

Evaluation Report

Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Approaches to Advocacy

Evaluation Office
July 2023



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Preface

In a world where access to fundamental human rights can often be impeded by a myriad of barriers, UNICEF remains steadfast in its commitment to advocate for the rights and well-being of every child.

In UNICEF, advocacy goes beyond mere engagement. Rooted deeply in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, our advocacy paves the way for the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, shedding light on the plight of the most vulnerable while imagining a future where every child has a fair chance. But to ensure our strides are as profound as our vision, evidence-based decision-making is paramount to reinforce UNICEF's advocacy planning and ultimately improve our chances of advocacy success. In this vein, the UNICEF Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the UNICEF Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, the Programme Group, the Office of Emergency Programmes, the Public Partnerships Division, and the Division of Private Fundraising and Partnerships, conducted an evaluability assessment and formative evaluation of UNICEF's advocacy approaches at the early stage of implementing the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Two complementary purposes animated this early evaluation: first, to proactively identify areas for growth in our advocacy capacity, aligning it with the ambition of the Strategic Plan, and second, to prepare for a future summative evaluation by improving the soundness of the design of advocacy plans. The evaluation examined advocacy priorities at each organizational level, particularly the Global Advocacy Priorities and humanitarian advocacy. It also considered organizational capacities to conceptualize and implement advocacy work and generate the necessary data and evidence to advocate for child rights.

At every level, this evaluation delved deep, through multiple evaluation methods, to understand UNICEF's advocacy approaches. It concluded that UNICEF has established advocacy as a critical function and an integral part of its work. While appreciating these efforts, it also determined that there is still a need for appropriate resource structures to align with UNICEF's advocacy ambitions with clearly defined roles in planning and programming for advocacy, expanding financial resources, institutional agility, and maintaining the multi-sectoral programmatic approach such as climate advocacy. The Global Advocacy Priorities provide organizational focus and direction on core advocacy areas; however, there is a need for a fusion of bottom-up and top-down approaches to promote greater uptake. The readiness for a meaningful final evaluation for advocacy can be improved by incorporating complexity-aware approaches that align with the nature of advocacy work.

This evaluation was capably conducted by Artival Research & Evaluation, and on behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to express my appreciation to Salvador Bustamante for his leadership of the evaluation team and to Laura Cardenas and Maria Pomes for their contributions. I am also grateful to colleagues from UNICEF, the Dutch National Committee, UN Women, Oxfam, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Save the Children and the many advocacy experts who provided generous insights into this process, particularly Duncan J. Green and Rhonda Schlagen. We also thank the colleagues and partners participating in the case studies, notably UNICEF country offices in Afghanistan and Indonesia, the UNICEF regional and country offices in Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and West and Central Africa, the Italian Committee for UNICEF – Foundation Onlus, and the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, and all respondents to the global survey. I would like to express my gratitude to Munyaradzi Dodzo and Pavithra Rangan for coordinating the evaluation within the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, and to Erica Mattellone in the Evaluation Office for managing this innovative evaluation, as well as Kamilla Nabiyeva, who supported this evaluation throughout. Special thanks also go to Samuel Bickel for his contributions in planning this evaluation. I also thank Geeta Dey, Celeste Lebowitz and Elena Panetti for their invaluable support in running and socializing this process.

While management is preparing the evaluation management response, I am optimistic at the areas of strength and growth for the organization and look forward to this evaluation to strengthen prioritization and innovation in upcoming advocacy initiatives and promoting partnerships for child rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. McCouch', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Robert McCouch

Director of Evaluation, UNICEF

Acknowledgements

This evaluation was commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office (EO) and managed by Erica Mattellone, Senior Evaluation Specialist, with the support of Kamilla Nabiyeva, Evaluation Officer, in collaboration with Munyaradzi Dodzo, Programme and Planning Manager, and Pavithra Rangan, Advocacy Specialist, in the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy.

The evaluation report was written by an evaluation team coordinated by Artival Research & Evaluation. Sincere appreciation goes to Salvador Bustamante, Laura Cardenas and Maria Pomes for their professionalism in conducting this evaluation and their capacity to apply innovative approaches and techniques to evaluate advocacy.

This evaluation would not have been possible without the contributions and engagement of many colleagues and partners at the global, regional and country levels. The EO and the evaluation team would like to thank all UNICEF staff who participated in the exercise, as well as the government partners, representatives of the United Nations agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations and partners for their help, time and insights provided during this evaluation. We are also deeply grateful to UN Women, Oxfam, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Save the Children for participating in the benchmarking exercise, and we are thankful to those who participated in the global survey, the case studies and the many interviews and consultations which informed this evaluation process. Furthermore, the unwavering support of the Evaluation Reference Group was also highly valued.



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Acronyms

A&C	Advocacy and communication	JSP	Joint Strategic Plan
ACBI	Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative	KII	Key informant interview
AMP	Annual Management Plans	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
AWP	Annual workplan	MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women	MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
CFC	Child-friendly cities	NatComs	National Committees
CO	Country office	NGO	Non-governmental organization
CCC	Core Commitments for Children	OMP	Office Management Plans
COAR	Country Office Annual Report	ORE	Other Resources – Emergency
CPD	Country Programme Document	ORR	Other Resources – Regular
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	PER	Performance Evaluation Report
CS	Case study	PFP	Private Fundraising and Partnerships
CSI	Core standard indicators	PG	Programme Group
CSO	Civil society organization	PHC	Primary health care
DAPM	Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring	PIDB	Programme Information Database
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	PII	Personally identifiable information
DOC	Division of Communication	PPD	Public Partnerships Division
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	QA	Quality assurance
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office	QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
ECARO	Europe and Central Asia Regional Office	QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
EMOPS	Office of Emergency Programmes	QMS	Quality Management System
EO	Evaluation Office	QuIP	Qualitative Impact Protocol
EPs	Emergency Procedures	RAM	Results Assessment Module
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group	RBM	Results-based management
EU	European Union	ROAR	Regional Office Annual Report
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK)	RPD	Regional Programme Document
FGDs	Focus groups discussions	RR	Regular resources
GA	Goal area	RRP	Results and Resource Plan
GAPs	Global Advocacy Priorities	SBC	Social and behaviour change
GAT	Global Advocacy Taskforce	SI	Standard indicators
GCA	Division of Global Communication and Advocacy	SitAn	Situation analysis
GCAS	Global Communication and Advocacy Strategy	SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound
GDPR	European General Data Protection Regulation	SNA	Social Network Analysis
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	SOWC	State of the World’s Children
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale	SP	Strategic Plan 2022–2025
GRIP	Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming	TL	Team leader
HIC	High-income countries	ToC	Theory of change
HR	Human resources	ToR	Terms of reference
HRBA	Human rights-based approach	ToT	Theory of transformation
IA	Immunization Agenda	UK	United Kingdom
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative	UN	United Nations
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
IRFF	Integrated Results and Resources Framework	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
		UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
		WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
		WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Introduction

This document presents the results of the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Approaches to Advocacy (hereinafter referred to as 'the evaluation'). The evaluation was competitively commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office (EO) in collaboration with the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (GCA) as a proactive and forward-looking exercise that provides critical evidence to inform UNICEF's advocacy planning to improve the chances of advocacy success. The evaluation was implemented by Artival Research & Evaluation, an external consulting firm. There are two complementary purposes that animated this formative, forward-looking exercise:

- **Formative evaluation:** Focused on increasing the success of UNICEF's advocacy efforts by identifying early adjustments to the advocacy approaches employed (proactive).
- ● **Evaluability assessment:** Focused on ensuring that a meaningful future summative evaluation of advocacy efforts can be carried out by the end of the current Strategic Plan (SP) in 2025. Consequently, it focused on gathering evidence about the internal logic and design of the advocacy change strategy for its improvement, as well as the planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting systems in place.

Scope and Methodology

The overall scope of the evaluation included **multiple organizational levels**, with the advocacy change strategy and the 2022–2025 SP as reference. The Global Communication and Advocacy Strategy (GCAS) 2019–2022 also helped inform the analysis, as well as the midyear review of the Strategic Plan 2002–2025, and the revision of the Global Advocacy Priorities (GAPs). The evaluation is also expected to contribute to inform the GCAS for 2023–2025 that is currently under development. The geographical scope was global (meaning it included all levels of interest, namely global, regional, national and subnational), and the chronological scope was 2022–2025.

Advocacy priorities originating at each organizational level were examined (including National Committees, NatComs) to make sure that the exercise did not imply that only the global priorities deserve the deepest attention. However, the GAPs got the most attention. The evaluation also considered organizational capacities, including conceptualization, enabling environment, implementation, evidence generation and use. Because advocacy goals exist for all host settings, the evaluation considered both very high-income settings as well as the poorest nations, and humanitarian contexts. In particular, the adaptation or differentiation of the advocacy activities to humanitarian or emergency contexts was a special area of focus.

It was not in the scope of this early, formative evaluation to assess organizational performance at the outcome level. Consequently, the evaluation did not consider the adequate use of financial resources, fiscal capacities, or leadership implementation capacities.

The driving questions for the evaluation can be summarized as *'How can UNICEF further enhance the effectiveness of its advocacy efforts?'*; and *'What steps can be taken to ensure the readiness of the advocacy strategy for a future final evaluation?'*

A total of five criteria were considered for the analysis, namely coherence, validity of design, relevance, system adequacy and implementation capacity. The evaluation design followed a **theory-based approach**, focus on maximizing its utility and considering participatory approaches.

Evaluation methods and techniques included key informant interviews, an in-depth desk review, a global survey, focus group discussions, a benchmarking analysis, a social network analysis and observation. More than 100 informants were interviewed (84 internal and 24 external, 66 female and 42 male), over than 300 internal and external informants were surveyed, and more than 300 documents were reviewed.

Key Findings

There is a **clear and broad definition of advocacy within UNICEF**, and staff members understand its importance and relevance. Staff members generally understand the goals of advocacy and the main advocacy approaches, although some confusion still persists. The diverse contexts in which UNICEF operates and the broad definition of advocacy contribute to this confusion. The process of renaming the Division of Communication (DOC) the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy and giving prominence to advocacy faced internal challenges and tensions, but training and promotion are helping to improve acceptance and understanding. UNICEF's definition of advocacy aligns with global definitions shared by other organizations. UNICEF's strengths for advocacy include its reach, brand, mandate, and ability to engage youth. However, limitations such as a limited ability to speak out in certain contexts, agility, advocacy capacities, and prioritization compared to other organizations affect UNICEF's advocacy work.

Several of the analysed organizations have institutional definitions of advocacy and dedicated structures for advocacy and communications, with formal mechanisms for collaboration between programmes and advocacy. These organizations employ a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches. Most organizations have developed theories of change. Oxfam's emphasis on understanding the process and impact of advocacy changes, as well as Save the Children's periodic micro moments of reflection, are notable approaches for measuring and monitoring advocacy results.

The Global Advocacy Priorities (GAPs) align with most thematic areas in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, except for child poverty and inclusive social protection, and fast-tracking the end of HIV/AIDS. Each GAP focuses on specific goal areas rather than being cross-cutting. The theory of transformation developed as part of the evaluation specifically addresses the contribution and logic of the global advocacy change strategy. The strengths of the GAP structure include strengthening prioritization, unified advocacy focus and messaging, tracking and consolidating results, promoting cooperation, and bringing in new initiatives such as mental health. Limitations of the GAP framework include the exclusion of vital areas like child poverty and inclusive social protection and potential inflexibility in responding to unforeseen opportunities. There are also some design issues, such as the single-sectoral focus of climate advocacy within the GAPs, which creates a dissonance with the multisectoral programmatic approach. Limited participation of staff at regional and national levels and a narrow humanitarian dimension were also identified as critical issues.

Funds allocated to advocacy have fluctuated since 2018, but UNICEF still allocates a higher proportion than other organizations analysed. Advocacy and communication activities, including public, political, humanitarian, and business advocacy, receive significant resources. Nonetheless, concerns about limited financial resources for advocacy were expressed at all levels, especially at Headquarters (HQ). Limited funding, the self-funded nature of GAPs, mismatched ambitions and available resources, unclear roles and responsibilities, limited fundraising expertise, and coordination issues contribute to the perception that funds are inadequate. However, those involved in advocacy mostly believe there is efficient resource utilization. UNICEF allocates five per cent of its workforce to communication and advocacy, less than other organizations assessed. Informants have a negative perception of personnel adequacy for advocacy ambitions, but recognize that there is efficient use of human resources. No major alternative cost-effective strategies were identified beyond effective strategic planning, and establishing clear roles and responsibilities for advocacy.

UNICEF's Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative is crucial for enhancing staff skills at all levels. Most informants believe they are proficient in basic advocacy techniques but lack advanced skills, especially in terms of political intelligence. Limited fundraising skills pose challenges for GAP teams, particularly at HQ. Mandatory advocacy training is not in place.

Roles, responsibilities, and collaboration for advocacy are defined globally, but the approach lacks systematization in primary planning documents. Tension exists in defining roles and accountability at the global level, mainly linked to the process of acknowledging advocacy as a core function that requires specialized skills and knowledge. Limited integration of global and national advocacy roles is observed. Humanitarian advocacy faces similar challenges in defining roles and responsibilities. Emergency Procedures aid in role clarity, but integration at regional and national levels is lacking. Positive examples of role definition and establishment exist at regional and national levels. Country and regional offices are transitioning to a greater focus on advocacy while maintaining existing personnel, communication roles, and skill sets. Coordination challenges persist internally and externally. Internal challenges include integrating advocacy efforts at different levels and improving inter-GAP coordination across divisions at HQ. Externally, limited coordination structures for civil society organizations (CSOs) are identified. Networks for advocacy exist but lack specific strategies for development and strengthening.

The GAP theories of change (ToCs) include important elements but lack causal link assumptions, feedback loops, and explanations of how changes occur at different levels. Barriers and limitations are identified, but sources and rationale assumptions are not clearly indicated. Periodic revision and adaptability to different contexts is recommended, but there is a lack of specific approaches to identify and categorize the different components of the advocacy work based on their level of complexity. There are examples of complementarity between GAPs, particularly in climate change, but limited collaboration with social protection. Funding constraints lead non-prioritized areas to rely on project-based funds for advocacy work. To ensure that the advocacy change strategy is clearly understood, a theory of transformation (ToT) was designed and validated as part of the assessment to establish a global framework for UNICEF's advocacy change strategy in both development and humanitarian settings. The ToT represents the overarching theory on how UNICEF's advocacy change strategy is structured and interconnected, including key elements that explain how change is supposed to happen and what specific overarching goals the change strategy directly contributes to.

The GAPs have undergone changes to adapt to the post-COVID-19 context, with GAPs 1 and 2 being the most adapted. Despite the levels of adaptability shown by the GAPs, there is still awareness at the global level of the challenge of maintaining the relevance of the GAPs in a rapidly changing global context and considering emerging issues. Integration of GAPs is primarily top-down, although some examples of bottom-up integration were found. There is a need for more effective integration of advocacy work into practice, particularly at the Country Office (CO) level. The social network analysis (SNA) shows potential for creating synergies and connections between GAPs, showing also that GAP 4 is the least connected. Access to systematic information on partnerships is very limited, hindering the ability to seek complementarities and engage partners at different levels.

The planning procedures and tools at the global, regional and national levels demonstrate clear linkages with the SP goals through the use of advocacy core standard indicators (CSI). Child poverty and inclusive social protection, although not designated as a GAP, contribute to the overall advocacy strategy and SP goal area 5. However, their representation within the GCA advocacy section is indirect, primarily through support and capacity-building initiatives.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system for advocacy includes key elements such as baselines, targets, data-collection periodicity, monitoring responsibilities, verification sources, transparency measures and reporting mechanisms. However, certain indicator templates have varying levels of analysis and not all comply with established criteria. The system lacks information on cost per activity or indicators in the Results Assessment Module (RAM). Gender- and disability-inclusion indicators are included for specific plans, but their responsiveness is not fully considered in the main M&E systems, at least for advocacy. Instructions on a complexity-aware approach to monitor advocacy initiatives are also lacking. Overall, the advocacy indicators

are well designed but have limited capacity to measure UNICEF's role in achieving advocacy goals and contextual factors. Methodological notes lack reference to data-collection periodicity, and qualitative remarks to enhance understanding of advocacy results are underutilized. The existing advocacy and communication standard indicators focus more on measuring communication than on the pathways of change in advocacy initiatives.

Advocacy practitioners acknowledge the current limitations in measuring and reporting on advocacy and the need to embrace uncertainty in monitoring and evaluation. The introduction of M&E tools and efforts (e.g., CSI advocacy indicators, 'success stories', etc.) to broaden the focus on monitoring processes and mid-level results has been positively received. The perceived limited M&E resources and staff at the national level and the reliance on external funding for GAPs impact M&E activities. The current structure reporting to SP goals is perceived to blur the visibility of the specific results of advocacy at the national level.

Conclusions – Formative Evaluation

The efforts made to elevate advocacy as a critical organizational function seem to be paying off, given the overall clear and shared understanding of advocacy goals and approaches at different levels, and considering that only specific areas remain unclear when it comes to understanding advocacy and what kind of work it entails. The structural changes made to give prominence to advocacy from HQ to national levels are still in the process of being consolidated. In any case, beyond a clear and shared understanding of advocacy, informants at all levels stressed the importance of being strategic when doing advocacy to ensure a clear and shared understanding of advocacy across units, teams and divisions.

The benchmarking analysis reveals interesting insights on practices of other organizations that could be effectively considered by UNICEF. The consideration of a bottom-up integration approach for certain organizations enhances the effective contextualization and integration of advocacy efforts at the global level. The fact that communication and advocacy are clearly delineated and separated in Oxfam and Save the Children is another enabling factor. The significance of having a theory of change (ToC) for advocacy is evident in all organizations. When evaluating advocacy results, Oxfam's emphasis on understanding the 'why' and 'how' stands out, along with Save the Children's approach of conducting micro-reflection periods to ensure adaptability of advocacy initiatives.

The fact that GAPs are not seen as cross-cutting issues in their contribution to goal areas is considered positive to ensure a clear focus, as each one of them mainly addresses one of the main areas considered in the SP, except for child poverty and inclusive social protection and the particular case of HIV/AIDS. The main reservations about the GAP framework relate to limitations in going beyond the thematic areas of the GAP, limited flexibility and responsiveness and issues related to the design of some priorities, such as GAP 4. The theory of transformation design as part of this assessment is expected to shed light on how the different GAPs and other relevant advocacy areas are interconnected and contribute to results at all levels.

Despite having a higher proportion of funds allocated to advocacy than other organizations, **UNICEF's ambitions in advocacy still need to be matched by relevant funding and human resources (HR) structures,** especially at the global level, but also at regional and national levels. Nonetheless, the use of financial resources available is considered efficient by informants. Enhancing cost-effectiveness relies primarily on establishing clear roles and responsibilities for advocacy and adopting a more strategic approach in advocacy efforts.

Despite advocacy training not being mandatory in UNICEF, most informants surveyed consider themselves skilled in basic advocacy techniques. Nevertheless, **informants expressed the need to further strengthen their advanced advocacy skills,** particularly regarding political intelligence and fundraising, considering GAP representatives needs to secure their funding streams. The fact that advocacy training is not mandatory could represent a major barrier in ensuring widespread advocacy capacities at all levels.

Global roles and responsibilities for advocacy have been established and agreed upon. However, there is still a need to translate these roles into clear lines of responsibility and accountability at all levels. While co-ownership is acknowledged and valued in principle, the lack of systematic joint workplans hinders the ability to hold individuals accountable and ensure alignment with programme priorities, thereby limiting the enhancement of advocacy results.

Relevant and meaningful coordination examples have been identified, reflecting the proactive approach and willingness to 'reach the last mile' of advocacy teams at different levels despite limitations in establishing roles and responsibilities. Nonetheless, identified challenges hinder coordination and result in missed opportunities. The lack of strategies for developing and sustaining networks for advocacy contributes to the existing weakness in political intelligence gathering, considering the limited mechanisms available for mapping networks and influencing pathways for effective advocacy.

Conclusions – Evaluability Assessment

The existing internal guidelines and templates for designing theories of change (ToCs) are thorough and widely used. To ensure identified limitations in ToC design are effectively addressed, existing templates need to be updated. The introduction of causal connections and pathways at different levels and across elements of the ToC, the definition of causal link assumptions, and the identification of feedback loops will strengthen ToCs considerably, as will specific approaches to ensure the adaptability of the strategy to contexts based on their level of complexity.

The GAPS have been adapted to the contextual challenges and needs deriving from the pandemic outbreak and post-pandemic situation. Although the GAPS have shown adequate levels of adaptability, existing approaches, mechanisms and tools to periodically categorize, review and adapt to contextual changes need to be reinforced with more systematic approaches. The focus is not only on remaining relevant but also on ensuring that progress towards advocacy results is effectively tracked.

The use and reporting of advocacy core standard indicators (CSI) at country level reflects the relevance and integration of the GAPS. However, putting advocacy strategies into practice is reported to be more challenging, mainly due to issues identified concerning the limited definition of roles and responsibilities, financial and HR structures, and capacities in place. The fact that National Committees (NatComs) have a more positive view on the extent to which GAPS are adequately contextualized and effectively integrated at the national level might reflect their stronger advocacy capacities compared to the limitations faced by regional offices (ROs) and country offices (COs) in terms of advocacy structure and capacities. Although the focus is mainly on a top-down integration approach for advocacy, bottom-up integration examples show that, to certain extent, practical experience and results on the ground are also informing global advocacy theory.

Cross-GAP initiatives should always be adequately justified and should ensure synergies and added value. One of the main opportunities for cross-collaboration lies in climate change, which can connect clearly with the work of the other GAPS and relevant partners. Social protection, not being a GAP and not being included in the GCA workplan, lags in complementary work with GAPS. The unbalanced focus on private partners versus Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is not necessarily harmful, but no specific rationale is shared across teams to understand the justification for this approach.

The lack of systematic information on partnerships at all levels is a major limitation in maximizing results, identifying synergies and periodically reviewing and capturing changes in needs for alliances. UNISON (UNICEF's global corporate partnership management platform for private and public sector relationships worldwide) could play a major role in addressing this gap. A systematic and shared approach **for identifying, developing and sustaining partnerships** would also ensure homogeneity and effectiveness in addressing the three main partnership strategies considered for advocacy.

The use of advocacy core standard indicators (CSI) at global, regional and national levels ensures to a great extent that the main planning tools clearly reflect the contribution to the SP. Although relevant collaborations between GCA and the social protection teams were identified in the course of the evaluation, the fact that child poverty and inclusive social protection is only represented indirectly in the scope and plans of the GCA raises a question about whether having a formal set of activities to support and contribute to enhancing advocacy efforts in this line should be considered.

The current M&E system is ready to take some steps forwards to ensure advocacy efforts are adequately monitored and evaluated, which include a revision of key indicators and the prioritization of certain M&E efforts. Country offices might have the chance to develop ad hoc indicators for measuring advocacy outputs, but having a full-fledged set of potential advocacy indicators at hand would be very useful not only to ensure the application and uptake of M&E, but also in maximizing indicator homogeneity for comparability and aggregation purposes. In this connection, an additional focus on context monitoring would be relevant to reflect a complexity-aware approach to advocacy monitoring.

A significant opportunity to enhance the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach for advocacy lies in the recognition by UNICEF staff that advocacy practitioners should be comfortable dealing with uncertainty, while understanding the complex nature of advocacy work. The M&E tools introduced have proven to be relevant for advocacy monitoring, and there is a growing perception that the focus of monitoring should be broadened to address challenges in measuring and reporting the contribution of advocacy work. Since GAPS rely on external funding, and reporting is usually done directly to the donor, results frameworks and the types of M&E and reporting activities might be highly influenced by external partner needs and demands, which would not be the case if UNICEF provided consistent core resources.

The most relevant approach to consider for the final evaluation combines the expected contribution of the theoretical framework and M&E data systems enhanced as a result of the recommendations included in this report, which are expected to clearly and meaningfully contribute to the development of a theory-oriented, case-based evaluation design that addresses the impact of UNICEF global advocacy efforts.

Recommendations

The following set of recommendations arose from the analysis and interpretation of key findings, which were co-created and validated by key internal and external stakeholders in a workshop.



Recommendation 1

Clarify accountabilities and strengthen role definition systems for advocacy.




1.1 Joint global advocacy workplans should be developed by the advocacy co-leads of both development and humanitarian advocacy. These global joint workplans should be used to prioritize and articulate collaborative advocacy work with other relevant units and divisions at HQ and across offices at the regional and national levels (including NatComs), as part of an integrated advocacy strategy. This should strengthen coordination and buy-in, while establishing clear lines of responsibility and accountability that go beyond ad hoc advocacy workplans done for specific initiatives. In humanitarian settings, global joint workplans between GCA and EMOPS should serve as the basis for informing the development of specific advocacy strategies at the country and/or regional level as part of the Emergency Procedures. These strategies should be effectively drafted per the requirements (mandatory in all L2 and L3 emergencies).

The global joint workplan for emergency settings should aim to support this process and strengthen coordination and responsibilities at the global level to support offices at the regional and country levels. This will help avoid duplication and ensure a more coordinated and standardized approach at the different levels, while leaving room to ensure the responsiveness and adaptation required for effective advocacy.

The global joint workplans developed between key divisions and units at HQ levels should serve for inspiration and guide ROs, COs and NatComs to develop their own joint workplans for advocacy. Examples of joint workplans between ROs and COs can be found in the context of the Italian NatCom and Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), as discussed in Annex 8. UNICEF should also set clear accountabilities for each office/division as part of the current procedure put in place, and following the initial indications included in the organizational Compendium.

1.2 The matrix management approach should be reinforced to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and multisectoral programming, improve motivation and commitment and maximize existing skills across teams. To do that, two reporting lines should exist, one for the functional area (direct supervisor) and one for the advocacy initiatives from the relevant functional and/or thematic area each advocacy practitioner is involved in (second reporting officer). The idea is that effective communication between the vertical and horizontal managers is ensured, and that staff receive more feedback and professional support. For example, an advocacy practitioner at the CO level might report directly to his/her supervisor in the advocacy and communication (A&C) team and horizontally to an advocacy specialist in the RO and or at relevant thematic areas in HQ. At HQ, GAP representatives might be linked to secondary reporting lines within the relevant thematic units within the Programme Group (PG), for example.

1.3 UNICEF should continue developing and including advocacy issues in role descriptions at all levels (including communication and advocacy roles and others), guidelines, performance evaluation reports (PER) and performance indicators explicitly defining advocacy responsibilities. Efforts should also be made to strengthen accountability systems globally to ensure timely decision-making and effective delivery of advocacy results. Regarding humanitarian advocacy, the activation of the Emergency Procedures is pivotal in creating certainty and structure around roles and coordination, and this should be effectively integrated at regional and national levels.

 Priority: Very high.	 Time frame: To be actioned in the next six months.
 Cost implications: Neutral, or cost-saving, as some of these initiatives are already being implemented (e.g., matrix management). Only financial resources and HR might be needed to develop and sustain global joint workplans.	
 Responsible units: Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (GCA), Programme Group (PG) and Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) as advocacy co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at HQ (Office of the Executive Director (OED), Division of Human Resources (DHR), Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP), Public Partnerships Division (PPD), Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM), regional and national levels.	



Recommendation 2

Strengthen and rethink the GAP framework design for the next Strategic Plan.

2.1 The GAP framework design should be fine-tuned to incorporate existing thematic areas more meaningfully. More specifically, and as already stressed by GCA and PG management, GAP 4 should contribute across the different areas of impact, including but not exclusively focusing on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). This will align the GAPs with the programmatic approach given to climate, eventually leading to greater cross-fertilization of results in this critical area.


2.2 UNICEF should ensure a better alignment between the GAPs and the goal areas identified in the SP. The GAPs should reorient their thematic focus to be more clearly aligned with the main areas included in the next SP. UNICEF should consider revisiting the GAPs to ensure they address all the goal areas comprehensively. For example, following the current structure, the GAPs should include child poverty and inclusive social protection, and also give relevance to this area in the annual workplans of key co-leads. In the event that UNICEF decides not to prioritize all goal areas of the SP, the GAPs should be defined following a bottom-up approach, as described in recommendation 3.


2.3 UNICEF should foster cross-GAP collaboration. The organization should promote and justify cross-collaboration initiatives that ensure synergies and added value between the different GAPs. Good examples of cross-collaboration, such as the collaboration between GAP 2 and GAP 3 on 'mental health in schools', should be identified and replicated. Climate change can serve as a critical area for cross-collaboration, connecting the work of the different GAPs. Efforts should be made to strengthen complementary work between GAPs and social protection and explore potential linkages with other areas like migration or gender equality.


2.4 Relevant changes should be made to the GAPs so that they are effectively translated and communicated at different levels to strengthen advocacy integration with updated strategies. These changes should target not only the A&C teams but also programmatic teams and other cross-thematic units at regional and national levels, such as the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) unit.

2.5 The Global Advocacy Task Force should continue to play a central role in setting strategic visions and priorities for advocacy. All GAPs should be represented in the Global Advocacy Task Force and all GAP leaders should be included.), as well as representatives from key thematic areas considered in the Strategic Plan (e.g., in the current SP, child poverty and inclusive social protection, and humanitarian advocacy).

 **Priority:** High.

 **Time frame:** To be actioned in the next 12 to 18 months.

 **Cost implications:** Neutral, or cost-saving, only financial and HR allocation might be needed to foster cross-GAP collaboration.

 **Responsible units:** GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at HQ, regional and national levels, as well as the Global Advocacy Task Force.



Recommendation 3

Integrate advocacy more systematically at all levels.


3.1 The prevailing top-down approach for integrating advocacy at all levels should be balanced with a more prominent bottom-up approach for selecting GAPs. Feedback gathered from offices at different levels for the next SP will be crucial to adapt and prioritize advocacy initiatives in the next GAP framework. UNICEF should enhance stakeholder engagement in the design and prioritization of the GAPs. Regional and country-level involvement should be encouraged to ensure the co-creation of agendas, transparency in priority-setting, credibility, buy-in, and ownership of the GAPs. The bottom-up approach also refers to accommodating regional and country-specific priorities that may fall outside the GAPs. GAPs could focus on global events and campaigns while maintaining a global focus and allowing flexibility for regions and countries to address their unique advocacy needs and adapt the priorities accordingly. This way, a top-down and bottom-up approach could be reinforced: HQ can act as a curator of policy and knowledge, and country offices share lessons learned with regional offices and HQ.


3.2 Advocacy and communication roles should be separated strategically. Following the approach considered by other relevant organizations, the advocacy position should remain separate from communication and continue to be housed within the communication teams. This represents a significant step that should be gradually introduced in UNICEF, and it can start by prioritizing offices or communication teams in certain regions or relevant thematic areas to pilot. This will help take advocacy work to a higher level and serve as a strategy to ensure a clear distinction between the two roles and that this distinction is widely understood, with the emphasis that communication is complementary to advocacy but not a substitute.


3.3 In order to enhance political intelligence in UNICEF, it is recommended that the organization:

- 1.** Define clear cross-organizational strategies for developing and sustaining networks that are shared across divisions and offices, including mechanisms for mapping networks and influencing pathways for effective advocacy.
- 2.** Leverage local staff knowledge and networks, foster collaboration with external stakeholders, implement a systematic cross-organizational political intelligence-gathering process, and establish clear reporting channels. By recognizing the insights and intelligence of local staff, encouraging collaboration between international and national staff, and engaging external stakeholders UNICEF can better understand local political landscapes.
- 3.** Develop a structured approach for intelligence gathering, using technology tools, and establishing clear reporting channels. This will ensure efficient and effective dissemination of political intelligence, supporting informed decision-making and advocacy efforts. In particular challenging contexts, UNICEF should consider engaging external agencies for political intelligence and recruiting expert advocates skilled in political intelligence. The organization should seek avenues to deliver sensitive messages effectively. Balancing organizational priorities and political sensitivities is crucial to avoid limitations in advocacy efforts, and the support of CSOs at the national level is key in this regard.

 **Priority:** Very high.

 **Time frame:** 3.3 to be actioned in the next six months, 3.1 and 3.2 in the next 12 to 18 months as part of the preparation for the next SP.

 **Cost implications:** Only financial resources are needed to separate A&C roles.

 **Responsible units:** GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at HQ (OED, PFP, PPD) and at regional and national levels, including National Committees (NatComs).



Recommendation 4

Match existing resources with advocacy expectations and ambitions.

4.1 It is essential to ensure that the funding and human resource structures align with UNICEF's ambitious advocacy goals. Exploring strategies for diversifying funding sources and securing long-term commitments to sustain advocacy efforts would be essential. This may involve engaging with strategic partners, exploring different and/or innovative funding models, and advocating for core funding. It would be critical to either secure fundraising skills and expertise within the GAP teams or secure core funds targeting the different GAPs based on a cost out of the resources needed to cover the main personnel. This will create the base of support for the GAP teams to sustain advocacy funding over time. Also, it will contribute to being more independent of donors' planning and reporting requirements. Creating a 'mapping of advocacy resources' aligned with the UNICEF organization compendium could prove beneficial. This approach would help efficiently capture and optimize existing resources instead of continuously seeking new ones.

Priority: Very high.

Time frame: To be actioned in the next six to 12 months.

Cost implications: Additional financial and human resources might be needed depending on the options considered.

Responsible units: GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at regional and national levels, including PFP, PPD and DAPM.



Recommendation 5





Maximize partnerships for advocacy.

5.1 UNICEF should systematically promote the use of information on partnerships in UNISON to have a shared global database of partnerships formed at all levels to help with making decisions and to define potential cross-collaboration and synergies.

5.2 The organization must develop specific strategies for selecting and ensuring partners' added value for advocacy at any given time and apply them systematically. Learning from other organizations' approaches to engaging with partners can help UNICEF establish effective partnerships to advance its advocacy goals. Also, a systematic and shared system for identifying, developing and sustaining partnerships would ensure homogeneity and effectiveness in addressing the three main partnership strategies considered for advocacy.

5.3 UNICEF should develop a framework for assessing the effectiveness and impact of its partnerships, particularly in terms of advocacy outcomes. Regular monitoring and evaluation of partnership activities can provide valuable insights for refining strategies, identifying successful approaches, and ensuring accountability in achieving advocacy goals. Among the critical issues to consider are 1) the extent to which partners adopt and prioritize issues important to UNICEF, and 2) how advocacy leads partners to invest in matters without directly funding UNICEF, contributing to a finance-leveraging perspective.

5.4 Strengthening partnerships with influential global institutions and coalitions like the European Union, G7, G20 and the World Economic Forum is important; such partnerships have proven valuable across all GAPS. UNICEF should continue to foster and expand these relationships to leverage their critical influence on child rights advocacy. Faith leaders and faith-based organizations have been identified as influential stakeholders across all GAPS, except for GAP 4. UNICEF should acknowledge their critical role in advocacy and foster partnerships with them. Engaging faith leaders and collaborating with faith-based organizations can help advance child rights issues by leveraging their influence and mobilizing their communities. While CSO partnerships are seen as more relevant at the country level, UNICEF should not neglect expanding CSO partnerships at the global level. Investing in building strong relationships with CSOs globally can facilitate knowledge-sharing, best practices, and collective advocacy efforts, enhancing UNICEF’s impact on child rights at both national and international levels. While the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are not considered highly influential for child rights advocacy, they are linked to all GAPS (except GAP 4). UNICEF should explore opportunities for closer collaboration with these United Nations (UN) agencies to align advocacy efforts and leverage their expertise and resources in addressing child rights issues. It is crucial to foster partnerships with influential donors. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK FCDO) are identified as critical influencers linked to all GAPS except GAP 3. UNICEF should prioritize building and strengthening relationships with these influential donors. Engaging with them strategically and aligning advocacy priorities can help secure funding support and maintain UNICEF’s advocacy impact. Finally, UNICEF should further embed youth engagement through youth organizations and youth movements to support the achievement of the established advocacy goals.

 Priority: High.	 Time frame: To be actioned in the next six to 12 months.
 Cost implications: Additional financial and human resources might be needed depending on the options considered, particularly for assessing the effectiveness of partnerships.	
 Responsible units: GCA, PG, EMOPS, PFP, PPD and DAPM, but also other relevant units and offices at regional and national levels.	



Recommendation 6

Continue developing advocacy skills and capacities.


6.1 To ensure that all staff members have the necessary advocacy skills, it is recommended to make advocacy training mandatory for managers, representatives and programmatic staff. This will contribute to developing a shared understanding of advocacy principles and techniques across UNICEF and ensure that advocacy is effectively integrated into programmatic work. Mandatory training can be included as part of staff onboarding and professional development programmes, and specific efforts should also be made to ensure that advocacy is considered a core part of the skills and capacities of representatives at regional and country levels. This can be achieved through training, clear guidelines, and effective communication from HQ. Beyond training, UNICEF should conscientiously focus on developing a culture of advocacy.


6.2 UNICEF should prioritize specific thematic areas for advanced advocacy training. The assessment has highlighted capacity gaps in areas such as gathering and using political intelligence and strategic advocacy, including capacity-building on youth engagement. This may include specialized workshops, mentoring programmes and knowledge-sharing platforms to enhance the skills and expertise of staff involved in advocacy. Also, capacity-building on resource mobilization should be provided to staff responsible for resource mobilization for advocacy at the different levels, from GAP representatives to office representatives and relevant teams. For NatComs, the focus should be on continuing to develop programming and M&E skills.


6.3 The organization should leverage the existing wealth of experience and expertise of relevant NatComs for developing capacities at the regional and country office levels. Some NatComs have strong ambassadors and teams with significant advocacy expertise, and more efforts should be made to identify them in order to support, recognize, and connect their work with other parts of UNICEF. This could be done by ensuring greater coordination at the national level, exchanging experiences, lessons learned and good practices for advocacy, and linking offices with similar thematic coverage, role played and the context in which UNICEF operates. This should not lead to NatComs receiving less support and capacity-building opportunities; rather, those more advanced in advocacy skills and capacities should be selected to support other areas and levels of UNICEF. NatComs expertise in resource mobilization for advocacy should also be leveraged.

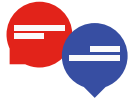
6.4 UNICEF needs to prioritize knowledge management and sharing approaches to strengthen organizational learning further. Among the crucial actions to consider are developing an advocacy community of practice and enhancing the Advocacy Portal on the intranet, a valuable resource for staff to access tools, guidance, case studies and good practices in advocacy, while ensuring key institutional memory is kept and promoted. This can include incorporating lessons learned from various contexts, sharing successful advocacy initiatives, and providing practical advice on implementing advocacy strategies. Regular communication and promotion of the Advocacy Portal will also ensure that staff are aware of its existence and use it effectively.

 **Priority:** High.

 **Time frame:** To be actioned in the next 12 to 18 months.

 **Cost implications:** Additional financial resources might be needed, depending on how Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative (ACBI) adapts its current strategy to include mandatory training and a focus on advanced advocacy skills.

 **Responsible units:** ACBI, GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, and selected NatComs.





Recommendation 7


Strengthen planning and reporting for decision-making.

7.1 UNICEF should strengthen communication and information-sharing, particularly across GAPs. Improved communication channels and mechanisms should facilitate coordination and information-sharing between different units, divisions and levels involved in different GAPs. Regular meetings, calls and updates can keep all stakeholders informed and aligned with advocacy initiatives. Regular communication channels and exchanges between parties involved in GAPs, such as the PG, PFP and National Committees should also be strengthened. This will foster a mutual understanding of operations and facilitate effective collaboration.

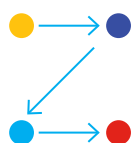
 **Priority:** High.

 **Time frame:** To be actioned in the next 12 to 18 months.

 **Cost implications:** Additional financial resources might be needed.

 **Responsible units:** GCA, PG, DAPM and EMOPS, with the support of other relevant units.

Recommendations aimed at ensuring readiness for a meaningful final evaluation




Recommendation 8

Improve and promote the theoretical models of the advocacy change strategy.


8.1 Validated theories of change and theory of transformation should be disseminated, known and owned by advocacy practitioners at the different levels to ensure advocacy strategies follow a consistent logic informed by global theoretical models and adapted to the realities and challenges of each particular context. The existing internal guidelines and templates for designing theories of change (ToCs) should be updated to ensure that causal connections and pathways at different levels and across elements of the ToC are included, as well as causal link assumptions and the identification of feedback loops. The rationale assumptions should be based on common sense and prior knowledge, providing a solid foundation for the plausibility of the proposed strategy. Additionally, the ToCs should address limitations and barriers based on previous experience, including a clear indication of the sources of obstacles and the rationale behind the assumptions made.

8.2 UNICEF should ensure that developed ToCs are periodically tested and adapted, following a strategic testing approach, a monitoring system specifically devised to track programmes addressing complex development problems through a highly iterative and adaptive approach.¹ Strategy testing ensures that existing theoretical models for advocacy (ToC) are continuously tested, informed by the realities on the ground, and adapted accordingly. As widely acknowledged within UNICEF, ToCs are living documents, and this approach ensures ToCs evolve through time as information emerges and are based on the results of what is working and what is not and why. The core of strategic testing is a structured discussion during which the advocacy practitioners collectively examine the previous version of the ToC to see whether its implicit assumptions are still valid. This will help embrace a ‘practices of change’ approach, which involves continuously testing and adapting advocacy strategies based on real-world practices and experiences. The bottom-up approach to advocacy recommended is expected to contribute to that, but this should be further strengthened with specific approaches to ensure theory testing.

 **Priority:** Very high.

 **Time frame:** To be actioned in the next 12 months.

 **Cost implications:** Neutral or cost-saving.

 **Responsible units:** GCA, PG, DAPM and EMOPS.

¹ The Asia Foundation, ‘Strategy Testing: An Innovative Approach to Monitoring Highly Flexible Aid Programs’, 2015.



Recommendation 9

Improve the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach of the advocacy change strategy.

9.1 Existing core standard indicators (CSI) should be fine-tuned to better reflect the contribution and role of UNICEF and the context in which results are achieved. This idea is linked to the consideration of measuring contribution based on the role played by UNICEF, which is currently not being considered. In this line, it would also be essential to give significance to advocacy results by categorizing the type of context in which advocacy results were achieved. Section 6 of the report provides guidance and a proposal of rubrics to categorize advocacy indicators (see tables 19 and 21).

UNICEF should strengthen Advocacy Standard Indicators Guidelines shared with/used by COs by including advocacy output indicators that cover all the main steps/areas of change included in the revised theories of change (engagement, mobilization/awareness, shift in social norms, base of support growth and policy/institutional influence). Of particular importance is the inclusion of mid-level indicators that measure the growth of base support and the mobilization of partners, as well as the results and influence on non-governmental partners, especially private partners.


The organization should ensure that the different branches of the ToC developed (global, regional, or national) are categorized based on their level of complexity (simple, complicated, and complex) to prioritize monitoring efforts in those that are more complex or uncertain. A typology to differentiate simple, complicated and complex advocacy initiatives is attached in Annex 26.

9.2 A series of sentinel indicators should be selected to track the most relevant assumptions included in the ToCs and keep track of changes in critical contextual and cause-effect conditions to identify them for adaptability effectively and in a timely way. Examples of appropriate assumptions to track could be 'Momentum is gained through both bottom-up and top-down approaches (depending on the context) to strengthen links and create pressure' or 'Integration of advocacy work at all levels (subnational, national, regional and global) facilitates securing commitments from relevant countries in global fora'.

9.3 UNICEF should ensure that 'success stories' are also used by COs to complement existing indicators as they are perfectly aligned to 'the seven steps' categorization and would provide a wealth of nuanced information to complement indicators for the final assessment of achievements. Success stories can play a significant role in explaining 'how' and 'why' changes occurred. As proposed in this section, their usefulness is strengthened by ensuring the categorization of advocacy results and indicators.

9.4 Social network analysis² should be used to complement existing initiatives (such as stakeholder analysis and Global Advocacy Situation Analysis) to enhance the quality of intelligence on which decisions are made and better understand the connectivity with different stakeholders and their level of influence to maximize engagement and synergetic actions while identifying leverage points for implementation purposes.

 **Priority:** Very high.

 **Time frame:** To be action in the next six months.

 **Cost implications:** Neutral or cost-saving.

 **Responsible units:** GCA, PG, DAPM, Office of Research and EMOPS.

² An accessible document on how to develop SNA is found in International Rescue Committee, Social Network Analysis Handbook: Connecting the dots in humanitarian programs, 2016.

Introduction



Introduction

This document presents the final report for the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Approaches to Advocacy (hereinafter referred to as 'the evaluation'). The evaluation was competitively commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office (EO) in collaboration with the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (GCA) as a proactive, forward-looking exercise to provide critical evidence to inform UNICEF's advocacy planning to improve the chances of advocacy success. The evaluation was implemented by Artival Research & Evaluation, an external consulting firm.

The report consists of nine sections, as follows:

- **Section 1** provides the context and background to the evaluation;
- **Sections 2 to 4** cover the evaluation purpose, objectives, scope, evaluation framework, questions and methodology;
- **Sections 5 and 6** present the main findings, first for the formative evaluation and then for the evaluability assessment;
- **Section 7** sets out the key overarching conclusions from the evaluation; and
- **Sections 8 and 9** provide key lessons and recommendations drawing on the findings and conclusions at the overarching level and for selected strategic and technical elements of significant strategic importance.

Object of the Evaluation



1. Object of the Evaluation

Advocacy is the deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence, to directly and indirectly influence decision makers, stakeholders and relevant audiences to support and implement actions that contribute to the fulfilment of children’s and women’s rights.³ In the very first line of its mission statement, UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly “to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential”.⁴

Following a rights-based approach and guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, advocacy has therefore been an integral component of UNICEF programme work. Over the past few years⁵, the organization has undergone important **structural changes to reinforce its advocacy and communication strengths and address its challenges**. The previous 2014–2017⁶ strategy was based on the principle that UNICEF must communicate to advocate. The strategy launched the ‘glocal’ approach – setting global priorities that can be adapted to local contexts – and firmly established UNICEF’s ‘digital first’ approach to communication. As a result, UNICEF successfully increased its reach and voice, and augmented the number of digital supporters to exceed the target of 50 million social media followers, pledge donors and U-Reporters.

Informed by this vision paper and other exploratory exercises (including the 2018 consultations, 2020 surveys, and several case studies⁷) the Deputy Executive Directors of Programmes and Partnerships have elevated advocacy as a **critical organizational function**. In order to ensure that UNICEF is driven by effective advocacy and communication that work in an integrated way to drive change for children and formalized HQ advocacy responsibilities, the Division of Communication (DOC) unit became the new GCA (January 2022) which also allows for a closer partnership between the GCA and the Programme Group.⁸ In the current Strategic Plan (SP) 2022–2025, advocacy has been integrated across all UNICEF goal areas as a key route to achieving results for children, and as a critical change strategy. The Global Advocacy Priorities (GAPs), approved by the Executive Director in 2020, are well entrenched in the Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework, and each priority has an integrated global strategy, which is being implemented at the global, regional and national levels.⁹

3 UNICEF, A guide to influencing decisions that improve children’s lives, 2010.

4 UNICEF, ‘UNICEF mission statement’, n.d.

5 ‘Communicate to Advocate: Driving Change for Children, 2019-2021’ is an update to ‘Communicate to Advocate for Every Child: UNICEF’s Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy, 2014–2017’ and is informed by the successes achieved and lessons learned through the initial strategy.

6 Ibid.

7 17 Case studies are developed in the Advocacy Portal (internal).

8 UNICEF, Headquarters Divisional Annual report, 2021.

9 GAP 1 contributes to Goal Area 1 of the SP: ‘Every child, including adolescents, survives and thrives with access to nutritious diets, quality primary health care, nurturing practices and essential supplies’. GAP 2 contributes to Goal Area 2: ‘Every child, including adolescents, learns and acquires skills for the future’. GAP 3 has dedicated results that contribute to Goal Area 1 and Goal Area 3: ‘Every child, including adolescents, is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices. GAP 4 contributes to Goal Area 4: ‘Every child, including adolescents, has access to safe and equitable WASH services and supplies, and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment’.

These four Global Advocacy Priorities (GAPs)¹⁰ have been defined, with specific theories of change (ToCs), indicators at the outcome and output levels, target results (current and future), barriers, key stakeholders and strategic approaches. The four GAPs were designated as priorities to contribute to the acceleration, scaling up and adjustment of UNICEF results for children:

- **GAP 1:** Build a global movement for vaccine affordability, availability and equity as a contribution to strengthening primary health care, which contributes to Goal Area 1 of the SP 2022–2025.
- **GAP 2:** Drive a global advocacy effort to tackle the learning crisis, prioritizing the most vulnerable and marginalized children, including through closing the digital divide, which contributes to Goal Area 2 of the SP 2022–2025.
- **GAP 3:** Secure investment and action to support and protect the mental health of children and young people, and to bring an end to neglect, abuse and childhood traumas that drive poor life outcomes, which contributes to Goal Area 1 and 3 of the SP 2022–2025.
- **GAP 4:** Work with and for children to tackle environmental degradation and climate change, so they have access to clear water, clean air, and a safe and sustainable environment, which contributes to Goal Area 4 of the SP 2022–2025.

In addition to these GAPs, the advocacy change strategy included in the current SP also includes areas such as humanitarian advocacy and advocacy for child poverty and inclusive social protection.

The 2021 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of UNICEF¹¹ acknowledges the challenges in measuring and quantifying normative advocacy efforts using the existing corporate monitoring system. These challenges are likely to affect the quality of the policy advocacy evidence and knowledge produced at the field level, an issue consistently found in decentralized organizations like UNICEF.¹²

10 The thematic areas covered by the GAPs were updated in June 2023 to address climate and environment, Community Platform for Child Survival, Child Rights and grave violations and adolescent girls.

11 MOPAN, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Assessment Cycle, 2021.

12 JIU, ‘Strengthening Policy Research Uptake in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development report’, 2018.

Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation



unicef 

General Description
Set of Winter Clothing for Child aged 1 - 2 Years

Includes:
Thermal set, top and bottom
Warm jacket
Cotton puffer trousers
Hats and scarf set

2 years

Customer Ref : Emergency - Winter C
(Iraq via Mersin)
P.O. # 45141998
Supplier Code : 1900019326
ITEM : 00030
Material No : 50000752
Approx Weight : 2.1 Kg
Volume : 0.024 cbm
Package Volume : 40 Long x 35 width x 15 Height

2. Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

2.1 Purposes and goals

Despite its prominence in UNICEF's mandate and Strategic Plans, UNICEF has never conducted a comprehensive corporate evaluation of its advocacy work. This evaluation represented an opportunity to learn about the current status of advocacy in UNICEF, as well as to maximize the success of advocacy efforts at all levels and prepare the ground for the future final evaluation to be conducted at the end of the current SP.

In line with the terms of reference (ToR) and as validated during the inception phase of the evaluation, there are two complementary purposes that animated this formative, forward-looking exercise:

- **The formative evaluation aimed to increase the success of advocacy efforts** by identifying early adjustments to the advocacy approaches and the resources available for their execution (proactive). The central purpose was to proactively clarify advocacy approaches to support the SP 2022–2025 and identify early adjustments that can be made in the present advocacy structure, supporting elements and plans that could increase the success of UNICEF's advocacy efforts, and the resulting benefits to children, their families and communities worldwide. The formative evaluation focused on maximizing the contribution of the advocacy efforts to the SP goals, but organizational performance was not assessed.
- **The evaluability assessment focused on ensuring that a meaningful future summative evaluation** of advocacy efforts can be carried out by the end of the current SP (2025). Consequently, it focused on gathering evidence about the internal logic and design of the advocacy change strategy, as well as the planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting systems in place. The supporting purpose was to improve the theory of change (as well as the practices of change) that the advocacy change strategy included in the SP 2022–2025 is based on, identify the factors that will allow for a meaningful evaluation of the contribution of UNICEF advocacy work to the overall SP success, and provide timely and comprehensive information needed from the start to the end of advocacy campaigns and other efforts.

2.2 Scope

The overall scope of the evaluation included multiple organizational levels, with the advocacy change strategy and the SP 2022–2025 as reference. The Global Communication and Advocacy Strategy (GCAS) 2019–2022 also helped inform the analysis, as well as the midyear review of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, and the revision of the Global Advocacy Priorities (GAPs). The evaluation is also expected to help inform the GCAS for 2023–2025 that is currently under development. The geographical scope was global (meaning it included all levels of interest, namely global, regional, national and subnational), and the temporal scope was 2022–2025. Advocacy priorities originating at each organizational level were examined (including NatComs), to make sure that the exercise does not imply that only the global priorities deserve the deepest attention. However, the GAPs got the most attention. A necessary focus was on assessing how levels collaborate to achieve a whole-of-UNICEF effect. The evaluation also considered organizational capacities, including conceptualization, enabling environment, implementation, evidence generation and use.

For the purposes of this evaluation, advocacy and communication were understood as distinct functions. Communication ‘is the means through which UNICEF disseminates messages based on moral claims of a shared humanity as embodied in the CRC and other normative documents’. According to the UNICEF Advocacy Strategy, advocacy is ‘the process of obtaining concrete commitments to those normative goals through Constitutions, law, policies, etc. It is the “How” in support of the “What”¹³.

In response to the fact that advocacy goals exist for all host settings, the evaluation considered both very high-income settings as well as the poorest nations, and humanitarian contexts. In particular, the adaptation or differentiation of the advocacy activities to humanitarian or emergency contexts was a special area of focus. One case study has been specifically designed to analyse advocacy efforts in humanitarian contexts. The evaluation also prioritized output-level UNICEF advocacy efforts. Outcome- and impact-level indicators were reviewed. When it comes to the time frame, the evaluation was conducted between November 2022 and July 2023. It was not in the scope of this early, formative evaluation to assess organizational performance at the outcome level. Consequently, the evaluation did not consider the adequate use of financial resources, fiscal capacities, or leadership implementation capacities.

2.3 Expected users and intended use

The evaluation focused on maximizing the utility of its results and their actual use. In order to do this, the evaluation design and process was carried out with careful consideration of meeting the information needs of primary and secondary audiences. Primary users included Set 1 (staff at the HQ level), Set 2 (staff involved in the institutional and operational implementation of advocacy approaches at regional offices, country offices and sub-offices) and Set 3 (staff at National Committees). Secondary users included donors and Member States, UNICEF partners, other implementation partners and rights holders, and secondary partners.

13 UNICEF, *Communicate to Advocate: Driving Change for Children, 2019-2021*, 2019.

Evaluation Framework and Questions



3. Evaluation Framework and Questions

The driving questions for the evaluation can be summarized as *'How can UNICEF further enhance the effectiveness of its advocacy efforts?; and What steps can be taken to ensure the readiness of the advocacy strategy for a future final evaluation?'* To answer these questions, the evaluation was guided by a set of evaluation research questions and hypothetical assumptions.

A total of six main evaluation questions, detailed through 12 sub-questions, guided the assignment. The set of original evaluation questions and sub-questions included in the ToR was further defined to better reflect the results of the inception phase analysis and the overall design of the process. Three evaluation questions informed the formative evaluation and three other questions informed the evaluability assessment. The evaluation matrix is attached in Annex 1, including all questions and sub-questions. The specific areas covered by each criterion, questions and sub-questions are included in Annex 2.

The evaluation was guided by specific criteria. A total of five criteria were considered for the analysis, as follows:

COHERENCE: The main goal under this criterion was to assess the extent to which a **clear and shared understanding of what advocacy aims to achieve and how (approaches)** exists in UNICEF and with relevant stakeholders, and the alignment of UNICEF approaches to advocacy with current best practices in the field. The results of the assessment are also expected to promote the evaluation 'process use' to strengthen ownership and contribute to improve a common understanding of UNICEF's advocacy strategy among relevant stakeholders.

RELEVANCE: The overall idea behind the assessment was to determine **the alignment of the GAPS and other areas to the UNICEF mandate, the SP 2022–2025 and main global United Nations frameworks.** The analysis also established the added value provided by UNICEF in advocacy work within the UN system.

IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY: The focus of this criterion was threefold, as it addressed (1) the extent to which **current resources are adequately allocated** for the implementation of the advocacy approaches, (2) the extent to which existing **capacities and skills** are adequate to implement the advocacy plan and achieve expected results and (3) the extent to which there is a **clear definition and understanding of the different advocacy roles, responsibilities and accountability** for an effective coordination and partnerships.

VALIDITY OF DESIGN: In an overall sense, the approach focused on assessing the **overall quality of UNICEF's advocacy change strategy design**, focusing on the extent to which it reflects the contextual conditions to be faced, its alignment to key goals and strategies, and key implementation modalities. In order to do this, the evaluation team revised and designed updated ToCs for each GAP that were validated during four workshops conducted with GAP representatives (see results in Annexes 19, 20, 21 and 22). Based on these results, a theory of transformation (ToT)¹⁴ was developed, which basically refers to synthesizing multiple ToCs to establish an overall framework or global ToC independent of any specific subject matter explaining how the overall advocacy change strategy and plan is supposed to work in both development and humanitarian settings. Practices of change¹⁵ were also considered during the analysis, to make sure there is a clear and adaptable connection between the theory and the practice in the field.

14 Patton, M. 'Evaluation Criteria for Evaluating Transformation: Implications for the Coronavirus Pandemic and the Global Climate Emergency', *American Journal of Evaluation*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2021, 53-89.

15 Arensman B., Van Waegeningh C., Van Wessel, M., 'Twinning Practices of Change with Theory of Change', 2017.

The analysis under this criterion also [provides recommendations aimed at ensuring a meaningful final evaluation of the advocacy work by 2025](#). The analysis did not focus only on the results of the evaluability assessment; it is also built on the evidence generated during the formative evaluation so as to provide a comprehensive set of recommendations about what UNICEF could do to maximize the utility of the final summative evaluation of the advocacy approaches and results.

SYSTEM ADEQUACY: The emphasis under this criterion was put on assessing the adequacy of the advocacy [planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems and procedures](#) to ensure meaningful advocacy approaches and initiatives that provide adequate guidance for effective decision-making.

Evaluation Methodology



4. Evaluation Methodology

The purpose of this section is to present the approach and methodology that guided the design of the evaluation, the data collection, analysis, interpretation and the way in which the final deliverables were framed.

4.1 Overall evaluation approach

The evaluation followed an improvement-oriented, forward-looking, and formative approach that aimed to identify current strengths and weaknesses in the design and implementation of UNICEF's advocacy change strategy. The purpose was to inform ongoing and future Strategic Plans for reflection, innovation, maximization of results, and the effective evaluation of those results. With this aim, the evaluation was guided by the following methodological approaches:

- 1. The evaluation followed tailored criteria of coherence, relevance, implementation capacity, validity of design and system adequacy.** For more information on these criteria, please see Annex 3.
- 2. Theory-based:** Theory-based approaches to evaluation were considered, and explicit logic model and/or ToC used to draw conclusions about whether and how advocacy efforts contribute to expected results. The assessment of the design of the advocacy change strategy focused on the existing GAP ToCs (revised theories included in Annexes 19, 20, 21 and 22), but also took into consideration other relevant advocacy work (humanitarian advocacy, and child poverty and inclusive social protection) for the development of the theory of transformation (included in Annex 13).
- 3. Utilization-focused:** The evaluation was utilization-focused and offered an opportunity to generate knowledge that enables key stakeholders to document and assess progress towards intended indicators and outcomes. The evaluation is expected to inform both ongoing progress towards SP as well as preparatory work for the future evaluation of the SP. Through this approach the evaluation focused on understanding the enabling factors and barriers, as well as to identify opportunities for adaptation and course correction.
- 4. Participatory:** The evaluation was participatory, and aimed to foster a strong sense of engagement and ownership of the evaluation process and outputs among the primary intended users. The evaluation ensured inclusive participation of the main stakeholders involved in the advocacy plan at all stages of the assessment, mainly through a consultative process and a joint decision-making process. This was particularly relevant when re-designing the ToCs, validating the preliminary conclusion, and for the co-creation of recommendations.
- 5. Finally, the evaluation considered a complexity-aware system thinking approach,** in the sense that it ultimately put particular focus on establishing the interlinkages and interdependence expected at all the levels of the advocacy plan, taking into consideration the non-linear and complex interlinkages and complementarity among the GAPs, as well as between these and other secondary priorities in both development and humanitarian settings. The analysis aimed to determine the extent to which these interactions are considered in the design of the programme, particularly in the existing ToCs.

4.2 Methodological strategies

The evaluation team ensured methodological robustness and a fit-for-purpose process to overcome – to the extent possible – the challenges in evaluating advocacy work, by combining qualitative and quantitative strategies, using complementary sources of information, ensuring cross-cutting issues are embedded in the assessment and following an open and flexible approach and considering different types of triangulation (data, method and investigator triangulation). To ensure the reliability of data-gathering tools, the evaluation team conducted several internal quality assurance procedures, such as ensuring that the definition of categories for qualitative data was clear and that all the team members had a shared understanding of each key concept.

The level of evidence confidence was assessed following the scale used in the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF’s Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The confidence required quality, validation, and triangulation of the evidence sources, with the following scale applied in each of the key findings presented:

- Level 4:** Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation;
- Level 3:** Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate;
- Level 2:** Limited lines and levels of evidence with limited triangulation;
- Level 1:** A single line of evidence and weak triangulation.

The methodological strategies and data-gathering techniques that were carried out are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Methodological strategies		
Methodological strategies	Research techniques	Data-gathering tools
Qualitative strategies (Content analysis, discourse analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Literature and desk review (primary and secondary data) ■ Semi-structured interviews ■ Focus group discussions ■ Validation workshops ■ Social network analysis ■ Benchmarking exercise ■ Expert input ■ Observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key informant interview protocols ■ Analytical framework/matrix ■ Observation diary/notes
Quantitative strategies (Descriptive and/or inferential statistical analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk research (primary and secondary data) ■ Online survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scoring tool (only some indicators) ■ Review notes ■ Questionnaires

Cross-cutting issues were embedded into the core of the methodology, and integrated in the list of findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations, by (1) embedding Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) intersectional principles in the scope of analysis of the assessment, (2) adopting a human rights-based approach in the review of the logical framework and indicators, and (3) following relevant UNICEF guidelines on ensuring that equity, gender and human rights are adequately reflected in advocacy efforts.

The combination of techniques was chosen to enable the consulting team to gain a reasonable view and understanding of UNICEF's advocacy efforts, so they could provide meaningful recommendations. **A more detailed description of each of the methodological strategies considered is included in Annex 3.**

1. Case studies: For the purposes of the evaluation, case studies provided a learning opportunity to study advocacy approaches and efforts in context. The evaluation conducted six case studies that examined each of the four GAPs, plus two other advocacy priorities (humanitarian advocacy; child poverty and inclusive social protection advocacy), and their overall contribution to the SP 2022–2025 goal areas. The sampling strategy considered for the selection of case studies, together with the list of proposed cases can be found in section 4.3, 'Sampling strategy'.

2. Literature and desk review: This included a study of internal and external documentation and secondary data sources. Internal documentation covered both UNICEF advocacy-related documents and generic strategic documents, as well as partner and sector documentation. External documentation included relevant data sets, documents from other UN agencies, institutions, foundations, etc., as well as state-of-the-art academic literature and manuals/guides on how to establish the readability and evaluation of advocacy interventions. **More than 300 documents were reviewed.**

3. Key informant interviews (KIs): KIs were a crucial method in the assessment as they generated key perceptual data, and allowed data triangulation, as they captured the views and opinions of different internal and external stakeholders. KIs were intended to inform as many as 32 indicators covering all six evaluation questions, and were therefore critical in ensuring the robustness and quality of the evaluation data and the triangulation processes. **Over the course of the evaluation, a total of 108 informants were interviewed** (84 internal and 24 external, 66 female and 42 male). The list of informants interviewed is included in Annex 4.

4. Online survey: The online survey was designed to complement qualitative techniques and produce quantitative information about the perceptions and views of key internal and external informants. It gathered the perceptions and feedback of those informants not reached through interviews. Internally the survey addressed UNICEF staff (sets 1, 2 and 3 of primary evaluation users) and internal advocacy stakeholders. Externally, the survey focused on secondary evaluation users, and key advocacy partners. **A total of 303 UNICEF employees and eight external informants were reached.** The number of external informants was very low, which effectively meant their input was not finally considered for the analysis (more on this in section 5.4 on methodological limitations).

5. Evaluability matrix: The evaluability assessment established the extent to which UNICEF has the adequate set-up to measure progress towards achieving advocacy goals. The assessment followed the criteria considered in the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF's Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. As a result, **the evaluability matrix focused on technical elements** and used the criteria shown in Table 2 for the assessment.

Table 2. Criteria considered for the evaluability matrix

Coherence	Fitness for Purpose	Resourcing
The technical element supports achievement of advocacy goals in principle, is clearly defined, has clear objectives, and is aligned with UNICEF and the UN-wide normative framework.	The technical element measures progress and/ or supports evidence of achievement of advocacy goals in practice, responds to defined needs and goals, and facilitates the generation and use of evidence.	The technical element is supported by human and financial resources that are adequately distributed across UNICEF (including main advocates), activities and areas of work.

The elements shown in Table 3 were considered for the evaluability assessment and matrix. Each one of the three criteria (coherence, fitness for purpose, and resourcing) were rated according to the categories shown in the table.

Table 3. Summary of the evaluability matrix approach

Area	Element(s)	Evaluation Question	Coherence	Fitness for Purpose	Resourcing
Validity of design	GAPs theory of change ¹⁶	4.1			
System capacity	Planning strategies and protocols	5.1			
System capacity	Monitoring and evaluation system	5.2			
System capacity	Reporting system	5.3			

6. Rating scale: The evaluation employed a five-point scale to address the technical elements included in the evaluability matrix as well as to address some of the evaluation indicators, mainly those linked to the validity of design (question 4) and system adequacy (question 5). The analysis followed the categories (rubrics) shown in Table 4, which are mainly based on those used for the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF’s Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The rubrics represented the standard rating system.

¹⁶ The GAP ToCs were considered under the scope of this analysis, including a humanitarian perspective. Later in the analysis, the ToT was co-created to reflect additional advocacy priorities.

Table 4. General scoring rubrics considered for some indicators included in the evaluation matrix

0	1	2	3	4
Totally lacking	Insufficient/poor	Insufficient/ but nascent	Sufficient/good	Optimal/very good
The element requires immediate adjustment in order to support implementation of the advocacy efforts.	The element is insufficiently ready to support implementation of the advocacy efforts.	The element presents initial but insufficient evidence that shows readiness for supporting the advocacy efforts.	The element is ready to support delivery of output results but cannot demonstrate contributions to priority outcomes.	The element presents a very good amount of evidence that support the implementation of the advocacy efforts with robust evidence towards achievement of outcomes/ medium-term changes.

Table 5 shows examples of the criteria to follow when assessing indicators and goals. Cross-cutting issues of gender, disability, equity and human rights were also considered for the assessment.

Table 5. Scoring categories proposed for the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) assessment of advocacy indicators and objectives

0	1	2	3	4
None or only one of the five SMART criteria is met	Two of the five SMART criteria are met	Three of the five SMART criteria are met	Four of the five SMART criteria are met	All five SMART criteria are met
The indicator/ goal is gender negative	The indicator/ goal is gender blind	The indicator/ goal is gender targeted	The indicator/ goal is gender responsive	The indicator/ goal is gender transformative
The indicator/ goal is negative to disability	The indicator/ goal is disability blind	The indicator/ goal is disability targeted	The indicator/ goal is disability responsive	The indicator/ goal is disability transformative

7. Social network analysis: The social network analysis (SNA) is a research technique that focuses on identifying and comparing the relationships within and between individuals, groups and systems in order to model the real-world interactions at the heart of organizational knowledge and learning processes. For the evaluation, the SNA focused on linking GAPs with different partners to identify potential areas of collaboration and synergy generation. Also, the different partners were categorized by GAP representatives based on their level of influence, defined as the inherent capacity or power of a stakeholder, with or without the support of UNICEF, to make a positive impact towards achieving GAP goals.

8. Benchmarking exercise: The evaluation team also carried out a benchmarking exercise that provided inputs on how other agencies and organizations understand, design, implement, monitor and evaluate advocacy efforts, taking stock of their experiences to date. The benchmarking analysis included the following areas of analysis and concepts: (1) Definition and institutional vision and scope of advocacy efforts, (2) Organizational structure for advocacy endeavours, resourcing and programmatic integration, (3) Measurement of advocacy efforts, (4) Partnerships, and (5) Organizational learning. The selection criteria and proposed comparable organizations for the benchmarking analysis is included in section 4.3, 'Sampling strategy'.

9. Validation workshops: Four ToC validation workshops were carried out to design/review and validate the ToC as part of the analysis on the validity of design. Another three internal workshops were carried out to validate the evaluation findings and preliminary conclusions, as well as another session to co-design the recommendations.

4.3 Sampling strategy

The evaluation employed a purposive sampling technique, which is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling.¹⁷

CASE STUDY SAMPLING

The proposed methodological approach to sampling case studies draws on criteria aiming to maximize coverage and representativeness of the sample. Significantly, it also drew on a literature review, intelligence and evidence collected through key scoping interviews where both good practices and learning opportunities were mentioned. **The final set of case studies is summarized in Table 6, and explained in detail below.**

Table 6. Summary of key characteristics and criteria for each of the case studies proposed

CHARACTERISTICS/ SELECTION CRITERIA	Case Study 1	Case Study 2	Case Study 3	Case Study 4	Case Study 5	Case Study 6
Thematic area	GAP 1 – Zero-dose goal	GAP 2 – Public-private partnerships	GAP 3 – Mental health goal	GAP 4 – Pillar 2 & 3 – COP26	Humanitarian procedures for advocacy	Goal Area 5 – child poverty and inclusive social protection
Focus	1 outcome of GAP 1	1 outcome of GAP 2	3 outcomes of GAP 3	1 pillar/ outcome of GAP 4	Advocacy procedures	1 goal area result
Geographical scope	Country (Indonesia)	Interregional	Country (Italy)	Global	Country (Afghanistan)	Regional
Region	East Asia & Pacific	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe and Central Asia	N/A	South Asia	Middle East & North Africa
Country Income levels	Middle-income	Low and middle-income	High Income	N/A	Low income	N/A
Type of evaluation user involved	Set 1 and 2	Set 1 and 2	Set 1, 2 and mainly 3	Set 1, 2 and mainly 3	Set 1, 2 and 3	Set 1 and 2
Relevance given in scoping interviews¹⁸	***	**	***	***	****	**

For specific information on the case studies and other methodological issues of the evaluation, please see Annex 3.

17 Patton, M., *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.

18 Refers to the mentions given to the specific topic covered by the case during the scoping interviews.

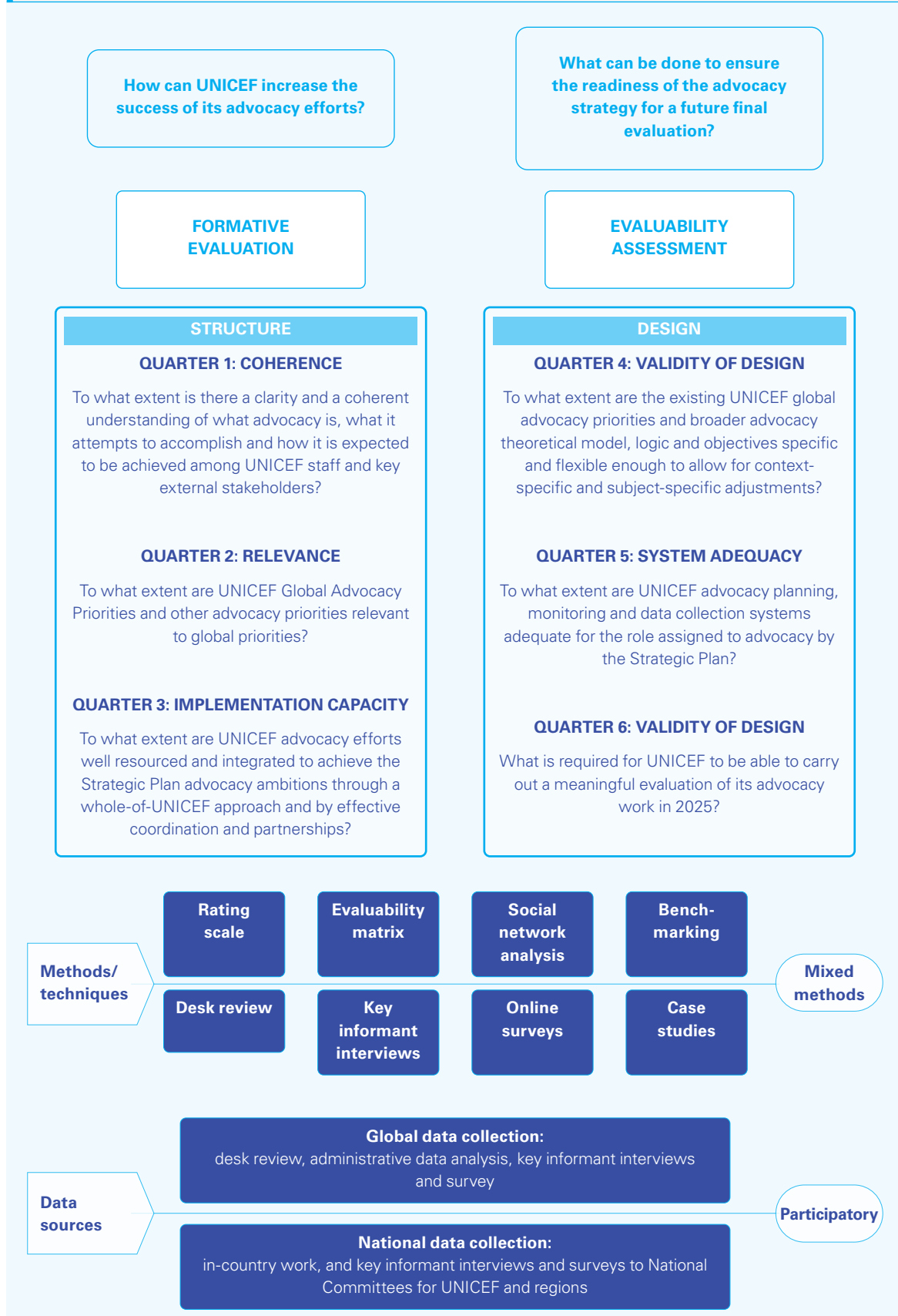
BENCHMARKING SAMPLING STRATEGY

The criteria that guided the selection of organizations for the benchmarking analysis included that they should be: organizations with a global footprint, organizations sharing similar goals as UNICEF, organizations with a dedicated advocacy function, and organizations with global advocacy strategies reflected at regional and country levels, and also foundations from the private sector working strategically with UNICEF. Based on these criteria and as per the results of the scoping interviews, the organizations selected were Save the Children, UNHCR (then changed to UN Women, see section 5.4, on methodological limitations), Oxfam International and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

INFORMANTS SAMPLING

The informants were selected from the proposed set of primary and secondary users as described in the ToR, including representatives from the global core teams, UNICEF regional and country offices and subnational offices and National Committees (NatComs). Among these, a purposive selection of global, regional and national management and technical staff, such as M&E, advocacy and communication specialists were considered at the beginning of the data-collection phase. Other partners (UN agencies, CSOs, donors, etc.) were also considered. At all levels (global, regional and national), the sampling strategy was complemented with a snowball sampling approach, where the goal was to identify new relevant informants based on the feedback provided by selected informants. The list of final informants reached through KIIs is included in Annex 4.

Figure 1. Summary of evaluation goals, approaches, questions, methods and data sources



Source: Inception report

4.4 Methodological limitations

The following are the main methodological limitations identified and the mitigation strategies considered.

Table 7. Methodological limitations and mitigations strategies

LIMITATION	EXPLANATION	MITIGATING STRATEGY
Scope of the evaluation	The evaluation provided general findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding the evaluability of the advocacy strategy. It was therefore not designed to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the implementation process or to evaluate achievements so far. In this line, the analysis does not include an assessment on the effective use of resources.	The evaluation puts focus on the four GAPs and covers advocacy contribution to all SP goal areas. Through desk review, the consulting team assessed advocacy priorities to complement the analysis and check for convergences and/or divergences among them in both development and humanitarian settings.
Incomplete data sets	The consulting team reviewed documentation including project reports, progress reports, monitoring data, evaluation reports and other relevant materials. However, there was limited information for some of the programmes and/or subprogrammes involved, for example, accessing GAP funding streams from Programme Group (PG).	The consulting team informed the Evaluation Office (EO) about the missing data or documentation required, and in most cases relevant data were provided. This section reflects main gaps in accessing data or changing the structure of the analysis in some particular cases.
Limited participation rate in survey	The survey for external partners did not receive enough responses, as it was not possible to systematize information from partners at the different levels.	Although it was originally considered that the eight responses received could be used to reflect some external ideas, this idea was finally discarded considering the limited relevance of the findings based on the existing sample.
Change in one of the selected organizations for the benchmarking	UNHCR was initially included in the benchmarking analysis. However, the evaluation team did not manage to engage relevant informants for the analysis, and the organization was eventually withdrawn.	UN Women was considered a good alternative to include and it was finally included in the analysis. Relevant informants working in advocacy were contacted and provided essential data for the analysis.
Change of focus for case study 3	The original case study 3 focused on the advocacy work done in Thailand. However, after careful consideration and a couple of sessions with the CO team, it became clear that the scope of the case study was not relevant for the office, and therefore it was proposed to focus the case study in a NatCom with relevant work done in mental health.	The NatCom in Italy was finally selected after a series of discussions with GAP 3 representatives.

LIMITATION	EXPLANATION	MITIGATING STRATEGY
Limited sources of data in case studies	Case studies 4 and 5 on COP26 and humanitarian advocacy respectively only reflect the views of five informants per case study. For case study 4, only one relevant informant from HQ could be engaged for the analysis. For case study 5, very limited documents were provided for the case of Afghanistan.	The evaluation team made consistent efforts over a two-month period to engage relevant stakeholders, and several other informants were approached to address various topics. However, these informants could not provide relevant information due to limited or lack of involvement in relevant activities.
No access to global resource mapping for advocacy	An exact mapping of resources directed to advocacy work was not available, and only funding streams for GCA and global allocations could be used for the analysis. According to informants, the piecemeal approach in fundraising makes it difficult to aggregate at global level.	The evaluation team included the relevant information provided for the analysis and reflects limitations in the report.
Feasibility of methods	One of the limitations was the feasibility of using all methods considered in a way that is robust and credible taking into consideration the timing and expected level of effort.	The depth and breadth of the proposed methods was limited to the timing available and the expected level of effort agreed for the exercise. The evaluation team is well aware that the analysis and results of some of the methods were not deployed to their full potential, but they have value in that they contribute to generating insights about the evaluation questions.
Generalization	The generalizability of findings across the institution was identified as a limitation.	The evaluation considered context-specific results (case studies results) as well as broader data sets (survey, funding data, etc.) to generalize claims and findings. Otherwise, clear limits and boundaries for findings and conclusions were determined.
Analysis of fund allocation based on Programme Information Database (PIDB) codes	The analysis was impacted by the way PIDB codes are defined in the current system. The system includes a number of subcategories linked to advocacy (some even duplicated), which are not grouped into one common global category for advocacy.	The analysis of financial resources was done based on the documentation shared by the EO on the SP cube expenditure and year-end analysis cubes. This general information was complemented with information specific to GCA extracted from the Results Assessment Module (RAM) of inSight. Moreover, to mitigate the challenge with PIDB codes, proxy subcategories to gather information were selected. As an example, M&E for advocacy is not clearly differentiated, and the analysis is based on a proxy for M&E expenditure within the advocacy stream, which does not necessarily reflect the reality of UNICEF.

4.5 Norms and standards

The evaluation was conducted according to relevant UNICEF and UNEG norms and standards¹⁹ and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation²⁰, and met GEROS quality standards²¹. The consultants from Artival Research & Evaluation were fair and carried out the assessment with integrity and honesty. Issues of confidentiality were taken seriously. Data collected and any resulting information was not linked to any particular person or office. The participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary. Dissent or unwillingness to participate was respected and informants were made aware that they were allowed to withdraw from the exercise/interview at any time without negative consequences. In addition, the assessment referenced a rights-based framework, and/or the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and/or the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs), and/or the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and/or other rights-related benchmarks in assessment design.

The consultants declared that they did not have any conflicts of interest, as they have not directly or indirectly participated in any of the interventions under review, or had a personal relationship with UNICEF managers and/or consultants involved in those interventions. The Code of Ethics includes Artival's commitments in terms of responsibility to society and to the profession, competence, integrity, impartiality, fairness and non-corruption. Artival also adhered to UNICEF Code of Conduct. Preventing, detecting and sanctioning corrupt practices throughout the execution of services relied on the procedures stated in Artival's Data Protection Policy. The team also followed the guiding principles of respect, beneficence, justice, integrity and accountability considered in UNICEF's Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data collection and Analysis.

19 UNICEF, Evaluation resource centre, n.d.

20 UNEG, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020.

21 Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System; the UNICEF evaluation quality-assessment system.

Findings – Formative Evaluation



5. Findings – Formative Evaluation

Q1.1 COHERENCE – To what extent is there clarity and a coherent understanding of what advocacy is, what it attempts to accomplish and how it is expected to be achieved among UNICEF staff and key external stakeholders?

Key findings:

1. UNICEF has a clear and broad definition of advocacy, and UNICEF personnel are aware of the importance of advocacy for the organization and the relevance given to advocacy in the current SP as a change strategy and by establishing the GAPS. **There is a clear and shared understanding of the goals and aims of advocacy** within the organization across positions and levels. However, the perception of staff about the level of shared understanding is low, particularly at the HQ and RO levels. Fundraising is still regarded as one of the primary goals of advocacy. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)
2. **Generally, the staff understand and correctly pinpoint how advocacy is expected to be achieved through relevant approaches;** agreeing, for example, that capacity-building initiatives are not advocacy. However, **the distinction between advocacy and technical assistance and the point where one leads to the other remains vague.** The unclear distinction of advocacy approaches can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, it is primarily influenced by the diverse contexts in which UNICEF operates, which results in different advocacy activities, leading to staff members having varying experiences and interpretations of what advocacy work entails. Secondly, it stems from having a broad definition of advocacy. In any case, **informants consider that the issue is not about a shared understanding of what advocacy entails but rather having a clear strategic approach towards advocacy.** (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)
3. The process of renaming the DOC to GCA has faced considerable internal challenges and created interdepartmental tensions. Within some circles, acknowledging advocacy as a core function and discipline that requires specialized skills and knowledge has been met with resistance. However, it has been observed that increased training leads to greater acceptance of the potential for improvement in advocacy endeavours. Still, **the perception that staff often misunderstand the distinct roles of advocacy and communication was identified at all levels,** and particularly at the national level (CO and NatCom). (Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)
4. **Regarding a shared understanding of advocacy with external partners, UNICEF's definition aligns with existing global definitions** of advocacy shared by other relevant organizations, which primarily focus on efforts to influence at various levels for systemic changes. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)
5. According to internal and external informants, the **main advantages of UNICEF for advocacy are its reach and presence, brand, specific mandate and capacity to engage young people.** Conversely, UNICEF's limited ability to speak out in particular contexts, its limited agility, advocacy capacities and limited prioritization compared to other organizations limits its advocacy work. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)

LEVEL OF A CLEAR AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM ADVOCACY, INCLUDING WHAT IT TRIES TO ACCOMPLISH AND HOW IT IS EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED.

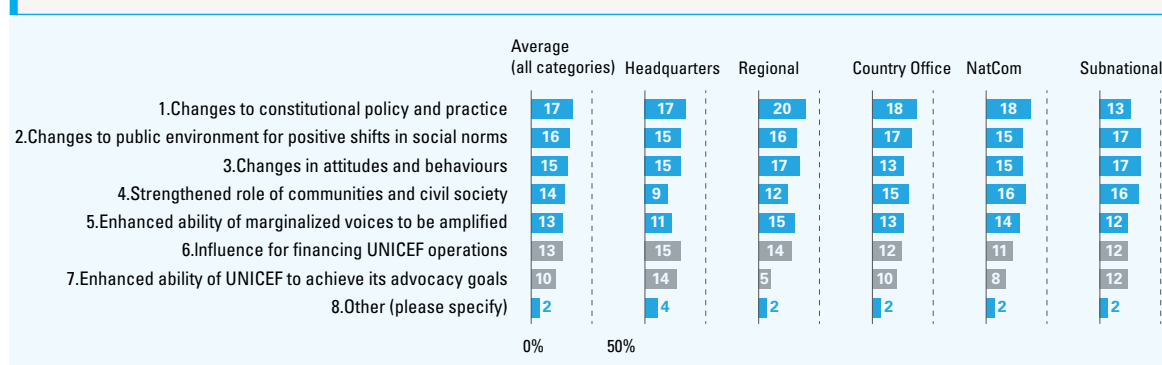
Q1.1.1 CLEAR AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF ADVOCACY GOALS

UNICEF defines advocacy as “the deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence to, directly and indirectly, influence decision-makers, stakeholders and relevant audiences to support and implement actions that contribute to realizing children’s and women’s rights”.

When asked, ‘What would you say are the main goals of UNICEF’s advocacy efforts?’ UNICEF staff in different positions and at different levels and working in different thematic areas²² selected the option of the survey ‘Changes to constitutional policy and practice’ most frequently, which shows a clear and shared understanding of the main goals of advocacy. The least selected option was ‘Enhanced ability of the organization to achieve its advocacy goals’, which is not directly linked to advocacy and therefore reflects a good understanding of the goals of the advocacy strategy. The only relevant misunderstanding in terms of goals was found in selecting the option ‘Influence for financing UNICEF operations’, which refers to fundraising, and that was chosen by different informants, and prominently by partnerships practitioners and surveyed informants from PG at the HQ level. These informants consider fundraising the second main goal of advocacy.

Figure 2 reflects the distribution of responses (%) of the total per level and on average for all levels. Advocacy goals are ordered from higher to lower results based on the average responses for all categories.

Figure 2. Identification of main goals of UNICEF’s advocacy efforts by informants at different levels²³



Source: UNICEF global survey

Interestingly enough, the survey results reveal that **informants at the HQ level have a very negative idea of the extent to which there is a shared understanding of what advocacy work entails among different parties** across UNICEF. Forty-six per cent of surveyed staff at HQ considered there is either little understanding (37 per cent) or no shared understanding at all (nine per cent). This proportion is considerably reduced in the case of RO representatives and particularly in the case of CO representatives and NatCom informants.

22 All the results for these three categories are statistically significant at 95 per cent and share the same pattern.

23 The number of informants per category is not shown as it differs, considering this was a multi-choice survey question.

The results of the KIs show that, in an overall sense, informants at all levels referred to the importance of ‘advocacy’ and knew that it went beyond communication to influence change through data, evidence, programming and financing to facilitate changes in policy and programmes at different levels. Also, informants noted that the GAPs help communicate these priorities internally, clarifying what will be emphasized and gaining visibility. Also, various informants described the importance of distinguishing fundraising from advocacy efforts and that the humanitarian review aims to move in this direction.²⁴

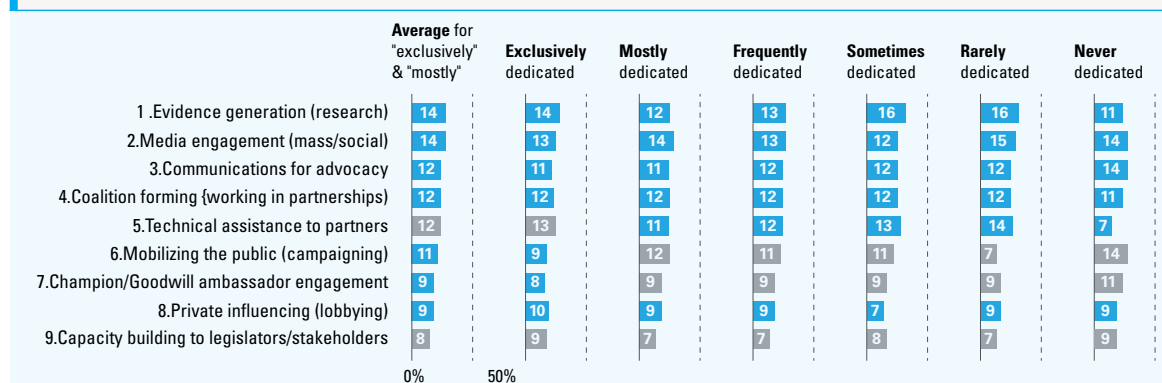
Overall, the feedback provided through KIs refers to the broad institutional definition of advocacy. However, **this distinction is more linked to how advocacy is done than the goals of advocacy.** This issue is addressed in the next section.

Q1.1.2 CLEAR AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF ADVOCACY APPROACHES

The results feeding this section are based on the survey question, ‘What would you say are the main advocacy approaches UNICEF implements as part of its advocacy efforts?’, the results of interviews and focus groups. The survey results reveal interesting patterns, as significant results²⁵ were identified based on the level of involvement of staff in advocacy initiatives. ‘Evidence generation’ and ‘media engagement’ are the advocacy approaches/responses that were selected by those informants more involved in advocacy initiatives (mostly or exclusively involved in advocacy, 75 per cent and 100 per cent of their time, respectively). Interestingly, the third advocacy approach most commonly selected for those more involved in advocacy activities is ‘technical assistance to government for policy preparation/revision’, particularly by those from PG (40 per cent). ‘Capacity-building to legislators/stakeholders’ is one of the least selected approaches, which aligns with the current definition of advocacy. Still, 38 per cent of PG informants consider it to be one primary advocacy approach.²⁶ Generally, the main advocacy approaches are identified and aligned with the global definition. However, while capacity-building is not considered to fall within advocacy, technical assistance is included, which although it complements advocacy efforts, cannot be considered advocacy as such.

Figure 3 shows that advocacy approaches are ordered from higher to lower results based on the average responses for those informants more involved in advocacy (exclusively and mostly involved).

Figure 3. Identification of main advocacy approaches by informants according to their level of involvement in advocacy



Source: UNICEF global survey

24 UNICEF Humanitarian Review, 2020, p. 55, ‘Recommendation 5.2.4 “Increase UNICEF’s advocacy capacity at HQ, in all ROs and in specific COs, recognizing that advocacy skills are specialized and separate from general communication skills and from fundraising.’

25 Survey results were statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence level.

26 The results are not statistically significant compared to the rest of the informants, but given the number of informants represented (29 in total), it was considered relevant to highlight.

The results of the KIs confirm, to a certain extent, the survey results. At the global level, informants concurred that advocacy is a central aspect of UNICEF's work, but its broad definition leads to varying interpretations and approaches. Teams might also be territorial with their work and prefer to separate the different types of advocacy and approaches. This leads to a varied acceptance of advocacy as a distinct discipline. The different interpretations of advocacy can also, to a certain extent, be attributed to the diverse contexts in which UNICEF operates. This leads to varied advocacy activities and staff members having different experiences regarding what advocacy work entails. This has been identified in the case studies, particularly in the context of the work carried out by NatComs. While NatComs cannot provide technical assistance, the distinctions between the concepts (advocacy and technical assistance) can become blurred in certain scenarios. Therefore, it may need to be clarified that advocacy involves suggesting actions without delving into specifics, whereas technical assistance requires detailed collaboration with partners. As a result, **the distinctions between advocacy and technical assistance**, as well as the point at which one leads to the other, **remain vague**, and identifying the precise juncture at which these interactions shift from advocacy to technical assistance is difficult at different levels, and particularly when it comes to NatCom work due to their particular nature and limitations in providing technical assistance.

The process of restructuring advocacy, distinguishing and naming the GCA division has faced considerable internal challenges and created interdepartmental tensions. In some circles, acknowledging advocacy as a core function and discipline that requires specialized skills and knowledge has been met with resistance. In this line, several informants at the global, regional and national levels shared **the perception that staff often misunderstand the distinct roles of advocacy and communications**. This is reflected in the misperception that communication teams should lead advocacy efforts, which has persisted for quite some time in UNICEF, especially at the national level.²⁷ It has been observed that increased training leads to greater acceptance of the potential for improvement in advocacy endeavours.

One of the recurrent comments at different levels was the idea that UNICEF staff understand intuitively and somehow practically what advocacy is. However, **the main issue identified is that it is not strategic enough when planning effective advocacy actions**. According to informants, not being strategic enough has affected results in COP26, the Accelerator Programme and the advocacy initiatives relating to the humanitarian response in Afghanistan.

Regarding a shared understanding of advocacy with external partners, some external informants highlighted that UNICEF's definition aligns with existing global definitions of advocacy. UNICEF's definition of advocacy is closely aligned with global definitions of the term shared by other relevant organizations such as Oxfam and Save the Children, which primarily focus on efforts to influence at various levels for systemic changes. More information on this is given in section Q1.2.

27 Throughout the report, the 'national level' refers to both COs and NatComs.

Q1.1.3 ADDED VALUE AND LIMITATIONS OF UNICEF'S ADVOCACY WORK²⁸

The following section presents the main ideas shared by key informants at all levels when asked about UNICEF's added value and limitations for advocacy work.

UNICEF'S ADDED VALUE IN ADVOCACY

- 1. UNICEF's reach and presence.** Informants highlighted UNICEF's global presence in over 190 countries and territories²⁹, including low, middle- and high-income nations, which provides significant advantages for advocacy work. The informants emphasized UNICEF's local presence in different countries, including at the subnational level, and the strength it provides to its partners. The NatComs are crucial in engaging supporters and the private sector, focusing on child rights mandates. UNICEF's extensive operational footprint and procurement network within the UN also enhance its advocacy impact. Also, respondents highlighted the importance of the decentralized and localized nature of UNICEF at national and subnational levels, which makes it possible to respond to different settings such as emergencies, natural disasters, conflicts, and/or development programmes. Before, during and after emergencies, UNICEF uses existing agreements and resources in affected areas to offer effective response and assistance. Their communications reach vast audiences and are considered a reliable source of information for the media. UNICEF also demonstrates proficiency in providing global public goods; collaborating with multiple partners; speaking authoritatively on various topics; and amplifying their messages. UNICEF also has access to decision makers, which is crucial for advocacy purposes.
- 2. UNICEF's brand.** Several informants emphasized UNICEF's strong brand recognition, which, among other things, allows for connecting with decision makers for advocacy purposes. To a certain extent, this enables UNICEF to express difficult opinions without facing major negative consequences. Informants also stressed the importance of brand awareness as a significant asset for an advocacy organization, although they believed that even though UNICEF performs well on various advocacy issues and in different parts of the world, it has yet to leverage all its resources and strengths fully.
- 3. UNICEF's mandate.** Several informants noted the added value of having a clear, exclusive and well-recognized mandate within the Convention on the Rights of the Child framework. A child rights mandate is considered beneficial as children's issues generally receive more sympathy from different audiences than other matters. Advocacy is built into UNICEF's mission statement, so it is fundamental to UNICEF's purpose. The fact that there is a recognition that UNICEF is the custodian of the most signed convention on the planet gives it more licence to talk about sensitive issues.
- 4. Youth engagement.** Informants also stressed the critical role of UNICEF in promoting the engagement of children and young people in different areas, such as climate and environmental policies, not just as affected population but as active participants. UNICEF supports youth involvement through education, green skills, and providing access to policymaking platforms at all levels. In this line, the U-Report – a messaging tool that empowers young people around the world to engage with and speak out on issues that matter to them – is highlighted, as it represents a key step in engaging and empowering young people for advocacy purposes.

²⁸ The original indicator focused on the alignment between the definition of advocacy and the implementation of relevant approaches, but this is already addressed in Q2.2.

²⁹ UNICEF, 'Where we work', n.d.

UNICEF'S LIMITATIONS IN ADVOCACY

- 1. Limited capacity to speak out.** UNICEF faces limitations in delivering certain messages due to its close governmental ties, and it often seeks help from other organizations to raise sensitive issues. This approach ensures better access to key decision-makers and protects UNICEF's on-the-ground work. Balancing different organizational priorities is challenging, as advocacy risks causing disagreements with governments and funders. Though child grants and welfare can become politicized, UNICEF aims to depoliticize them and focus on strengthening rights investments. Political sensitivities and donor dependencies limit their advocacy efforts, putting them at a disadvantage compared to NGOs such as Save the Children or Oxfam. UNICEF focuses on improving children's quality of life instead of participating in political analysis or peace negotiations. Their participation in meetings is limited, and they do not engage in political affairs.
- 2. Limited agility.** Success in advocacy is attributed to the ability to make quick decisions without bureaucratic delays. Still, challenges arise from being part of a UN agency, from internal bureaucracy, and from the political sensitivity surrounding child rights issues. UNICEF machinery is reportedly slow, bureaucratic and decentralized, making effective coordination difficult considering the wide thematic areas covered by the organization in relation to advocacy. According to these informants, UNICEF faces a challenge of decision-making and sign-offs because of its multi-layered and hierarchical structure. This structure impedes agility and responsiveness, both critical in advocacy.
- 3. Advocacy capacities.** A few informants consider that UNICEF faces recruitment challenges as staff circulation within the organization may result in employees needing more skills and expertise for effective advocacy. This issue stems from advocacy being a relatively recent addition to UNICEF's functions. The UN reportedly limited freedom in recruiting top talent leads to workforce problems when inexperienced staff are asked to become advocates. Furthermore, the number of senior officials in UNICEF with an advocacy mindset is reported to be limited, contributing to the overall challenges in this area.
- 4. Broad and diverse advocacy scope.** It was also pointed out that NGOs tend to have a specialized focus, making them highly effective in specific advocacy areas. Their targeted approach enables them to concentrate resources and achieve considerable impact. Meanwhile, UNICEF opts for a more comprehensive approach, addressing various child-related issues across different regions. Although this enables them to face multiple challenges and reach a wider audience, it may sometimes result in diluted outcomes. UNICEF's broad scope requires balancing addressing numerous concerns and achieving tangible results in each area.

Key findings:

- 1.** From the five organizations compared³⁰, only UNICEF, Oxfam and Save the Children have an **institutional definition of advocacy**, with explicit structures dedicated to advocacy. In UNICEF, communication and advocacy are allocated in the same structure, but in Oxfam and Save the Children these areas are separated. In Oxfam and Save the Children, formal structures exist for the joint work of programmes and advocacy through global policy and advocacy working groups or thematic streams depending on needs. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)
- 2. In terms of setting and integrating advocacy priorities**, and compared to UNICEF, whose approach is more top-down, Oxfam's priorities are clearly defined with a bottom-up approach, from local to global. Save the Children sets priorities in both directions, top-down and bottom-up. In the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) case, priorities are defined geographically and with a more bottom-up approach. All organizations but UN Women developed theories of change (ToCs). While UNICEF, Save the Children and the BMGF set overall advocacy ToCs, Oxfam mainly focuses ToCs at the field level. Oxfam has a matrix management structure where individuals are part of specific functional areas (programme manager, campaign manager, media manager, etc.) but also collaborate on cross-functional projects or campaigns, particularly in advocacy. This means that individuals have dual reporting lines, one for their functional area and another for the specific project or campaign they are working on. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)
- 3. When it comes to measuring advocacy results**, Oxfam's 'Learning and Accountability Framework' and Save the Children's 'Intense Period Debrief' are interesting approaches to consider. The first one focuses on assessing results based on how they have been achieved and the extent to which their approaches have been transformative and innovative, and second one showcases creating opportunities for advocates to pause and reflect on the progress of their campaign. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)
- 4.** Concerning **partnerships**, the organizations have similar approaches when engaging with different partners. However, no specific strategies could be found on how these organizations select and ensure partners' added value for advocacy at any given time. **Organizational learning** is considered very relevant to Oxfam approach, as they value a transformative approach to advocacy that encourages testing, learning and trying new approaches. Save the Children's mentorship programme to support new advocacy team members is also relevant to further enhancing organizational learning. (Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)

30 UNICEF, Oxfam, Save the Children, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and UN Women.

Q1.2.1 LEVEL OF ALIGNMENT OF THE CURRENT INTERNAL DEFINITION OF ADVOCACY WITH THE BEST CURRENT THINKING ON THE ISSUE AND PRACTICES (THE BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS)

This section summarizes the results of the benchmarking exercise to provide the main takeaways on how other agencies understand, design, implement, monitor and evaluate advocacy efforts, taking stock of their experiences to date. The full comparative analysis of selected UN agencies and other relevant private sector organizations and foundations, namely Oxfam, Save the Children, the BMGF and UN Women, is included in Annex 5.

DEFINITION AND INSTITUTIONAL VISION AND SCOPE OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS

While all organizations focus on advocacy, each has its unique approach and thematic areas of emphasis. UNICEF and Save the Children prioritize the rights and well-being of children, while the BMGF focuses on global health and development. UN Women centres its advocacy efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment, and Oxfam focuses on changing power relationships to tackle the structural causes of poverty. The scope of advocacy varies from systemic changes to specific thematic areas and engagement with various stakeholders at global, regional and national levels. Only UNICEF, Oxfam and Save the Children have an institutional definition of advocacy. Oxfam is the only one that explicitly uses the term 'influencing' as an overarching term (rather than 'advocacy' or 'campaigning'). It explicitly defines itself as a worldwide influencing network.³¹

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR ADVOCACY ENDEAVOURS, RESOURCING AND PROGRAMMATIC INTEGRATION

Like UNICEF, Oxfam and Save the Children have explicit structures dedicated to advocacy. Oxfam emphasizes decentralized decision-making and collaboration between affiliates and Save the Children emphasizes integrating advocacy into programmatic work. The BMGF takes a distributed approach, considering every staff member an advocate, and closely combines advocacy with programme teams. UN Women has a decentralized structure, with shared responsibility for advocacy across the organization.

In UNICEF, communication and advocacy are allocated in the same structure, while in Oxfam and Save the Children, advocacy is located alongside Policy and Campaigning, and communication is allied to Public Engagement or Mobilization. In Oxfam and Save the Children, formal structures exist for the joint work of programmes and advocacy through global policy and advocacy working groups or thematic streams depending on needs. The BMGF has a Global Policy and Advocacy Division and a Programme Advocacy and Communication Division. Oxfam has an interesting matrix management structure, which means that individuals belong to their respective functional areas (programme manager, campaign manager, media manager, etc.) but also collaborate and work together on cross-functional projects or campaigns, especially in terms of advocacy. Matrix management at Oxfam means that individuals have two reporting lines: one for their functional area and another for the project or campaign they are involved in. This structure fosters collaboration, coordination and efficient resource allocation among the various functional areas of the organization.

31 OXFAM, 'Influencing to Tackle Poverty and Injustice: Learning from the Past, looking to the Future', Discussion Paper, 2019.

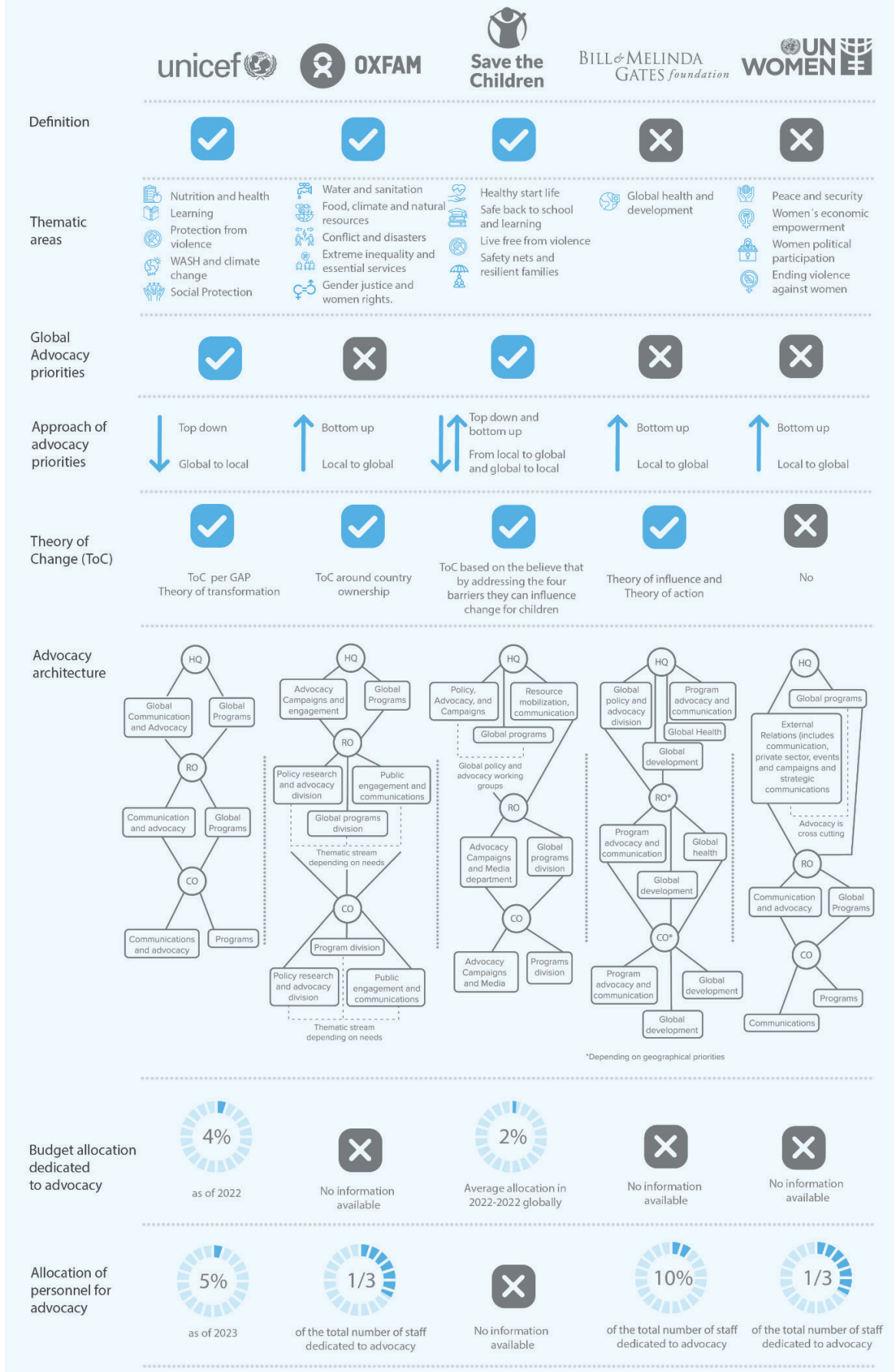
In terms of setting and integrating advocacy priorities, and compared to UNICEF, whose approach is more top-down, Oxfam's priorities are clearly defined with a bottom-up approach, from local to global. Save the Children sets priorities in both directions, top-down and bottom-up. However, their advocacy and campaigning ambitions recognize that 80 per cent of the change for children they need is national, and 20 per cent is international.³² And in the case of the BMGF, priorities are defined geographically and with a more bottom-up approach. Save the Children, Oxfam, UN Women and the BMGF have global campaigns (for example, The Global Campaign – Save the Children, Generation Equality – UN Women, and The One Campaign – BMGF), or global advocacy actions are focused on global events such as the G7, G20 or the World Economic Forum.

Regarding the advocacy framework, while UNICEF has one ToC for each global advocacy priority, Oxfam considers that change must take place in terms of country ownership and at the country level through the distribution of assets, resources and power. So, there are different TOCs for different issues, times and targets that result in various theories of action. At Save the Children, the global ToC is based the belief that by addressing four barriers³³, they can influence change for children. The BMGF employs a global theory of influence and a theory of action to guide its work. These theories are tailored and adapted based on the specific programme in question. The foundation also maintains a unique ToC, which may differ from a broader approach focused on creating general 'surround sound'. This theory of influence encompasses the global policy and advocacy and communications divisions. There is no ToC at UN Women.

32 Save the Children, 'Local to Global Advocacy Approach: 2022-2026', 2022.

33 Advocate for and with children; equitable public services and resilient systems for children; financing for children; accountability for realizing child rights; shifting power to children and communities.

Figure 4. Benchmarking results



Source: Benchmarking analysis

Regarding budget allocation for communication and advocacy, Save the Children allocated 1.4 per cent of its budget for advocacy at the global level in 2021. UN Women’s budget for advocacy was US\$117.1 million.³⁴

Regarding staff allocation for communication and advocacy, Oxfam and the BMGF have approximately one third of their staff focused on these matters. At UN Women, one third of staff are involved in advocacy activities.

MEASUREMENT OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Oxfam and Save the Children have well-established systems with indicators, evaluations and case studies. The BMGF emphasizes continuous monitoring and evaluation to refine strategies. UN Women faces challenges in capturing impact of advocacy, but recognizes the need for improvement in monitoring and reporting. [The case of Oxfam](#) is particularly relevant, considering its ‘Learning and Accountability Framework’ is more than just tracking indicators; it is about evaluating and assessing the impact and transformative change they want to achieve, to what extent their approaches have been transformative and innovative, and how they have learned through training. [Save the Children](#) has also implemented a tool called the ‘Intense Period Debrief’, developed by the Innovation Network, which responds to the intense time constraints that advocates often face for mid-campaign by creating a very brief opportunity for advocates to pause and reflect on the progress of their campaign.³⁵ [Information on advocacy measurements for UNICEF can be found in section Q5.2.](#)

PARTNERSHIPS

Oxfam works with various organizations, including local partners, campaign allies and strategic partnerships. Transparency, shared vision, mutual accountability and joint learning are emphasized in their partnerships. The organization engages in capacity-building, advocacy and campaigning, research and knowledge generation, and fundraising within these partnerships. Save the Children values coalitions and global-level partnerships, emphasizing evidence-driven partnerships and involving diverse stakeholders such as governments, NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. They also work closely with communities and aim to empower local leadership and engage children in advocacy efforts. [The BMGF](#) collaborates with governments, multilateral organizations, foundations, academia, the private sector and local partners. The foundation also emphasizes the importance of local partnerships and engages with stakeholders at various levels to understand the country’s context and deliver effectively. [UN Women](#) partnerships span governments, civil society, UN entities and the private sector. They prioritize collaboration with women’s organizations and civil society to promote grassroots engagement and empowerment. They also engage with the private sector to promote gender equality and combat sexism. [Information on partnerships for UNICEF can be found in section Q4.2.6.](#)

34 UN Women, Corporate evaluation on UN Women’s policy advocacy work, 2022.

35 Coffman, Julia and Reed, Ehren, ‘Unique methods in advocacy evaluation’, The California Endowment, 2009.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Oxfam places a strong emphasis on organizational learning and sharing of knowledge. They actively publish lessons and wisdom from their programmes and activities, including their impact and effectiveness. The organization values a transformative approach to advocacy and encourages testing, learning, and trying new approaches. They invest in staff capacity-building through training and mentoring and employ various approaches to knowledge management and sharing, such as continuous learning, communities of practice, and knowledge-sharing platforms. Save the Children also recognizes the importance of organizational learning and employ several components to support it. They have knowledge management systems, including databases and online communities, to capture and share knowledge. The organization also has working groups that create resources, strategies, and learning platforms to facilitate collaboration and peer-to-peer learning. They have implemented a mentorship programme to support new advocacy team members, further enhancing organizational learning. The BMGF conducts learning sessions, maintains internal newsletters, and organizes workshops for knowledge exchange and professional development. These efforts contribute to an environment of collaboration, innovation and the dissemination of best practices. UN Women recognizes the significance of learning from past experiences and sharing knowledge, but the organization is still working towards fully implementing its knowledge management strategy. Limited resources and the organization's relatively young age present challenges in achieving comprehensive knowledge management. While senior leadership provides mentorship and guidance, there is room for improvement in developing a more robust knowledge management approach. [Information on organizational learning for advocacy for UNICEF can be found in section Q3.2.](#)

Key findings:

- 1. The GAPs addressed most of the thematic areas covered in the SP 2022–2025, with the main exception of child poverty and inclusive social protection** and the specific area linked to fast-tracking the end of HIV/AIDS. GAPs are not considered cross-cutting issues in their contribution to the SP, and each GAP mainly focuses on one goal area, covering four of the five goal areas considered in the SP. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 2. The SP theory of change** establishes linkages between main overarching development goal frameworks (mainly the SDGs, the CRC and its three Optional Protocols). Despite UNICEF being guided by the Core Commitments for Children (CCC) in humanitarian actions, no linkages to specific results of the CCC are made for each goal area (GA) in the SP ToC beyond including relevant indicators in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework. The SP does not mention contributions to the Agenda for Humanity. These missing linkages are included in the developed theory of transformation. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 3. The main strengths of the GAP structure** are that it contributes to strengthening the prioritization of central advocacy themes, enabling a consistent organization-wide approach. Also, the GAPs contribute to being more strategic and results-oriented by having a unified advocacy focus and messaging while tracking, aggregating and consolidating results from the national to the global level and maintaining a consistent methodology for advocacy priorities. The GAPs are also reported to stimulate cooperation across the co-leads (GCA and PG) and other relevant divisions and units. Finally, the GAP structure has brought new and non-traditional initiatives, such as mental health and climate change. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
- 4. The main limitations and challenges of the GAP framework** identified are that the GAP focus can limit the consideration of other vital areas, such as child poverty and inclusive social protection and migration. The GAPs can limit flexibility and hinder the ability to respond to unforeseen opportunities outside the established thematic framework. When it comes to the design of the GAPs, the issue of whether climate advocacy should be multisectoral has been addressed during the process of drafting the final evaluation report, and GAP 4 on climate and water is expected to be adapted and reinforced to reflect the cross-sectoral priorities outlined in the new UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. Finally, issues concerning the limited participation of staff at the regional and national levels and other stakeholders in GAP design and the narrow humanitarian dimension reflected in the GAP thematic areas were also critical issues identified by stakeholders. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*

Q2.1.1 LEVEL OF ADEQUACY OF THE GAPS TO CONTRIBUTE TO UNICEF'S MANDATE AND THE SP 2022–2025 IN DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

GAPS ADDRESSING THE AREAS COVERED BY THE SP 2022–25

The relevance of advocacy for the current SP is depicted in the main documents and the theory of change. Advocacy is one of the nine change strategies defined for the current SP, which refers to the operational strategies that UNICEF prioritizes for 2022–2025. To support the implementation of these change strategies, five organizational enablers were also identified.³⁶

The SP ToC is structured following the goal areas (GA) or long-term outcomes it is expected to contribute to. These goal areas comprise of specific results establishing the areas to cover within each area, although there is no perfect match between the GAPS and the goal areas included in the SP. Except for GAP 3, each GAP contributes specifically to one of the goal areas, following the same numbering (e.g., GAP 1 contributes to some results of GA 1, GAP 2 to all results of GA 2, etc). The fifth goal area refers to child poverty and inclusive social protection, and it is not linked to any GAPS. No reference to the GAPS is made in the SP ToC, even though the GAPS were designed before the SP. **This effectively means that GAPS are not considered cross-cutting issues in their contribution to the SP. Still, each one mainly focuses on one of the specific goal areas considered, except for GA 5.**

Table 8. Linkages between the GAPS and the SP

GAP	GOAL AREA	RESULT AREA
GAP 1	GOAL AREA 1. Every child, including adolescents, survives and thrives with access to nutritious diets, quality primary health care, nurturing practices, and essential supplies.	RESULTS AREA 1,2,6,7,8
GAP 2	GOAL AREA 2. Every child, including adolescents, learns and acquires skills for the future.	RESULTS AREA 1,2
GAP 3	GOAL AREA 1. Every child, including adolescents, survives and thrives with access to nutritious diets, quality primary health care, nurturing practices, and essential supplies.	RESULTS AREA 5
	GOAL AREA 3. Every child, including adolescents, is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices.	RESULTS AREA 1,2,3
GAP 4	GOAL AREA 4. Every child, including adolescents, has access to safe and equitable WASH services and supplies and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment.	RESULTS AREA 1,2,3
N/A	GOAL AREA 5. Every child, including adolescents, can access inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty.	RESULTS AREA 1, 2

Beyond GA 5, which is not addressed by the GAPS, one result area in GA 1 remains out of the focus of the GAPS. This result area is 'Fast-track the end of HIV/AIDS' (results area 3, GA 1).

³⁶ Accelerated resource mobilization, agile and responsive business model, decentralized and empowered internal governance and oversight, dynamic and inclusive people and culture, and strategic internal communication and staff engagement.

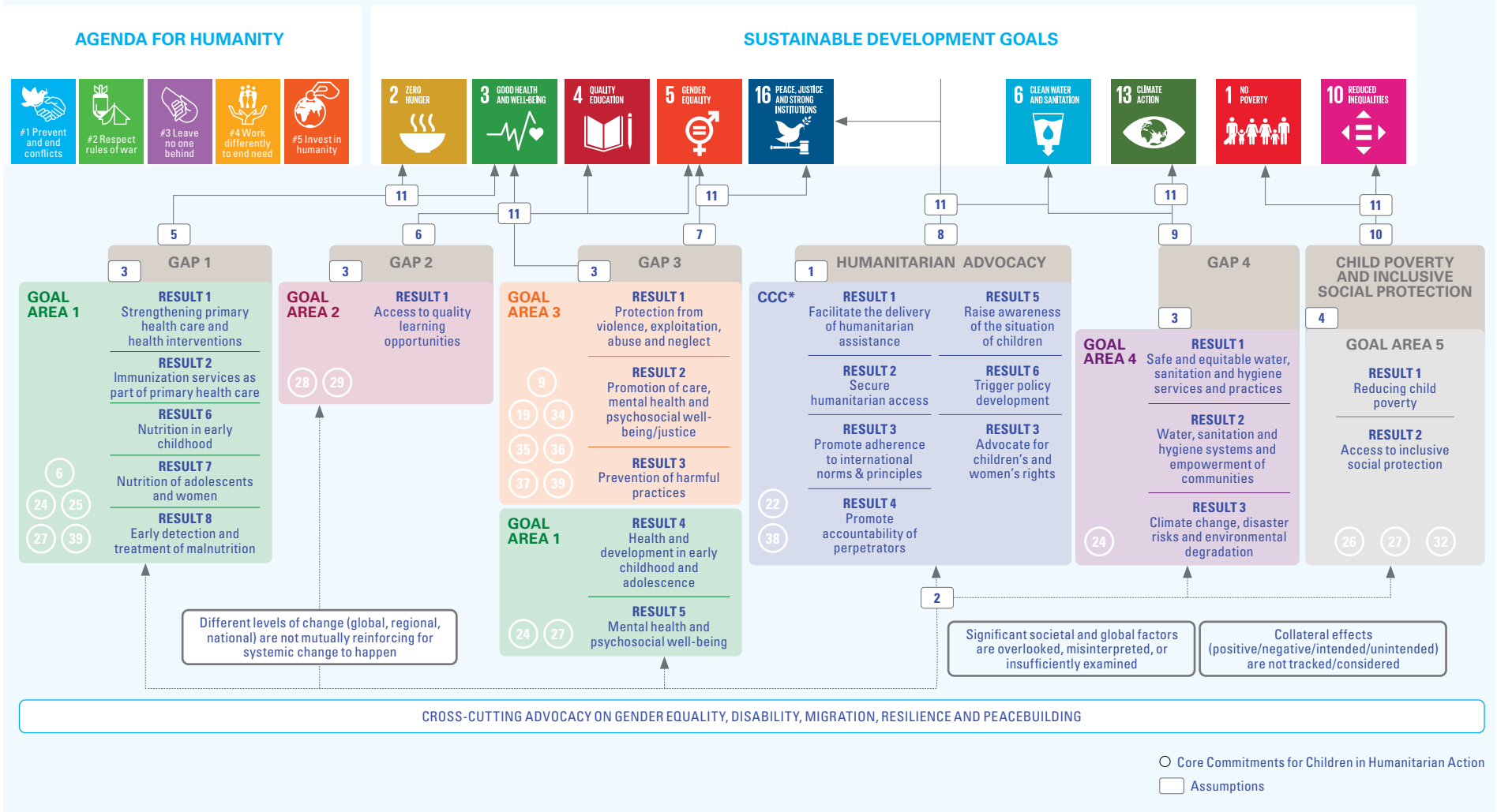
ALIGNMENT OF THE GAPS AND SPTO MAIN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN FRAMEWORKS

The SP theory of change establishes linkages between main overarching development goal frameworks (mainly the SDGs, the CRC and its three Optional Protocols, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). The linkages of every GA to SDGs are specifically included for each GA, whereas this is not the case for the CRC (clearly established for GA 1, GA 2 and GA 5 but only mentioned as a reference in the other GAs). The goal areas also make reference and linkages to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) provisions to which each UN agency is to contribute. In humanitarian settings, UNICEF is guided by the Core Commitments for Children (CCC), the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming. In situations of armed conflict, UNICEF is guided by international humanitarian law and refugee law and is specifically mandated to protect children by Security Council Resolution 1612. Despite being mentioned, no linkages to specific results of the CCC are made for each GA in the SP ToC. However, specific indicators are included in the results framework for each GA. Moreover, the SP does not mention contributions to the Agenda for Humanity and the CCCs that are part of the agenda.

THE ADVOCACY CHANGE STRATEGY THEORY OF TRANSFORMATION

The obvious limitation of the SP ToC is that it is not only focused on advocacy. It is an overarching strategy that includes all aspects and change strategies considered under the SP. To ensure that the advocacy change strategy is clearly understood, the evaluation team designed a theory of transformation (ToT). Based on the validated ToC of each GAP and the inclusion of other relevant areas, the goal of the ToT is to establish a global framework for UNICEF's advocacy change strategy in both development and humanitarian settings. This is an overarching theory on how UNICEF's advocacy change strategy is structured and interconnected, including key elements that explain how change is supposed to happen and what specific overarching goals the change strategy directly contributes to. The ToT and the ToCs developed for each GAP are expected to inform the next Global Communication and Advocacy Strategy, which is currently being developed. The logic and elements included follow the same logic and structure as those presented for the GAP ToCs, including feedback loops, negative contributions and assumptions, the latter specifying the necessary conditions for change to happen at all levels, leading to the contribution to major goals. Figure 5 shows the ToT, which is further articulated (including key assumptions) in Annex 13.

Figure 5. UNICEF Global Advocacy Strategy – Theory of transformation



Source: Evaluation team

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Humanitarian advocacy is linked to all relevant areas covered by the GAPs and other relevant priorities as per the sectoral commitments and programme approaches, part of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.
2. Relevant coordination measures are taken to ensure that the Office of Emergency Programmes, the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, and the Programme Group work together efficiently towards the achievement of relevant advocacy goals. Humanitarian advocacy strategies are actioned in a coherent manner at country, regional and global levels to address priority child rights issues and critical programming or policy gaps. Clear roles and responsibilities for advocacy and communication are established, as well as relevant advocacy and communications strategies.
3. The GAP theories of change are revised periodically to ensure their relevance and contribution to designated Goal Area results. In addition:
 - The communication and advocacy change strategy is complemented and creates synergies with the rest of the eight change strategies considered for the Strategic Plan.
 - No organization, entity or network governs, controls or oversees transformation; synergistic interactions drive and hasten the change process, and UNICEF systematically records the role played to achieve changes at all levels.
 - Alliances are nurtured and sustained, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders involved share a common vision and advocacy strategy, and are meaningfully contributing towards achieving expected goals.
 - GAP initiatives follow a complexity theory approach, which means that they apply systems thinking when formulating and implementing relevant actions. Among other things, this implies identifying simple, complicated and complex aspects of the interventions to address them properly while systematically monitoring interrelationships and critical assumptions included in the theories of change.
 - Engagement across sectors/GAPs is promoted for systemic change. Knowledge-sharing systems are maximized for cross-fertilization of collective learning and experience sharing.
4. Social protection develops a theory of change that seeks synergies and complementarities with GAPs at different levels. The Division of Global Communication and Advocacy includes specific activities/sub-activities for joint cooperation with UNICEF Social Protection team.
5. GAP 1 ensures that relevant interconnection between vaccines, nutrition and climate are effectively done, seeking potential synergies with other relevant GAPs to maximize the integration of the child survival concept. The list of priority countries is updated accordingly.
6. GAP 2 continues exploring complementarities with GAP 3 and GAP 4, as well as with humanitarian advocacy, leveraging more opportunities to work with organizations from the private sector.
7. GAP 3 continues strengthening results with GAP 2 and exploring other ways of connecting with GAP 4 and GAP 1, considering the set of joint partners shared. The list of priority countries is updated accordingly.
8. Humanitarian advocacy is linked to all relevant areas covered by the GAPs and other relevant priorities as per the sectoral commitments and programme approaches, part of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.
9. The focus of GAP 4 is clearly established so as to ensure that its cross-cutting nature is effectively implemented and reflected in other GAP areas and beyond, following the UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan.
10. Social protection is included in Division of Global Communication and Advocacy workplans with specific activities/sub-activities for joint cooperation.
11. Advocacy stakeholders (UNICEF, partners and others) connect and engage with other relevant internal and external networks (e.g. digital transformation, innovation, partnerships and engagement, etc., and external organizations promoting child rights, among others) to ensure that synergies are generated. Values, principles and related actions enable systems transformation at the highest level for contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Global and local perspectives (“glocal”) are interconnected and integrated to ensure that advocacy at the local level is highly contextualized and grounded while being able to aggregate results, keep track of major scale changes and inform the global level. Innovative measurement approaches complement existing standardized indicators to provide nuanced explanations of the level and depth of change achieved.

Q2.1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE GAP STRUCTURE FOR THE CONTRIBUTION TO MAJOR GOAL FRAMEWORKS³⁷

The following are the results of the analysis of interviews about the relevance and challenges of having an advocacy structure based on GAPs.

STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Improves prioritization.** In a general sense, informants at all levels agreed that the main benefit of implementing a GAP structure is that it enhances the prioritization of key advocacy themes, enabling a consistent organization-wide approach. Having consistent GAPs involved over a period of time makes it easier to attain relevant advocacy results, such as policy influencing. By assigning dedicated resources to specific goals, the GAP framework allows for the systematic implementation of selected topics and supports a focused advocacy strategy. The selection process considered clear alignment with allies and winnable opportunities for influence. Issues like nutrition became more viable due to changes in political landscapes and external support, resulting in their adoption as a new part of the priorities.
- 2. Ensures structure is more strategic/results-oriented.** Having GAPs is reported to influence and contribute to being more strategic in advocacy, which, among other things, is expected to contribute to having a strong, unified advocacy focus and messaging. The GAP framework is essential for offices to consolidate their results, comprehend their contribution to global impact, and maintain a consistent methodology for advocacy priorities. By employing similar strategies across initiatives, UNICEF can function cohesively and track progress efficiently. NatComs and country offices tailor advocacy approaches to address local needs. Nonetheless, by framing the issue in different contexts depending on the audience's interests, the GAPs make it possible to add those results and contribute to the same overarching goals. The GAPs also contribute to better integration of efforts at all levels, and this collaborative approach (bottom-up, top-down glocal approach) proves crucial when addressing sensitive issues such as mental health and child maltreatment.
- 3. Stimulates cooperation between GCA and PG.** In the context of the GAPs, the co-leadership between PG and GCA is expected to effectively bring about closer cooperation and stronger linkages between the advocacy and programmatic structures despite their differing approaches and operational speeds. The GAP structure fosters advocacy ownership within PG and promotes joint ownership between GCA and PG, although it lacks some elements found in the cause framework, such as core resourcing.
- 4. Considers new/non-traditional initiatives.** The GAPs include recently introduced thematic areas, such as mental health and climate change. This signifies a shift in the organizational logic, where advocacy efforts are now linked to areas beyond strong programmatic experience. It reflects the adaptability and willingness of the organization to remain relevant and address critical issues beyond their traditional areas of focus.

³⁷ The original indicator referred to the identification of main opportunities based on the work of other organizations, but this area is already covered in Q1.2 based on the results of the benchmarking analysis.

LIMITATIONS/CHALLENGES

- 1. Advocacy beyond the GAPs.** Several informants at different levels argue that UNICEF's focus on the GAPs can limit the consideration of other vital areas, such as social protection and migration. While GAPs cover global cross-cutting areas such as climate, they can be too narrow, leaving some critical issues unaddressed and becoming irrelevant for certain regions and countries. This is considered to lead to structural issues within UNICEF, where one side of the organization focuses on advocacy priorities, while the other side expects support for initiatives outside those priorities, creating a complex and challenging process.
- 2. Limited relevance/adaptability.** Some informants expressed the concern that the GAPs can limit flexibility and hinder the ability to respond to unforeseen opportunities outside the established thematic framework. The structured nature of the priorities may prevent the advocacy team from effectively seizing political opportunities as they emerge. There is still current thinking at the global level that expresses the challenge of maintaining GAPs in a rapidly changing world and the importance of aligning advocacy approaches with programme priorities, addressing significant emerging issues such as reducing gender inequalities for adolescent girls, pandemic preparedness through community health and nutrition systems strengthening for resilience against shocks; and inclusive social protection.
- 3. Design issues – the definition of GAP 4.** The issue of whether climate advocacy should be multisectoral was stressed during the data analysis, as there was a disconnect within UNICEF due to the GAP 4 structure, because climate advocacy priorities were narrowly defined. While the programmatic focus for climate change is multisectoral, the advocacy focus on the GAP is single-sectoral, which created a certain dissonance. This has caused a disconnect within UNICEF, as certain groups do not feel adequately represented and are pursuing their agendas outside the GAPs. Nonetheless, this issue has been addressed during the process of drafting the final evaluation report, and GAP 4 on climate and water is expected to be adapted and reinforced to reflect the cross-sectoral priorities outlined in the new UNICEF Sustainability and Climate Action Plan – including but not limited to WASH.
- 4. Limited involvement of stakeholders when designing the GAPs.** Some informants expressed concerns about the level of stakeholder engagement in establishing GAPs. Questions arose about UNICEF's regional- and country-level involvement in co-creating GAPs, with some informants believing it to be a top-down decision. Also, other informants affirmed that civil society partners wanted to co-create agendas, feel heard, and be included in decision-making processes. There were doubts regarding the transparency of priority-setting and the importance of dialogue with stakeholders for credibility and buy-in.
- 5. Limited humanitarian dimension.** The humanitarian dimension within GAPs could be stronger, as it primarily focuses on development. Although some areas, such as mental health and education, fit well in humanitarian contexts, synergies between GAPs and humanitarian advocacy remain a challenge. During emergencies, competition for resources intensifies among sectors due to the existing organizational structure, making it difficult to achieve a cohesive response. Confusion arises among country and regional offices due to varying funding levels, donors' interests, and unclear guidance on pursuing GAPs in humanitarian contexts.

Q3.1 IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY – To what extent are the means/resources allocated for the implementation of the advocacy approaches and priorities adequate for the achievement of the evolving advocacy goals?

Key findings:

- 1. The funds allocated for advocacy have fluctuated considerably since 2018. Nonetheless, the proportion of funds allocated to advocacy remains higher than those of other organizations included in the benchmarking analysis.** Constantly over time, there is a clear predominance of advocacy resources used for communication and advocacy activities covering public, political, humanitarian and business advocacy at PFP, as well as communication activities for social and behaviour change with communities. The analysis of funding allocation within GCA shows that GAP 1 is the global priority with the most allocated funds. Conversely, GAP 2, GAP 3 and GAP 4 account for a minimal proportion of the GCA funds for 2023. Finally, humanitarian advocacy represents almost seven per cent of the GCA budget for 2023, and funding for child poverty and inclusive social protection is residual. The evolution of funding streams between 2022 and 2023 reveals that all different areas covered have increased to a certain extent the proportion of funds allocated with the exception of GAP 1 and GAP 3. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
- 2. Informants at all levels expressed concern about the limited availability of financial resources for advocacy work.** The perception of the adequacy of funds is relatively low, particularly at HQ levels and specifically from GCA and PG informants. The main reasons identified that explain the views on the inadequacy of financial resources are the limited funding available and the self-funded nature of GAPs, the advocacy ambitions that do not match available resources and capacity for global implementation, unclear roles and responsibilities, little expertise in fundraising, a limited strategic approach, and coordination issues. Nonetheless, informants at all levels had a relatively positive perception of the **efficient use of financial resources available**; those informants more frequently involved in advocacy initiatives also had a positive perception. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
- 3. In terms of personnel** allocated to advocacy and communication, five per cent of UNICEF's workforce is directly dedicated to these particular issues, which is less than the proportion of personnel dedicated to advocacy in other organizations analysed. Within the staff dedicated to advocacy in UNICEF, 17 per cent are based at HQ, which is close to (although does not match) the global distribution of UNICEF staff, as noted by several informants (80 per cent of the work takes place at regional and country level, and 20 per cent of the work is taking place or supported at the HQ level). GCA holds an adequate balance between fixed-term and temporary/consulting roles. Informants had a considerably negative perception of the adequacy of personnel to meet UNICEF's organizational advocacy ambitions. Nonetheless, informants had a positive perception of the extent to which human resources (HR) is used efficiently. In both cases, informants at the national level (both COs and NatComs) had a more positive perception than those at HQ and regional levels. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
- 4. No major alternative strategies were identified** for being more cost-effective beyond ensuring advocacy is adequately strategized at different levels, and that clear roles and responsibilities are established and followed. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*

Q3.1.1 EXTENT TO WHICH EXISTING RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED AND PRIORITIZED COHERENTLY TO ACHIEVE EXPECTED ADVOCACY GOALS

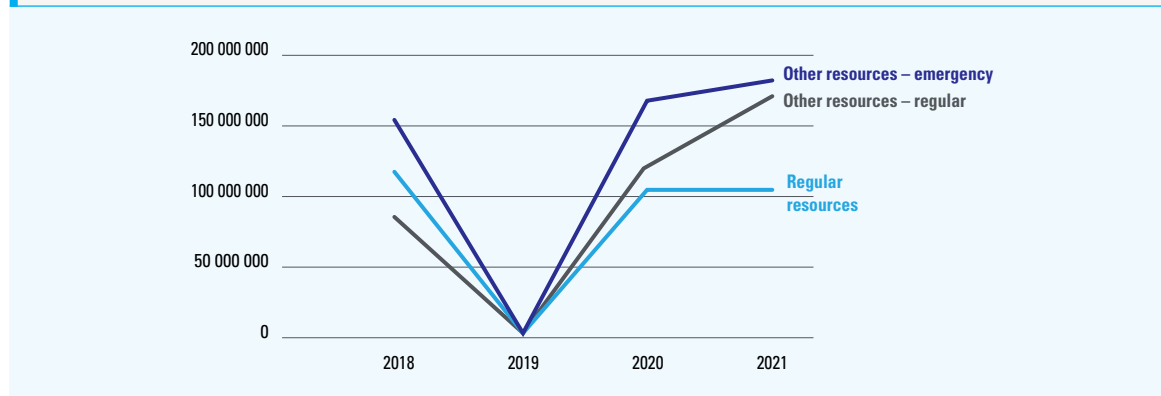
FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The analysis of financial resources³⁸ is impacted by the way PIDB codes are defined in the current system, as stated in section 5.4 on methodological limitations. As an example, M&E for advocacy is not clearly differentiated, and the analysis is based on a proxy for M&E expenditure within the advocacy stream, which does not necessarily reflect the reality of UNICEF.

GLOBAL FINDINGS

The funds allocated for advocacy have fluctuated considerably over time. As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of funds allocated for advocacy out of the total UNICEF funding fluctuated from 3.5 per cent to 5 per cent³⁹, with a sharp decrease in 2019, when advocacy only represented 0.22 per cent of the total budget of the organization. Beyond this particular situation, the proportion of funds allocated to advocacy remains higher than those of other organizations included in the benchmarking analysis. Disregarding the situation in 2019, the average proportion of funds allocated for advocacy is 4.3 per cent of the total, which is higher than the average expressed by organizations such as Save the Children (1.96 per cent).⁴⁰

Figure 6. Trends over time of the global funding for advocacy



Source: UNICEF inSight

GLOBAL FINDINGS BY FUNDING TYPE

Funding for advocacy-related PIDB codes by resource type has also fluctuated significantly over time. Data reveal a sharp decrease in 2019 to US\$20,000,000, approximately a tenth of 2021 funding levels. This situation is the same for all resource types (RR, ORR, ORE⁴¹). Total resource levels resumed in 2019 yet evidencing a predominance of ORR over the rest, indicating a tendency towards interventions in partnership.

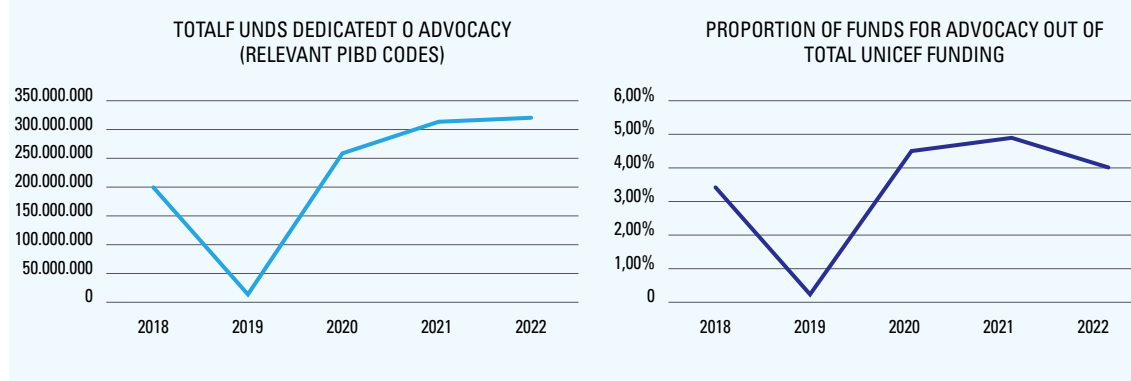
38 The analysis of financial resources was done based on the documentation shared by the EO on the SP cube expenditure and year-end analysis cubes. This general information was complemented with information specific to GCA extracted from the Results Assessment Module (RAM) of inSight. The system includes a number of subcategories linked to advocacy (some even duplicated), which are not grouped into one common global category for advocacy. This results in the selection of proxy subcategories to gather information on this particular area.

39 The total funds available for UNICEF rose from US\$5.4 billion in 2018 to US\$8 billion in 2023.

40 Average of allocation of Save the Children for advocacy in the period 2022–2023.

41 Regular resources (RR) are core and flexible resources. Other resources – regular (ORR) are earmarked resources for non-emergency activities. The other category considered for the analysis is other resources – emergency (ORE).

Figure 7. Trend over time of advocacy funds per type



Source: UNICEF inSight

FINDINGS BY ADVOCACY CATEGORY

Table 9 shows the main categories of the advocacy funding streams analysed.⁴² The complete analysis per relevant advocacy category and subcategory is found in Annex 14.

Table 9. Main PIDB categories for advocacy funding streams

CATEGORY	DEFINITION
Cross-sectoral Communication for Development	Mainly used for downstream communication activities for social and behaviour change (SBC) with communities. Owned and managed by Programme Group – SBC and the funding type that is applicable is mainly RR, OR or ORE.
Other cross-sectoral programme areas	Mainly used for communication and advocacy activities covering public, political, humanitarian and business advocacy at private fundraising and partnerships (PFP).
Technical excellence in policy and programmes	Used to address advocacy and communication activities by ROs and COs, including advocacy & communication expenditure at the RO & CO levels and the technical support on advocacy and communication done by HQ.
Corporate external relations and partnerships, communication, and resource mobilization	Includes all advocacy and communication linked to partnership building, fundraising, influencing only at HQ levels, and it is not used by ROs and COs.

⁴² The overall year-end data cube is provided annually for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. 2022 is provided differently, since it is the current SP cube covering the period 2022–2025. The database provided is structured by type of funding resources: RR, ORR and ORE, including relevant advocacy PIDB categories and subcategories.

Except for 2019's limited total availability of funds, total resources for all categories increased over time. **Funds used for communication and advocacy activities covering public, political, humanitarian and business advocacy at PFP ('other cross-sectoral programme areas') remain the predominant category across all years**, proportionately accounting for more than 50 per cent of the budget for relevant advocacy PIDB codes considered. The tendency from 2019 is that the proportion of these funds out of the total is decreasing.

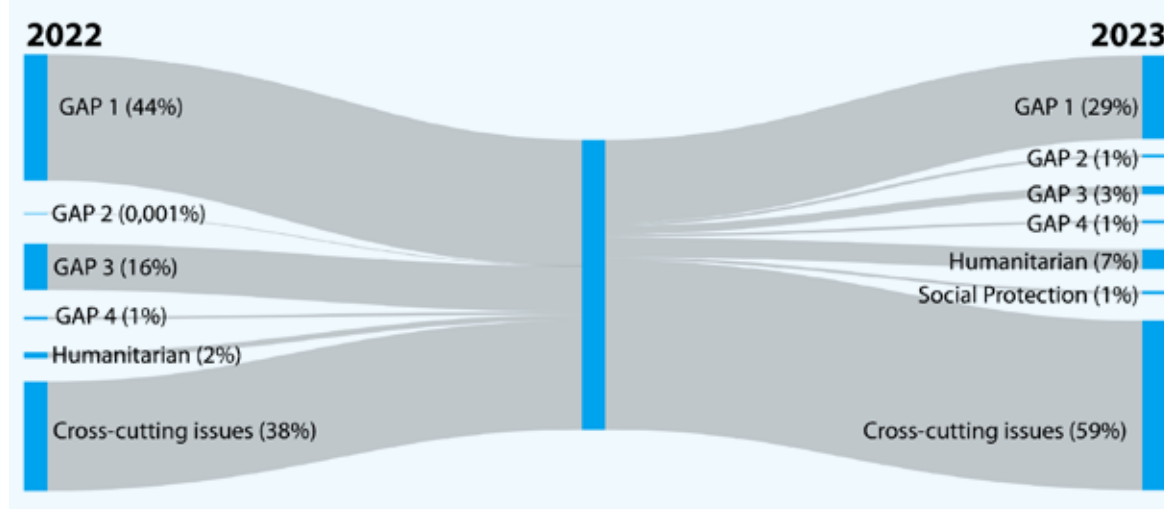
In terms of funding prioritization, the second most important area focuses on down streaming communication activities for social and behaviour change with communities ('Cross-sectoral Communication for Development' area). This category includes nine subcategories referencing social and behaviour change (SBC), youth and community engagement, content production, research and M&E, strengthening communication for development (C4D), and cross-sectoral technical assistance. The subcategory with a clear link to advocacy is 'Advocacy and partnership-building for social behaviour change', which is included in the next section of the analysis. Resources for this category account for around 30 per cent on average of the total PIDB codes analysed through the period analysed. The tendency from 2019 is that the proportion of these funds out of the total is increasing over time.

Resources dedicated to address advocacy and communication activities by ROs and COs ('Technical excellence in policy and programmes') include subcategories linked to programme guidance, policy development and support, planning and quality assurance, programme coordination, and advocacy and communication. Resources for this category represent around 10 per cent of the total PIDB codes analysed.

Finally, resources dedicated to advocacy and communication (A&C) linked to partnership building, fundraising and influencing only at HQ levels ('Corporate external relations and partnerships, communication and resource mobilization') are negligible, not even accounting for 1 per cent of total funds.

The analysis of funding allocation per GAP and other thematic areas is based on the information available for GCA, so it only represents one part of the total GAP funding streams. However, GCA is leading the GAPs, and the results of the analysis on funding allocation are considered relevant. The analysis is done based on the information provided for 2022 and 2023.

Figure 8. Evolution of advocacy funding streams for GCA (2022–2023)



Source: UNICEF inSight

Most of the GCA budget is allocated to cross-cutting functions, including capacity-building, operational issues, partnerships, etc. In 2023, almost 60 per cent of the GCA budget is dedicated to these areas. GAP 1, including the vaccines/child survival and nutrition components, has the thematic priorities with the most allocated funds. Conversely, GAP 2 on learning, and the funds for social protection each account for roughly 2 per cent of the GCA budget. The evolution of funding streams between 2022 and 2023 reveals that all the different areas covered have increased the proportion of funds allocated with the exception of GAP 1 and GAP 3.

The analysis per region shows a wide variance of total and proportional advocacy funds across regions and time. Throughout the analysis, advocacy disbursements in WCARO have totalled almost US\$170 million, whereas those in ECARO are below US\$32 million (not even 20 per cent of those in WCARO). Advocacy disbursements in HQ are in the mid-range of all regions.

With regard to survey results on the **perception of the adequacy of funds available for advocacy activities**, the results at the different organizational levels (HQ, regional, national) show that half of informants have a rather positive perception and the other half a negative perception. The higher positive perception on the adequacy of funds is identified at the national level (56 per cent of CO informants and 50 per cent of NatCom informants considered funds adequate), compared to the results at the regional level and HQ. Still, around 50 per cent of informants at all levels considered the funds available for advocacy purposes to be inadequate. The specific analysis at the HQ level also shows interesting patterns since informants from PG and particularly GCA have a lower perception than the average (35 per cent of informants from GCA and 40 per cent of informants from PG consider resources for advocacy purposes to be adequate). Although not statistically significant, this information still seems relevant as informants from GCA and PG represent 65 per cent of the total informants from HQ (49 out of 76 informants).

The survey results are aligned with the results of the interviews. **Generally, informants at the global level expressed concern about the limited financial resources** available for advocacy efforts and, more specifically, when considering the mandate of the different GAPs. The perception of these informants at the global level is that the GAP mandate needs to be coupled with sufficient resources, which directly impacts the capacity to implement advocacy work successfully. The main challenge is matching advocacy ambitions with adequate resources and capacity for global implementation. The fact that GAPs lack core funding from UNICEF for activation and staffing is perceived as a clear limitation when meeting GAPs' expectations and ensuring sustained funding streams in some cases. Respondents mentioned that lack of core funding for GAPs is a problem as UNICEF prioritizes a series of thematic issues that should be addressed at all levels, leaving the specific teams managing these GAPs to self-fund the strategies. The fact that the GAPs are entirely funded by external sources to a certain extent also influences their objectives and priorities, as well as the sustainability of funding. GAP teams collaborate with trusts and foundations which have political agendas, making their situation unique compared to other UNICEF staff roles funded by unrestricted core funds.

In terms of funding dedicated to planning and M&E, the allocation of funds for these issues represents 3.12 per cent of the total budget for 2022⁴³, with the great majority of funds allocated for field monitoring and system strengthening in countries. According to UNICEF's procedure on monitoring⁴⁴, heads of office are responsible for allocating necessary and sufficient resourcing for monitoring, and the UNSDG guidance (2014)⁴⁵ recommends an indicative allocation of three to five per cent of funds for monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Consequently, and in an overall sense, UNICEF met the criteria for the minimum allocation of resources for M&E in the year 2022.

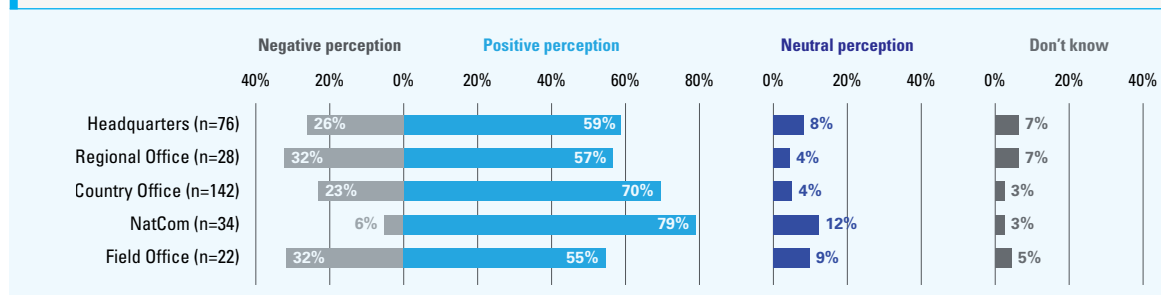
43 Based on information from InSight, UNICEF's expenditure on planning and monitoring is equal to US\$232 million, and US\$29 million on evaluation, out of a total budget of US\$8.4 billion in 2022.

44 UNICEF, PROCEDURE/ DAPM/2022/004, 2022.

45 UNSDG Guidance Note on Joint Programmes Standard Operating Procedures for Countries Adopting the Delivering as One Approach.

Concerning the perception of informants on the adequate use of financial resources available to maximize results, a rather positive perception was shared by surveyed informants at all levels. On average, 64 per cent of all informants have a positive perception of the adequate use of resources. Informants at the national level have a higher positive perception than informants from regional level and HQ, as shown in Figure 9. Similar positive perception levels are shared by those informants more frequently involved in advocacy initiatives (those categorized as frequently, mostly, and exclusively dedicated to advocacy activities), as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Survey results on the perception of the adequate use of financial resources per level



Source: UNICEF global survey

The multivariate analysis per thematic area and organizational level⁴⁶ (information disaggregated by GAP, humanitarian advocacy, social protection, and others) also reveals no major variance in the informants' perception of the adequate use of resources, while revealing the pattern already identified of informants at national levels having a higher positive perception of the issue than those at HQ.

Informants that expressed a negative perception of the adequacy of resources for advocacy explained the reasons for their views (44 per cent of the total 303 informants) in open-ended questions of the survey. The main ideas shared had to do with (1) lack of resources, (2) unclear roles and responsibilities, (3) limited expertise and skills in advocacy, (4) an ad hoc approach to advocacy rather than a strategic and planned effort, and (5) issues concerning coordination and collaboration, mainly linked to limited links between advocacy and communication colleagues and programme teams.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In terms of personnel allocated to advocacy and communication (A&C), a total of five per cent of UNICEF's workforce (854 employees out of 17,193) are directly dedicated to these particular issues in 2023. This overall proportion of staff explicitly linked to A&C is lower than the proportion of personnel dedicated to advocacy in other organizations analysed, such as Oxfam (around 33 per cent of staff) and the BMGF (roughly 10 per cent of staff). Within the staff dedicated to advocacy in UNICEF, 17 per cent are based in HQ. Out of the 83 per cent of staff dedicated to A&C at the RO and national levels, the great majority are based at national levels (either CO or NatCom – 77 per cent of the total – 657 A&C staff out of 854). Finally, six per cent of A&C staff are located in regional offices.

46 Multivariate analysis controlling results by thematic area is statistically significant at 95 per cent.

Figure 10. Proportion of staff dedicated to advocacy and communication (A&C)



Source: UNICEF inSight

In terms of staff dedicated to research, planning and M&E, 4.2 per cent of the total number of employees are dedicated to M&E (722 out of 17,193). Among these, 16 per cent (166 people) are based at HQ, and 84 per cent at RO and national levels. This distribution might contribute to the resourcing challenge for M&E brought up at the HQ level. As pointed, the issue of M&E resources is not about its overall volume, but rather the type and distribution of resources, as the great majority of funds are allocated with a major focus on field monitoring and system strengthening in countries with substantial budgets.

There are no rules of thumb when it comes to a particular **proportion of fixed and temporary/consulting positions** within a United Nations agency, as several additional factors come into play due to the nature and goals of these organizations. As a starting point, a commonly suggested range is to aim for approximately 70 to 80 per cent of fixed positions within the organization.⁴⁷ This allows a significant workforce to have long-term commitment and develop deep institutional knowledge. The remaining 20 to 30 per cent of positions can be allocated to temporary or consulting roles. This allocation allows flexibility, specialized expertise, and the ability to bring fresh perspectives for specific projects or skill gaps. According to the most recent organization chart available, GCA has 162 positions, of which five are vacant. 75 per cent of these positions are fixed-term, while 20 per cent are filled by consultants and 5 per cent by temporary appointments. Therefore, the Division is within the adequate distribution of positions. The units with the highest proportion of consultants are digital strategy (46 per cent) and the brand section (33 per cent).

Regarding the perception of surveyed informants on the adequacy of HR for advocacy, informants at the different levels have a considerably low positive perception of the adequacy of HR, even lower than for funds (although these are intrinsically linked). On average, 38 per cent of all informants have a positive perception of the adequacy of HR. A similar pattern is found in the case of the analysis of funding, where informants at the national level have a higher positive perception than those at the HQ and regional levels. Although not statistically significant, the results by level of involvement in advocacy activities are also quite revealing, as the positive perception of the adequacy of staff decreases considerably from those that only rarely or sometimes work in advocacy issues with those that mostly or exclusively work on advocacy. This effectively means that the higher the involvement in advocacy activities, the higher the perception that HR available is inadequate. The results of the interviews also show the concerns of GAP representatives in terms of meeting expected goals and considering available personnel. For example, the limited size and resources of the climate team are reported to have hindered their ability to support PG's advocacy priorities and meet relevant goals. Similarly, informants from GAP 2 reported having limited personnel to address expected goals.

47 Krasteva, S. Sharma, P. and Wagman, L., 'The 80/20 Rule: Corporate Support for Innovation by Employees', 2015.

Concerning the perception of the adequate use of personnel available,⁴⁸ surveyed informants have a rather positive perception as, on average, 65 per cent of informants at the different levels consider the use of HR for advocacy to be adequate or very adequate. The same pattern is revealed as in previous questions: informants at the national level have a more positive perception than those at HQ and regional levels. In this case, it is relevant to mention the position of NatCom representatives, as more than 90 per cent perceive that HR is being used efficiently. Also, the analysis shows that the higher the respondent's involvement in advocacy activities, the higher the perception that HR available are being used efficiently. The analysis per thematic area shows similar levels of positive perception across areas.

The results of the interviews also reveal some of the ideas identified through the survey, mainly concerning the limited HR capacity at the global level. Informants from all GAPs have pointed out the challenges of having limited staff available to meet GAP expectations. In some areas, such as in PFP, all respondents believe HR available is adequate. In some instances, limited staffing was also identified at the country level, as in context of case study 2 (more on this in Annex 7).

Q3.1.2 POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES TO DELIVER MORE COST-EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY GOALS

No major alternative strategies were identified as more cost-effective than ensuring advocacy is adequately strategized at different levels and that clear roles and responsibilities are established and followed, as described in detail in section Q3.3. Also, and whenever relevant, it is important to break silos and maximize synergetic work among GAPs and other relevant advocacy priorities. Regarding collaboration at the different levels, the expertise in advocacy of NatComs could be further taken into account at the global level, and closer collaboration could yield better advocacy procedures and results.

48 Measured as the level of agreement with the statement: 'The human resources available for the advocacy purposes I am involved in are being used in the best possible way so as to maximize results'.

Q3.2 IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY – To what extent does UNICEF have the necessary advocacy **skills and competency** to implement the advocacy approaches?

Key findings:

1. UNICEF's Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative is crucial for enhancing staff skills at all levels. **Most informants believe that they are proficient in basic advocacy techniques but lack advanced skills, especially related to political intelligence.** This situation is accentuated for programme practitioners involved in advocacy initiatives and particularly for staff involved in planning, monitoring and evaluation. At HQ level, informants from the different GAPs emphasized the challenges faced by the various teams due to limited fundraising skills to secure funding. At CO level, informants involved in planning, monitoring and evaluation and those engaged in GAP 4 and humanitarian areas expressed lower levels of perceived advanced advocacy skills. The role of the country/regional director is crucial for advocacy, but they are not necessarily advocacy strategists or advocacy specialists. Advocacy training is not mandatory in UNICEF. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
2. Regarding **feeling supported in implementing relevant advocacy initiatives**, informants at the national level (and especially those from NatComs) expressed higher support than their counterparts at the regional and global levels. Finally, informants felt engaged in influencing others to achieve advocacy excellence, although programme practitioners involved in advocacy at HQ and planning, monitoring and evaluation practitioners at the CO level reported lower engagement levels. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*

Q3.2.1 EVIDENCE ON THE EXISTENCE OF RELEVANT CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES FOR ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

The Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative (ACBI) leads capacity-building initiatives in advocacy. The initiative's vision is to ensure that UNICEF leadership and employees at all levels understand and champion advocacy's central role in realizing UNICEF's mandate.⁴⁹ Since 2020, the scope and impact of the ACBI's endeavours have expanded. The most recent data for 2022 show a fourfold increase in the number of participants compared to 2020. Similarly, the number of COs has doubled.⁵⁰ Most of these efforts focused on integrating the GAPs at the national level (COs and NatComs) while providing direct support to regional and country offices and conducting global workshops. The indicators selected for measuring ACBI's work show that targets were fully achieved in 2022. In addition, the ACBI has built the Advocacy Portal on the intranet, where staff can access relevant tools, guidance, case studies, lessons learned and good practices. The work of ACBI has also focused on further developing the advocacy Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and programme integration as well as influencing senior leadership at the global, regional and national levels with, among other things, the launch of different advocacy awards and the creation of the advocacy task force.

Q3.2.2 EVIDENCE FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS ON THE ADVOCACY-RELATED SKILL GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The most recent and relevant evaluation⁵¹, which includes pertinent information on advocacy capacities, highlights the strong capacity in global communication, with updated job descriptions for advocacy and youth engagement that have helped to strengthen relevant work in UNICEF's system. However, technical input for mobilizing UNICEF on GAPs faces delays. At country and regional levels, advocacy and public engagement capacities are only beginning to develop, and despite consistent capacity-building efforts, more is needed to adapt to a modern business model. The evaluation also highlights that middle-income countries need further investment in advocacy skills for private sector resource mobilization and political intelligence to respond effectively to challenges.

Q3.2.3 SHARED PERCEPTION AMONG UNICEF STAFF AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS ON THE STRONGEST AND WEAKEST AREAS FOR IMPLEMENTING ADVOCACY WORK

The following are the most relevant strengths and opportunities of UNICEF for doing advocacy work based on the results of the interviews and group discussions at all levels. The complete set of strengths and weaknesses identified can be found in Annex 15.

49 UNICEF, Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative in Action report, 2022.

50 In 2022, the following COs received capacity-building services: Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Eastern Caribbean, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana & Suriname, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya (RO), Lebanon, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, PPD ROSA, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, UAE, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

51 UNICEF, Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, 2022.

STRENGTHS

- 1. Expertise and engagement capacity.** Several informants highlighted that UNICEF's main strength lies in its organizational capacity, which includes access to support from country, regional and global offices. GAP leads and other roles, such as humanitarian advocacy leaders, are recognized as strong and experienced, with solid track records and networks. There is a sense that UNICEF has a robust skill set across various fields, such as health and education, and that UNICEF has a unique position to represent and uplift the voices of young people as an organization that advocates for the rights of every child. Examples of the latter were evidenced in case study 4 focused on the participation of the Organization in COP26 (more on this in Annex 9).
- 2. Integration and link with regional and national offices.** Informants at the global level mentioned that advocacy implementation is effective when national (CO and NatCom) advocacy strategies are developed by countries, with support from global data and thought leadership. The strength lies in delivering local teams with established connections and context knowledge who can convey messages and respond to questions in person. Informants perceive that National Committees have strong ambassadors and teams with significant advocacy expertise, and NatComs excel in advocacy, which is critical to consider for the effective integration and linking of advocacy efforts. Also, the collaboration of the Italian NatCom with the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) and the development of a joint workplan reflects that level of integration at the different levels. The integration of efforts across HQ, ROs and COs was also highlighted in the case of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan.
- 3. Leadership support and convening capacity.** Some informants mentioned that senior leadership in UNICEF supports advocacy efforts and expects country representatives to advocate for child rights. Heads of office have different levels of comfort and skills in advocacy, with some focusing more on programme delivery and implementation. Also, UNICEF has a unique ability to gather experts and stakeholders as needed, which brings a unique position to convene and do advocacy.
- 4. Presence at national and subnational levels.** Both UNICEF staff and external informants have particularly valued the relationship-building capabilities that UNICEF has at the country level. UNICEF holds a strong country position in many countries due to its long-time presence and is respected by local governments. This situation enables UNICEF to participate and encourage decentralized decision-making, allowing for more effective advocacy. For example, this was brought up by informants from case study 2 on the Accelerator Programme. Each year, new priorities are established collaboratively with the government and other partners, which are then signed off and committed to be supported. This approach helps push UNICEF's agenda further, even though some goals may still need to be fully achieved. UNICEF's presence at the subnational level has also been highlighted as essential, such as in case study 1's focus on GAP 1 integration in Indonesia. This presence allows UNICEF employees to collaborate closely with local leaders and provide valuable technical assistance and gap analysis, and help to identify individuals who may be left behind.

WEAKNESSES

- 1. Limited role definition.** Informants at different levels consistently mentioned that one of the most evident limitations to implementing advocacy work is the limited establishment of clear roles and responsibilities at all levels. There is a sense that implementation capacity at the country level is absent as country representatives and regional directors might not consider advocacy as part of their role. Other external partners consider that the lack of agility and responsiveness at the country level stems from a need for more unity of partners behind the coalition's mission. Internal country-level informants generally agree with the need for more responsiveness. More details are given in the next section on roles and responsibilities.

2. **Accountability systems for advocacy.** Respondents also said that at the global level UNICEF faces challenges as a large organization, particularly with bureaucracy and accountability. These issues hinder decision-making and limit the capacity to deliver results in a timely way. The decentralized nature of the offices prevents, to a certain extent, this situation at the NatCom, CO, RO levels. The recent review of UNICEF’s accountability system has led to the addition of specific language on advocacy for various roles to address these issues.
3. **Technical and strategic expertise.** Some internal and external informants at the global and national (COs and NatCom) levels pointed out that technical and thematic expertise are rarely combined in the same person, and agenda ownership is thus diffused. It was also highlighted that UNICEF relies heavily on communication personnel for advocacy. While programme personnel may be specialists in their field, they may not necessarily possess the skill set required for advocacy work. For example, the NatCom in Italy possesses a widespread presence across the country, with numerous local committees that maintain strong ties to local authorities. This presents an opportunity to convey crucial advocacy messages at a local level. However, due to the need for more professional skills in advocacy of most volunteers from this local committees, the quality of local advocacy remains a challenge. Thus, capitalizing on this opportunity is both a potential benefit and an obstacle.
4. **Limited strategic advocacy.** Informants at the global level highlighted the importance of strategic advocacy, planning and having a clear advocacy strategy at the national level. Examples from the case studies reveal that in some cases, advocacy strategies were not effectively contextualized at the country level, as in case study 2 about the Accelerator Programme (more on this in Annex 7).

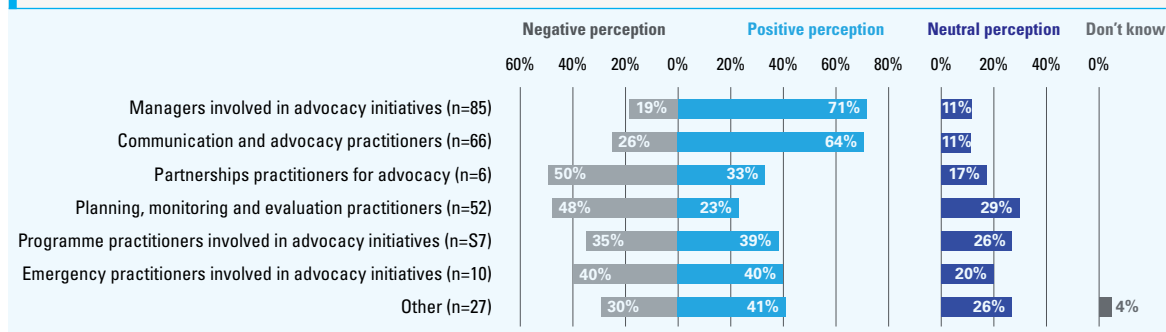
Q3.2.4 SHARED PERCEPTION AMONG UNICEF STAFF OF THEIR CAPACITIES AND SKILLS, AND COMMITMENT TO CARRY OUT ADVOCACY WORK

PERCEPTION OF SKILLS

The survey results for UNICEF employees show that most informants consider they are **skilled in basic advocacy techniques**. When the responses are analysed by position, the perception of managers involved in advocacy and communication, and advocacy practitioners and emergency practitioners involved in advocacy is similar, and 90 per cent of these respondents considered themselves skilled in basic advocacy. Programme practitioners involved in advocacy have a lower perception of their basic advocacy skills (82 per cent consider them adequate). Planning, monitoring, and evaluation practitioners at the CO level have a lower perception of their basic advocacy skills, as 58 per cent consider them adequate.

Concerning the informants’ perception of their **skills in advanced advocacy**, including political intelligence, the results reveal a considerably lower perception. Overall, 45 per cent of informants considered themselves skilled in relevant topics. However, statistically significant differences are found between different positions, as shown in Figure 11. For example, 71 per cent of managers involved in advocacy consider their skills in advanced advocacy to be adequate, whereas 39 per cent of programme practitioners involved in advocacy and 23 per cent of planning, monitoring and evaluation practitioners consider their skills to be adequate. Concerning the perception based on the level of involvement on advocacy initiatives, 80 per cent of informants, mostly or exclusively involved in advocacy initiatives, consider their advanced advocacy skills developed (a total of 88 informants from the total 303 surveyed). Nonetheless, this perception is higher in HQ than at the regional and CO levels.

Figure 11. Survey results on the perception of informants on advance advocacy skills per position



Source: UNICEF global survey

The results of the interviews show that some informants acknowledge the efforts made and the advocacy capacity-building initiatives put into motion in the last years. Among the examples provided by informants, they mentioned that the ACBI team had invested significantly in creating training materials for advocacy, M&E and results-based management (RBM), including a new set of materials and country programme planning cycles. Also, efforts have been made to incorporate advocacy strategy development within the capacity-building initiative's training modules. Nonetheless, several informants agreed that there were **limited capacities when it came to political intelligence** for advocacy purposes. According to these informants, political intelligence and the ability to frame and shape policy requests are lacking at both global and country levels. The example of the COP26 exemplifies this, as the application of political intelligence at a global level was unsystematic and relied on last-minute information about ministers' interests. The United Kingdom government, however, had better access to intelligence, allowing for improved strategic planning.

In any case, relevant examples of seizing opportunity and gathering political intelligence were identified. In the case study on GAP 1 in Indonesia, a local communication colleague had a place in the government's COVID-19 task force team, which brought the opportunity to influence and gather political intelligence first-hand. These examples show the importance of local staff members in providing valuable insights for advocacy work. In general, informants highlight the importance of improving political intelligence within the organization by using national staff members' knowledge and personal networks and developing relevant skills.

Box 1. Good practice

In the context of COP26 (case study 4), the UK NatCom had a clearer understanding and access to political intelligence, which greatly facilitated strategic planning and specific actions. The use of political intelligence as a regular part of their advocacy strategy involved identifying decision makers, understanding their responsibilities and determining why certain actions had not yet been taken.

Informants also stressed leadership's diverse approaches and capacities for advocating at different levels and influencing governments. Representatives play a critical role in advocacy, uniting offices internally and exerting political influence externally. While the country representative is crucial in meeting and convincing key stakeholders, they do not necessarily have to be the advocacy strategist. Individuals transitioning from technical project management to advocacy/representation roles often need more preparation in advocacy and political awareness. These informants stressed that having someone who can lead advocacy strategy development and collaborate with others in the office is essential. UNICEF's model focuses on direct country support, with 80 per cent of its staff stationed at the national level, emphasizing that real change occurs at the country level. However, unlike organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the World Bank, UNICEF has limited HQ advocacy teams. Also, informants at all levels pointed out the stress experienced as they manage various responsibilities, including advocacy, fundraising, programme management, global reporting, financial movements, and country missions. Another limitation identified by informants is that **advocacy training is not mandatory** for managers, representatives or programmatic staff, which is considered a major limitation in a massive organization with high staff rotation.

At HQ level, informants from the different GAPs emphasized the challenges faced by the various teams that have **limited fundraising skills** but still need to seek funding for their roles and activities under the GAPs. The need to raise funds requires a considerable effort that diminishes their capacity to deliver programmatic results. Larger teams with more funding have dedicated advocacy support, while smaller teams struggle to deliver. According to informants, this results in inequities that impact organizational effectiveness and highlight the need for more flexible allocation of funds and better leadership. Also, the fact that GCA focuses on GAPs and humanitarian advocacy mainly shows the limited contribution to advocacy initiatives beyond those areas and the challenges other areas experience in getting their attention.

The perception at COs is that there is a need for technical staff in UNICEF to possess advocacy skills so they can create and implement advocacy strategies effectively. Currently, the communication team handles media and social media. However, it does not effectively reach change-makers at the country level, because staff do not have the necessary advocacy skills. At the same time, there is an implicit requirement for advocacy experts to combine a varied skill set of management and fundraising which limits their dedication and efficacy in advocacy responsibilities.

PERCEPTION OF SUPPORT PROVIDED AND ENGAGEMENT

When it comes to **feeling supported to implement relevant advocacy initiatives** (e.g., adequate time allocation, management support, etc.), national informants reported higher support levels than their counterparts at the regional and global levels. Generally, the higher the respondent's involvement in advocacy initiatives, the higher their perception of being supported. Finally, informants reported **feeling engaged in influencing others** to achieve advocacy excellence. This was particularly so for managers involved in advocacy initiatives (75 per cent of the total said that they felt engaged) and communication and advocacy practitioners (62 per cent). Nonetheless, managers at the HQ level (90 per cent) reported much higher engagement than those at the regional (42 per cent) and CO levels (73 per cent). Conversely, programme practitioners involved in advocacy at the HQ level and planning, monitoring and evaluation practitioners at the CO level reported lower levels of engagement. On average, 75 per cent of informants with higher involvement in advocacy issues described feeling engaged when it comes to influencing others to achieve advocacy excellence.

Key findings:

- 1. Global roles, responsibilities** and collaboration expected for advocacy purposes have been defined in the Compendium on the Organization of UNICEF, the document of reference on existing functions, lines of responsibility and accountability within the organization. Ad hoc joint workplans for specific initiatives that clearly define accountabilities are developed in some instances and across GAPs. Still, the approach is not systematized and reflected in primary planning documents. At the global level, tension still exists in defining the roles and accountability of the advocacy co-leads (GCA and PG) and, to a certain extent, other supporting divisions. Despite having ample capacity, UNICEF's effectiveness is reported to be hindered by limited cohesion, a competitive approach across divisions and teams, and a bureaucratic structure at the global level, which slows decision-making and agility. The limited definition of roles and responsibilities also manifests when integrating global and national advocacy. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 2. When it comes to humanitarian advocacy**, similar views are shared in terms of the definition of roles and responsibilities. The activation of the Emergency Procedures is pivotal in creating certainty and structure around roles and coordination. Recent attempts have been made to draw distinctions between communication and humanitarian advocacy and create roles to strengthen coordination. Although these efforts have translated into greater communication at the HQ level, this has yet to be effectively integrated at regional and national levels. *(Level 2: Limited lines and levels of evidence with limited triangulation)*
- 3. Positive examples of defining and establishing roles and responsibilities** for advocacy have been identified at the regional and national levels. The key challenge lies in addressing the structural issue of integrating advocacy into existing communication roles. The perception at COs is that recent changes in transitioning to a more prominent advocacy role have taken place while maintaining most of the personnel, roles and skill sets at the country and regional offices. Conversely, NatComs have expressed a positive perception regarding the advocacy role definition. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- Despite relevant examples of **coordination and cross-collaboration** among teams and divisions, coordination challenges exist. Internally, these are linked to integrating advocacy efforts at different levels and within HQ divisions and teams, such as improving inter-GAP coordination. Externally, the limited existing coordination structures for CSOs have been identified as a challenge. Although relevant examples of **developing networks and participating/extending networks for advocacy** were identified at all levels through the different case studies, there are no specific documents and/or strategies designed for developing and strengthening advocacy networks. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*

Q3.3.1 LEVEL OF DETAIL AND SPECIFICITY ON THE ADVOCACY ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES INCLUDED IN THE SP AND OTHER PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

Overall, the Compendium on the Organization of UNICEF⁵² is the document of reference on existing functions, lines of responsibility, and accountability within the organization. The document includes a section on the collaboration expected for advocacy purposes, where it states the relevance given to this function within UNICEF and the general roles played by main divisions, including GCA, PG, Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM), PFP, Public Partnership Division (PPD), and the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS). The document mentions the role and importance of the Global Advocacy Task Force co-led by GCA and PG in setting strategic visions and priorities. Also, GCA and the EMOPS jointly lead humanitarian advocacy at the global level to safeguard the CCC in emergency settings. Finally, the document also establishes the importance of the support to be provided by HQ and ROs to national offices for the effective integration of advocacy at all levels in both development and humanitarian settings. The document also defines the directors' and representatives' roles and responsibilities. At a more operational level, Annual Work Plans (AWP) and other key planning instruments are expected to clearly establish responsibilities when carrying out specific initiatives set in strategic documents such as country programme documents (CPD)s and/or joint strategic plans (JSPs).

The analysis per GAP shows that ad hoc joint workplans have been developed for specific initiatives, clearly articulating internal roles and responsibilities as follows:

- In the case of GAP 1, examples of the joint workplan between PG and the Global Office of Research and Foresight for developing the State of the World's Children (SOWC) report, including the strategy document and collective action tracker, were analysed. Also, the Strategic Health Advocacy Moments calendar was used by GCA and PG to coordinate global and technical health-related engagement moments. In nutrition-related work, documents outlining joint messages from advocacy and communications teams within GCA were also identified, together with the advocacy plan 2022 that was prepared as a result of the workshops held by PG/PFP/PPD and GCA.
- In the case of GAP 2, a brief interim joint workplan was developed by GCA and PG, which focused on joint activities for leveraging data, evidence and solutions, engaging with business leaders as advocates and supporting tailored country-level advocacy.
- In the case of GAP 3, the MHPSS in Education Advocacy Roadmap 2023-2024 was reviewed.
- In the case of GAP 4, two joint workplans were analysed, one overall joint advocacy workplan of GCA and PG for the remainder of 2023 and the joint workplan between the two divisions on the 2023 Water Conference.

At the HQ level, the overall AWP for GCA was analysed to establish the level of detail and specificity on the advocacy roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. The AWP report includes a specific section for advocacy, which links output areas, activities and sub-activities to an overarching advocacy outcome.⁵³ The output areas considered refer to the different GAPS, humanitarian advocacy, and advocacy capacity-building results. For each one of these areas, activities and sub-activities are defined. Each one of the sub-activities is connected to one indicator. The responsible GCA staff and the contributing team are included in feeding and managing these indicators/activities. For other internal staff contributing to these results, a specific section, 'Partners and Allies,' is also included, reflecting internal and external units/divisions and/or organizations. Internal partners and allies include many different units and offices (e.g., PG, PFP, PPD, EMOPS, COs, ROs, NatComs, DAPM, Global Office of Research and Foresight, etc.). The great majority of sub-activities are to be developed together with other internal units and divisions. Although the report references these and links that work to specific departments, the document does not provide the same level of detail as for GCA's responsible

52 UNICEF, Report of the accountability system of UNICEF: Compendium on the organization of UNICEF, 2022.

53 By 2025, UNICEF will have progressively influenced decision makers and other key audiences to take action to address the most challenging child rights issues in 190 countries and territories through strategic advocacy, partnerships, engaging children and young people, and deploying our credible voice and brand (Outcome 2, Advocacy).

staff. In addition, the report cannot be considered a joint workplan with other units since only GCA-led activities are included.

At the regional and national level, the format of regional programme documents (RPD), CPDs and JSP only provided a general reference to major external partners. Annual workplans at these levels follow a similar structure as the aforementioned GCA AWP, although less specific.

Q3.3.2 SHARED PERCEPTION AMONG UNICEF STAFF ON HOW ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES

Box 2. Good practice

The NatCom in Italy and ECARO have recently produced a joint Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)-integrated workplan to clarify roles and responsibilities per activity. The workplan divides each activity into three main approaches (service delivery, technical assistance, and advocacy/SBC), establishing what office is responsible for conducting and leading what. In this way, both offices ensure their specific roles are maximized and used synergistically, considering the NatCom's limited capacity to carry out technical assistance and ECARO's limited expertise in advocacy.

AND ACCOUNTABILITY ARE CLEARLY DEFINED AND SUPPORTED FOR ADVOCACY

The following is the synthesis of the main ideas of informants at different levels on the issue of establishing roles and responsibilities for advocacy work. The complete analysis on roles and responsibilities for advocacy is included in Annex 16. In an overall sense, informants at different levels consistently suggested that **one of the most evident limitations to implementing advocacy work is the limited establishment of clear roles and responsibilities at all levels.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

At the global level, several informants pointed out the efforts made to ensure the GCA and PG's co-leadership for advocacy in development settings. Informants emphasized the relevance of defining GAP focal points in GCA and PG teams for strengthening close collaboration and better engagement. However, the main challenge identified at the global level was the **limited definition of roles across divisions for advocacy purposes**, mainly between the co-leads (GCA and PG). According to a considerable number of informants, the lines of responsibility for advocacy are, in most cases, blurred. The concept of co-ownership is acknowledged and accepted by staff in principle. However, it needs a clear and down-to-earth definition and implementation strategy, which ensures accountability effective coordination. This limitation hampers the implementation of advocacy efforts at the global level. Despite having ample capacity, UNICEF's effectiveness is reported to be hindered by limited cohesion, a competitive approach across divisions, and a bureaucratic structure at the global level, which slows decision-making and agility. This is reflected in the results of the survey⁵⁴, since 30 per cent of informants from GCA (20 in total) and 46 per cent of informants from PG (29 informants in total) rated the level of coordination reached within HQ as low or very low. Generally, one third of informants from HQ considered the level of coordination within HQ for advocacy purposes to be low or very low.⁵⁵ In any case, representatives from both divisions confirmed the need for more prominent roles and better collaboration; improvements were acknowledged but uncertainty remained regarding practical implementation. Both parties emphasized the importance of teamwork and knowledge-sharing to achieve the desired objectives.

54 Results were not statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence level.

55 Results were statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence level.

This limited definition of roles and responsibilities permeates other divisions and teams. The need for more clarity in roles and responsibilities between PFP and PPD has also been pointed out. More information on this is included in Annex 16.

When it comes to humanitarian advocacy, similar views are shared in terms of the definition of roles and responsibilities. Humanitarian advocacy is co-led by GCA and EMOPS at the global level. Recent attempts have been made to draw distinctions between communication and humanitarian advocacy and create roles to strengthen coordination and foster trust, relationships and accountability. Although these efforts have translated into greater communication at the HQ level, this has yet to be effectively integrated at regional and national levels. The situation in Afghanistan exemplifies this problem, as various teams operated independently without clear direction from the country or regional offices. More information on this is included in Annex 16.

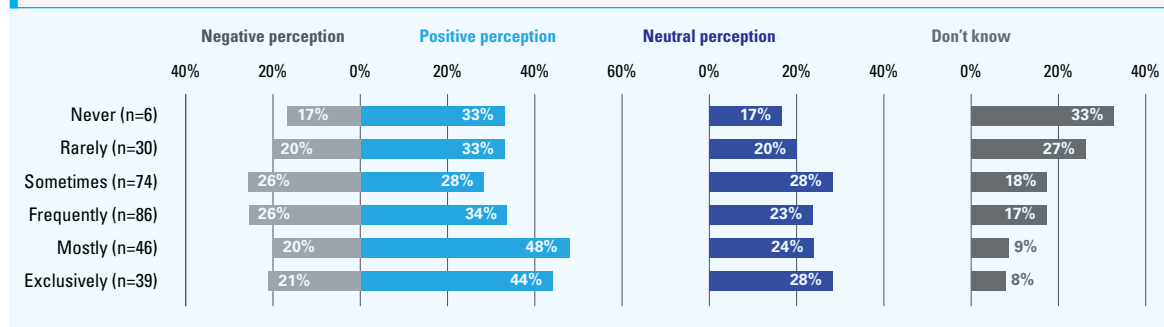
Box 3. Good practice

GCA created a specific role for humanitarian advocacy to liaise with EMOPS, strengthen coordination and ensure advocacy is effectively translated in humanitarian settings with the support of both co-leading divisions.

The survey results align with the feedback provided in the interviews. When asked about the extent to which roles and responsibilities are clearly defined at the global level for advocacy purposes, 37 per cent of surveyed staff thought the advocacy roles were considerably or completely defined, whereas 21 per cent considered they were defined slightly or not at all.

Nonetheless, it is important to stress that the greater the involvement in advocacy initiatives, the more positive the perception, and more than half of informants that are mainly or exclusively involved in advocacy initiatives have a positive perception of the level of establishment of roles and responsibilities, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Survey results on the perception of informants on the extent to which clear responsibilities are set for advocacy



Source: UNICEF global survey

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

At the regional and national levels, UNICEF's global accountability system determines that UNICEF representatives should promote the strategic goals of UNICEF through active advocacy and communication at regional, national and subnational levels, in line with UNICEF's advocacy guidelines and regional and country-level strategies. They are also to ensure principled humanitarian advocacy within emergency response. [Positive examples of establishing roles and responsibilities at the regional and national levels](#) have been identified. For example, in the case of case study 3 in Italy, the NatCom has a cooperative agreement with UNICEF HQ, which focuses on advocacy and fundraising. The understanding of roles and responsibilities among different parties (PG, PFP and NatCom) has improved significantly in recent times due to increased communication and regular exchanges held, particularly in the area of MHPSS.

A detailed analysis, including positive examples and challenges when defining roles and responsibilities as per the results of the case studies is included in Annex 16, and the summary is presented below.

- [At HQ](#), some informants mentioned that representatives at regional and national levels do not necessarily consider advocacy as part of their role, or at least one of the critical parts. Also, one issue to factor in is that yielding results for advocacy usually involves a long-term process, and these time frames do not necessarily match those established for a regional or country representative, which are usually shorter.
- [The perception in COs](#) is that recent changes in the communication division, transitioning to GCA, have occurred while maintaining most of the personnel, roles, and skill sets at the country and regional offices. Also, because the locus of advocacy is national, it leads to technical experts doing advocacy while not necessarily having advocacy skills.
- [National Committees](#) have a clearer advocacy position, given their focus and structure.
- [Also, informants from ROs and COs](#) pointed out the limited clarity in roles and responsibilities for some newly introduced thematic areas, such as climate. Compared to other areas, such as education and child protection, there is often no designated climate issue expert. This absence makes it challenging to develop workplans and allocate necessary resources for proper communication and advocacy efforts.
- [In humanitarian settings](#), the key challenge identified by informants at national levels also lies in addressing the structural issue of integrating advocacy into existing communication roles. Advocacy roles in humanitarian settings are almost defined on a case-by-case basis. Under normal circumstances, programme leads would work directly with their ministry counterparts on advocacy. In humanitarian settings, roles are defined as messages are formulated and opportunities arise. There is, therefore, no single role leading these conversations with governments as several different roles might speak to them at once (GCA, PPD, the NatCom, etc.), and it is often not known who is leading on what (this is most before the emergency is categorized as L2, L3).

The survey results show that around 20 per cent of the informants most involved in advocacy initiatives at the HQ level still consider that roles are only slightly established or not established at all. The survey results also align with the perception that clear roles and responsibilities are still to be set at the regional and country levels. **On average, 25 per cent of respondents considered that clear roles and responsibilities are considerably or completely established at the regional levels.** When it comes to the perception of the extent to which roles and responsibilities **are defined at the country level**, the results are interesting. Informants from NatComs have a mostly positive perception (more than 70 per cent have a positive perception), whereas informants at COs and field offices have a lower positive perception (41 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively). In addition, only 30 per cent of informants at HQ considered advocacy roles to be considerably or completely defined at the country level.

When asked to what extent those **roles are implemented**, the percentages at all levels are significantly reduced. On average, only 35 per cent of respondents who are mostly or exclusively focused on advocacy initiatives have a positive perception of the level of application of advocacy roles at the global level. This percentage is reduced to 20 per cent at the regional level and 40 per cent at the country level.

Q3.3.3 EVIDENCE OF THE LEVEL OF COORDINATION/SYNERGIES GENERATED ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE COORDINATION

Within UNICEF, considerable coordination mechanisms exist to facilitate collaboration among colleagues and leaders from different divisions and levels. One of the main coordination mechanisms for advocacy is the Global Advocacy Taskforce (GAT), a cross-organizational mechanism that sets out how to strengthen UNICEF's global advocacy practice to ensure optimal outcomes for children. The GAT is responsible for operationalizing the Global Advocacy Framework and, among other things, led the adoption process of the GAPs and developed the SP Advocacy Vision Paper. The GAT members include representatives from GCA, PG and EMOPS, among others, and some of the GAP leaders. Meetings are held regularly (every six weeks) to discuss and coordinate global advocacy initiatives.

Regarding global coordination between GCA and PG, the Deputy Director of GCA, in matrix management with GCA Director, is already reporting to PG and participates in the monthly PG leadership meetings, which helps optimize the SP and advocacy approach without significant restructuring and costs. From the PG side, a focal group is being established to coordinate and enhance advocacy efforts, although it is still a work in progress. PG/GCA focal points' discussions for each GAP take place on a regular basis and issues such as the identification of advantages and added value, evolution and adaptation strategies, presentation of results, and recommendations for the way forward are discussed.

When it comes to coordination within GAPs, close coordination on GAPs has been reported. Moreover, GAP leads from GCA and PG have internal project team meetings (HQ level) and biweekly or monthly working groups/meetings with NatComs and COs. In any case, all GAPs have different coordination structures. The commonality is that the sessions take place at HQ (project team meetings) and RO/CO levels at specific key moments. There is also the informal collaboration that takes place organically. These regular intra-GAP meetings are complemented with 'deep dives'; in-depth analyses of the situation and design of GAPs to define the following steps and ensure relevance throughout the implementation process. Since 2021, one deep dive for each GAP has taken place. In addition, a strategic moment of reflection was recently carried out by GCA, and a midterm review will start in autumn 2023 to revise the GAPs design, measure current progress and take decisions for the second half of the SP implementation process.

Inter-GAP coordination between GCA and PG is led by GAP leads, who facilitate meetings for GAPs through an informal GAP coordination committee. These meetings are held every three months and they have taken place at least six times in the past year and a half. However, the need to improve and strengthen these mechanisms was pinpointed, as they lack a formal structure and regular frequency.

Examples of relevant coordination in GAPs, social protection and humanitarian advocacy are included in Annex 17.

MAIN CHALLENGES IN INTERNAL COORDINATION

A considerable number of informants, particularly at the global level, considered that UNICEF needs to improve connections between different levels, including offices at the regional and country levels. The challenge is ensuring that not only A&C is involved in advocacy but also colleagues in other teams, particularly colleagues in PG teams. **Examples of the main challenges in coordination in GAPs, are included in Annex 17.**

The results of the survey are aligned with the information gathered through KIs as the majority of respondents considered that moderately low levels of coordination are reached at the different levels. More specific information on this is included in Annex 17.

MAIN CHALLENGES IN EXTERNAL COORDINATION

Limited coordination structure for coordination with civil society organizations (CSOs). At the global level, the need for a coordination structure for CSOs was emphasized. Priority is given to coordination and partnerships with the private sector and fundraising compared to civil society partners. The lack of dedicated staff for civil society coordination slows progress, and there is an evident need for more focused resources to enhance this coordination effort. It was also pointed out that the limited involvement of the GCA-CSO partnership in events such as the water conference resulted from restricted access to stakeholders and the direct engagement of other units. It was also emphasized that, to improve outreach to CSO partners, communication should come from entire sections in PG rather than just one person in the advocacy division.

Q3.3.4 EVIDENCE OF THE APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES AVAILABLE TO ACTIVELY DEVELOP INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NETWORKS FOR ADVOCACY

Relevant examples of developing networks and participating/extending networks for advocacy were identified in the different case studies (e.g., case study 3). UNICEF is highly recognized and reported to be invited to relevant discussions on child rights in a diversity of contexts, which also provides good opportunities to strengthen networks for advocacy purposes.

Beyond the use of existing planning documents, ad hoc joint strategies and guidelines reviewed (toolkits for partnerships, guidelines for stakeholder analysis and civil society engagement, for NGO collaboration, government interaction, and private sector cooperation), where different advocacy partners and stakeholders are identified, **there are no specific documents and/or strategies designed for developing and strengthening advocacy networks.** It is acknowledged that there is an existing weakness in political intelligence-gathering mechanisms necessary for mapping networks /influencing pathways for effective advocacy. Informants at HQ level also expressed the need to be more connected to regional/national levels for developing networks.

Q3.3.5 LEVEL OF SPECIFICITY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITH PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE COMMON EXPECTED GOALS

Several templates and examples of cooperation agreements for advocacy at HQ level were assessed to determine the extent to which they clearly established the roles and responsibilities of the different parties. These documents clearly reflect the responsibilities and accountability of both UNICEF and implementing partners. The general cooperation agreement document that is signed by both parties, and the programme documents that guide the operationalization of the cooperation agreements mention responsibilities and accountabilities.

Findings – Evaluability Assessment



6. Findings – Evaluability Assessment

Q4.1 VALIDITY OF DESIGN – To what extent are the GAPs ToCs and plans specific enough to provide guidance for operationalizing and harmonizing the advocacy work across UNICEF functions and the global, regional and national levels?

Key findings:

- 1. In all GAP theories of change (ToCs), the strategy includes most of the main elements considered for the analysis,** including background information, approaches, and key elements of the results chain from inputs to impact. However, no causal link assumptions (necessary internal and external conditions for the expected changes to occur at the different levels), linkages to overarching goal frameworks and other GAPs, feedback loops, and potential collateral effects were considered. **The ToCs follow a logical structure.** Also, all the GAP ToCs establish the different levels of implementation (global, regional, national) per expected results. However, no indication of the different causal connections between all the elements was included in the ToC, and no causal pathways explain how changes should unfold at the various levels. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 2. A detailed set of barriers and limitations are included for each GAP ToC.** The plausibility of the ToC would have been reinforced if the document included a clear indication of the sources of barriers to progress and the rationale assumptions (e.g., previous evaluations, research papers, synthesis reviews, etc.). *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 3. Periodic revisions of the ToC is recommended in main documents,** which also stress the importance of having space and flexibility for national and regional adaptation. Yet, specific approaches to identify and categorize the different components of the advocacy work based on their level of complexity are not considered. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 4. Relevant examples of complementarity work across GAPs** were identified, as well as potential areas for collaboration, which mainly involve cross-cutting work on climate change issues. Complementary work between GAPs and social protection is more limited, and the initiatives to link child poverty, public finance and social protection with other areas like WASH were not successful. As GCA funding is strictly focused on GAPs and humanitarian advocacy, other non-prioritized areas must rely on project-based funds to hire consultants for crucial advocacy work on topics like social protection, gender or child poverty. Several informants emphasized that integration and coordination should only be pursued when it serves a purpose and contributes to an outcome rather than being an end in itself. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*

Q4.1.1 LEVEL OF COMPLETENESS, ACCURACY, PLAUSIBILITY AND CONTEXT-SENSITIVITY OF GAP TOC, INCLUDING THE LEVEL OF REFLECTION ABOUT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, the overall results of the assessment are presented, and the definition of key elements of a ToC and the individual analysis per GAP is attached in Annex 18. The GAP ToC analysis results are based on the full information available on the strategy, including the original ToC document and the results of the deep dives and reviews conducted by the GAP team.

Table 10. Results of the assessment of the GAP theories of change

CRITERIA	GAP 1 ToC	GAP 2 ToC	GAP 3 ToC	GAP 4 ToC
1. Completeness	Insufficient but nascent	Insufficient but nascent	Insufficient but nascent	Insufficient but nascent
2. Accuracy	Insufficient but nascent	Insufficient but nascent	Insufficient but nascent	Insufficient but nascent
3. Plausibility	Sufficient/good	Sufficient/good	Sufficient/good	Insufficient but nascent
4. Context-sensitivity	Sufficient/good	Sufficient/good	Sufficient/good	Sufficient/good

COMPLETENESS

This sub-criterion refers to the extent to which a ToC includes all relevant elements that enable a clear and comprehensive representation of the different pathways of change leading to results at all levels. Completeness also analyses the extent to which relevant cross-cutting issues (gender, equity, disability, and human rights) are reflected in the intervention design and the ToC. Table 11 shows the overall compliance with the key elements considered for the analysis of completeness by the GAP ToCs assessed.

Table 11. Elements considered for the analysis of the advocacy M&E system, and status (met/not met)

ELEMENT	STATUS	ELEMENT	STATUS
1. Background information	✓	6. Feedback loops	
2. Results chain	✓	7. Linkages with GAPs and overarching goals	
3. Rationale assumptions	✓	8. Cross-cutting issues	
4. Causal link assumptions		9. Analysis of risks and negative influence	✓
5. Limitations and barriers	✓	10. Potential collateral effects	

In all GAP ToCs, the strategy includes the main elements from inputs to impact, including a specific section explaining [the purpose and background](#) of the ToC, including the decision to create the different GAPs in 2020 and the goal of the strategy to guide the specific change agenda. The documents point out the importance of periodically reviewing the ToC to reflect changes in the context and also present the main problem that the different GAPs aim to address or alleviate, including relevant background information and the expected contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. In some cases, the original set of documents also includes a Canvas Matrix that identifies the main areas reflected in the narrative ToC, such as barriers, opportunities, milestones, and more.

The documents also include a series of [rationale assumptions](#) or premises on which the GAPs are founded (e.g., ‘focusing on the specific change agenda of immunization can act as a wedge that opens the door for the delivery of critical primary healthcare services’). These assumptions serve the purpose of strengthening the plausibility of the ToC (see the next section). However, the GAP ToCs lack [causal link assumptions](#) that explain the internal and external conditions needed for change to happen at all levels and for each one of the cause-effect pathways that are assumed in the results chain.

One of the [main gaps in the GAP documents is the lack of linkages between the overall goals considered under each GAP and the overarching results](#) and goal areas they aim to contribute to realizing the SP 2022–2025. There is no indication in the document of the expected contribution of the GAPs to SP goal areas and, more specifically, to relevant results within those goal areas.

Concerning the [integration of cross-cutting issues](#), the ToCs only mention relevant issues to a limited extent, such as in the case of GAP 1, where the section about implementation highlights that “national implementation should also consider the needs of different genders and specific vulnerable and marginalized groups, as well as their existing access to services”. Beyond this, no specific reference or mention of relevant cross-cutting issues is considered. Finally, the ToC document also includes an [analysis of risk and mitigation](#) strategies and reflects the main partners and stakeholders, global opportunities, milestones, and key accelerators. However, feedback loops and linkages to other GAPs are not considered in the ToC document, nor is there a reflection on [potential collateral effects](#) (intended and/or unintended).

ACCURACY/ROBUSTNESS

This element examines the degree to which elements of the ToC (activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts and assumptions) and the proposed causal linkages between them are clearly and coherently indicated. The ToC should include a clear and logical sequence on how a set of strategies will contribute to achieving a number of outputs once the assumptions considered have materialized. Then, outputs should contribute to outcomes and these in turn should contribute to the global impact sought by the advocacy efforts. The ToC should reveal the causal pathways linking elements towards the realization of goals, meaning the extent to which defined elements are linked to each other, while explicitly making underlying causal link assumptions.

Table 12. Element considered for the analysis of ToC accuracy/robustness

ELEMENT	STATUS	ELEMENT	STATUS
1. General causal pathways	✓	2. Causal linkages at all levels	

The results chain proposed for the different GAPs include the main results and overarching outcomes these results are expected to contribute to. The documents also establish a sequence of change (general causal pathways) that follows the logic ‘if we do this, then we will achieve that, considering the following...’. This logic presents a list of what is to be done, and a justification of why (rationale assumptions), and concludes with a list of key results and impacts to be achieved. The theories of change follow a logical structure. Also, all the GAP ToCs establish the different levels of implementation (global, regional, national) and the linkages between them and the expected results.

Nonetheless, the ToCs do not clearly indicate the different causal linkages between all the elements. Results are presented as a list of global, regional and/or national achievements that contribute to advocacy outcomes. However, there is no hierarchy, causal pathways, or logic that explains how changes are supposed to unfold at different levels. Similarly, the ToCs present a list of advocacy activities, reasons for their deployment, and expected changes. However, it neither clarifies the causal linkages among them nor shows some level of prioritization on the significance of activities and outputs to the contribution of expected goals.

PLAUSIBILITY

This sub-criterion analyses how likely it is that a ToC will generate real changes on the ground at the expected times. For that, the logic should be based on common sense and prior evidence suggesting that the activities, if implemented, are expected to trigger the causal chain leading to desired results. In addition, the logic of the outcome chain needs to be solid, and the ToC should be specific enough to measure its assumptions in credible and useful ways.

Table 13. Elements considered for the analysis of ToC plausibility

ELEMENT	STATUS	ELEMENT	STATUS
1. Logic grounded in previous experience	✓	1. Limitations/barriers grounded in previous experience	✓

The GAP ToCs include a series of rationale assumptions based on prior experience and provide the grounds for the plausibility of the proposed strategy. Statements such as ‘failure to build demand and acceptance for COVID-19 vaccines will have knock-on effects on childhood vaccinations’ enhance the plausibility of the ToC for GAP 1 to lead to expected changes. This kind of assumption reflects the results of previous experience on how and why to consider certain actions or ways of interpreting reality. In addition, the documents include a set of barriers to progress that set the grounds to explain the main limitations identified in the particular area of intervention and how the ToC is expected to lead to the intended results by considering these barriers. Considering barriers is very helpful for identifying potential negative contributions in the cause-effect chain, and the most relevant barriers have been grouped and presented as such in the version of the ToC developed as part of the evaluation (see Annexes 19, 20, 21 and 22). The plausibility of the ToC would have been reinforced if the document included a clear indication of the sources of information about barriers to progress and the assumptions rationale (e.g., previous evaluations, research papers, synthesis reviews, etc.).

CONTEXT-SENSITIVITY

This sub-criterion studies the degree to which the ToC encompasses the diversity of contexts it is meant to cover and whether it is sensitive to the inherent unpredictability of the context in which the advocacy efforts are implemented. The GAP strategic documents state that the ToC is a living strategy document that will be continually reviewed, monitored, and updated as required. The 'deep dive' documents and updated two-pagers produced for different GAPs (GAP 1, 2 and 4) are proof of that continuous revision. This evolution reflects the efforts made to ensure the adaptability of GAP 4. For GAP 3, there are no evident references to it having been adapted over this time, as this has not yet been considered necessary.

Table 14. Elements considered for the analysis of ToC context-sensitivity

ELEMENT	STATUS	ELEMENT	STATUS
1. The ToC is adapted to contextual changes	✓	3. Reflects development and humanitarian settings	✓
2. Periodic revision of the ToC is considered	✓	4. Definition of complexity levels	

When it comes to the adaptation to different contexts, the GAP strategic documents acknowledge the importance of ensuring space and flexibility for national and regional adaptation and implementation to different contexts, and they provide examples of how that adaptation can be implemented (e.g., adapting targets, adapting the areas of focus, and/or identifying sublevel indicators that are better contextualized). Overall, the main message of the documents is that being flexible, adaptable and correcting courses as needed is critical. Despite these references, the document does not include any particular differentiation between implementation settings (development/humanitarian).

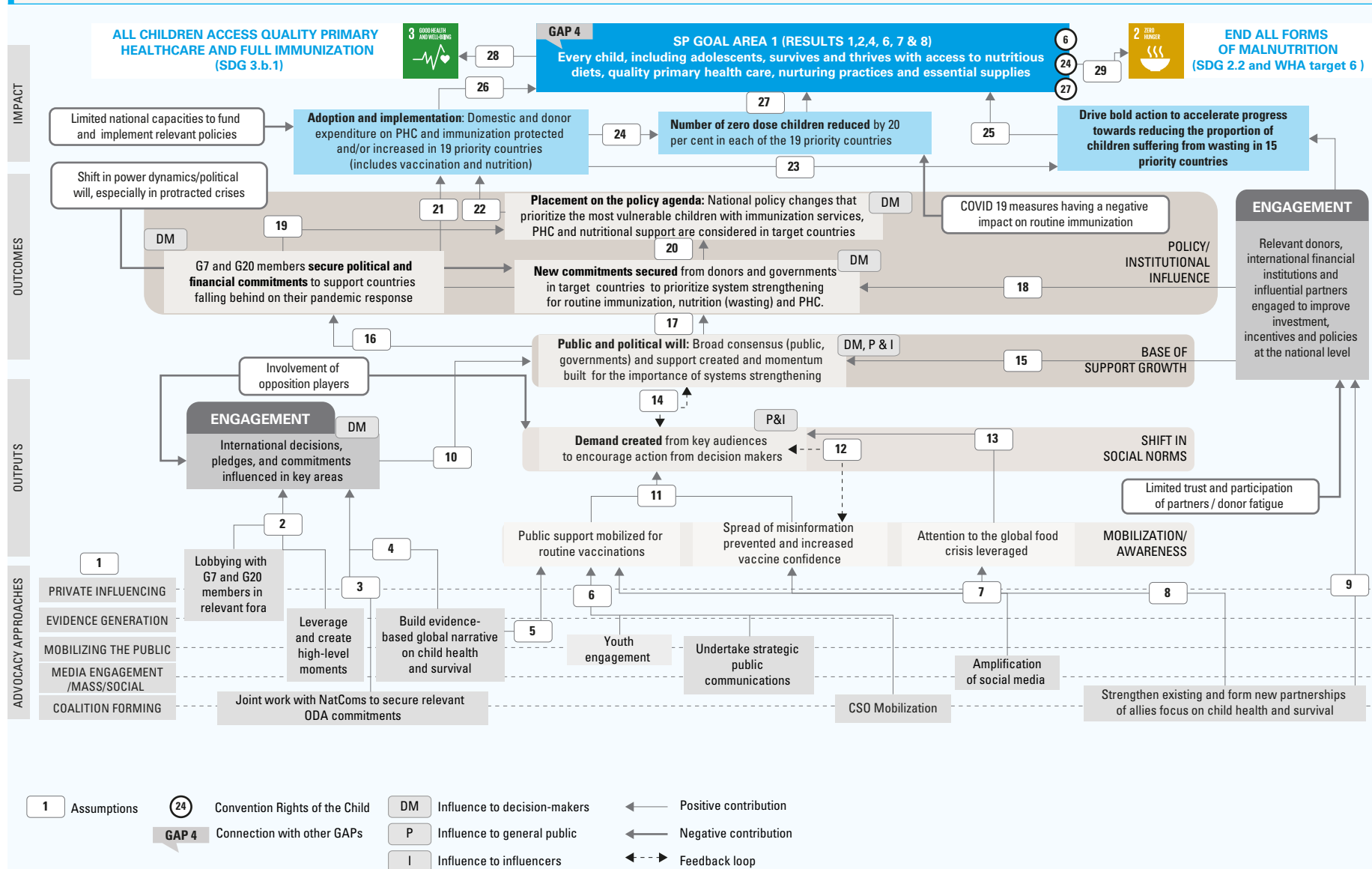
There are no specific approaches to identify and categorize the different components of the advocacy work based on their level of complexity. This is very relevant as simple interventions work the same in most contexts. Complicated interventions are more dependent on context as they work differently in different situations and for different people, or in different implementation environments. In complex interventions, small differences in context might lead to different unpredictable impacts.⁵⁶

THE PROPOSAL OF GAP TOCs

The evaluation team did not limit their work on GAP design solely to the assessment of existing ToCs. Instead, a proposal for a ToC for each GAP was designed, presented, and validated during workshops with representatives from each GAP. The complete ToCs are attached in Annexes 19, 20, 21, and 22. The following is an example for GAP 1. The purpose of defining updated ToCs for all GAPs is to ensure that a document reflecting the current reality of each GAP is available to guide the integration and implementation process for the remaining period of the current Strategic Plan. The ToCs, although updated, are expected to be regularly reviewed and revised based on experiences and data from the field.

⁵⁶ Funnell, S.C. and Rogers, P.J., Purposeful Program Theory Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models, 2011.

Figure 13. ToC developed for GAP 1



Source: Evaluation team

Q4.1.2 LEVEL OF COMPLEMENTARITY AND INTERCONNECTION AMONG GAPS

COMPLEMENTARITY AMONG GAPS

According to informants from GAP 1, and informants generally, integration across climate, nutrition and water has been easier to secure than integration between education and mental health. The prioritization of immunization and nutrition led to the child survival crisis approach. Even though this broadened the original strategy, it is still considered the best possible approach.

Informants from GAP 2 and GAP 3, and some outside informants, highlighted the positive impact of prioritizing mental health work within UNICEF and how this has raised the profile of mental health and enabled more effective work in this area. For example, the work on mental health in schools which brings together global GAP 2 and GAP 3 was mentioned at different levels, including the case of the Italian NatCom.

Concerning GAP 4, it is acknowledged that staff advocate for climate outside the GAP, but it is still a work in progress. Advocacy efforts take place in sectors like education and health but are not clearly defined within the GAP 4 structure, as it focuses on climate and water. There is collaboration at the programme level between health, water and climate groups, but these efforts are not always visible.

The main potential areas for collaboration identified across GAPS are discussed in Annex 23.

CHALLENGES FOR COMPLEMENTARITY WORK ACROSS GAPS

Regarding seeking synergies, several informants argue against forcing synergies across GAPS, stating that in some instances it is unnecessary and can result in reputational risks for UNICEF. Informants emphasized that integration/coordination should only be pursued when it serves a purpose and contributes to an outcome rather than being an end in itself. With a preference for a focused and in-depth understanding of topics, they express caution regarding assumptions that better coordination is always required.

Limitations in complementarity with areas beyond the GAPS. As GCA funding is strictly focused on GAPS and humanitarian advocacy, other non-prioritized areas must rely on project-based funds to hire consultants for crucial advocacy work on topics like social protection, gender or child poverty. Despite the organization's resources, limited funds are available for these consultants due to a lack of support from GCA.

Q4.2 VALIDITY OF DESIGN – To what extent do the GAP ToCs and plans provide sufficient guidance for operationalizing and adapting advocacy work across different and dynamic contexts?

This section complements the analysis of the ToC and particularly already presented assessment on the context-sensitivity of the GAP ToC and plans.

Key findings:

1. Since their conception in 2021, **the GAPs have evolved to ensure adaptability** in a rapidly changing post-COVID-19 global context. The GAPs more directly linked to the areas influenced by the COVID-19 outbreak and the post-COVID situation were the ones that experienced more significant changes, namely GAP 1 on vaccines and GAP 2 on education. In some instances, the changes made to GAPs seem not to have been effectively communicated at the CO level or not disseminated beyond the A&C teams. Despite the levels of adaptability shown by GAPs, there is still awareness at the global level of the challenge of maintaining the relevance of the GAPs in a rapidly changing global context and considering emerging issues. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
2. **Integration of GAPs** is mainly top-down, although relevant examples of bottom-up integration of advocacy efforts were identified. Integration and GAP uptake at the CO level are high, considering CSI indicators for advocacy are required by all COs and also used by NatComs. This effectively means COs have relevant operations linked to global strategies and goals and report to one or more GAPs. As long as GAPs remain suitable for ROs, COs and NatComs, no significant issues were identified in effectively including GAP goals in the design of regional and national strategies. Still, there is a relatively negative perception of the process of integrating and contextualizing relevant advocacy work into practice. In this regard, NatCom representatives have the most positive perception, mentioning fewer challenges for the practical integration of the GAPs. In the humanitarian context, activating the Emergency Procedures is pivotal for effectively integrating advocacy strategies. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
3. Deep dives and regular review exercises are carried out in all GAPs to ensure the relevance of advocacy work in different settings and thematic areas. GCA's strategic 'moment of reflection' has also started, aiming at strengthening the relevance of the advocacy priorities and fine-tuning their logic and coherence to maximize results. Ad hoc mapping exercises are also carried out to understand the context of specific initiatives. **Beyond that, no formal and systematic mechanism to periodically review and capture changes in contextual conditions was identified** in development settings. In humanitarian settings, the Situation Reports (SitReps) serves that purpose to a certain extent. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
4. The SNA reveals **some areas of connection between GAPs that could be further explored** to create synergies and complementarity work based on shared partners and their level of influence for advocacy. Also, the SNA reveals that the GAP 4 is the least connected of all. *(Level 2: Limited lines and levels of evidence with limited triangulation)*
5. Although a system for gathering global information on partnerships exists (UNISON), **no systematic information on partnerships at all levels is currently available**, which limits the capacity of the different teams to seek complementarities and synergies in alliances. **Informants from different GAPs and levels confirmed that the strategy used for identifying and sustaining partners mainly follows an organic structure** with no systematic approach and/or methodology. The main challenge identified when it comes to engaging partners at the global level is the **unbalanced focus for the engagement of CSO partners** compared to private partners and the need for a robust engagement strategy for interdivisional work with CSOs within UNICEF. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*

Q4.2.1 CONTEXT-SENSITIVITY OF THE GAPS

In general, UNICEF is a flexible and decentralized organization that allows offices to adapt strategically according to their specific contexts, focusing on locally relevant issues rather than adhering strictly to Headquarters' guidelines. This adaptability relies on staff's ability to respond to their unique contexts, and de facto might imply prioritizing thematic areas outside the GAPS. Nevertheless, flexibility within UNICEF is reported to vary across levels, with the global level being the least flexible. Despite the challenges, GAP teams have some autonomy and individual adaptability, while decision-making speed varies. According to informants at global level, the HQ level has lower flexibility due to bureaucracy and competing priorities. Nonetheless, since 2021, the GAPS teams have ensured that the priorities remain relevant through the SP implementation process by modifying and adapting the GAP designs to match relevant global demand and changes in contextual needs.

As a result of this process, the following are **the main changes/evolution experienced by GAPS that secure their relevance**:

- **GAP 1:** This is the GAP that has seen the clearest and most profound evolution. The COVID-19 and backsliding, linked to health service disruptions and diversions, economic shocks and food insecurity due to the pandemic, led to an increase in un-immunized children and climate-induced food insecurity. Since 2022, the GAP has shifted from being mainly focused on vaccines and immunization and primary health care (PHC) to encompass the child survival crisis, which considers the initial areas covered and their interrelations with nutrition and climate change-related issues. The team leveraged the momentum around nutrition by organizing events and raising considerable funds.
- **GAP 2:** This global priority has also evolved, and while it originally encompassed the concepts of quality education and digital learning, the latter is more oriented towards school closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The priority has evolved to reflect quality education and learning outcomes as the original scope is no longer relevant.
- **GAP 3:** This GAP, which represents a new thematic area for UNICEF, has not changed as much as others, and their global results structure has been maintained. The priority has remained relevant in the post-COVID-19 situation, as mental health has become a global issue, and more than before, its original design remains relevant.
- **GAP 4:** The GAP on climate change also represents one of the efforts of UNICEF to address this relevant issue, even though there are areas in which the organization is more experienced. As in GAP 3, the priority results and logic frameworks have remained relevant since 2021, and no significant changes were made to ensure its adaptability and relevance to global contexts.

However, and based on some of the results of the KIIs and case studies, the changes to GAPS seem not to have been effectively communicated at the CO level in some instances, or not disseminated beyond the A&C teams.

The survey results also shed light on the perception of the staff about the extent to which global advocacy initiatives are adequately contextualized. The main results are presented below.

Adequacy of global advocacy initiatives. When surveyed informants were asked about the extent to which global advocacy initiatives are adequately contextualized (understood as adapted to the global realities where they are implemented), informants from ROs and COs had a somewhat negative perception (on average, 40 per cent of respondents from RO and CO had a negative view). By contrast, most of the staff at the HQ level consider global advocacy initiatives to be adequately contextualized (only 17 per cent have a negative perception). Interestingly, NatCom representatives have the highest positive views in this regard, as only 12 per cent of respondents have a negative view of the adequate contextualization of global advocacy initiatives. Informants at the global level that are mostly or exclusively involved in advocacy initiatives share a similar perception.

Adequacy of national advocacy initiatives to their context. In general, informants from the global, regional and national levels (both COs and NatComs) share a similar view on the extent to which in-country advocacy initiatives are adequately contextualized. On average, 80 per cent of all informants consider the contextualization at the national level to be positive, with slightly fewer positive views from the HQ level than regional and national levels. A similar level of perception is shared on average by those informants at the national level who are mostly or exclusively involved in advocacy initiatives.

According to those who answered the subsequent open-ended question in the survey, the main elements needed to better contextualize advocacy strategies are better identification and clarity on roles and responsibilities. CO respondents particularly highlighted the need for a more comprehensive M&E system.

Several informants, mainly at the HQ level, expressed the perception during interviews that the advocacy efforts were flexible enough to adapt to contextual challenges, and they provided specific examples. **These specific examples of GAPS and other advocacy efforts being adapted to contextual challenges are included in Annex 24.**

Q4.2.2 INTEGRATION OF THE GAPS AT ALL LEVELS

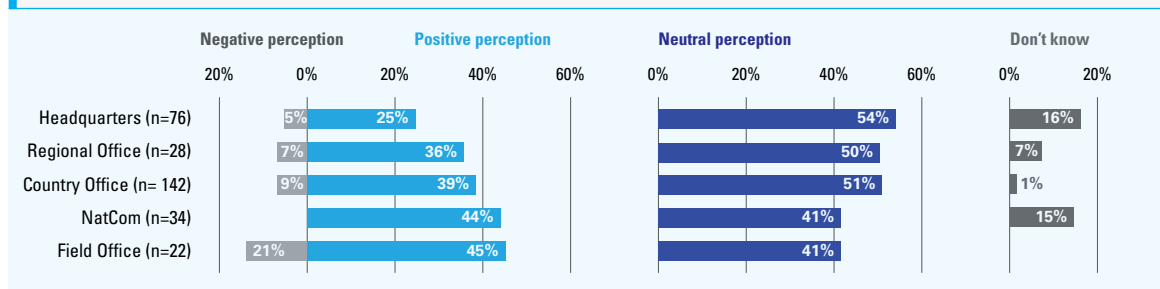
As described in the benchmarking analysis, **UNICEF's approach for the integration of GAPS at all levels mainly relies on a top-down approach**, where global priorities, theories and strategies are expected to flow down and be implemented in practice at the regional and national levels, where the bulk of operations are carried out. Nonetheless, feedback and experience from the practice in the field are also expected to flow bottom-up to ensure GAPS remain relevant and adapted to the contexts where they operate.

UNICEF's global advocacy strategy focuses primarily on the GAP areas, which is not necessarily the case at the regional and country levels, and this leads to positive and negative impacts.

The positive aspect is that non-prioritized advocacy areas, such as migration and social protection, are addressed at regional and country levels. On the other hand, this could result in a limited integration of the GAPS at these levels. In any case, this does not seem to be a problem as the number of countries reporting on relevant GAPS does not reflect major gaps. According to the UNICEF Results on Advocacy Indicators report of 2022, a total of 128 countries reported for relevant advocacy indicator measuring GAP 1, 147 countries reported to GAP 2, 133 countries reported to GAP 3 and 134 countries reported to GAP 4 related indicators, which effectively means that these countries have relevant operations.

Survey results to the question, 'To what extent are the definition and scope of advocacy work effectively translated into practice in the field?' shows that more than half of informants from HQ, ROs and COs consider advocacy strategies are only sometimes effectively translated into practice (neutral perception). 25 per cent of informants from HQ considered advocacy work is often or always effectively translated into practice in the field. This perception is higher among RO informants, CO informants and particularly NatCom informants.

Figure 14. Survey results on perception of advocacy work being effectively translated into practice in the field



Source: UNICEF global survey

Through case studies, the evaluation team identified examples of adequate and synergetic integration of global advocacy approaches, logic and theories at regional and national levels. This integration usually flows top-down, although relevant examples of bottom-up integration have also been identified. These, together with examples of negative results in terms of integration of advocacy identified through case studies, are discussed in Annex 25.

Q4.2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF SIMPLE, COMPLICATED AND COMPLEX COMPONENTS OF ADVOCACY

The assessment under this section focused on the extent to which the GAP design and ToCs identify the simple, complicated and complex aspects of the advocacy work under GAPs, emergency or social protection issues. The main goal behind considering a complexity-aware framework for the analysis is to identify the nature of key aspects of interventions as a way of structuring the strategy and prioritizing efforts when it comes to ensuring adaptability to dynamic context as well as ensuring an adequate set of methodologies and tools to track change and maximize effectiveness and efficiency. In this line, logic frameworks and traditional performance monitoring systems might be useful for simple and complicated interventions. However, additional tools are required to design and evaluate complex advocacy approaches, such as considering unintended results, alternative causes, and gaining an in-depth understanding of assumptions at all levels when considering a non-linear change that can undermine effective decision-making.

In any case, specific strategies are not followed to identify and categorize the different components of the advocacy work based on their level of complexity, as already reflected in the assessment of context-sensitivity for the theories of change and included in relevant key findings. Specific ideas on how to develop this approach are included in section Q6 of the report. The definition of simple, complicated and complex is given in Annex 26. However, categorizing advocacy initiatives under each label relies heavily on contextual factors. This means that some COs with limited access to high-level government representatives might consider private advocacy to be one of the complex aspects of their ToC. By contrast, other COs with direct and trusted lines of communication with high-level officials would categorize this as 'complicated'.

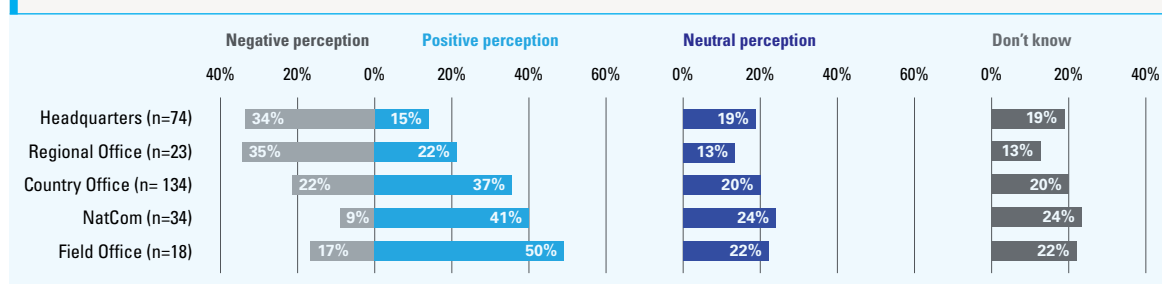
Q4.2.4 EXISTENCE OF MECHANISMS TO PERIODICALLY REVIEW AND CAPTURE CHANGES IN CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

GAP teams and other relevant teams doing advocacy work shared their deep dives and regular review exercises to ensure the relevance of advocacy work in different settings and under different thematic areas. The midterm review for the GAPs will start in autumn 2023, with the aim of ensuring the relevance the advocacy priorities and fine-tuning their logic and coherence to maximize results and relevance. In addition, ad hoc mapping exercises are carried out to understand the context of specific initiatives.

Beyond that, no formal and systematic mechanism to periodically review and capture changes in contextual conditions was identified in development settings. In humanitarian settings, the SitRep serves that purpose to a certain extent.

The survey results reflect this limited systematization of initiatives to review and capture changes in contextual conditions, as one in three respondents consider the mechanism in place to address these issues to be adequate (and one in three informants do not know this mechanism). When these results are disaggregated, informants at the HQ level have a lower positive perception than informants at the regional and the national level. Beyond the analysis per level, around one third of the surveyed staff that are mostly or exclusively dedicated to advocacy, have a positive perception of the systems' adequacy. A similar trend is identified when informants rate the existing mechanisms to identify and address the need for changing the focus of advocacy strategies. Informants from HQ have a rather negative perception (only 14 per cent have a positive perception) that is reduced in the case of informants at the regional and national levels.

Figure 15. Survey results on the adequacy of existing mechanisms to review and capture changes in contextual conditions



Source: UNICEF global survey

Q4.2.5 EVIDENCE OF APPLYING A PRACTICE OF CHANGE APPROACH

The concept of ‘practices of change’ refers to using feedback from practice in the field to inform and amend global theories so they are fit for purpose. By focusing on practices, and not only on the theories of how GAPs are supposed to work, the theory is expected to be continuously tested to strengthen its coherence, logic and plausibility. This testing process then maximizes the chances that the theory will be adapted to changing circumstances. The ‘practices of change’ approach is an approach that exposes the theoretical model of an initiative (ToC) to the real world of practices.⁵⁷ The revision and validation of ToC as part of the evaluation has helped develop a clearer framework of the theoretical model behind each GAP to make it possible to analyse the extent to which theory is effectively translated into practice, and what major gaps or limitations are found. The revision and validation of ToC reflected how the flexibility and adaptability of advocacy approaches on the ground (in practice) were reflected back to the overarching theories, especially regarding GAP 1 and GAP 2 – the priorities that experienced a more profound change. The updated ToCs are to be tested again based on the implementation process results, and some fine-tuning is expected to ensure they reflect as accurately as possible how advocacy strategies under the different GAPs work on the ground.

Q4.2.6 PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

GCA developed a partnership mapping in 2022, with the overall objective of strengthening UNICEF’s work by harnessing the power of advocacy and communication-driven partnerships and creating a shared understanding of the GCA partnership landscape.⁵⁸ The results of this mapping are very interesting, including the definition of three main approaches for partnership building, which are discussed in the next section. To deepen the analysis by building on existing results from the mapping exercise, the evaluation team gathered partnership information from the partnership mapping exercise and other relevant sources (financial data) to develop a social network analysis (SNA) that not only reveals the interconnection between partners and GAPs but also shows the level of influence of each partner.⁵⁹ The list of partners included per GAP is not extensive and tries to capture all relevant types of partners for advocacy purposes. The final list was shared and fine-tuned by GAP representatives. Figure 16 shows the network developed as a result of the analysis. It shows the linkages between partners and GAPs, with the size of the circles representing the different levels of influence for advocacy of the different partners.

57 Arensman, B., Van Waegeningh, C., Van Wessel, M., ‘Twinning Practices of Change with Theory of Change’, 2017.

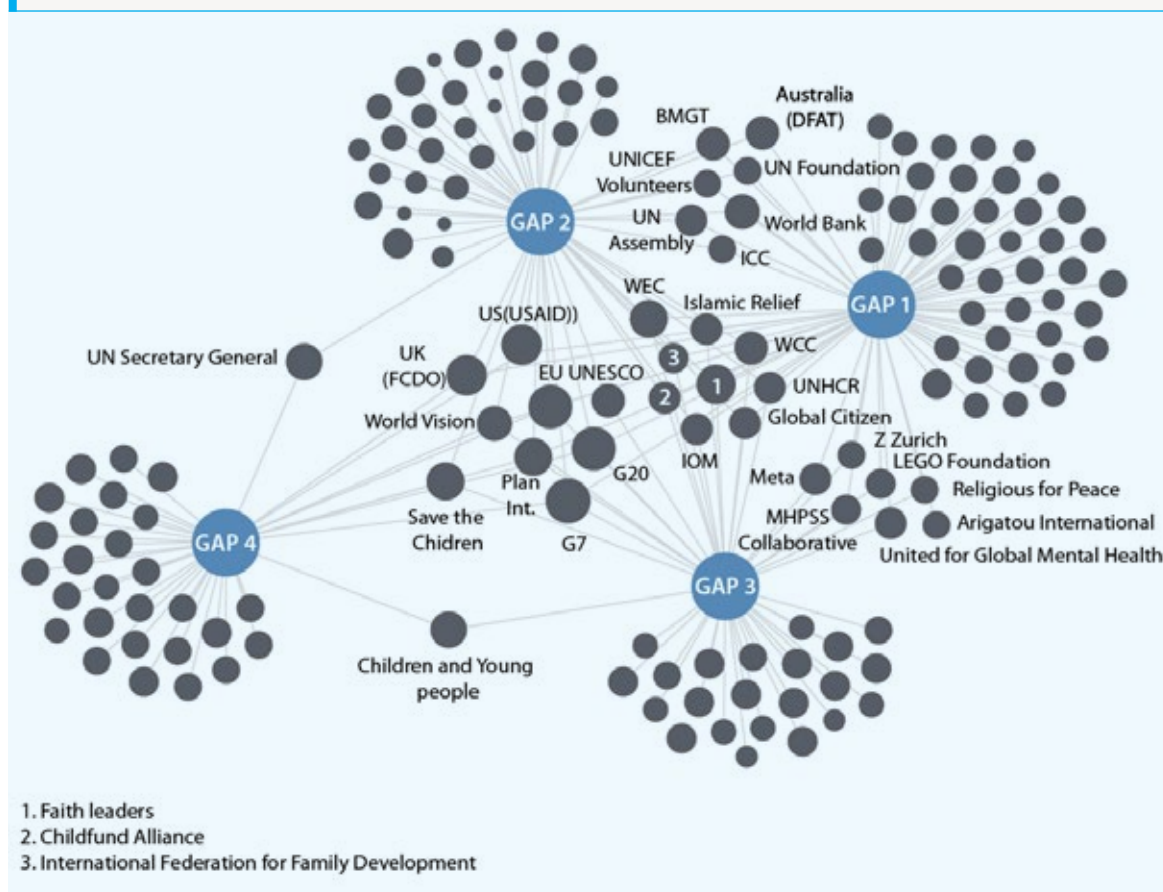
58 UNICEF, GCA Partnership mapping, 2022.

59 The term ‘influence’ was defined as the inherent capacity or power of a stakeholder, with or without the support of UNICEF, to make a positive impact towards achieving GAP goals. GAP representatives rated each relevant partner following a scale from 0 – no influence to 4 – critical influence.

The SNA reveals several interesting patterns. At first glance, the network shows some relevant connections between partners and GAPS, as discussed below.

- **On a GAP level**, all share similar patterns in terms of interconnections with partners, except for GAP 4, which shares fewer links with partners with other GAPS.⁶⁰
- **The most obvious connections reflect those partners shared across all GAPS**, which include global institutions with a critical influence, such as the European Union, G7 and G20 and with moderate influence, such as the World Economic Forum. NGOs such as Plan International and World Vision International are also linked to all GAPS, and are considered moderately influential. These are partners/stakeholders that have different levels of influence but affect all GAPS. There are considerable opportunities for these partners to join forces and seek synergies for advocacy, especially regarding NGOs.
- **Then, there are a series of partners linked to up to three GAPS.** Among the NGOs, Save the Children is recognized as highly influential and linked to all but GAP 1. Although their influence is considered moderate or low, the International Federation for Family Development and the Global Citizen is linked to all but GAP 4.

Figure 16. Social network analysis of partners for GAPS



Source: Social Network Analysis

⁶⁰ More partners than those reflected in the network were identified for GAP 1, GAP 2 and GAP 4. For GAP 1, 32 more partners were identified, and for GAP 4, 37 more. These are not reflected in the network as GAP teams provided no rating for the level of influence, and it was then assumed these partners were not relevant partners for the GAP.

Regarding **faith leaders**, all GAPs but GAP 4 are linked to them and consider their influence in advocacy matters to be critical. Concerning faith-based organizations, World Vision is the only organization of this type linked to all GAPs. Islamic Relief Worldwide, the World Council of Churches and the Child Fund Alliance are linked to all but GAP 4. As for **UN agencies**, the IOM and UNHCR, although not considered of high influence for advocacy issues on child rights, are also linked to all GAPs but GAP 4. Concerning **donors**, USAID and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) are considered critical influencers linked to all but GAP 3.

Finally, when it comes to **partners linked to two different GAPs**, the following are the most relevant that were identified:

- **A cluster of six partners is linked to GAP 1 and GAP 3.** The most influential of those are Meta and United for Global Mental Health. Then, the Lego Foundation and MHPSS collaborative are also considered highly influential and linked to both GAPs. Finally, Arigatou International and Zurich Foundation are also linked to these GAPs and are considered moderately influential.
- **There is another cluster of six partners linked to both GAP 1 and GAP 2.** Among these, the most influential are the World Bank, the Government of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the BMGF (particularly influential for GAP 1). Then, the UN Foundation, UNICEF Volunteers and the International Chamber of Commerce, and the UN President of the General Assembly, although linked to these two GAPs, are considered moderately influential.
- **Only one partner is linked between GAP 4 and GAP 2, which is the UN Secretary-General.** Similarly, for GAP 4 and GAP 2, children and youth organizations are linked and are considered highly influential.

One of the results of the SNA and the analysis of interviews is that **few partnerships focus solely on advocacy**, in the sense that the sole purpose of the partnership is influencing the push of relevant policies on child rights. Instead, partnerships typically function as programmatic or fundraising alliances. The intensity of advocacy strategies within these alliances varies based on the specific theory of change and other factors. Thus, most partnerships are not purely advocacy-based but also fulfil other roles.

The specific analysis of partnerships by type (private sector, public sector and CSOs) is included in Annex 27. In this analysis, the main issue identified when it comes to engaging partners from civil society at the global level is the **unbalanced focus for the engagement of CSO partners** compared to private partners and the lack of a robust engagement strategy for interdivisional work with CSOs within UNICEF. PG was assigned to oversee CSO coordination, and a broader coordination structure led by the PG, including focal points from each division, was established, but additional resources have yet to be allocated. CSO partnerships are seen as more relevant at the country level, and there has been limited focus in the last few years on expanding CSO partnerships at the global level. The significant role of CSOs calls for a balance of advocacy responsibility among civil society partners, PG and GCA.

Q4.2.7 STRATEGIES AND MECHANISM TO PERIODICALLY REVIEW/CAPTURE CHANGES IN NEEDS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

UNICEF's strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships represents the guiding document for establishing partnerships at all levels. The GAP strategies identify existing and potential advocacy partners to implement relevant advocacy work, and mapping stakeholder exercises have been conducted at different levels. GCA has established three main partnerships-building strategies, as follows⁶¹:

1. **Conducting situation analysis and mapping** to build partnerships based on existing synergies and gaps in the partnership landscape. The SNA is expected to contribute to this area.
2. **Strategic plan-directed strategy to build partnerships** based on key goals set out in the SP, focusing on the 'Digital first' approach, and the next generation of UNICEF supporters.
3. **Global and regional market-shaped strategy** aimed at building partnerships based on media use and market leaders at different levels. For this, UNICEF will identify media use and market leaders across regions and share findings with colleagues at ROs to identify priorities and potential partnerships.

Beyond the three main strategies mentioned, informants from different GAPs and levels confirmed that the strategy used for identifying and sustaining partners mainly follows an organic structure with no systematic approach and/or methodology. The identification of stakeholders is carried out through existing networks and governance structures, as well as different platforms and channels, such as the World Health Assembly and Gavi Board for the GAP 1. Partnership meetings and government connections are used to engage these stakeholders. In the case of GAP 3, and with the support of the CSO partnership team, five regular partners have been established, on the basis of previous campaigns and a mutual interest in mental health.

This situation is reflected in the survey results. When asked to rate the level of adequacy of mechanisms to identify and address the need for changing key partners from the public and private sector, on average almost one in three respondents did not know what to answer, and the other third had a negative view. This situation was more acute at HQ levels, particularly for respondents from both PG and GCA. Similar results were recorded when respondents were asked about mechanisms to identify and address key partners from the United Nations and also key partners from national and international NGOs.

Although a system for gathering global information on partnerships exists (UNISON)⁶², **no systematic information on partnerships at all levels is currently available.** This is considered a relevant bottleneck in maximizing the results of partnerships, identifying synergies and periodically reviewing and capturing changes in partnership needs. While partnerships records are more systematized across units at the country level as partners act as service providers; at the global level, engagement with partners is more diverse.

61 As described in 'GCA Partnership Mapping – Findings with Recommendations, August 2022'.

62 UNICEF's global corporate partnership management platform for private and public sector relationships worldwide.

Q5.1 SYSTEM ADEQUACY – To what extent are the **planning strategies and protocols** adequate in contributing to the SP advocacy-related goals?

Key findings:

- 1.** The **planning** tools at the global, regional and national levels show clear linkages with the SP goals through the use of advocacy core standard indicators (CSI). Child poverty and inclusive social protection, although not designated as a GAP, contribute to the overall advocacy strategy and SP goal area 5. However, their representation within the GCA advocacy section is indirect, primarily through support and capacity-building initiatives. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
- 2.** The number of **recommendations for advocacy-related issues from previous evaluations is very limited**, especially considering that no global evaluation on the issue has been carried out so far. Nonetheless, some examples identified could be link to planning-related recommendations included in relevant evaluations, such as the effort to measure the existence of advocacy strategies in both development and particularly in humanitarian contexts and the initiative to ensure that each advocacy effort/strategy is based on a theory of change. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*

Q5.1.1 EVIDENCE OF CLEAR AND RELEVANT LINKAGES BETWEEN THE PLANNING STRATEGIES/ PROCEDURES AND THE APPROACHES AND GOALS CONSIDERED IN THE SP

The advocacy and communication (A&C) change strategy is detailed in the Global Communication and Advocacy Strategy (GCAS), which usually includes a specific ToC on how planned initiatives contribute to achieving low, mid and high-level goals. In the current scenario and given that the new GCAS is still under development, the ToCs and the ToT developed as part of this evaluation could serve the same purpose. In the context of the SP, the GCA is responsible for one change strategy – advocacy and communication, and one enabler – internal communication and staff engagement.

Table 15. Evaluability matrix results for planning strategies and protocols for advocacy

AREA	ELEMENT(S)	COHERENCE	FITNESS FOR PURPOSE	RESOURCING
System capacity	Planning strategies and protocols	Sufficient/good	Insufficient but nascent	Sufficient/good ⁶³

DEVELOPMENT SETTINGS

Regional and national level: UNICEF has streamlined the overall process of planning for CPDs by issuing comprehensive guidance⁶⁴ that breaks down the process in five key steps: evidence synthesis, prioritization, design of a theory of change, develop a results and resource plan (RRP) and issue explanatory notes. As described in UNICEF’s Principles and Frameworks, advocacy and communication (A&C) must be an integral part throughout the design and implementation process of a UNICEF office, and should be included in the Situation Analysis (SitAn), CPD, Office Management Plan (OMP), Strategic Moment of Reflection, theories of change, Programme Strategy Notes (PSNs), Management Plans (AMPs), Integrated Budget, Midterm Review, Work Plans, annual reviews, annual reports and the Joint Strategic Plan (JSO) in the case of National Committees.⁶⁵

Externally, UNICEF is guided by the A&C guidance. Key tools are also available on the intranet to plan advocacy initiatives. DAPM is rolling out the e-Work Plan module in the RAM of inSight and all 2023 AWP’s should be entered in the module.

A specific set of steps have been also identified for the effective and meaningful integration of A&C into CPDs. The steps guide the process of planning any A&C strategy in the country office, by reviewing existing evidence and performance on advocacy results, using the existing SitAn assessment, Guidance on Risk Informed Programming (GRIP) along with the enterprise Governance Risk and Compliance (eGRC) platform and in conjunction with the rolling risk assessment process. Consultation with partners and relevant stakeholders on advocacy issues is also recommended for COs, so they are able to prioritize advocacy endeavours. Once the initial analysis and A&C prioritization is conducted, A&C is to be integrated in the CPD structure by developing a ToC together with a comprehensive results and resources plan that enables the operationalization of the A&C initiatives considered. These are expected to be reflected upon during strategic moments of reflection.

⁶³ See section Q3.1.1 on M&E funding allocation and personnel.

⁶⁴ UNICEF, ‘UNICEF Country Programme Planning. Guidance to achieve SDGs by 2030’, 2022.

⁶⁵ UNICEF, ‘Communication and Advocacy. A guidance for Planning, Monitoring and Reporting’, 2022.

Finally, once the CPD has been approved, the full-fledged advocacy strategy is to be developed. This strategy serves as a complement to the CPD and programme strategy notes, outlining A&C roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. This ensures that colleagues throughout the office understand their part in contributing to the integrated advocacy and communication efforts.

Global level: The planning process at the global level follows the same logic and uses the same tools as the regional and national levels. Although the guidelines and processes are primarily focused on the regional and national levels (where the majority of UNICEF activities take place), they are also applicable and used at the global level. A relevant example of this is that the GAP canvas and strategic documents used to develop and plan the GAPs follow the same templates used for CPDs at the national level.

HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

According to the organizational definition, UNICEF humanitarian response planning refers to the process of defining what UNICEF will do programmatically to respond to identified humanitarian needs. As described in the ToT, the humanitarian actions contribute to the CCCs, which establish the normative framework for UNICEF's humanitarian response. Concerning **Emergency Procedures**⁶⁶, the planning of A&C initiatives should include three main considerations: (1) ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, (2) developing A&C strategies and (3) planning public advocacy focused on all violations of children's rights, including grave violations. Principles of for planning advocacy initiatives in humanitarian settings are provided in relevant guidance.⁶⁷

As revealed in the ToT, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) is also an important element of the SP, with related indicators included and reference made to the different CCC articles across the five goal areas. These linkages are reflected in main documents, such as the Emergency Procedures,⁶⁸ where the response plan aims at activating, adapting or developing a UNICEF Humanitarian Response Plan consistent with inter-agency planning. In order to do that, the CO needs to regularize its workplan within six to 12 months, where possible, following the Country Office Work Planning Procedure and the CCC Indicator Guidance.

LINKING PLANNING OF ADVOCACY STRATEGIES TO THE GOALS CONSIDERED IN THE SP

The planning of advocacy strategies to the goals included in the SP is based on the analysis of the GCA AWP 2023 at the global level and the CPDs and JSPs reviewed as part of the case studies (Indonesia and Italy) at the national level.

The **GCA Annual Workplan 2023** presents different sections involving communication and advocacy areas, making linkages between relevant sub-areas addressed (digital, media, content, youth engagement, etc.). The report includes a specific section for advocacy, which links output areas and activities and sub-activities to an overarching advocacy outcome.⁶⁹ The Output areas considered refer to the different GAPs, humanitarian advocacy and advocacy capacity-building results. For each one of these areas, activities and sub-activities (the latter linked to specific indicators) are developed. The measurements link the overarching outcome with a combination of input, process and low-level output indicators that measure both internal (operational) and external issues.

66 UNICEF, 'Emergency Procedures', 2021.

67 UNICEF, 'Communication and Advocacy. A guidance for Planning, Monitoring and Reporting', 2022.

68 UNICEF, 'The Emergency Procedures', 2021.

69 By 2025, UNICEF has progressively influenced decision makers and other key audiences to take action to address the most challenging child rights issues in 190 countries and territories, through strategic advocacy, partnerships, engaging children and young people, and deploying our credible voice and brand (Outcome 2: Advocacy).

Among the internal issues, GCA monitors the number of COs supported in the delivery of the GAPs, the number of global strategies developed, number of emergencies in integrated advocacy strategies and measurements on the number of participants trained in advocacy issues. External issues refer to a series of output/product level indicators that, in some instances, are linked to higher-level indicators. These mainly refer to advocacy products developed, participation in relevant events, etc. Social protection, one of the key advocacy areas contributing to the overarching global change strategy in advocacy and the SP goals, is only represented indirectly in the scope of the GCA advocacy section, mainly through the support given to offices and the capacity-building initiatives carried out. Although relevant collaborations have been identified in the course of the evaluation, there is still a question over whether a formal set of activities to support and contribute to enhancing advocacy efforts should be considered.

At the national level (including both COs and NatComs) seven advocacy core standard indicators (CSIs) are deployed globally and all COs are required to employ them, and one advocacy indicator is also mandatory for all JSPs developed by NatComs. This contributes greatly to ensuring adequate linkages between planning and SP goals. These indicators do not link only to GAPs, but also to humanitarian and social protection advocacy work.

When it comes to the CPDs and JSPs reviewed⁷⁰, the linkages to the SP were clearly depicted and the contribution to SP goals was evidently justified. For example, in the case of the Italian NatCom, the mental health ToC was clearly aligned in its four outcomes to GAP 3 outcomes, and this was effectively reflected in workplans and even in the joint workplan developed with ECARO. In Indonesia, the advocacy strategy around climate change is being developed following the GAP structure and logic as well.

Q5.1.2 LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROVED PLANNING-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER ADVOCACY EVALUATIONS

The number of relevant recommendations for advocacy-related issues is very limited, especially considering that no global evaluation on the issue has been carried out so far. The following are the key issues that are currently being considered/implemented:

- The structure of the GAPs is clearly inherited from the previous cause framework implemented by UNICEF from 2018 to 2021.
- The effort to measure the existence of advocacy strategies in both development and particularly in humanitarian contexts is a reflection of a relevant recommendation made in the Humanitarian Review (2020).
- The initiative to ensure that each advocacy effort/strategy is based on a theory of change is also a reflection of the relevant recommendation made in the Evaluation of Advocacy done for Thailand in 2018.⁷¹
- Advocacy and communication are analysed as one of the change strategies in the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 (2022). Relevant findings are presented in terms of the approach, positioning, technical capacities, partnership and resources available for advocacy and communication purposes. More information on this can be found in section Q4.2.2.

70 CPDs: Indonesia, Lebanon, Jordan. JSP: Italy, Norway, Poland, UK.

71 UNICEF, 'Evaluation of Advocacy as a strategy in the UNICEF Thailand Country Programme 2012-2016', 2018.

Q5.2 SYSTEM ADEQUACY – To what extent does the existing **M&E system** allow for and provide clear guidance for the collection of SMART data for Mandatory Advocacy Indicators that apply at different levels of the Organization.

The following technical analysis focuses on the extent to which the existing M&E system for measuring progress towards achieving advocacy goals and strengthening accountability and learning is fit for purpose, taking into consideration the indicator structure presented and a series of elements considered for the assessment.

Key findings:

- 1. The M&E system for advocacy includes the majority of key elements necessary for a full-fledged M&E system**, including baselines and targets, periodicity of data collection, monitoring responsibilities and sources of verification, transparency and accountability measures, methodological notes, a comprehensive database, and relevant reporting mechanisms and tools. However, some of the templates used for defining indicators include different levels of analysis, and not all comply with the established criteria. The analysis reveals that information on cost per activity or indicators is not available in RAM. Although specific indicators for the Gender Action Plan and Disability Inclusion are included in the SP, the extent to which other indicators are gender or disability-inclusion responsive is not considered in the main planning, monitoring and reporting systems, at least for advocacy-related indicators. The main disability-sensitive advocacy-related indicator at level 3 identified is not prioritized as the gender-transformative indicator in level 1. **The main elements not fully addressed in the M&E system are specific instructions on how to develop and implement a complexity-aware approach to monitor advocacy initiatives.** *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*
- 2. Overall, the indicators are well designed**, and specific information about their nature, key elements and method of calculation is included in their methodological notes. There are certain criteria where the compliance level is fairly high, particularly in terms of measurability, achievability and timeliness. **The main issue identified is the limited capacity of existing indicators to measure the role played by UNICEF in achieving specific advocacy goals, as well as the context in which results are achieved.** The methodological notes for the A&C standard indicators (SI) do not include any reference to the periodicity of data collection. Particularly relevant is to consider indicators at the level of the base support growth, as these indicators can measure achievements beyond country-level results and address global and/or regional results that are not currently being effectively monitored but that have a clear impact on higher advocacy results. Although some indicators can be complemented with qualitative remarks to deepen the understanding and explain the results achieved, the use and usefulness of these remarks are still limited. The existing SI for communication and advocacy are more focused on measuring communication than the pathways of change of advocacy initiatives. *(Level 4: Multiple lines and levels of evidence with very strong triangulation)*

Table 16. Evaluability matrix results for M&E approaches for advocacy

AREA	ELEMENT(S)	COHERENCE	FITNESS FOR PURPOSE	RESOURCING
System capacity	Monitoring and evaluation approach	Sufficient/good	Insufficient but nascent	Sufficient ⁷²

Q5.2.1 EXISTENCE OF A FULL-FLEDGED M&E SYSTEM

The following is a summarized version of the M&E system analysis conducted; the complete analysis is included in Annex 28.

The assessment of the advocacy M&E system was based on a series of key elements, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Elements considered for the analysis of the advocacy M&E approach

ELEMENT	STATUS	ELEMENT	STATUS
1. Baselines, milestones and targets	✓	6. Cost per activity/indicator	✓
2. Periodicity of data collection	✓	7. Disaggregated data and CC issues	✓
3. Responsibilities/sources of verification	✓	8. Complexity-aware approaches to monitoring	
4. Transparency and accountability	✓	9. M&E database	✓
5. Metadata for indicators	✓	10. Key reporting documents	✓

1. Baselines, milestones and targets: These elements are essential for monitoring progress towards results. All advocacy indicators assessed included or considered baselines, final targets for 2024 and annual milestones. Only one case⁷³ where baselines and targets were not available was found, mainly because the indicator had only recently been introduced and the data were not yet available. The advocacy results framework template made available for offices to keep track of relevant advocacy initiatives and results includes key relevant elements considered. In addition, a specific document has been issued to guide the process of setting baselines, milestones and targets for the SP, 2022–2025.⁷⁴

72 See section Q3.1.1 on M&E funding allocation and personnel.

73 Indicator H3.4: Number of countries in which UNICEF-supported policymaking or budgeting is informed by data, research and evaluation.

74 Approach Paper for setting baselines, milestones and targets for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

2. Periodicity of data collection: The UNICEF methodological note template for core standard indicators (CSI) includes a specific field to specify the periodicity of data collection for any given indicator. As pointed out in the next section, all assessed indicators from the CSI but one (H3.4) have established a clear time frame and include how regularly data are to be collected to feed the indicators. Usually, data are collected annually, but some of the indicators are only to be fed by the end of the current SP. Conversely, the methodological notes for the A&C standard indicators (SI) do not include any reference to the periodicity of data collection. The advocacy results framework template available in the intranet does not include a field to determine the periodicity of data collection.

3. Responsibilities/sources of verification: Overall, roles and responsibilities for monitoring at all levels are established in UNICEF's Procedure on Monitoring and the procedure of Organizational Performance Management (2022)⁷⁵ as well as in the Report of the Accountability System of UNICEF (2022). Although in these documents it is stated that each office should establish internal processes and define standard operating procedures, the documents clearly state that accountability for the quality, coverage, equity and ethics of monitoring sits with the representative or director of each office. At HQ, each division is the responsible business owner for the relevant key performance indicators, with the support of DAPM. Methodological note templates for both CSI and SI include a section describing the responsible unit or section owner. In the case of CSI, both planning and programme focal points are defined with clear names and roles. In the case of SI, responsible units/section/teams are identified, as well as indicator contact person. The advocacy results framework template does not include a field to determine the responsibilities in collecting data and reporting information.

Concerning sources/means of verification, both CSI and SI included relevant data-collection tools/data sources respectively. For the majority of CSI assessed, the Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs) were used to be the main tool/source of data. The assessment also reveals that the online templates for CSI include more information than the word templates, since, for example, no main data-collection tools/data sources were found in the latter. The advocacy results framework template includes a field to specify the means of verification for each indicator.

4. Transparency and accountability measures: In accordance with the UNICEF Procedure on Organizational Performance Management, UNICEF fulfils its commitment to transparency by providing headline statements for all output-level results, along with relevant indicators (baselines, targets and the most recent reported status). These are accessible to external audiences via UNICEF's Transparency Portal⁷⁶ and other external websites, such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), d-portal.org, and country-level case studies on IATI data usage.

5. Metadata for indicators: Referred to as 'methodological notes' internally, metadata typically includes the definition, rationale, calculation method, level of disaggregation, data-collection and analysis methods, responsibilities, and limitations of each indicator included in a results framework. The metadata for CSI includes more relevant information than the metadata for SI. Two different versions of CSI metadata were found: the information available on the 'Strategic Planning & Corporate Analysis' intranet website and the information available in word/pdf documents.

6. Cost per activity/indicator: The analysis reveals that information on cost per activity or indicator is not available in RAM. The system presents less disaggregated information, as it shows costs per output and per fund type BMM (Management), ORE, ORR and Core RR. Cost per indicator is not available, but information by output/activity and region is available through the PIDB coding system, which enables results-based planning, including the selection of standard indicators in RAM, reporting on results, and monitoring and reporting of expenditures. VISION is the system used for entering and analysing these financial data.

75 PROCEDURE/DAPM/2022/004 and PROCEDURE/DAPM/2022/005.

76 UNICEF, UNICEF TRANSPARENCY PORTAL, n.d.

7. Disaggregated data and cross-cutting issues: Disaggregated data are only considered for impact indicators related to goal areas, which focus on changes in the population or target groups. However, the metadata for indicators does not include an assessment of the level of gender responsiveness, disability inclusion, or HRBA considerations for each indicator. Although specific indicators on the Gender Action Plan and Disability Inclusion are included in the SP, the extent to which indicators are gender- or disability-inclusion responsive is not considered in the main planning, monitoring, and reporting systems, at least for advocacy-related indicators. Indicators included in RAM should be gender-tagged according to a pre-filled criterion, but no relevant classification was found for advocacy-related indicators in the system. Indicators are to be coded using the PIDB codes, which, among others, includes a series of tags and markers for cross-cutting issues.

8. Complexity-aware approaches to monitoring: The Monitoring & Evaluation Framework of the GCAS, 2019–2021 is the M&E guidance framework for advocacy work to be applied by all UNICEF offices, including NatComs. This framework complements the existing global M&E structure. The M&E approach considered in the last GCAS references the Monitoring and Evaluation Advocacy Toolkit⁷⁷ by mentioning the evolving approach of M&E and highlights the need for the M&E function to be periodically reviewed in order to adapt to changes in context and needs. The document also acknowledges the unpredictability of time frames when doing advocacy work and emphasizes the importance of measuring progress, not just results. This is a key requirement for ensuring that M&E reflects a complexity-aware approach. The M&E advocacy toolkit acknowledges that UNICEF’s M&E approach should consider the unique, collaborative and complex nature of advocacy work. In 2022, UNICEF released a Monitoring Guidance that emphasizes moving away from primarily measuring predefined results using simplistic linear models of causation and reporting upward.

Although all these documents emphasize the significance of adopting a complexity-aware approach to M&E and acknowledge efforts to account for the evolving dynamics of advocacy for planning and monitoring purposes (such as the need to develop a ToC when planning advocacy strategies, using strategic moments of reflection to assess contextual changes and the use of both quantitative and qualitative data for monitoring purposes),⁷⁸ they provide limited guidance on effectively developing and implementing complexity-aware approaches.

9. M&E database: UNICEF’s performance management system, inSight, is used globally across offices as the primary tool to track and monitor results in all key corporate performance areas. inSight tools and applications are categorized into three groups of products tailored to different business needs: Performance Scorecards and Dashboards, Management Reports and Cubes, and Custom Applications. The RAM is UNICEF’s corporate results reporting platform within inSight and is a primary source of organizational performance data. The information included in RAM extends beyond programmatic data (indicator baselines and targets) and incorporates budgetary information such as funding utilization and grant summaries.

10. Key reporting documents: UNICEF has specific A&C reporting mechanism and guidelines in place. These reporting mechanisms and tools are classified based on the intended audiences (including partner report, donor reports and situation reports) and settings (humanitarian reports). The main overall reports are the Country, Regional and Divisional Annual Reports (COARs, ROARs and HQARs respectively), used both internally and externally.

77 UNICEF, ‘Monitoring and Evaluation Advocacy. Companion to the Advocacy Toolkit’, 2010.

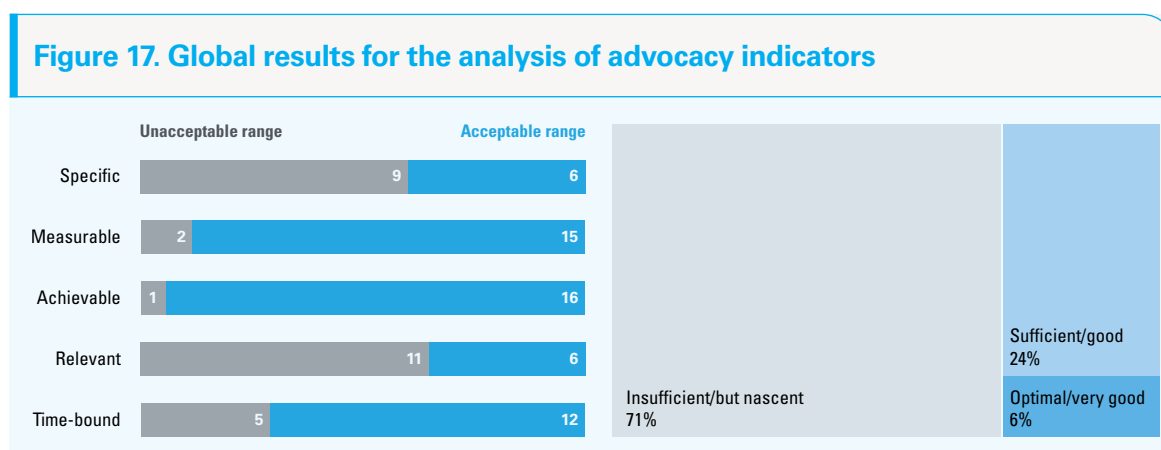
78 For example, point 16 of the UNICEF Procedure on Monitoring reads: Country offices monitor intended changes described in programme theories of change and Results and Resources Plans (RRPs), as well as unintended changes, the robustness of planning assumptions and risks, and the effectiveness of change strategies.

Q5.2.2 ANALYSIS OF ADVOCACY INDICATORS

The following is a summarized version of the indicator analysis conducted; the complete analysis is included in Annex 29.

This section assesses the quality of the design of a set of advocacy indicators. A total of 17 indicators linked to advocacy (12 CSI and 5 SI) have been considered. They represent measurements included in Level 1 (Indicators of the Advocacy & Communication change strategy), Level 2 (Outcome indicators with direct reference to policy changes that result from Advocacy work) and standard output indicators. The assessment focused on assessing the extent to which selected indicators comply with the SMART criteria, meaning the extent to which indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. The definition of the criteria can be found in Annex 29. In order to assess the extent to which each indicator meets the SMART criteria, ratings were given in a scale of four items, from 'satisfactorily' and 'sufficiently' SMART (acceptable range), to 'partially' or 'insufficiently' SMART (unacceptable range). Once each of the SMART criteria was assessed for each indicator, a global rubric was used to determine the overall result of the assessment. In addition to the SMART analysis, the assessment of indicators includes the classification of these elements according to the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES)⁷⁹, which was also used to assess the extent to which disability inclusion and HRBA are considered in indicators.

The global results of the SMART analysis are shown in Figure 17. The results for each indicator are included in Annex 30, in the indicator assessment framework. **Overall, the indicators are well designed, and specific information about their nature, key elements and method of calculation is included.** There are certain criteria where the compliance level is fairly high, particularly in terms of measurability, achievability and timeliness. Methodological notes have been issued for all indicators in a consistent manner. These notes offer an overview of each indicator (including definitions, link to SDGs, data-collection instructions, methods of calculation, reporting lags and indicator focal points), along with main connections to the SP Integrated Results and Resources Framework, and include baselines, milestones and anticipated targets.



Source: UNICEF global advocacy indicators, evaluation team's analysis

79 UNDP, 'Evaluation of UNDP's Contribution to Gender Equality', 2015.

Nonetheless, the adequacy of indicators is somewhat limited, with 29 per cent of indicators (five out of 17) rated as sufficient/good and six per cent (one out of 17) being classified as very good or good. **The main limitations of advocacy indicators are their limited capacity to clearly depict UNICEF's specific contribution in achieving the changes monitored**, as there are not enough linkages between the work done by the CO and its effects on the country with such relevant strategies. **Also, advocacy indicators do not shed light on the context in which results were achieved, which would add more meaning and context to achievements.** Although the methodological notes of some indicators state that additional qualitative information can be added to explain the contribution made to monitored progress, there is no systematic way of classifying the role play by UNICEF in monitored changes.

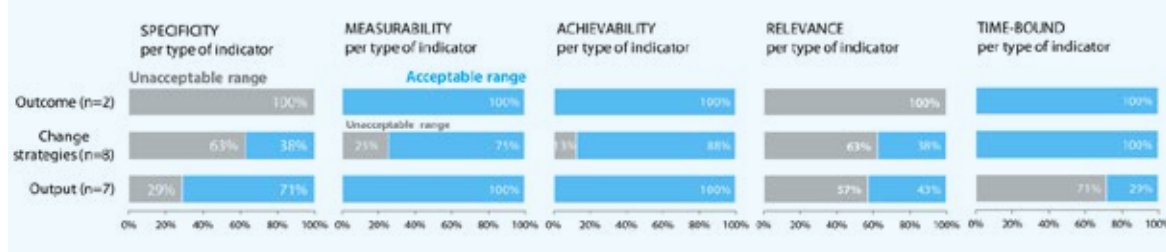
Indicators rated as insufficient/poor mainly measure policy existence with limited links to UNICEF work and contribution (e.g., *1.6.4: Number of countries with a national policy for the protection, promotion and support of optimal child nutrition*). Other indicators rated as insufficient/poor measure changes in policy without clearly depicting (or not depicting at all) UNICEF's role and support (e.g., *4.8: Number of countries developing, financing, and implementing child-sensitive climate policies and programmes*). Similarly, indicators rated as insufficient but nascent are better designed (e.g., *H1.1: Number of countries that took advocacy action that triggered policy change related to the UNICEF Global Advocacy Priorities*) but face issues when establishing levels of contribution to results.

Concerning the analysis of cross-cutting issues, the great majority of advocacy-related indicators do not reflect gender equality or disability inclusion aspects, although they effectively reflect a human rights-based approach. Only one indicator of the sample, *H9.8 Number of countries supported by UNICEF that have identified and financed transformative child rights policies and programmes that promote gender equality*, is considered transformative according to the GRES scale, as it aims to transform gender-based power dynamics and structures driving negative outcomes for children and women through policies and programmes that promote Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW). Nonetheless, the indicator is broad enough to encompass all type of advocacy work and thematic areas, and therefore it is considered adequate to measure gender responsive advocacy results. None of the indicators assessed make reference to **disability-inclusion issues**, and the most relevant indicator in this line is found in level 3 of advocacy indicators (indicator *5.2.3 Number of countries with disability-inclusive social protection programmes with UNICEF support*).

All the indicators were categorized based on their capacity to measure relevant changes of advocacy work. A total of nine out of 17 indicators are considered critical. These indicators mainly measure relevant changes in policies, and youth engagement. Important indicators (four in total) refer to indicators measuring the number of UNICEF digital supporters and output/input indicators. Finally, the four secondary indicators are those that only track the existence of relevant policies and one SI 'Number of key content products contributing to advocacy and communication priorities'.

Figure 18 shows the SMARTness of indicators per type (output, change strategy and outcome indicators).

Figure 18. Results of the indicator analysis per type of advocacy indicator



Source: Indicator analysis

ANALYSIS OF INDICATOR UPTAKE

The Indicator Uptake Dashboard provides data on indicators used by goal and result area per region and country. The tools help assess the extent to which their globally defined standard indicators are relevant to measure country programme results. The dashboard also provides an indication on the needs for offices to create their own context-specific indicators. When it comes to advocacy indicators, the level of uptake is rather limited, as they represent four per cent of the total number of possible indicators used. A total of seven key advocacy indicators are used worldwide to measure advocacy at the output level.

The current guidance notes for the A&C SI includes a selection of advocacy and communication, youth engagement, media engagement, partnerships, branding and content indicators for COs' reference. The guidance provides an unbalanced number of indicators for A&C, clearly giving more relevance to communication-related indicators (branding, engagement, production of content, etc). Relevant indicators for measuring youth and media engagement are also included. However, when it comes to pure advocacy indicators, only an input-oriented indicator is included (indicator IND0021918: Existence of clearly defined advocacy standards and practices). This is particularly relevant as one of the key considerations identified in measuring advocacy results is to ensure that measurements at all levels, from activity to global results are considered. In the current set of proposed indicators for the SI, input indicators are considered, but limited measurements at the output level are proposed that can be linked to the change path established in the theories of change. The main advocacy-related indicators considered in the current guidelines for A&C SI are:

- Indicators measuring certain aspects linked to partners/coalition forming;
- Indicators measuring the public support of high-profile individuals;
- Indicators measuring the level of youth and community engagement.

There are still relevant indicators measuring different levels of change of the ToCs that could be considered, measuring changes in terms of mobilization/awareness, shift in social norms, growth of the base of support and policy and institutional influencing. It is particularly relevant to consider indicators at the level of the base support growth, as these indicators can measure achievements beyond country-level results and address global and/or regional results that are not currently being effectively monitored but that have a clear impact on greater advocacy results. One example of this is the achievement of the Ministerial Declaration of Arab States for Social Protection, which led to a ripple effect on social protection-related issues in relevant countries.

Nonetheless, COs have the opportunity to develop ad hoc indicators to measure change at all levels for advocacy initiatives, and solid guidelines such as the UNICEF Advocacy Toolkit Companion and the Communication and Advocacy guidance for Planning, Monitoring and Reporting are very helpful for such purposes.

Q5.3 SYSTEM ADEQUACY – To what extent are the indicator inventory and M&E approaches adequate to guide the organization on how to **report on relevant advocacy initiatives for effective decision-making**?

The following analysis focuses on establishing the extent to which the current M&E approach and reporting system meets the criteria of coherence, fitness for purpose and level of resourcing established for the evaluability assessment. The assessment is mainly based on the results of the desk review, interviews and group discussions, the survey and technical inputs from the evaluation team.

Table 18. Evaluability matrix results for the advocacy reporting system

AREA	ELEMENT(S)	COHERENCE	FITNESS FOR PURPOSE	RESOURCING
System capacity	Reporting system	Sufficient/good	Sufficient	Sufficient ⁸⁰

Key findings:

- 1. Advocacy practitioners acknowledge the current limitations in measuring advocacy outcomes and the need to embrace uncertainty in advocacy monitoring and evaluation and collect more qualitative data to better understand results.** Also, staff highly valued the introduction of tools for M&E purposes as well as the steps taken to broaden the focus of M&E and put more effort into monitoring processes and mid-level results. Staff involved in advocacy and monitoring have a positive perception of the utility and actual use of the monitoring data generated. Respondents thought there were limited M&E resources and staff at the national level and felt that more support on M&E is needed. At the global level, the need to revise GAP ToCs and indicators was highlighted. GAPs rely on external funding, and reporting is usually done directly to the donor. On the one hand this might strengthen M&E, but it might also have a negative impact if the results frameworks and the types of M&E and reporting activities are highly influenced by external partner needs and demands. This could be the case as donors do not necessarily request reporting according to UNICEF's results frameworks. *(Level 3: Multiple lines and levels of evidence, most of which triangulate)*
- 2. UNICEF has a strong reporting system in place,** for both development and humanitarian settings. Reporting advocacy is in general terms well regarded by staff who have a high involvement in advocacy initiatives. The main gap identified in reporting advocacy at the global level is the challenge of aggregating results from offices. At the national level, the main reporting tool does not specifically address advocacy in a particular section, but rather as a cross-cutting theme. The current structure reporting to SP goals is perceived to blur the visibility of the specific results of advocacy at the national level. *(Level 2: Limited lines and levels of evidence with limited triangulation)*

⁸⁰ See section Q3.1.1 on M&E funding allocation and personnel.

5.3.1 EVIDENCE ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH M&E ANALYSIS, STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND REPORTING MECHANISMS ARE IN PLACE FOR THE USE OF EVIDENCE FOR DECISION-MAKING PURPOSES, INCLUDING RELEVANT CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE M&E APPROACH

Several opportunities were identified through KIIs when it comes to M&E for advocacy purposes. The most relevant are discussed below.

- 1. Advocacy practitioners being comfortable and aware of advocacy measurement limitations:** A few informants, mainly at HQ level, expressed the idea that even though measuring advocacy contribution is harder than measuring contributions in other areas, emphasizing its difficulty creates a sense of impossibility. The main point shared is that UNICEF should feel comfortable with the challenges and limitations of measuring the contribution of advocacy work, rather than aiming at attributing results to UNICEF only. Respondents mentioned UNICEF's focus on evidence-based results and their discomfort in dealing with uncertain and more nuanced areas, something that is required when working in advocacy. According to these informants, a mindset shift is needed to adapt to these challenges and become more comfortable with uncertainty and dealing with the complex nature of advocacy.
- 2. New M&E tools and approaches introduced:** Positive feedback was gathered at global and national levels on the introduction of relevant approaches to M&E for advocacy. In a general sense, respondents thought the SP included a policy change indicator specifically designed for GAPS that is being used by all country offices and National Committees is highly effective in strengthening a more systematic M&E function. This strategy is expected to help demonstrate the overall and aggregate results of advocacy efforts at different levels. At the NatCom level, representatives from the Italy and Dutch offices applauded the recent improvements in the planning and M&E approach for advocacy, which now includes the definition of a theory of change and the same seven-point scale of thresholds used by relevant CSI indicators to measure progress towards policy change. Other tools considered very relevant are the 'contribution stories', which are tools that provide qualitative data about ongoing activities, allowing a better understanding on how and why accomplishments are achieved and how to plan future steps.
- 3. The focus of M&E:** Several informants made suggestions about what M&E for advocacy work should focus on. Of these suggestions, the idea of putting more focus on measuring processes and intermediate steps necessary for achieving advocacy goals stands out. Concerns arise regarding the potential loss of crucial information surrounding advocacy work due to insufficient detail in the framework for measuring processes and first- and second-level outputs. Countries are asked to input data annually for the core standard indicators, focusing on outcome indicators such as child coverage, poverty and malnutrition. However, the current system has limited output and input indicators, making it difficult to effectively monitor the theory of change and advocacy.

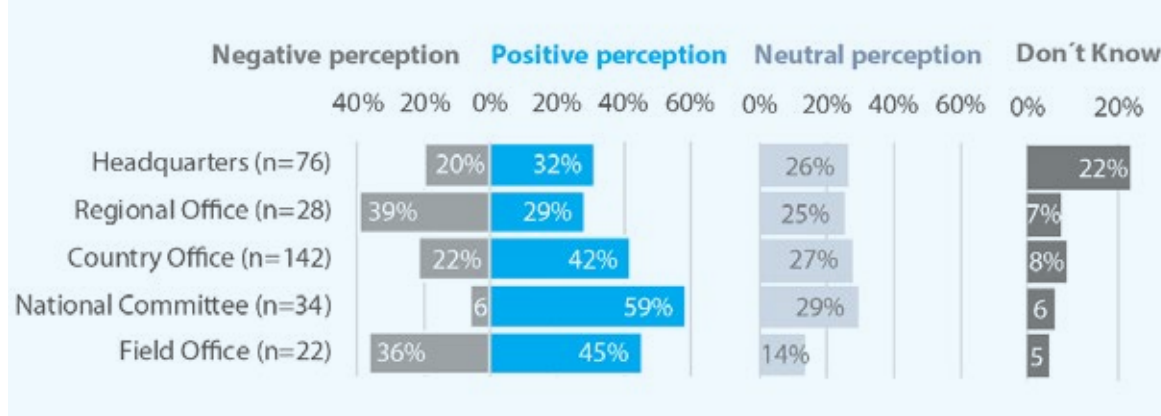
Other ideas shared by informants that provide opportunities to strengthen the M&E function are:

- **Donor requirements:** Having specific advocacy grants with donors has been reported in some instances to strengthen the M&E process. For example, in the framework of the partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), there is a country planning document for each of its country offices that outlines workplans with activities, results and outcomes that must be reported on every six months and formally to the BMGF every year as part of the grant. Additionally, there are other regular checkpoints to monitor progress.
- **Use of overarching strategies/directions:** Several informants highlighted the existing wealth of M&E information, guidelines, channels and existing community of practice, as well as systems for lesson sharing and exchange, which are very relevant for experience sharing across different regions and countries within UNICEF. The use of strategic directions and protocols is mandatory for COs, including those relevant to advocacy. Nonetheless,

representatives from the NatComs also confirm the importance of using M&E overarching strategies for achieving results by using UNICEF guidance provided by PFP. The guidance is updated every few years, with the latest version preferred due to its use of a results circle (seven steps of policy change).

The results of the survey for UNICEF staff shows interesting patterns in their perceptions on the utility and use of M&E data for advocacy. For example, the more involved the informant in advocacy initiatives, the higher the positive perception on the utility of the evidence generated through the M&E system for advocacy towards decision-making. Informants at the national level (COs and NatComs) have a stronger positive opinion of the utility of data generated through monitoring compared to informants at the regional level, and particularly at HQ level. Following this trend, when it comes to assessing the actual use of M&E data and evidence for advocacy-related decision-making, informants at the national level have a much higher positive perception. When it comes to the M&E system being sensitive to the different contexts in which advocacy is implemented, informant at the national levels, and particularly at the NatCom level, expressed more positive views, as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19. Survey results on the extent to which the M&E system is sensitive to the different contexts in which advocacy is conducted



Source: UNICEF global survey

The results of the KII shows that, in general, **the main M&E challenges identified by informants at all levels when doing advocacy work are:**

- 1. Challenges measuring the contribution of advocacy work:** This issue was consistently brought up by informants at all levels. UNICEF has recognized advocacy as a distinct strategy, focusing on its importance and purpose. However, measuring its influence remains a challenge, as expressed by informants at all levels. On the one hand, measuring contribution to advocacy is acknowledged to be challenging due to the complex nature of advocacy work, and the numerous variables that contribute positively and negatively towards achieving advocacy goals. Informants emphasized the need for a clear pathway and system to track policy and budget changes. Informants also stressed that, unlike communication results, major changes in policy as a result of advocacy efforts require time to materialize. Some informants considered that current systems focus on the shift in narratives and policy changes (the different levels of policy change in indicators), but do not adequately capture issues such as relationship and coalition-building aspects, which are crucial to effective advocacy. Overall, the issue, as described by informants, lies in coordinating and streamlining evaluation methods for advocacy initiatives within and across offices and using joint mechanism and tools to monitor and evaluate advocacy efforts.

2. **Complementary data needed to track progress towards advocacy results:** Several informants at the global level highlighted UNICEF's need to improve its advocacy storytelling and results measurement by emphasizing its unique ability to create large-scale change compared to other relevant players. According to these informants, high-value donors recognize UNICEF's significant impact and position; thus, UNICEF should communicate this aspect more effectively. While some country offices successfully convey this message, globally, the organization needs to showcase its distinctive role in driving higher levels of change. In order to do that, several informants stressed the importance of complementing existing quantitative measurements for advocacy result with qualitative data.

In addition to these key challenges, other challenges identified by key informants were:

- **Limited M&E resources and staff:** At the national level, and especially in small COs, M&E was reported to have limited staff numbers. From the point of view of NatComs addressed, the results of the case studies show that while in CO settings strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools and approaches are essential, as are dedicated M&E teams, the reality of National Committees is different, and even reasonably big NatComs might lack dedicated M&E officers, which limits the breadth and depth of their M&E efforts.
- **More support on M&E needed:** Informants at the NatCom and CO level discussed the struggle faced by non-M&E specialists in defining and monitoring the impact of their advocacy work. The main concern is that by 2025, the framework might not effectively capture their work. The lack of evaluation and follow-up of advocacy work was also brought up. Despite being involved in activities and attending courses organized by headquarters, some staff believed there was no proper system to follow up on those courses and monitor their advocacy efforts, and no one was designated to help review their progress.
- **Need to revise ToC and indicators:** A few informants at the HQ level highlighted the need to revise the theories of change and indicators. While impact indicators are linked to the SP and tactics are defined according to the GAPs, the theory of change is not always considered clear.

REPORTING SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

Reporting mechanism in place are described in 'UNICEF Procedure on Annual Programme and Management Results Reports' (2021),⁸¹ where the scope of internal and external reporting and the main components of the reporting system are presented (mainly, the CRAVE, SMOs and the annual reports at all levels, including Consolidated Emergency Reports). Offices are also to participate in the broad UN internal reporting system, which includes the UN Cooperation Framework at country level and reporting to UNSDG Data Portal at the global level. The RAM is the platform used for reporting results, with the coordination process managed by DAPM. The main internal results reporting products are the country office, NatCom, regional and HQ divisional annual reports, which are aggregated in the overall UNICEF Annual Report.⁸² **Concerning emergency programme reporting**, inSight Emergency Programming Module is used internally, together with the situation reports (SitReps), which is the main tool for regularly reporting on the evolving humanitarian response as well as reporting against Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC). External reporting is done through the Periodic Monitoring Report coordinated by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA).

81 DAPM/2021/004

82 A&C is included in all global reporting mechanisms and procedures. Additionally, relevant documents provide guidance on how to maximize the quality of A&C reporting, including several types of reporting classified based on the intended audiences. The Strategic Planning & Global Support Section (SPGS) oversees planning, monitoring and evaluation of GCA's work while assisting UNICEF regional and country offices in coordinating, planning, monitoring and evaluating their communication and advocacy efforts.

The survey produced interesting results in terms of the extent to which informants agreed with the statement 'The current M&E system establishes **clear protocols and guidelines for reporting to support decision-making** across diverse contexts'. Informants at the national level expressed higher levels of agreement with the statement than those at regional and HQ levels. The higher the involvement of the informant in advocacy initiatives, the more positive was their perception of the protocols and guidelines for reporting.⁸³

The results of the interviews reveal a limitation when it comes to reporting at the global level. Informants expressed the **challenge of ensuring that all COs report and feed the advocacy indicators consistently** to aggregate results and establish contributions to SP indicators. Nonetheless, the global analysis of advocacy indicators from UNICEF offices was recently launched⁸⁴ by GCA, which highlights the need to strengthen the CSI formulation and CSIs methodological notes, and make linkages across advocacy indicators at all levels to avoid overlapping and double counting. The interviewees also felt that a solid ToC enables better monitoring and reporting. The midyear review that will start in autumn 2023 is considered a great opportunity to complement and discuss the extent to which the information provided from COs is valid and is the correct information needed to feed global indicators. **GAPs rely on external funding, and reporting is usually done directly to the donor. This might also have an impact on M&E, since the results frameworks and the types of M&E and reporting activities might be highly influenced by external partner needs and demands.** This could be the case as donors do not necessarily request reporting according to UNICEF's results frameworks.

Concerning reporting at the national level, the feedback was received on the changes made to the Country Office Annual Report (COAR), which is now more focused on reporting following the SP outcomes. Respondents felt this blurred the visibility of the specific results of advocacy at the national level. The COAR template does not include any specific section on advocacy, although the different COARs reviewed for the assessment included advocacy issues across the different sections of the report. A more visible system with a table of achievements could help report more efficiently. In some instances, reporting at the national level is also done directly to the donor, and that also might have an impact on connecting advocacy efforts at the country and subnational levels to regional and global outcomes.

In humanitarian settings, the situation reports do not include any specific section on advocacy. However, the guidance notes for reporting clarify that relevant advocacy issues/messaging is to be included in the first section of 'highlights'.

83 All results are statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence level.

84 UNICEF, GCA – Results on Advocacy Indicators, 2022, April 2023.

Q6. DESIGN PROPOSAL – What is required for UNICEF to be able to carry out a meaningful evaluation of its advocacy efforts in 2025?

In this section, and based on the results of the evaluability assessment, a series of proposals are presented, aiming at strengthening the capacity of the final evaluation to effectively assess results achieved by the end of the current SP. The section addresses three main sections with specific ideas to (1) continuously improve the advocacy theoretical model based on practices of change and contextual issues, (2) effectively strengthen monitoring approaches and data to support the final evaluation and (3) address the design of the final summative evaluation by the end of the SP.

Key findings:

- 1. The main proposals shared in this question aim to guide the final evaluation and focus on strengthening the existing advocacy theoretical models and the monitoring and evaluation system**, as well as providing guidance on evaluation approaches for the final results-oriented evaluation. These proposals aimed to ensure that a meaningful theory-oriented and case-based impact evaluation is carried out, which is to be complemented with data from global indicators, providing nuanced information to establish levels of achievements. The evaluation is expected to place a specific emphasis on understanding how and why the implementation worked, as well as the relevant contributions made, within the specific context in which they occurred.

PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY THEORETICAL MODELS

The efforts made during this evaluation to ensure the advocacy theoretical model is sound are evident. The following proposals aimed to ensure that existing and validated ToCs are used as a map/inspiration to develop ToCs at all levels, and that these theoretical models are continuously tested and adapted to the realities on the ground, so as to end up with highly relevant and up-to-date theoretical models on which to base the final evaluation.

1. **Ensure the validated ToCs are promoted, known and owned** by advocacy practitioners at the different levels, to ensure advocacy strategies follow a consistent logic that is informed by global theoretical models, but adapted to the realities and challenges of each particular context. The existing internal guidelines and templates for designing ToCs should be updated to make sure causal connections and pathways at different levels and across elements of the ToC are included, as well as causal link assumptions, and the identification of feedback loops.
2. **Ensure developed ToCs are periodically tested and adapted**, following a strategy testing approach, i.e., a monitoring system specifically devised to track programmes that are addressing complex development problems through a highly iterative and adaptive approach.⁸⁵ Strategy testing is about ensuring that existing theoretical models for advocacy (ToC) are continuously tested, informed by the realities on the ground, and adapted accordingly. As widely acknowledged within UNICEF, ToCs are living documents, and this approach ensures ToCs evolve through time as information emerges and are also based on the results of what is working and what is not, and why. Basically, the core of strategy testing is a structured discussion during which the advocacy practitioners collectively examine the previous version of the ToC to see whether its implicit assumptions are still valid.

PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING THE ADVOCACY MONITORING SYSTEM

As concluded in the report, the advocacy M&E system is ready to evolve and include complexity-aware approaches that would help track progress towards achieving advocacy results. Advocacy is usually conducted or performed as a combination of complex interactions that go beyond the initiatives carried out by one organization, and the non-linear nature of these interactions makes the introduction of complexity-aware approaches essential. Complexity-aware approaches help address the unpredictability that surrounds most advocacy initiatives, mainly by ensuring context is well rooted and tracked within the M&E system, ensuring contribution is established based on the roles played by relevant actors and by giving more significance to the results achieved.⁸⁶ The following are the main approaches to be considered for strengthening the M&E function for advocacy:

1. **Fine-tuning existing outcome indicators** to reflect the contribution and role of UNICEF better. This idea is linked to the consideration of measuring contribution based on the role played by the organization, which is currently not being considered. Following the categorization included in the document previously referenced, the role played by UNICEF could be categorized as shown in Table 19.⁸⁷

85 The Asia Foundation, 'Strategy Testing: An Innovative Approach to Monitoring Highly Flexible Aid Programs', 2015, s. f., 29.

86 Adapted from ideas of Coe, J. and Schlangen, R., 'No Royal Road: Finding and following the natural pathways in advocacy evaluation', 2019.

87 As described in Coe and Schlangen, 2019.

Table 19. Types of roles in advocacy

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
SOLE ACTOR	The sole actor calling for the change.
PRIMARY ACTOR	The actor that coordinated the approach, corralling and organizing others.
LEAD CONTRIBUTOR	An actor that made a leading contribution, was prominent throughout, stayed the course, and made a number of significant interventions.
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR	An actor that played an important role but may not have been vital to the result. There may be a case that the outcome would have happened anyway.
SEED SOWER	The actor that initiated the campaign and sowed the seeds, which then took a life of their own. This makes their fingerprints on the final result difficult to see (but in a good way because of the momentum they generated).
TEAM CONTRIBUTOR	An actor that worked as part of a team, among whom it is difficult to disentangle who achieved what. Isolating the factors may not be possible and is probably not that helpful: it is the combinational effect that is key.
KEY ROLE PLAYER	One of a small number of main players, each fulfilling a particular role. Each actor adds value; each is vital.
OVER-THE-LINE-GETTER	An actor that made a discreet or niche, but undeniably vital, contribution.

In this connection, it would also be essential to give significance to advocacy results by **categorizing the type of context in which advocacy results were achieved**. For instance, initial steps in the seven dimensions of policy change (e.g., from identifying a baseline policy issue to having a firm discursive commitment from key policy actors) in a highly volatile environment can be more significant change than changes at the end of the scale (implementation of policies with adequate resources) in a highly supportive or developed environment. Table 21 shows a proposal of scale to categorize results following this logic. **The seven dimensions of policy change already considered in advocacy CSI for measuring the extent to which UNICEF has influenced changes in policies is included in Table 20.**

Table 20. The UNICEF 7 dimensions of measuring policy change

STEP	DESCRIPTION
Step 1	A baseline policy issue related to child rights (CR) has been identified and evidence collected
Step 2	There is now a firm discursive commitment from key policy actors for a new or revised policy related to CR
Step 3	A new or revised policy related to CR has been developed
Step 4	A new or revised policy related to CR has been officially adopted by the responsible State body
Step 5	A negative policy proposal related to CRs has been prevented or blocked
Step 6	A policy related to CR is implemented with adequate resource allocation
Step 7	The government or business institution has carried out a comprehensive policy review or policy evaluation

2. **Strengthening advocacy standard indicators guidelines** shared with or used by COs by including advocacy output indicators that cover all the main steps/areas of change included in the revised theories of change (engagement, mobilization/awareness, shift in social norms, base of support growth and policy/institutional influence). Of particular importance is the inclusion of indicators that measure the growth of base support. These indicators play a crucial role in assessing achievements beyond the country level and can address global and/or regional outcomes that are currently not effectively monitored. By incorporating these indicators, it becomes possible to capture the significant impact they have on overall advocacy results (e.g., the achievement of the Ministerial Declaration of Arab States for Social Protection, which led to a ripple effect on social protection-related issue in relevant countries).

Table 21. Proposal of rating scale for advocacy contexts⁸⁸

SCALE	CONTEXT DESCRIPTION
1. UNFAVOURABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limited access to decision makers or stakeholders. ■ Severe restrictions on humanitarian access and limited opportunities for advocacy. ■ Hostile or resistant attitude towards advocacy efforts. ■ Scarce resources or funding available for advocacy initiatives. ■ High levels of insecurity, violence or political instability. ■ Restricted freedom of expression or limited media coverage. ■ High level of bureaucracy or red tape hindering advocacy progress.

88 Formulated by evaluation team.

SCALE	CONTEXT DESCRIPTION
2. CHALLENGING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limited but feasible opportunities for advocacy amidst humanitarian or conflict situations. ■ Mixed or neutral attitude towards advocacy efforts. ■ Some resources or funding available, but additional effort required to secure support in difficult environments. ■ Partial freedom of expression or sporadic media coverage. ■ Moderate levels of insecurity, violence, or political instability that impact advocacy progress. ■ Moderate level of bureaucracy or red tape impacting advocacy progress.
3. PROMISING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasonable access to decision makers or stakeholders. ■ Reasonable opportunities for advocacy within humanitarian or conflict contexts. ■ Supportive or open attitude towards advocacy efforts. ■ Limited resources available but good potential for ensuring them in the short term. ■ Some freedom of expression or occasional media coverage. ■ Some level of security, reduced violence, or improved political stability that facilitates advocacy work. ■ Manageable level of bureaucracy or red tape for advocacy progress.
4. SUPPORTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy access to decision makers or stakeholders. ■ Favourable opportunities for advocacy in humanitarian or conflict situations. ■ Supportive and receptive attitude towards advocacy efforts. ■ Sufficient resources or funding available for advocacy initiatives. ■ Strong freedom of expression or consistent media coverage. ■ Improved security, reduced violence, or favourable political stability that actively supports advocacy efforts. ■ Minimal bureaucracy or red tape, facilitating advocacy progress.

3. Ensuring that the different branches of the ToC developed (global, regional or national) are categorized based on the initiative’s level of complexity (simple, complicated and complex). It is necessary to prioritize monitoring efforts in those that are more complex/uncertain. A typology to differentiate simple, complicated and complex advocacy initiatives is attached in Annex 26.

4. Selecting a series of sentinel indicators, which track the most relevant assumptions included in the ToCs to keep track of changes in key contextual and cause-effect conditions, to identify them effectively and in a timely way for adaptability. Examples of relevant assumptions to track could be ‘Momentum is gained through both bottom-up and top-down approaches (depending on the context) to strengthen links and create pressure’ or ‘Integration of advocacy work at all levels (subnational, national, regional, and global) facilitates securing commitments from relevant countries in global fora’.

5. **Ensuring that ‘success stories’ are also used** by COs to complement existing indicators, since these are perfectly aligned to the ‘seven steps’ categorization and would provide a wealth of nuanced information to complement indicators for the final assessment on achievements. Success stories can play a major role in explaining ‘how’ and ‘why’ changes occurred, and their usefulness is actually strengthened by ensuring the categorization of advocacy results and indicators as proposed in this section.
6. **Using social network analysis** to complement existing initiatives (such as stakeholder analysis) to enhance the quality of intelligence according to which decisions are made, and better understand the connectivity with different stakeholders and their levels of influence, to maximize engagement and synergetic actions while identifying leverage points for implementation purposes.

PROPOSALS FOR DESIGNING THE FUTURE FINAL EVALUATION

Regarding evaluation approaches, many possibilities exist to assess advocacy work. In any case, and given the particularities of advocacy work, the most relevant impact evaluation approaches for advocacy are theory-based approaches combined with case-based approaches. These approaches usually involve a combination of strict indicator assessment (quantitative) and a more qualitative approach. As described in a recent paper by the World Bank,⁸⁹ several myths persist about the rigour of qualitative, theory-oriented, case-based impact evaluations that are relevant to measure the impact of initiatives in complex environment such as advocacy. The two main reasons for this are the challenge of inferring causality (e.g., what works in advocacy, for whom and in what context) and the challenge of generalizing results based on case-based evidence. According to the World Bank paper, these issues can be addressed with a combination of (1) a sound theory, (2) an adequate case selection, (3) the identification of key variables to be analysis for the assessment, and (4) a detailed plan for systematic data collection and analysis of results. These four steps, and how they relate to this evaluation, are discussed below.

1. **Having a sound theory on which to base the assessment:** Theory testing or the analysis of how the overarching design of one intervention matches the empirical realm (what happens on the ground) is vital to carry out case-based evaluations. In this regard, the goal of the evaluation has been, among other things, to ensure that a sound theory for advocacy is in place. For that, all the GAP ToC were revised, and a new ToT was designed to establish the theoretical model of UNICEF’s approaches to advocacy at all levels. This contributes significantly to the first area on which to base a sound case-based final evaluation. As suggested in the previous section, strategy testing will be key to ensure that advocacy theoretical models at all levels are sound and updated, and that the theory-based evaluation approach can be effectively and meaningfully applied for the final evaluation. Otherwise, the first step of the evaluation team would be to reconstruct, update or create those theoretical models, which will be time-consuming, and probably ineffective as the testing process will not be possible, meaning ToC designed for the evaluation will not be informed by practices of change.
2. **A sound, detailed and strategic case selection:** Case selection is a critical part of designing case-based causal analyses. It must be done carefully to maximize the chances of valid causal inferences and (modest) generalizability of the analysis findings.⁹⁰ Cases must be selected within a specific area of homogeneity (e.g., similar advocacy goals) so that they have enough in common. Still, different degrees of success, under different contexts and levels of contributions, are needed to understand critical questions better and, to the extent possible, represent the broader UNICEF advocacy efforts for generalizability purposes.

89 World Bank, ‘The Rigor of Case-Based Causal Analysis’, 2023.

90 Bennet (2022), Rihoux and Ragin (2009) as cited in World Bank, ‘The Rigor of Case-Based Causal Analysis’, 2023.

In this regard, the monitoring recommendations included in this section also aimed to categorize advocacy results better, going beyond what has changed to understand what was the role played by UNICEF and under what circumstances or context, which to a certain extent contributes to answering the questions on ‘what works, for whom and under what circumstances’. In any case, an essential contribution of having more significant information on achievements is critical to this second condition for a meaningful case-based evaluation, as having more disaggregated results allows for better mapping and identification of cases based not only on changes achieved but also on how and in what conditions results were attained. The monitoring recommendations included supporting the case selection with relevant information gathered through monitoring, enabling the design and selection of more meaningful cases based on granular results data.

- 3. The identification of key variables to be analysis for the assessment:** To explain how the actual case worked, how change happens at all levels and what results UNICEF contributed to, a wide range of qualitative evaluation approaches and methods can be considered, which mainly focus on assessing how each particular case worked (within-case analysis) and how results can be compared to other cases (cross-case causal analysis). Several options are available for within-case analysis, such as Contribution Analysis⁹¹, Outcome Harvesting⁹², the Qualitative Impact Protocol, Process Tracing, the GEM case study method⁹³ or the Relevant Explanation Finder⁹⁴. All these approaches are aimed at understanding how each case worked and how the causal-effect chain unfolds by eliminating or controlling alternative or rival explanations. The within-case analysis must then be complemented with a cross-case analysis aimed at identifying general patterns and establishing certain levels of generalizability. The most widely used approach for cross-case analysis is the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) approach. In summary, within-case approaches aim to understand how each case works (internal validity), while cross-case analysis aims to establish general global results patterns (external validity).

Each of the approaches described has its methodological limitations. Still, given the scope and nature of the final evaluation, combining these two types of approaches would ensure a methodologically sound approach to address the results achieved at different levels. For ‘within-case approaches’, both Outcome Harvesting and Process Tracing could be the most relevant to consider: the former for its applicability and straightforward approach, the latter for its methodological strength, which requires higher levels of expertise. As for ‘across-case’ approaches, QCA would be the most relevant approach to consider.

The identification of key variables and assumptions to study for the evaluation should be based on the likelihood of those variables and assumptions to influence change at the different levels of the theoretical model. As suggested, the previous use of sentinel indicators would be extremely useful to effectively identify those variables in which to base the analysis (e.g., role played/contribution made by different stakeholder, support of external partners, conduciveness of policy environment, etc.).

- 4. Detailed plan for systematic data collection and analysis of results:** At this point, once the evaluation design is ready, little can be said on the importance of having a clear and detailed plan for the systematic collection of data to ensure the validity and reliability of data for comparability purpose. Specific quality assurance protocols should be established at different levels to ensure the data collection and analysis is sound, and specific levels of evidence confidence should be considered, such as the scale use in this assessment.

91 Mayne, J., ‘Addressing Attribution through Contribution Analysis: Using Performance Measures Sensibly’, *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2002, 1–24.

92 Wilson-Grau, Britt, ‘Outcome Harvesting’, Ford Foundation, 2012.

93 Patton, ‘Advocacy Impact Evaluation’, *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, vol. 5, no. 9, 2008.

94 S. Lemire, S. Bohni and L. Dybdal, ‘Making contribution analysis work: A practical framework for handling influencing factors and alternative explanations’, 2012.

Conclusions



7. Conclusions

This evaluation provides crucial and timely evidence to guide UNICEF's advocacy change strategy and enhance the likelihood of advocacy success while also contributing to the assurance of a meaningful future summative evaluation of advocacy efforts by the end of the current Strategic Plan (2025). The assessment emphasizes the significance of advocacy as a change strategy, integrated into all UNICEF goal areas as a fundamental approach to achieving outcomes for children. This evaluation represents the first comprehensive organization-wide assessment, focused explicitly on this thematic area. The assessment reached the following conclusions regarding the organization's preparedness to achieve these goals and propose a set of recommended strategies for moving forward.

UNICEF has taken strong and decisive measures to establish advocacy as a critical organizational function and an integral part of its work. These efforts encompass significant structural and programmatic changes and endeavours to enhance capacities, skills, and engagement at all levels for the effective integration of advocacy. While these processes are still being consolidated, positive results are already emerging in the form of staff understanding and recognition of the importance and relevance of advocacy, along with improvements in advocacy skills across UNICEF.

Nonetheless, **to maximize the likelihood of advocacy success, there is still a need for appropriate resource structures to align with UNICEF's advocacy ambitions.** Moreover, while the change management strategy is in place globally, it requires full operationalization and systematization to effectively establish clear lines of responsibility at all levels. The shift towards integrated advocacy efforts involves implementing relevant internal strategies and processes to adopt an organization-wide advocacy approach. Several gaps have been identified in this regard, where the organization could adopt a more strategic approach to advocacy efforts at all levels and in different settings.

Although positive examples were identified throughout the process, coordination is hindered by the limited definition of advocacy roles and the fact that advocacy is not strategic enough. This limitation is noteworthy since previous experience (cause framework) has demonstrated that effective collaboration is crucial in establishing a comprehensive advocacy strategy based on global thematic pillars. The Vision Paper for the Strategic Plan (SP) emphasizes the importance of recognizing advocacy roles and accountabilities as core and critical organizational functions and formally establishing integrated working methods. However, these objectives have only been partially achieved.

The GAP framework provides focus and direction for advocacy while ensuring consistent support to certain areas in a specific time period, which is critical for achieving advocacy results. Considerable potential for inter-GAP cross-fertilization was identified. There is still some debate on whether the selected thematic areas remain relevant, but the evaluation results reveal that the GAPs have been adapted to the post-COVID-19 landscape. That discussion might be pertinent only to define the global thematic areas for the next SP. The extent to which non-prioritized areas are included in the strategies and plans of crucial divisions (GCA, PG) remains an issue to be addressed. Strategically, the current approach for integrating advocacy mainly flows in one direction (top-down) and could be further strengthened and meaningfully adapted to the realities on the ground with a higher bottom-up uptake.

As for the readiness to ensure a meaningful final evaluation for advocacy, the theoretical models on which the advocacy change strategy and the GAPs are based, as well as relevant advocacy planning, monitoring and reporting, could be further enhanced by considering complexity-aware approaches that align with the nature of advocacy work. The current situation is favourable, as there are indications that staff members are comfortable dealing with uncertainty and understand the complex nature of advocacy work.

Below is a more detailed account of the conclusions drawn from the assessment based on the key areas covered.

Formative Evaluation

CLEAR AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Conclusion 1: The efforts made towards elevating advocacy as a critical organizational function seem to be paying off, given the **overall clear and shared understanding of advocacy goals and approaches at different levels**, and considering that only specific areas (e.g., distinction between advocacy and technical assistance) remain unclear when it comes to understanding advocacy and what kind of work it entails. Staff involved in programmatic areas seem to be prone to include actions such as capacity-building and technical assistance as advocacy work. The structural changes made to give prominence to advocacy from HQ to national levels are still in the process of being consolidated. This is reflected in the existence of an unclear perception of the distinction between communication and advocacy, particularly at the national level. In any case, beyond a clear and shared understanding of advocacy, informants at all levels suggested the importance of being strategic when doing advocacy to ensure a clear and shared understanding of advocacy across units, teams and divisions. [Linked to formative key findings 1, 2 and 3.](#)

ADVOCACY APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES OF OTHER PLAYERS

Conclusion 2: **The benchmarking analysis reveals interesting insights**, such as the explicit use of ‘influencing’ as a comprehensive term for advocacy within Oxfam and the distinct advocacy frameworks adopted by the organizations analysed, where in some cases communication and advocacy are clearly delineated and separated in their structures (e.g., Oxfam and Save the Children). The consideration of a bottom-up integration approach for certain organizations is expected to enhance the effective contextualization and integration of advocacy efforts at the global level. Additionally, the significance of having a theory of change (ToC) for advocacy is evident, even though Oxfam does not have a global ToC established. When evaluating results, Oxfam’s emphasis on understanding the ‘why’ and ‘how’ stands out, along with Save the Children’s approach of conducting micro-reflection periods to ensure adaptability of advocacy initiatives. [Linked to formative key findings 4, 6, 7 and 8.](#)

RELEVANCE

Conclusion 3: **The fact that GAPs are not considered cross-cutting issues in their contribution to goal areas is considered positive to ensure a clear focus**, as each one of them mainly addresses one of the main areas considered in the SP, except for child poverty and inclusive social protection and the particular case of HIV/AIDS. The main reservations about the GAP framework relate to limitations to going beyond the thematic areas of the GAP, limited flexibility and responsiveness and issues related to the design of some priorities, such as GAP 4. The theory of transformation design as part of this assessment is expected to shed light on how the different GAPs and other relevant advocacy areas are interconnected and contribute to results at all levels. [Linked to formative key findings 10, 11, 12 and 13.](#)

IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY (RESOURCES)

Conclusion 4: Previous evaluations⁹⁵ have flagged advocacy underfunding and limitations in the personnel available for such purposes. The results of analysis reflect that such issues are still relevant and that a **sustainable structure for funding streams still needs to be implemented to support advocacy** as a change strategy and contribute to SP goals. Despite having a higher proportion of funds allocated to advocacy than other organizations, UNICEF's ambitions in advocacy still need to be matched by relevant funding and HR structures, especially at the global level, but also at regional and national levels. Nonetheless, the use of financial resources available is considered efficient by informants. Enhancing cost-effectiveness primarily relies on establishing clear roles and responsibilities for advocacy and adopting a more strategic approach in advocacy efforts. [Linked to formative key findings 14, 15, 16 and 17.](#)

IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY (CAPACITIES AND SKILLS)

Conclusion 5: **Despite advocacy training not being mandatory in UNICEF, most informants surveyed consider themselves skilled in basic advocacy techniques.** Nevertheless, informants expressed the need to further strengthen their advocacy skills, particularly regarding political intelligence and fundraising, considering GAP representatives need to secure their funding streams. Strengthening advocacy skills is particularly relevant for managers and leadership, especially for office representatives. The fact that advocacy training is not mandatory can be a major barrier to ensuring widespread advocacy capacities at all levels. [Linked to formative key findings 18, and 19.](#)

IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY (ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES)

Conclusion 6: Global **roles and responsibilities** for advocacy have been established and agreed on. However, there is still a need to translate these roles into clear lines of responsibility and accountability at all levels. While co-ownership is acknowledged and valued in principle, there is recognition that advocacy is a shared responsibility across the organization, involving various thematic areas and functions. Unfortunately, the lack of systematic joint workplans hinders the ability to hold individuals accountable and ensure alignment with programme priorities, thereby limiting the enhancement of advocacy results. [Linked to formative key findings 20 and 21.](#)

Conclusion 7: **Relevant and meaningful coordination** examples have been identified, reflecting the proactive approach and willingness of advocacy teams at different levels to 'reach the last mile' despite limitations in establishing roles and responsibilities. Nonetheless, identified challenges hinder coordination and result in missed opportunities. The lack of **strategies for developing and sustaining networks** for advocacy contributes to the existing weakness in political intelligence gathering, considering the limited mechanisms available for mapping networks /influencing pathways for effective advocacy. [Linked to formative key findings 22 and 23.](#)

95 UNICEF, 'Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025', 2022.

Evaluability Assessment

DESIGN OF ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Conclusion 8: The existing internal guidelines and templates for designing ToCs are thorough and widely used. In any case, templates that do not reflect the main limitations identified in the assessment will ensure continuity in ToC design limitations. The introduction of causal connections and pathways at different levels and across elements of the ToC, the definition of causal link assumptions, and the identification of feedback loops will strengthen ToCs considerably, as well as specific approaches to ensure the adaptability of the strategy to contexts based on their level of complexity. [Linked to evaluability key findings 1, 2, 3 and 4.](#)

DESIGN ADAPTABILITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Conclusion 9: The GAPS have been adapted to the contextual challenges and needs deriving from the pandemic outbreak and post-pandemic situation. While the widely accepted belief is that the GAP framework improves prioritization and strategic thinking while fostering collaboration, there are differing opinions regarding its continued use for ensuring the relevance of advocacy work. There is an internal debate on whether to maintain existing priorities or introduce emerging issues and how to do that in the context of existing GAPS without diluting results and efforts. Although the GAPS have shown adequate levels of adaptability, existing approaches, mechanisms and tools to periodically categorize, review and adapt to contextual changes need to be reinforced with more systematic approaches. The focus is not only on remaining relevant but also to ensure that progress towards advocacy results is effectively tracked. [Linked to evaluability key finding 6.](#)

Conclusion 10: The level of relevant indicator uptake at country levels reflects the GAPS' relevance, and the integration of global structures in the design of regional and national advocacy strategies is effective in those areas where GAPS are relevant. Putting those strategies into practice is reported to be more challenging, which is also linked to the issue identified about the limited definition of roles and responsibilities, financial and HR structures and capacities in place. The fact that NatComs have a more positive view on the level of GAP contextualization and the effective integration of global advocacy strategies might reflect more substantial advocacy capacities and the limitations that ROs and COs face in terms of advocacy structure and capacities. Despite a focus on a top-down integration approach, bottom-up integration examples reflect that practices of change are, to a certain extent, also informing advocacy theory based on the experience and results on the ground. [Linked to evaluability key finding 7.](#)

Conclusion 11: Cross-GAP initiatives should always be adequately justified and ensure synergies and added value. One of the main opportunities for cross-collaboration lies in climate change, which can connect clearly with the work of the other GAPS and relevant partners. Social protection, not being a GAP and not being included in the GCA Workplan, lags in complementary work with GAPS. The unbalanced focus on private partners vs. CSOs is not necessarily harmful, but no specific rationale is shared across teams to understand the justification for this approach. [Linked to evaluability key findings 5 and 9.](#)

Conclusion 12: The lack of systematic information on partnerships at all levels is a main limitation in maximizing the results of partnerships, identifying synergies and periodically reviewing and capturing changes in needs for alliances. UNISON (UNICEF's global corporate partnership management platform for private and public sector relationships worldwide) could play a major role in addressing this gap. Also, a systematic and shared approach **for identifying, developing and sustaining partnership** would ensure homogeneity and effectiveness in addressing the three main partnership strategies considered for advocacy. [Linked to evaluability key finding 10.](#)

PLANNING PROCEDURES

Conclusion 13: The use of advocacy CSI indicators at global, regional and national levels ensures to a great extent that the **main planning tools reflect clearly the contribution to the SP**. Although relevant collaborations between GCA and social protection teams were identified in the course of the evaluation, the fact that child poverty and inclusive social protection is only represented indirectly in the scope and plans of the GCA raises a question about whether having a formal set of activities to support and contribute to enhancing advocacy efforts in this line should be considered. [Linked to evaluability key finding 11.](#)

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Conclusion 14: **The current M&E system is ready to take some steps forwards to ensure advocacy efforts are adequately monitored and evaluated**, which includes a revision of key indicators and the prioritization of certain M&E efforts (more on this in Section 6). COs might have the chance to develop ad hoc indicators for measuring advocacy outputs, but having a full-fledged set of potential advocacy indicators at hand would be very useful not only to ensure their application and uptake but also in maximizing indicator homogeneity for comparability and aggregation purposes. In this line, an additional focus on context monitoring would be relevant to reflect a complexity-aware approach to advocacy monitoring. [Linked to evaluability key findings 13 and 14.](#)

REPORTING

Conclusion 15: A significant opportunity to enhance the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach for advocacy lies in the recognition by UNICEF staff that advocacy practitioners should be comfortable dealing with uncertainty, while **understanding the complex nature of advocacy work**. The M&E tools introduced have proven to be relevant for advocacy monitoring, and there is a growing perception that the focus of monitoring should be broadened to address challenges in measuring and reporting the contribution of advocacy work. Since GAPs rely on external funding, and reporting is usually done directly to the donor, results frameworks and the types of M&E and reporting activities might be highly influenced by external partner needs and demands, which would not be the case if UNICEF provided consistent core resources. [Linked to evaluability key findings 15 and 16.](#)

GUIDANCE FOR THE FINAL, SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF ADVOCACY

Conclusion 16: The most relevant approach to consider for the **final evaluation** combines the expected contribution of the theoretical framework and M&E data systems enhanced as a result of the recommendation included in this report, which are expected to clearly and meaningfully contribute to the development of a theory-oriented, case-based evaluation design that addresses the impact of UNICEF global advocacy efforts. [Linked to evaluability key finding 17.](#)

Lessons Learned



8. Lessons Learned

The evaluation process has identified the following lessons that can be sufficiently generalized and applied in various context regarding advocacy work.

- 1. Relevant advocacy work can be accomplished with thematic and advocacy experts.** The perception that UNICEF needs to possess strong programmatic expertise in a specific area to advocate effectively is shifting due to the introduction of work in areas such as MHPSS and climate change as GAPS. While this view has yet to be widely accepted within the organization, there is a growing sentiment that the previous notion is no longer valid and that relevant advocacy work can be accomplished with the support of thematic specialists, advocacy experts, UNICEF's evidence functions, and external support through research and data analytics. The swift adaptation to the COVID-19 scenario, where UNICEF began campaigning against school closures after initially hesitating to do so, further exemplifies this shift.

UNICEF, historically programme-focused, has evolved to appreciate the significance of global advocacy, even in areas unrelated or not extensively linked to programmatic initiatives. This shift emphasizes their commitment to addressing critical global issues such as climate change and adolescent mental health while increasingly working with middle-income countries that may not necessarily require service delivery but focus on advancing key policy frameworks and reforms. However, they are combined with well-established vaccines, health, child survival, and education operations. This signifies a shift in the organizational logic, where advocacy efforts are now linked to areas beyond historical programmatic experience. It reflects the adaptability and willingness of the organization to remain relevant and address critical issues beyond its traditional areas of focus.

- 2. Being strategic is the key to having an organization-wide integrated advocacy approach.** It is understood that for advocacy efforts to succeed it is important for everyone involved to have a clear understanding of what advocacy means and how it should be done. Nonetheless, and beyond that, advocacy practitioners and other staff at all levels agree that being strategic is key to achieving this shared understanding across different units, teams and divisions. Being strategic means carefully planning and using smart tactics to ensure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to advocacy. This helps teams work together smoothly, coordinate their efforts effectively, and ultimately have a bigger impact with their advocacy work.

Recommendations



9. Recommendations

The following is the set of recommendations arrived at as a result of the analysis and interpretation of key findings, which were co-created and validated by key internal and external stakeholders in a workshop.

RECOMMENDATIONS AIMED AT MAXIMIZING THE RESULTS OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Recommendation 1: Clarify accountabilities and strengthen role definition systems for advocacy.

Clear role definition is identified as a weakness in implementing advocacy work. It is recommended that clear roles and responsibilities for advocacy be systematically established at all levels of the organization and in all settings where advocacy is carried out. To address this key issue, and closely linked to the idea of ensuring advocacy strategies guide advocacy at all levels, the following should be considered:

Responsible units: Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (GCA), Programme Group (PG) and Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) as advocacy co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at HQ (Office of the Executive Director (OED), Division of Human Resources (DHR), Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP), Public Partnerships Division (PPD), Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM), regional and national levels.

Priority: Very high

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next six months

Cost implications: Neutral, or cost-saving, as some of these initiatives are already being implemented (e.g., Matrix Management). Only financial resources and HR might be needed to develop and sustain global joint workplans.

1.1 Joint global advocacy workplans should be developed by the advocacy co-leads of both development and humanitarian advocacy. These global joint workplans should be used to prioritize and articulate collaborative advocacy work with other relevant units and divisions at HQ and across offices at the regional and national levels (including NatComs), as part of an integrated advocacy strategy. This should strengthen coordination and buy-in, while establishing clear lines of responsibility and accountability that go beyond ad hoc advocacy workplans done for specific initiatives. In humanitarian settings, global joint workplans between GCA and EMOPS should serve as the basis for informing the development of specific advocacy strategies at the country and/or regional level as part of the Emergency Procedures. These strategies should be effectively drafted according to the requirements (mandatory in all L2 and L3 emergencies). The global joint workplan for emergency settings should aim to support this process and strengthen coordination and responsibilities at the global level to support offices at the regional and country levels. This will help avoid duplication and ensure a more coordinated and standardized approach at the different levels, while leaving room for the responsiveness and adaptation required for effective advocacy.

The global joint workplans developed between key divisions and units at HQ levels should serve for inspiration and guide ROs, COs and NatComs to develop their own joint workplans for advocacy. Examples of joint workplans between ROs and COs can be found in the context of the Italian NatCom and ECARO, as discussed in Annex 8. UNICEF should also set clear accountabilities for each office/division as part of the current procedure put in place, and following the initial indications included in the Compendium.

1.2 The matrix management approach should be reinforced to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and multisectoral programming, improve motivation and commitment and maximize existing skills across teams. To do that, two reporting lines should exist, one for the functional area (direct supervisor) and one for the advocacy initiatives from the relevant functional and/or thematic area each advocacy practitioner is involved in (second reporting officer). The idea is that effective communication between the vertical and horizontal managers is ensured, and that staff receive more feedback and professional support. For example, an advocacy practitioner at the CO level might report directly to his/her supervisor in the A&C team and horizontally to an advocacy specialist in the RO and/or at relevant thematic areas in HQ. At HQ, GAP representatives might be linked to secondary reporting lines within the relevant thematic units in PG, for example.

1.3 UNICEF should continue developing and including advocacy issues in role descriptions at all levels (including communication and advocacy roles and others), guidelines, performance evaluation reports (PERs) and performance indicators explicitly defining advocacy responsibilities. Efforts should also be made to strengthen accountability systems globally to ensure timely decision-making and effective delivery of advocacy results. Regarding humanitarian advocacy, the activation of the Emergency Procedures is pivotal in creating certainty and structure around roles and coordination, and this should be effectively integrated at regional and national levels.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen and rethink the GAP framework design for the next Strategic Plan (SP). The assessment has highlighted the main advantages and disadvantages of having an organizational advocacy structure based on global priorities. While the advantages are clear, some issues should be considered to ensure the GAP framework remains relevant and maximizes advocacy results while considering key priorities and areas of interest for the organization.

Responsible units: GCA, PG, and EMOPS as co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at HQ, regional and national levels, as well as the Global Advocacy Task Force.

Priority: High

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next 12 to 18 months

Cost implications: Neutral, or cost-saving, only financial and HR allocation might be needed to foster cross-GAP collaboration

2.1 The GAP framework design should be fine-tuned to incorporate existing thematic areas more meaningfully. More specifically, and as already stressed by GCA and PG management, GAP 4 should contribute across the different areas of impact, including but not exclusively focusing on WASH. This will align the GAPs with the programmatic approach given to climate, eventually leading to greater cross-fertilization of results in this critical area.

2.2 UNICEF should ensure a better alignment between the GAPs and the goal areas identified in the SP. The GAPs should reorient their thematic focus to be more clearly aligned with the main areas included in the next SP. UNICEF should consider revisiting the GAPs to ensure they address all the goal areas comprehensively. For example, following the current structure, the GAPs should include child poverty and inclusive social protection and also give relevance to this area in the annual workplans of key co-leads. If the organization decides not to prioritize all goal areas of the SP, the GAPs should be defined following a bottom-up approach, as described in recommendation 3.

2.3 UNICEF should foster cross-GAP collaboration. The organization should promote and justify cross-collaboration initiatives that ensure synergies and added value between the different GAPs. Good examples of cross-collaboration, such as the collaboration between GAP 2 and GAP 3 on 'mental health in schools', should be identified and replicated. Climate change can serve as a critical area for cross-collaboration, connecting the work of the different GAPs. Efforts should be made to strengthen complementary work between GAPs and social protection and explore potential linkages with other areas like migration or gender equality.

2.4 Relevant changes should be made to the GAPs so that they are effectively translated and communicated at different levels to strengthen advocacy integration with updated strategies. These changes should target not only the A&C teams but also programmatic teams and other cross-thematic units at regional and national levels, such as the MEAL unit.

2.5 The Global Advocacy Task Force should continue to play a central role in setting strategic visions and priorities for advocacy. All GAPs should be represented in the Advocacy Task Force (all GAP leaders should be included.), as well as representatives from key thematic areas considered in the Strategic Plan (e.g., in the current SP, child poverty and integrated social protection, and humanitarian advocacy).

Recommendation 3: Integrate advocacy more systematically at all levels. Through the evaluation, specific areas have been identified that represent an opportunity to foster the integration of advocacy at all levels, as follows.

Responsible units: GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at HQ (OED, PFP, PPD) and at regional and national levels, including National Committees (NatComs).

Priority: Very high

Timeframe: 3.3 to be actioned in the next six months, 3.1 and 3.2 in the next 12 to 18 months as part of the preparation for the next SP

Cost implications: Only financial resources are needed to separate A&C roles

3.1 The prevailing top-down approach for integrating advocacy at all levels should be balanced with a more prominent bottom-up approach for selecting GAPS. Feedback gathered from offices at different levels for the next SP will be crucial to adapt and prioritize advocacy initiatives in the next GAP framework. UNICEF should enhance stakeholder engagement in the design and prioritization of the GAPS. Regional and country-level involvement should be encouraged to ensure the co-creation of agendas, transparency in priority-setting, credibility, buy-in, and ownership of the GAPS. The bottom-up approach also refers to accommodating regional and country-specific priorities that may fall outside the GAPS. GAPS could focus on global events and campaigns while maintaining a global focus and allowing flexibility for regions and countries to address their unique advocacy needs and adapt the priorities accordingly. This way, a top-down and bottom-up approach could be reinforced: HQ can act as a curator of policy and knowledge, and country offices share lessons learned with regional offices and HQ.

3.2 Advocacy and communication roles should be separated strategically. Following the approach considered by other relevant organizations, the advocacy position should remain separate from communication and continue to be housed within the communication teams. This represents a significant step that should be gradually introduced in UNICEF, and a start can be made by prioritizing offices or communication teams in certain regions or relevant thematic areas to pilot. This will help take advocacy work to a higher level and serve as a strategy to ensure there is a clear distinction between the two roles and that they are widely understood, with emphasis that communication is complementary to advocacy but not a substitute.

3.3 In order to enhance political intelligence in UNICEF, it is recommended that the organization:

1. Define clear cross-organizational strategies for developing and sustaining networks that are shared across divisions and offices, including mechanisms for mapping networks and influencing pathways for effective advocacy.
2. Leverage local staff knowledge and networks, foster collaboration with external stakeholders, implement a systematic cross-organizational political intelligence-gathering process, and establish clear reporting channels. By recognizing the insights and intelligence of local staff, encouraging collaboration between international and national staff, and engaging external stakeholders, the organization can better understand local political landscapes.
3. Develop a structured approach for intelligence gathering, utilizing technology tools, and establishing clear reporting channels that will ensure efficient and effective dissemination of political intelligence, supporting informed decision-making and advocacy efforts. In particularly challenging contexts, the organization should consider engaging external agencies for political intelligence and recruiting expert advocates skilled in political intelligence. UNICEF should seek avenues to deliver sensitive messages effectively. Balancing organizational priorities and political sensitivities is crucial to avoid limitations in advocacy efforts, and the support of CSOs at the national level is key in this regard.

Recommendation 4: Match existing resources with advocacy expectations and ambitions.

Responsible units: GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, but also other relevant units and offices at regional and national levels, including PFP, PPD and DAPM.

Priority: Very high

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next six to 12 months

Cost implications: Additional financial and human resources might be needed depending on the options considered

4.1 It is essential to ensure that the funding and human resource structures align with UNICEF's ambitious advocacy goals. Exploring strategies for diversifying funding sources and securing long-term commitments to sustain advocacy efforts would be essential. This may involve engaging with strategic partners, exploring different and/or innovative funding models, and advocating for core funding. It would be critical to either secure fundraising skills and expertise within the GAP teams or secure core funds targeting the different GAPs based on a cost out of the resources needed to cover the main personnel. This will create the base of support for the GAP teams to sustain advocacy funding over time. Also, it will contribute to being more independent of donors' planning and reporting requirements. Creating a 'mapping of advocacy resources' aligned with the UNICEF organization Compendium could prove beneficial. This approach would help efficiently capture and optimize existing resources instead of continuously seeking new ones.

Recommendation 5: Maximize partnerships for advocacy.

Responsible units: GCA, PG, EMOPS, PFP, PPD and DAPM, but also other relevant units and offices at regional and national levels.

Priority: High

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next six to 12 months

Cost implications: Additional financial and human resources might be needed depending on the options considered, particularly for assessing the effectiveness of partnerships

5.1 UNICEF should systematically promote the use of information on partnerships in UNISON to have a shared global database of partnerships formed at all levels to help with making decisions and to define potential cross-collaboration and synergies.

5.2 The organization must develop specific strategies for selecting and ensuring partners' added value for advocacy at any given time and apply these strategies systematically. Learning from other organizations' approaches to engaging with partners can help UNICEF establish effective partnerships to advance its advocacy goals. A systematic and shared system for identifying, developing and sustaining partnerships would also ensure homogeneity and effectiveness in addressing the three main partnership strategies considered for advocacy.

5.3 UNICEF should develop a framework for assessing the effectiveness and impact of its partnerships, particularly in terms of advocacy outcomes. Regular monitoring and evaluation of partnership activities can provide valuable insights for refining strategies, identifying successful approaches, and ensuring accountability in achieving advocacy goals. Among the critical issues to consider are 1) the extent to which partners adopt and prioritize issues important to UNICEF, and 2) how advocacy leads partners to invest in matters without directly funding UNICEF, contributing to a finance-leveraging perspective.

5.4 Strengthening partnerships with influential global institutions and coalitions like the European Union, G7, G20 and the World Economic Forum is important; such partnerships have proven valuable across all GAPs. UNICEF should continue to foster and expand these relationships to leverage their critical influence on child rights advocacy. Faith leaders and faith-based organizations have been identified as influential stakeholders across all GAPs, except for GAP 4. UNICEF should acknowledge their critical role in advocacy and foster partnerships with them. Engaging faith leaders and collaborating with faith-based organizations can help advance child rights issues by leveraging their influence and mobilizing their communities. While CSO partnerships are seen as more relevant at the country level, UNICEF should not neglect expanding CSO partnerships at the global level. Investing in building strong relationships with CSOs globally can facilitate knowledge-sharing, best practices, and collective advocacy efforts, enhancing UNICEF’s impact on child rights at both national and international levels. While the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are not considered highly influential for child rights advocacy, they are linked to all GAPs (except GAP 4). UNICEF should explore opportunities for closer collaboration with these United Nations (UN) agencies to align advocacy efforts and leverage their expertise and resources in addressing child rights issues. It is crucial to foster partnerships with influential donors. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK FCDO) are identified as critical influencers linked to all GAPs except GAP 3. UNICEF should prioritize building and strengthening relationships with these influential donors. Engaging with them strategically and aligning advocacy priorities can help secure funding support and maintain UNICEF’s advocacy impact. Finally, UNICEF should further embed youth engagement through youth organizations and youth movements to support the achievement of the established advocacy goals.

Recommendation 6: Continue developing

advocacy skills and capacities. The efforts made in the past years should continue and consider the following.

Responsible units: ACBI, GCA, PG and EMOPS as co-leads, and selected NatComs.

Priority: High

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next 12 to 18 months

Cost implications: Additional financial resources might be needed, depending on how Advocacy Capacity-Building Initiative (ACBI) adapts its current strategy to include mandatory training and a focus on advanced advocacy skills

6.1 To ensure that all staff members have the necessary advocacy skills, it is recommended to make advocacy training mandatory for managers, representatives and programmatic staff. This will contribute to developing a shared understanding of advocacy principles and techniques across UNICEF and ensure that advocacy is effectively integrated into programmatic work. Mandatory training can be included as part of staff onboarding and professional development programmes, and specific efforts should also be made to ensure that advocacy is considered a core part of the skills and capacities of representatives at regional and country levels. This can be achieved through training, clear guidelines, and effective communication from HQ. Beyond training, UNICEF should conscientiously focus on developing a culture of advocacy.

6.2 UNICEF should prioritize specific thematic areas for advanced advocacy training. The assessment has highlighted capacity gaps in areas such as gathering and using political intelligence and strategic advocacy, including capacity-building on youth engagement. This may include specialized workshops, mentoring programmes and knowledge-sharing platforms to enhance the skills and expertise of staff involved in advocacy. Also, capacity-building on resource mobilization should be provided to staff responsible for resource mobilization for advocacy at the different levels, from GAP representatives to office representatives and relevant teams. For NatComs, the focus should be put on developing programming and M&E skills.

6.3 The organization should leverage the existing wealth of experience and expertise of relevant NatComs for developing capacities at the regional and country office levels. Some NatComs have strong ambassadors and teams with significant advocacy expertise, and more efforts should be made to identify them in order to support, recognize, and connect their work with other parts of UNICEF. This could be done by ensuring greater coordination at the national level, exchanging experiences, lessons learned and good practices for advocacy, and linking offices with similar thematic coverage, role played and the context in which UNICEF operates. This should not lead to NatComs receiving less support and capacity-building opportunities; rather, those more advanced in advocacy skills and capacities should be selected to support other areas and levels of UNICEF. NatComs expertise in resource mobilization for advocacy should also be leveraged.

6.4 UNICEF needs to prioritize knowledge management and sharing approaches to strengthen organizational learning further. Among the crucial actions to consider are developing an advocacy community of practice and enhancing the Advocacy Portal on the intranet, a valuable resource for staff to access tools, guidance, case studies and good practices in advocacy, while ensuring key institutional memory is kept and promoted. This can include incorporating lessons learned from various contexts, sharing successful advocacy initiatives, and providing practical advice on implementing advocacy strategies. Regular communication and promotion of the Advocacy Portal will also ensure that staff are aware of its existence and use it effectively.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen planning and reporting for decision-making.

Responsible units: GCA, PG, DAPM and EMOPS, with the support of other relevant units.

Priority: High

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next 12 to 18 months

Cost implications: Additional financial resources might be needed

7.1 UNICEF should strengthen communication and information-sharing, particularly across GAPs. Improved communication channels and mechanisms should facilitate coordination and information-sharing between different units, divisions, and levels involved in different GAPs. Regular meetings, calls, and updates can keep all stakeholders informed and aligned with advocacy initiatives. Regular communication channels and exchanges between parties involved in GAPs, such as the PG, PFP, and NatComs, should also be strengthened. This will foster a mutual understanding of operations and facilitate effective collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS AIMED AT ENSURING READINESS FOR A MEANINGFUL FINAL EVALUATION

Recommendation 8: Improve and promote the theoretical models of the advocacy change strategy. **Responsible units:** GCA, PG, DAPM and EMOPS.

Priority: Very high

Timeframe: To be actioned in the next 12 months

Cost implications: Neutral or cost-saving

8.1 Validated theories of change and theory of transformation should be disseminated, known and owned by advocacy practitioners at the different levels to ensure advocacy strategies follow a consistent logic informed by global theoretical models and adapted to the realities and challenges of each particular context. The existing internal guidelines and templates for designing theories of change (ToCs) should be updated to ensure that causal connections and pathways at different levels and across elements of the ToC are included, as well as causal link assumptions and the identification of feedback loops. The rationale assumptions should be based on common sense and prior knowledge, providing a solid foundation for the plausibility of the proposed strategy. Additionally, the ToCs should address limitations and barriers based on previous experience, including a clear indication of the sources of obstacles and the rationale behind the assumptions made.

8.2 UNICEF should ensure that developed ToCs are periodically tested and adapted, following a strategic testing approach, a monitoring system specifically devised to track programmes addressing complex development problems through a highly iterative and adaptive approach.⁹⁶ Strategy testing ensures that existing theoretical models for advocacy (ToC) are continuously tested, informed by the realities on the ground, and adapted accordingly. As widely acknowledged within UNICEF, ToCs are living documents, and this approach ensures ToCs evolve through time as information emerges and are based on the results of what is working and what is not and why. The core of strategic testing is a structured discussion during which the advocacy practitioners collectively examine the previous version of the ToC to see whether its implicit assumptions are still valid. This will help embrace a ‘practices of change’ approach, which involves continuously testing and adapting advocacy strategies based on real-world practices and experiences. The bottom-up approach to advocacy recommended is expected to contribute to that, but this should be further strengthened with specific approaches to ensure theory testing.

96 The Asia Foundation, ‘Strategy Testing: An Innovative Approach to Monitoring Highly Flexible Aid Programs’, 2015.

Recommendation 9: Improve the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach of the advocacy change strategy.

Responsible units: GCA, PG, DAPM, Office of Research and EMOPS.

Priority: Very high

Timeframe: To be action in the next six months

Cost implications: Neutral or cost-saving

Existing outcome and core standard indicators should be fine-tuned to better reflect the contribution and role of UNICEF and the context in which results are achieved. This idea is linked to the consideration of measuring contribution based on the role played by UNICEF, which is currently not being considered. In this line, it would also be essential to give significance to advocacy results by categorizing the type of context in which advocacy results were achieved.

9.1 UNICEF should strengthen Advocacy Standard Indicators Guidelines shared with/used by COs by including advocacy output indicators that cover all the main steps/areas of change included in the revised theories of change (engagement, mobilization/awareness, shift in social norms, base of support growth and policy/institutional influence). Of particular importance is the inclusion of mid-level indicators that measure the growth of base support and the mobilization of partners, as well as the results and influence on non-governmental partners, especially private partners. Section 6 of the report provides guidance and a proposal of rubrics to categorize advocacy indicators (see tables 19 and 20).

The organization should ensure that the different branches of the ToC developed (global, regional, or national) are categorized based on their level of complexity (simple, complicated, and complex) to prioritize monitoring efforts in those that are more complex/uncertain. A typology to differentiate simple, complicated and complex advocacy initiatives is attached in Annex 26.

9.2 A series of sentinel indicators should be selected to track the most relevant assumptions included in the ToCs and keep track of changes in critical contextual and cause-effect conditions to identify them for adaptability effectively and in a timely way. Examples of appropriate assumptions to track could be 'Momentum is gained through both bottom-up and top-down approaches (depending on the context) to strengthen links and create pressure' or 'Integration of advocacy work at all levels (subnational, national, regional and global) facilitates securing commitments from relevant countries in global fora'.

9.3 UNICEF should ensure that 'success stories' are also used by COs to complement existing indicators as they are perfectly aligned to 'the seven steps' categorization and would provide a wealth of nuanced information to complement indicators for the final assessment of achievements. Success stories can play a significant role in explaining 'how' and 'why' changes occurred. As proposed in this section, their usefulness is strengthened by ensuring the categorization of advocacy results and indicators.

9.4 Social network analysis⁹⁷ should be used to complement existing initiatives (such as stakeholder analysis and Global Advocacy Situation Analysis) to enhance the quality of intelligence on which decisions are based and better understand the connectivity with different stakeholders and their level of influence to maximize engagement and synergetic actions while identifying leverage points for implementation purposes.

97 An accessible document on how to develop SNA is found in International Rescue Committee, 'Social Network Analysis Handbook. Connection the dots in humanitarian programs', 2016.

LIST OF ANNEXES

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