

Evaluation of UNICEF's Reasonable Accommodation Fund for Employees and Job Applicants with Disabilities

Inception Report

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Acronyms

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DCO	Development Coordination Office
DEI	Diversity, equity and inclusion
DIPAS	Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy
DHR	Division of Human Resources
EFAAT	Environmental Footprint and Accessibility Assessment Tool
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary General
EU	European Union
GEROS	Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System
GMT	Global Management Team
GrAF	Greening and Accessibility Fund
GSS	Global Staff Survey
HQ	Headquarters in New York
HR	Human Resources
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
KII	Key Informant Interview
OED	Office of the Executive Director
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPD	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
RA	Reasonable Accommodation
RAC	Reasonable Accommodation Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary-General
SP	Strategic Plan
UN	United Nations
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

UNICEF’s Evaluation Office has commissioned an Evaluation of UNICEF’s Reasonable Accommodation Fund (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Fund’) covering the period from its inception in 2011 to 2022, with particular emphasis on the period from 2020 to 2022 when there was an increase in funding, awareness, and utilization. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure the Fund meets needs and expectations while being in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)¹ and relevant UN-specific guidelines. It will also inform the future design and approach of the Fund in line with the organizational goals addressing disability inclusion and, more broadly, pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including UNICEF’s Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS).

The Fund is one component of UNICEF’s efforts to advance the inclusion of employees with disabilities within the organization and to provide accommodations to remove workplace barriers that prevent applicants and employees with disabilities from enjoying equal employment opportunities. This report will outline the specific offerings of the Fund and how it relates to other procedures and entitlements that UNICEF employees with disabilities can access to benefit from accommodations at the individual and organizational level, which collectively are aimed at making UNICEF a more inclusive organization.

The Fund covers accommodations that have a cost (e.g., purchasing software or hiring a personal assistant). Accommodations that do not have a cost (e.g., changes to working hours or location) will be considered in terms of how coherent and complementary the Fund is with other related tools and policies.

This inception report seeks to establish a common understanding among the key stakeholders of the evaluation. The report builds on the evaluation terms of reference² and describes the background, purpose, and objectives of the evaluation. It outlines the evaluation questions and the planned approach and methodology to be used to answer them. It clarifies the evaluation process, including the timeline and key products that will be delivered, and the process and arrangements that will be used to ensure overall quality and the active participation of relevant stakeholders. The information presented in this report is based on a desk review of key documentation and 14 inception interviews (both listed in [Annex 1](#)).

¹ UN (2006), [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

² Which can be accessed [here](#).

2. Background and context

Background and rationale of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is an umbrella term that refers to values, policies or practices that promote the representation, participation and support of people from diverse backgrounds and identities. Each component of the term describes a distinct aspect: Diversity represents the wide variety of personal characteristics, both visible or less visible, that make us similar to and different from one another, such as ethnicity or disability. Equity is the act of ensuring fair treatment and access, so that no one is left behind. And inclusion comes through actions taken to understand, embrace, and leverage all individuals' unique identities and perspectives so that all feel welcomed, valued, and supported.³ Efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion also often mean taking action to improve the lives of people who have been historically excluded or marginalized.⁴

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are pillars of a successful, modern workplace. This claim is supported by broad evidence: According to a 2019 global report from the International Labour Organization, companies with inclusive business cultures and policies have a higher probability of increased profitability and productivity, an enhanced ability to attract and retain talent, and a higher degree of creativity, innovation and openness.⁵ Many other studies come to similar conclusion, demonstrating that having a diverse and inclusive workforce greatly improves innovation, performance and talent attraction.⁶

Despite efforts to strengthen diversity and equity, persons with disabilities often still face significant difficulties in the workplace. On the one hand, persons with disabilities are over a third less likely to be employed than persons without disabilities. Yet about 15 per cent of the world's population, so an estimated one billion people, are persons with disabilities, which is why they are sometimes referred to as 'the world's largest minority'⁷ and represent a large pool of untapped talent. On the other hand, persons with disabilities often face a workplace environment that is not tailored to their needs and requirements and present barriers to their equal participation in the workplace.⁸

According to the CRPD, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis.⁹ Successfully addressing these barriers in the workplace would mean that employees with disabilities and applicants to job vacancies with disabilities feel they have an equal opportunity to work, bring in their skills and grow their careers.

The concept of intersectional discrimination also plays an important role in this context. Intersectionality is a framework that describes how a person's various marginalized identities work together to impact a person. For example, if someone is working class *and* is a person with disability, the combination of both factors together shapes a person's life experiences. Countless factors can intersect with disability to alter an individual's experience, such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, education level, and much more.¹⁰

A catalyst for the global movement on the rights of persons with disabilities is the CRPD. The CRPD is an international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. It is the first legally binding international instrument requiring states that have ratified it to pay specific attention to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to the same rights and opportunities as everybody else. As of April 2022, 186¹¹ countries have ratified the CRPD. The CRPD encourages

³ UNICEF (2022), Glossary of terms related to diversity, equity and inclusion, p.11-12. (Internal document)

⁴ Gallup (2022), [Advancing DEI Initiatives: A Guide for Organizational Leaders](#), p. 6

⁵ ILO (2019), [The business case for change](#), p. 21

⁶ Forbes (2022), [The Importance Of Diversity And Inclusion For Today's Companies](#); Harvard Business Review (2018), [How and Where Diversity Drives Financial Performance](#)

⁷ Dennis, T. & Hatton, J. (2021), [Diversity, Inclusion and Disability](#)

⁸ Ruh, D. (2021), [Creating A More Accessible And Inclusive Workplace For People With Disabilities](#)

⁹ UN (2006), [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), Article 1 – Purpose

¹⁰ Feder, J. (2021), [What is Intersectionality?](#)

¹¹ This includes 185 countries that have ratified the CRPD and the European Union.

people worldwide to understand disability as a human rights issue. It covers many areas where obstacles can arise, such as physical access to buildings or access to information.¹²

At the level of the UN system, a [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy \(UNDIS\)](#) was launched in June 2019 to lead by example and improve the Organization's standards and performance on disability inclusion across all pillars of work. The UNDIS enables the UN system to support the implementation of the CRPD. It includes a system-wide policy, an accountability framework with 15 common-system indicators that UN entities report, and other implementation modalities. Reasonable accommodation is required by all UN entities, including UNICEF, as per indicator 7 of the UNDIS which is reported annually to the UN Secretary-General.

UNICEF has identified disability inclusion as a priority both for its programmatic work and within the organization. The organization's current Strategic Plan (SP) has been elevating programming on disability rights as a cross-cutting dimension.¹³ In early 2022, the organization published a dedicated report on the well-being of children with disabilities of which there are 240 million worldwide, representing 10 per cent of the world's children.¹⁴ The UNICEF Programme Group has a Disability Team that provides technical support through developing tools and guidance and supporting country offices. The Disability Team is also responsible for global leadership, advocacy and innovation, establishing partnerships and securing funding.

Moreover, **UNICEF's Strategic Plan identifies 'Dynamic and inclusive people and culture' as an organizational performance enabler** and states that *"inclusion and representation will be prioritized, so that every member of the UNICEF workforce can count on feeling safe, respected and valued. A key part of this is ensuring adequate representation of marginalized groups across all functional areas."*¹⁵ Internal data of UNICEF's last Global Staff Survey (GSS) conducted in 2022 indicated that 308 out of 14,747 respondents self-identified as persons with disabilities, which corresponds to a share of 2.1 per cent. Another 558 or 3.8 percent stated they preferred not to state whether they were a person with disability.¹⁶ It is expected that the successful inclusion of employees with disabilities will also inform and benefit the organization's programmatic work to effectively support children with disabilities.¹⁷ Besides, related efforts are also a direct response to demands of colleagues with disabilities to adequately address their needs and shape the organization into a truly inclusive workplace.¹⁸

As part of its commitment to disability inclusion, UNICEF developed its first ever [Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2022-2030](#) to guide the organization's work towards disability inclusion in both programmatic areas as well as in organizational systems, processes and culture. The DIPAS was developed through broad consultations and endorsed in September 2022 by the Global Management Team (GMT), comprised of UNICEF's senior leadership advisory body to the Executive Director on strategic management. The DIPAS is directly linked to the implementation of UNICEF's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, the UNDIS, and the UN 2030 Agenda.¹⁹ Reasonable accommodation is directly addressed in the DIPAS as a key component and organizational strategy for disability inclusion.

Additional resources and initiatives are aimed at supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities at UNICEF. The organization's intranet has dedicated pages to disability inclusion in UNICEF Programmes and Operations with technical resources, publications and reports. UNICEF has a Procedure on Disability-inclusive Human Resources Management and a guide on inclusive employment related to disability and its intersections,²⁰ and there is a global network of employees with disabilities (called *Disability Connect*) and another employee resource group of UNICEF employees with dependants with disabilities.

¹² WHO (2020), [Disability: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

¹³ UNICEF (2021), [UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022-2025](#) (Executive Board Document), p. 9

¹⁴ UNICEF (2022), [Seen, Counted, Included. Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities](#)

¹⁵ UNICEF (2021), [UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022-2025](#) (Executive Board Document), p. 20-21

¹⁶ UNICEF (2022), Global Staff Survey. (Internal document)

¹⁷ The recent report '[Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan](#)', published in fall 2022, highlighted a need for further strengthening in this area. It assessed elements of strategic importance for UNICEF's mission, with disability as a cross-cutting strategy rated as insufficient/poor but nascent (see page 64).

¹⁸ UNICEF (2020), [UNICEF is striving to be a disability-inclusive employer](#) (Video)

¹⁹ UNICEF (2022), [Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy \(DIPAS\) 2022-2030](#)

²⁰ UNICEF (2021), Inclusive Employment Guide. Disability and its intersections. (Internal document)

A key element in including persons with disabilities are the organization's provisions for reasonable accommodation (which is also called a reasonable adjustment in some other countries²¹). A reasonable accommodation is *what an employer does differently for an employee or applicant with disability to remove a workplace barrier*. This can entail any change in the work environment or how a job is performed that enables a person with disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities, as long as the changes do not remove essential job functions. There are three categories of reasonable accommodations:

- 1) changes to a job application process including the interview phase,
- 2) changes to the work environment or to the way a job is usually done, and
- 3) changes that enable an employee with disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment (such as access to training).

Reasonable accommodation can be a one-time adjustment, such as ensuring an accessible workspace, adequate travel accommodation, or providing assistive devices. Or it **may require an ongoing adjustment**, such as sign language interpretation or personal assistance at work. The denial of reasonable accommodation is a form of discrimination.

UNICEF first made a formal commitment to provide reasonable accommodation for employees and applicants with disabilities in 2011 with the signing of an Executive Directive by Anthony Lake UNICEF's Executive Director at the time. Subsequently a fund was set up and the first requests were processed in 2012, with more formal efforts by senior leadership to publicise the Fund in 2013. Awareness and use of the Fund among employees remained fairly limited according to the Chief of the Disability Section and reflected by the limited number of requests, until a procedure on disability-inclusive human resources management was adopted in 2020 by the Division of Human Resources and rolled out with a guide on reasonable accommodation available to employees, HR practitioners and managers of the Fund.²² At the same time, the Fund was significantly increased from \$50,000 to \$300,000 annually. While there has been an increase in efforts to address the provision of RA, there is still a need for more clarification in terms of how to ensure the Fund is efficient, effective and sustainable, especially as experts agree RA is an evolving concept.

UNICEF's efforts in supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the organization have reached a new level. This is particularly evident in the emphasis placed on this topic in the organization's current Strategic Plan; in the recently developed DIPAS and the formation of the Culture & Diversity team in the Office of the Executive Director which has a dedicated member working on disability inclusion. The organization's provisions for reasonable accommodation play a central role in the success of these efforts, particularly in light of the organization's aim to have 7 per cent of employees with disabilities as part of its total workforce by 2030. The Culture & Diversity team has therefore requested an independent evaluation of the Reasonable Accommodation model to inform its future design and approach.

Purpose and scope of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund

The **purpose of UNICEF's Reasonable Accommodation Fund is to provide the necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others²³** in line with Article 2 of the CRPD²⁴. The Fund was established in an effort to create a more inclusive workplace that values and includes employees and applicants with disabilities and enables UNICEF to deliver results for children.

Initially the Fund covered all types of accommodations from making buildings accessible to providing specific work equipment and offering flexible working or special travel arrangements. In the initial years of the Fund there were only few requests from 2-3 people per year.²⁵ In 2020, the Fund was significantly increased (from \$50,000 to \$300,000 annually), accompanied by a new *Guide for RA Requests* and scaling up of strategic com-

²¹ UK Government (2010), [Equality Act](#)

²² UNICEF (2020), Guide for Reasonable Accommodation Requests. (Internal document)

²³ UNICEF (2020), Guide for Reasonable Accommodation Requests. (Internal document)

²⁴ UN (2006), [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), Article 2 – Definitions

²⁵ UNICEF (2020), Guide for Reasonable Accommodation Requests, p. 6. (Internal document)

munications across the organization to increase awareness that the Fund exists. Moreover, the request process was automated and streamlined which meant that all UNICEF employees (staff and non-staff, the latter including consultants, interns, and UN Volunteers) could request RA through an online service gateway. Job applicants were able to do so through human resources (HR) focal points.

Over time UNICEF also established standard operating procedures and other funding mechanisms to address some of the areas, like flexible working arrangements, which applied to all staff not just staff with disabilities, and physical accessibility. For example, the Greening and Accessibility Fund (GrAF) was established in 2016 to support country offices in improving facility or office accessibility (e.g., installing a ramp or elevator, adding braille to signage) for persons with disabilities which is another type of accommodation. As such, the Fund today is one part of UNICEF's overall approach to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Currently, the Fund covers modifications and adjustments, or *reasonable accommodations (RAs)*, for individual employees and applicants. This includes staff, interns, UN volunteers, consultants, JPOs and individuals applying to work for the organization. All requests for reasonable accommodation should be submitted to the Fund through the online platform. Requests for accommodations under US\$2500 are reviewed by the Culture & Diversity Team, whereas accommodations over US\$2500 are reviewed by a Reasonable Accommodation Committee (RAC). There may also be instances where accommodations are provided at the office level without a cost, and therefore are not handled through the Fund. Furthermore, UNICEF also provides offices with US\$500 for accommodations provided as part of a recruitment process. These reimbursements for recruitment purposes are not handled through the online platform.

The Fund is administered through UNICEF's Division of Human Resources (DHR) and is managed by the organization's Culture & Diversity team.²⁶ The Culture & Diversity team coordinates and aligns organizational culture and diversity, equity and inclusion approaches across offices, and across all areas of UNICEF's work.²⁷ The team also includes a recently established, dedicated focal point for disability which is the same focal point from the Culture & Diversity team for this evaluation. Numerous teams within UNICEF (i.e., DHR, operations, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, ICT Division, Division of Finance and Administration, Division of Global Communications and Advocacy, procurement and supply division) have worked collaboratively in consultation with employees with disabilities to make sure the Fund was operational and that employees, applicants, human resource colleagues and managers were aware of the Fund and how to support requests, including with procurement of relevant goods and services.

Since 2021, UNICEF received 56 RA requests²⁸, which is when the centralized online case management system for RA was launched. As already noted, internal data of the last Global Staff Survey conducted in 2022 indicated that 308 out of 14,747 respondents self-identified as persons with disabilities, which corresponds to a share of 2.1 per cent. Another 558 or 3.8 percent stated they preferred not to state whether they were a person with disability.²⁹

These figures indicate that there are significantly more employees with disabilities in the organization compared with those that have applied for reasonable accommodation in recent years. It also shows that the proportion of persons with disabilities in the organization is significantly lower than the global average of the population (about 15 per cent and 80 per cent are of working age³⁰). The DIPAS calls for UNICEF to gradually increase the number of employees with disabilities across all offices by at least 2 per cent by 2025, with the aim of reaching 7 per cent by 2030.³¹

²⁶ The Culture & Diversity team was officially established in January 2022 and resulted from a merge between the previous Diversity & Inclusion team (located in the Department of Human Resources, DHR) and the Organizational Culture Team (located in the Office of the Executive Director, OED)

²⁷ UNICEF (2022), Culture and Diversity. About us. (Webpage in UNICEF's intranet)

²⁸ The number of requests mentioned indicates the overall number of submissions the Fund received. Each submission can contain multiple requests from the same person and one individual can complete the Fund request form multiple times.

²⁹ UNICEF (2022), Global Staff Survey. (Internal document)

³⁰ [According to the International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#), there are an estimated 1 billion persons with disabilities around the world, or 15 per cent of the global population, and the majority are of working age (80%).

³¹ UNICEF (2022), [Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy \(DIPAS\) 2022-2030](#)

3. Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess UNICEF's Reasonable Accommodation Fund to ensure that it meets needs and expectations while in line with relevant international and UN-specific guidelines and provide evidence-based insights and recommendations to inform the organization's future model for the Fund and related decision-making processes. This evaluation will mainly be forward-looking and formative in character, while also assessing past results achieved in this area. The underlying intention of this evaluation is to contribute to the successful inclusion of persons with disabilities in UNICEF.

The specific objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

- **Conformity with relevant guidelines:** To assess the extent to which the current model of the RA Fund is compliant with principles of the CRPD and the requirements of the UNDIS.
- **Benchmarking with good and proven practices:** To compare the current model with good and proven practices on reasonable accommodation in literature and among other organizations.
- **Internal relevance and coherence:** To clarify the extent to which use of the fund is implemented consistently within the organization; the extent to which it is aligned with other relevant organizational policies; and its relevance for employees with disabilities in the context of broader HR tools and policies, health insurance, wellbeing, and occupational health provisions.
- **Quality of operationalisation:** To determine the extent to which the use of the fund is regulated by rules that are transparent, clear, and easy to understand for all involved; and understand the quality of operationalisation in terms of existing procurement processes, as well as barriers and enablers in this context.
- **Use and results achieved:** To determine the extent to which the fund has achieved satisfactory results in that its use has met related reasonable accommodation requirements and facilitated the mitigation of barriers in relation to essential job functions and to create an equitable work environment.
- **Overall readiness and suitability:** To identify the extent to which the current model meets the requirements for an effective, efficient, and sustainable future provision of reasonable accommodation while allowing to successfully deliver on the recently established DIPAS and being in line with the CRPD and the requirements of the UNDIS.

Moreover, this evaluation is timely, as there are currently strong UN-wide efforts and related interagency discussions aimed at strengthening the inclusion of persons with disabilities including the provision of reasonable accommodation. The evaluation therefore enables UNICEF to make a valuable and evidence-based contribution to this discussion.

Scope

The temporal scope of this evaluation encompasses all aspects related to UNICEF's Reasonable Accommodation Fund from its inception in 2011 with the signing of the Executive Directive to the end of 2022 and its use across the various organizational levels (global, regional, and country levels).

This timeframe represents an adjustment compared to what was foreseen in the evaluation's original Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR stated that the scope would be from when the Fund was established in 2013 to the present. However, considering the signing of the Executive Directive in 2011 that officially set up the Fund, this evaluation will cover the period from 2011 until 2022, which is the last full year data is available for the Fund. A stronger emphasis will be on the period since the Fund was increased in 2020 to 2022.

While this evaluation focuses on the Fund, there are **many other means by which UNICEF as an organization and employer provides reasonable accommodation** for persons with disabilities that are not within the scope

of this evaluation. This evaluation will seek to show how the Fund relates to other policies and procedures that address accessibility and accommodations, like the Greening and Accessibility Fund, and where there are opportunities for further linkages in an effort to mainstream accommodations to the extent possible. The evaluation will also not directly evaluate how UNICEF addresses **accommodations that do not have an associated cost**. These will however be considered in terms of how relevant and complimentary the Fund is in the context of broader HR tools and policies.

Intended use and users

This evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations are expected to inform UNICEF's model of the reasonable accommodation fund and help the organization ensure that the Fund is aligned with international norms, standards and good practices.

The **primary intended users of this evaluation** are:

- Colleagues from the Division of Human Resources (DHR) involved in administering the Fund
- Culture & Diversity team overseeing UNICEF's approach to disability inclusion and managing the Fund
- UNICEF colleagues involved in the provision of reasonable accommodation and disability inclusion, for example UNICEF's Disability Team, operation colleagues, ICT Division, Division of Finance and Administration, Division of Global Communications and Advocacy, procurement and supply divisions
- Managers within UNICEF that may be involved with RA requests
- UNICEF colleagues or applicants, currently or in the future, eligible to request reasonable accommodation
- UNICEF Senior leadership responsible for promoting and fostering an inclusive organization

The **secondary intended users of this evaluation** include:

- UN colleagues involved in inter-agency discussions on this topic
- Global community of researchers, consultants and experts working to advance the knowledge, understanding and provisions of RA in line with the CRPD

4. Evaluation questions

The evaluation is expected to answer the following questions to meet its purpose and objectives:

- 1) To what extent is the current model in line with relevant guidelines and good and proven practices?**
 - *To what extent does the current model fulfil the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the requirements of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy?*
 - *What are current good or proven practices, lessons or insights from literature or other organizations that can be applied to UNICEF's reasonable accommodation fund for employees and job applicants with disabilities?*
- 2) How relevant is the fund within the organization and how coherent is it with other related tools and policies?**
 - *What is the relevance and complementarity of the fund for employees with disabilities in the context of broader HR tools and policies, health insurance, wellbeing, and occupational health provisions?*
 - *To what extent is the model well aligned with other targeted or mainstream internal systems and provisions related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities? Are there any major gaps or overlaps?*
- 3) To what extent is the Fund's model clearly and consistently defined, organized, and communicated?**
 - *To what extent are UNICEF employees and applicants aware of the provisions for reasonable accommodation? How is the necessary information about their use communicated to potential users in a timely and transparent manner?*
 - *To what extent is the model and its governance well organized, especially with regard to the related application, decision-making and procurement processes?*
 - *To what extent are the associated processes and decisions implemented consistently throughout the organization?*
- 4) What have been the main results achieved so far?**
 - *What estimated proportion of potential users are using reasonable accommodation so far?*
 - *To what extent was the provision of reasonable accommodation implemented effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with established procedures?*
 - *Are there any particular descriptive characteristics of people that influenced their decision whether to request reasonable accommodation?*
 - *To what extent do past and current users feel that it enabled them to have equal employment opportunities and that the fund contributes to an equitable working environment?*
 - *What are current shortcomings in the process? What have been main strengths and enablers where it went well?*
- 5) To what extent is the current model suitable to meet related objectives and requirements?**
 - *To what extent is the current approach 'fit for purpose', in particular with regard to requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy; and the goals laid out in UNICEF's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy?*
 - *How could the model and its implementation be further improved and what is the projected necessary increase in the fund over the next years to meet the goals set forth in the DIPAS?*
 - *To what extent are adequate data, M&E, and knowledge management systems in place to foster accountability and learning?*
 - *What internal and external factors enhance or impede the provision and use of the reasonable accommodation fund?*

The evaluation matrix in [Annex 2](#) provides more details on how these questions are foreseen to be answered and forms the primary analytical framework for this evaluation. Apart from minor wording adjustments, there are no deviations in the evaluation questions from the original Terms of Reference.

5. Methodology

The evaluation methodology specifies the overall approach to the evaluation, what types of data will be collected, the methods used to manage the data, and how the collected data will be analysed.

Approach

The evaluation incorporates elements of **policy**, **process** and **outcome evaluation**:

- The evaluation will assess the Fund's model, in the sense of a policy³² designed and offered by the employer/organization, including elements such as its alignment with relevant guidelines and good practices or its coherence with other related tools and policies (*policy evaluation*);
- the evaluation will assess how reasonable accommodation provided through the Fund is being implemented, reviewing the effectiveness of its governance and processes, and the consistence of its use across the organization (*process evaluation*);
- and the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund in the sense of an intervention intended to produce change, by reviewing results achieved, in particular regarding the Fund's contribution to providing an equitable working environment (*outcome evaluation*).

As further described below, the proposed methodological approach for the evaluation combines several elements: it will rely on **mixed methods**, uphold a **human rights-based approach** to disability, as well as a focus on **accessibility**. In addition, it will be **theory-guided** and will use **benchmarking** and **foresight**.

- **Mixed methods & triangulation:** The evaluation will rely on a mixed methods approach, so to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data to draw on the strengths of each and obtain a comprehensive understanding building on many perspectives. In answering the evaluation questions, the assessment will use triangulation, i.e., draw on different data sources and collection techniques to gather different perspectives and test the consistency of information. Any findings that come exclusively from a particular source or group of respondents will be indicated as such.
- **Human rights-based approach:** The evaluation will acknowledge the human rights-based approach to disability and the broader context in which this evaluation is being conducted. This means respecting the inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons with disabilities³³.

Since the evaluation will explore people's experiences and opinions of the Fund, both positive and negative, particular attention will be paid to creating a supportive environment where participants can end interviews at any time without explanation. The evaluation will respect difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, as well as the equality of opportunity between men, women and individuals that identify as non-binary.

Furthermore, the evaluation will be gender-responsive meaning it will take into account the unique needs of females, valuing their perspectives and respecting their experiences.

- **Accessibility:** Specific measures will be taken to ensure activities and communications related to this evaluation are inclusive and accessible. This includes, but is not limited to, making any reports, documents and presentations accessible for screen reading software and individuals with low vision. Additional techniques will be incorporated to make documents easier to read, such as using bullet points, bold words and phrases, tables, and graphs (as long as the document remains accessible). Online surveys will use Microsoft Forms because it is one of the more accessible platforms for screen readers. For online meetings, discussions, and interviews, every effort will be made to provide accessible meeting platforms (e.g., *MS Teams* or *Zoom*) and reasonable accommodations when requested by participants or interviewees.

³² Whereby *policy* is understood as a deliberate system of guidelines for decision-making to achieve specific outcomes.

³³ UN (2006), [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), Article 3 – General Principles

- **Benchmarking:** A benchmarking process of comparing UNICEF’s RA Fund model with that of other organizations, including other UN entities and that of the private and public sectors, will be undertaken to see how well UNICEF is doing and more importantly to garner if there are elements or practices from other models that could suit UNICEF and thus inform the future approach. This exercise is dependent on other organizations sharing their RA policies, procedures or models.
- **Foresight:** The evaluation will attempt to provide estimations regarding the necessary resourcing of the Fund. These estimations will be derived based on qualitative and quantitative methods. More specifically, qualitative informed steps (i.e., figures or statistics gained through interviews) will inform quantitative calculations. However, the quality of such estimates depends on many factors, notably the data sources used in the estimate and the approach on which the estimate is based.

Guiding principles

This evaluation will be guided by the following values and principles and meet the associated requirements:

- **Ensure transparency, meaningful participation and ownership.** The evaluation will aim to foster strong engagement and ownership of the evaluation process and outputs among the primary intended users. Key stakeholders are intended to be engaged in an extensive manner throughout the process, for instance through regular coordination with a focal point from the Culture & Diversity team and regular consultations with an evaluation reference group. Key stakeholders will be kept informed throughout all stages of the evaluation, including – or in particular – if any difficulties arise.
- **Uphold confidentiality and minimize risks.** In line with the *do no harm principle*, the evaluation will minimize risks to, and burdens on, people participating in the evaluation. The evaluation will be geared towards ensuring that participants do not face negative stigma or discrimination as a result of their participation in this evaluation on the basis of disability or any other factor, and that their right to provide confidential information is respected and guaranteed. Interviewees will be clearly informed of the confidentiality measures being taken in data collection and the final report, emphasizing the importance of anonymity. Additional measures in the collection and treatment of data will be taken to safeguard confidential and sensitive information to protect the interests of UNICEF and participants.
- **Adhere to values and standards of good practice in evaluation.** The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the values of the United Nations, as expressed in the UN Staff Rules and Regulations and Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Servant, as well as international human rights and UN policies (e.g. UNDIS). It will follow and be guided by the norms and standards for evaluation and ethical guidelines across the UN system and UNICEF, outlined in the following documents:
 - [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016)
 - [UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards](#) (2017)
 - [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#) (2020)
 - [UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis](#) (2021)
 - [UNICEF Policy on Personal Data Protection](#) (2020)
 - UNICEF Standard on Information Security (2018) (Internal Document)

Data collection

The evaluation will include a document review, literature review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, online surveys, and a data review. A diverse group of individuals will be consulted as part of this evaluation. This includes diversity in terms of disability, age, gender, geography, and level and role within the organization.

Considering the broader environment in which people with disabilities face negative stigma and marginalization, the evaluation will consider the sensitivities associated with persons with disabilities choosing to self-identify as a person with disability. Therefore, confidentiality will be a priority and all information gathered will be anonymized. If information will be shared in the report or presentations that contains identifiers (e.g., disability, age and geographic location), permission will be sought from the individual before including it.

Document review

The document review provides the opportunity to collect data from existing documents to answer the key evaluation questions as outlined in the Evaluation Matrix ([Annex 2](#)). The documents will be identified through online searches through academic databases and libraries, as well as on the world wide web, and through recommendations from other colleagues working in this sector. Peer reviewed publications will be prioritized when available.

The review will encompass two main areas:

1) Internal UNICEF documents

- Information and documents related to the provision of reasonable accommodation and disability inclusion in UNICEF, including available data from internal data management systems
- Other internal regulations or policies relevant to the provision of reasonable accommodation

2) External documents

- UN system-wide documents that pertain to reasonable accommodation (e.g., CRPD and UNDIS)
- Reasonable accommodation policies and procedures from other UN entities
- External guidelines, strategies, journal articles, compendiums of case studies
- Publications, evaluations and studies that provide insights on good or proven practices

[Annex 3](#) includes an initial list of documents that are foreseen as part of the document review.

Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured manner using online communication platforms. Data analysis will involve a content analysis of interview notes (transcribed using Otter ai), identifying common or recurring views and aspects in the material captured, and organization of all the information into themes, based on the evaluation questions and sub-questions. Individuals will be selected based on their knowledge or experience in relation to the subject and diversity in gender, age, disability, and geographic location. [Annex 4](#) contains key elements of the foreseen guiding structure for key informant interviews, which will be adjusted depending on the interviewee and the context of the specific conversation.

Interviews are foreseen to be conducted with the following groups:

- UNICEF staff responsible for or involved in the provision of reasonable accommodation and disability inclusion either directly or in the wider sense (i.e., HR colleagues, operation colleagues, managers, senior leadership, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, ICT Division, Division of Finance and Administration, Division of Global Communications and Advocacy, procurement and supply division).
- Employees with disabilities that have made RA requests
- Employees with disabilities that are eligible for RA requests but who have chosen not to make one
- Individuals with disabilities that have applied for jobs at UNICEF but were not selected
- Colleagues from other UN agencies or comparable organizations that have good practices in reasonable accommodation
- Colleagues from governments that have reasonable accommodation procedures in place
- Colleagues from private sector companies that have good practices in reasonable accommodation
- External researchers and experts including Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)

The following outlines the targeted numbers of key informants foreseen to be interviewed by type of organization or group. The actual number may be higher if more information will be required for the evaluation.

Within UNICEF:

- ⇒ 8-12 UNICEF employees (international professionals, national officers, UNVs) with disabilities (this may include staff, UN volunteers, consultants, interns)
- ⇒ 4-6 UNICEF managers, admin, and HR focal points at country, regional and global level
- ⇒ 8-12 UNICEF staff from the Division of Human Resources (DHR), mental health and well-being, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, Disability Connect, Supply Division, operations, and procurement specialists across all levels

External:

- ⇒ 3-6 Representatives of civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities
- ⇒ 3-6 Representatives from governments
- ⇒ 6-8 Representatives from multilateral organizations (e.g., UN entities, EU, World Bank)
- ⇒ 8-10 Private sector companies with good practices
- ⇒ 8-10 Researchers and technical experts

Focus group discussions

To complement the key informant interviews, **focus groups will help gather responses to evaluation questions and sub-questions and inform recommendations.** The focus groups will be focused on a specific topic that is complex in nature and requires additional inputs and discussion following the key informant interviews. Topics may include criteria for provision of RA, determining eligibility for RA, what is considered *reasonable* with RA requests, and what model for the Fund is most 'fit for purpose' to achieve UNICEF's organizational targets.

The focus groups envisioned during the inception phase will include, but are not limited to:

- One focus group with 3-5 members of Disability Connect, UNICEF's employee resource group for staff with disabilities. It will be led by the Evaluation Expert, conducted online using Microsoft Teams and last for one hour covering 4-6 questions. The discussion will be transcribed for purposes of analysis using *Otter.ai*.
- A second focus group is foreseen to bring together representatives from 3-4 UN entities that currently have active reasonable accommodation policies or practices to test the recommendations being considered for UNICEF's future model of RA.
- A third focus group is planned with 3-4 representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, if the International Disability Alliance can help arrange the meeting.

Surveys

Two online surveys will be conducted to provide key insights into the extent to which the current model is clearly and consistently defined, organized and communicated, and to gain information about the results achieved so far.

- **The first survey will target past, current and potential users of the Fund** and capture information on the user experience. The Culture & Diversity team that manages the Fund will email the link to the survey to all the individuals that made requests through the online case management system. It will be further disseminated through Disability Connect, the employee resource group within UNICEF, to reach especially those persons with disabilities who may not have requested reasonable accommodation. The survey aims to reach individuals from every region (assuming employees from all regions applied), including headquarters, and have diversity in gender identity.
- **The second survey is foreseen to target colleagues who have been involved in a supporting role with requests**, which may include HR focal points, operations/finance colleagues, and managers at all levels of the organization. It will target individuals currently working for UNICEF. The Culture & Diversity team will help disseminate the survey to individuals that meet the criteria through respective divisions and relevant focal points networks (HR, Operations and Supply/Logistics specialists in each region). Just like with the first survey, the survey aims to reach individuals from every region, including headquarters.

The surveys will be conducted in English, French, and Spanish, using Microsoft Forms with accessibility as a top priority. They have been designed in line with the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator.³⁴

Benchmarking

To gain a deeper understanding of how well UNICEF's model is aligned with best practices, the Evaluation Team will compare UNICEF's current model, policy and practices to that of other entities in the UN and private sector companies and to the extent possible with national legislation. This practice will be comparing UNICEF to entities that are similar in size and have a similar approach to disability (e.g., rights-based approach and not the medical approach).

The first step will be to identify UN entities with existing RA policies and practices in place (which is expected to include DCO, OHCHR, WFP, IOM and UNDP³⁵), to do a comparison of key elements (e.g., is there a centralized fund, how do staff request RA, what does the Fund cover, how much funding is allocated, governance structures), and to collect lessons learned within the UN system. The second step will be to collect information about policies and practices from private sector companies through key informant interviews.

Data review

Two sources of secondary data will be analysed in particular: 1) the requests made through Service Gateway by employees and applicants; as well as 2) general and disability-specific data from global staff surveys. The evaluation will compile, review, and analyse these data sets to complement the analysis.

Data analysis and reporting

Qualitative data will be transcribed, sorted by themes, and reviewed to look for recurring patterns according to the evaluation questions. Quantitative data, as collected through surveys, will be cleaned, and analysed using descriptive statistics, summaries, graphs, and tables to find relevant insights, trends, and patterns. As noted previously, in answering the evaluation questions, the assessment will use triangulation, i.e., draw on different data sources and collection techniques to gather different perspectives and test the consistency of information. Any findings that come exclusively from a particular source or group of respondents will be indicated as such. Overall, the data collection and analysis are guided by the evaluation matrix ([Annex 2](#)), which clarifies what data sources are used to answer specific questions.

Risks and limitations

The evaluation is facing several risks of which the most relevant are listed below, together with the corresponding mitigating measures anticipated.

- There is a risk that only **limited data** will be available, for instance, if key informants cannot be reached, are unwilling to be interviewed, or choose not to complete a survey, for example if they have concerns regarding sensitive and personal information to be shared for this evaluation.

Mitigation: In this case, the evaluation will focus on the data sources available and exploit their information value as comprehensively as possible. If the response rate to the survey of employees with disabilities is low, further key informant interviews will be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the situation.

- Another risk is the fact that this evaluation is being undertaken in a **short timeframe** as its results were requested as soon as possible. With the final report to be made available before the end of May 2023,

³⁴ UNEG (2022), [Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator](#).

³⁵ Noting that UNDP has a guidance note not a policy.

the timeline for this evaluation is ambitious, resulting in less time to deepen data collection, analysis, or reporting, if needed.

Mitigation: To mitigate this risk, evaluation phases may overlap if deemed necessary.

- To maintain full anonymity for all RA requesters and users, and recognizing the completion of online surveys is optional, there is a risk that there will be a **lack of diversity among the survey respondents**.

Mitigation: Specific efforts will be made by the Culture & Diversity team, Disability Team, and Disability Connect to encourage employees to complete the survey.

- There are varying levels of understanding of terminology and definitions used with regards to disability. “Reasonable accommodation” and “disability” are both technical terms and there is a risk that **people engaging in this evaluation will have a different understanding of the terminology being used**. This is also related to the fact that different terms are used for RA, such as in the UK, where the term *reasonable adjustments* is used instead.

Mitigation: To prevent confusion, steps will be taken to ensure key terminology is clearly explained in key informant interviews, surveys, group discussions, presentations and reporting.

Potential limitations of this evaluation include:

- A limitation is **the lack of long-term established good practices on reasonable accommodation within the United Nations system**, and particularly outside UNICEF who has been leading among UN entities in this area for the past decade. The evaluation will seek to identify good practices from other multilaterals, bilaterals, civil society organizations and the private sector to garner any good practices that exist and which can be applied to the UNICEF context.
- Another potential limitation is the **possibility that the evaluation will not be able to identify persons with disabilities who applied for positions with UNICEF but were not selected**, to learn about their experience related to reasonable accommodation. Targeted efforts will be made to find such cases and see if they may be interested and willing to share their experience.

Evaluation process

Management and governance arrangements

The evaluation is commissioned by UNICEF’s Evaluation Office. A staff member from the Evaluation Office (Institutional Effectiveness portfolio) will act as the **Evaluation Manager**. The Evaluation Manager will oversee and supervise the work of an Evaluation Team, contracted by the UNICEF Evaluation Office to conduct the evaluation, while ensuring impartiality and transparency throughout the process.

The main responsibilities of the Evaluation Manager will be:

- **Provide support to the Evaluation Team**, including orientation on the subject and context of the evaluation, in coordination with the Focal Point;
- **Facilitate the Evaluation Team’s access** to key informants, as well as to specific information needed to carry out the evaluation, and assist with coordinating data collection activities at large;
- **Ensure that the Reference Group is formed**, and that they can provide input and technical support through virtual or in-person meetings and feedback mechanisms;
- **Ensure that key stakeholders**, particularly the Focal Point and the Reference Group, **are kept informed** throughout the evaluation process;
- **Monitor and assess the quality of key deliverables** to ensure they meet UNICEF and UNEG quality standards;
- **Recommend approval of key deliverables** for final clearance by management of the UNICEF Evaluation Office;
- **Solicit input needed from key stakeholders to prepare a management response** to the evaluation;
- **Disseminate the evaluation findings and products**, in particular the final report.

The Evaluation Manager will be supported by a **Focal Point** from UNICEF's Culture and Diversity Team, who will be closely engaged during the evaluation process. The Focal Point will provide access to information and key informants and support the coordination of the data collection. The views and inputs from the Focal Point will be vital to ensure that different perspectives, especially those of key stakeholders, are duly considered and inform the process and related decisions. At the same time, the final approving authority will be with the Evaluation Manager and the UNICEF Evaluation Office, as per the UNICEF Evaluation Policy.

An **Evaluation Reference Group** will support the evaluation in an advisory capacity. The Reference Group is typically composed of critical internal and external stakeholders that are knowledgeable about the subject to ensure that the evaluation receives credible advice, guidance, and transparency throughout the process. The Reference Group consists of internal resource persons on reasonable accommodation and disability inclusion, including representatives from Disability Connect, as well as external experts. The members of the Reference Group are listed in [Annex 5](#).

The responsibilities of the Reference Group will be to:

- **Offer views and insights** on issues under discussion at key stages of the evaluation, especially in the inception phase where the methods, design, and data to be sought are to be determined;
- **Review key deliverables** produced, including the inception report, the emerging findings summary, and the final report, and provide feedback and technical input;
- **Participate in meetings** for presentation, validation and discussion of emerging findings.

The **Evaluation Team** will be responsible for conducting the evaluation. In doing so, the Evaluation Team is required to meet UNICEF's expectations regarding the quality of the evaluation process and deliverables, as outlined in the respective UNICEF and UNEG guidelines. The Evaluation Team consists of an Evaluation Expert and a Technical Advisor, which each will have a different focus in terms of their main tasks and responsibilities (see biographies in [Annex 6](#)).

The main responsibilities of the Evaluation Expert will be to:

- **Ensure the quality of data collected** and the **integrity of their analysis**;
- Ensure that **data collection processes are carried out in line with pertinent ethical guidelines**;
- **Ensure that evidence gathered**, both qualitative and quantitative, is comprehensive and robust enough to allow for an informed assessment in line with the evaluation's objectives, and in support of the conclusion and recommendations put forward by the evaluation;
- **Manage all data collection** (e.g., desk review of related documents, literature search, interview processes, focus group discussions, surveys, and workshops), analysis, reporting, and communication;

The main responsibilities of the Technical Advisor will be to:

- **Provide technical input and expertise on specific aspects** of the subject matter of the evaluation, i.e., related to disability inclusion, reasonable accommodation, social security, or social protection systems
- Support the Evaluation Expert by **sharing key information or contacts**, and **reviewing key deliverables** of the evaluation, i.e., the draft inception, preliminary findings and the draft final report.

Timeline and key deliverables

The evaluation is foreseen to be conducted between December 2022 and May 2023, divided into three phases: 1) inception, 2) data collection and analysis, and 3) reporting and communication.

During the **inception phase**, the evaluation team (consisting of the Evaluation Expert and the Technical Advisor) reviewed available information and data to gain an in-depth understanding of the Fund's current model, and drafted this report as a roadmap for the evaluation, complemented by input from the Reference Group.

The **data collection and analysis phase** will follow, which is when primary and secondary data is collected and duly analysed, whereupon preliminary findings and conclusions will be presented to the Reference Group for their validation and feedback.

Finally, the **report drafting and dissemination phase** will follow when the final report will be produced. In addition, suitable stand-alone products that can help disseminate key findings and recommendations from this evaluation will be considered and produced which will include a presentation and evaluation brief.

The following table provides an overview of the timeline, including key dates and deliverables.

Key Event or Deliverable	Timeline (tentative)
Mobilization of the evaluation team and start-up meeting	December 2022
Inception Phase	27 Dec '22 – 10 March '23
Desk review, inception interviews, drafting the inception report	27 December – 29 January
Evaluation Manager, Technical Advisor, and Culture & Diversity focal point review draft inception report	30 January – 8 February
Presentation of the draft inception report to the Reference Group	1 March
Reference Group reviews and provides comments on draft inception report	17 February – 3 March
Finalization of the inception report	10 March
Data collection and analysis phase	1 March – 28 April
Online surveys	8 March – 21 April
Document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions	1 March – 21 April
Data analysis	21 – 28 April
Technical Advisor to review and contribute to the presentation of preliminary findings for the Reference Group	24 – 28 April
Workshop with key stakeholders/Reference Group to present preliminary findings and co-create recommendations to include in the final report	end April / early May
Report drafting and dissemination phase	24 April – 7 June
Drafting of final report	24 April – 5 May
Evaluation Manager, Technical Advisor, and Culture & Diversity focal point review draft final report	5 – 12 May
Sharing of the Final Report to the Reference Group for comments	12 – 24 May
Finalization of final report	24 – 31 May
Submission of final presentation and evaluation brief	7 June

Quality assurance

This evaluation uses a layered system of management, quality assurance and oversight. The key elements include:

- The Evaluation Expert is the principal author of draft and final reports, and presentations, and reviews and edits to ensure quality before submitting for review.
- The Reference Group acts as the main advisory body for the evaluation and provides commentary and feedback at key points in the process.
- The Evaluation Manager, the Culture & Diversity Team and the Technical Advisor will provide comments and feedback on the draft inception report, presentations and final report.
- All reports and presentations will be reviewed, commented and cleared by the Evaluation Management.
- All reports and presentations will be reviewed for clarity, conciseness, and use of plain language, as well as made available as accessible word and PowerPoint files.

Furthermore, quality control protocols and processes established by the UNICEF Evaluation Office will be followed to ensure quality assurance and close management through all stages of the exercise and quality assessed by the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS).

Annexes

Annex 1: Documents reviewed and interviews conducted

List of documents:

- Dennis, T. & Hatton, J. (2021), Diversity, Inclusion and Disability.
- Forbes (2022), The Importance Of Diversity And Inclusion For Today's Companies; Harvard Business. Gallup (2022), Advancing DEI Initiatives: A Guide for Organizational Leaders, p. 6.
- Harvard Business Review (2018), How and Where Diversity Drives Financial Performance.
- ILO (2019), The business case for change, p. 21.
- Feder, J. (2021), What is Intersectionality?
- Ruh, D. (2021), Creating A More Accessible And Inclusive Workplace For People With Disabilities.
- UK Government (2010), Equality Act.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).
- UNICEF (2022), Culture and Diversity. About us. (Webpage in UNICEF's intranet)
- UNICEF (2022), Glossary of terms related to diversity, equity and inclusion, p.11-12. (Internal document).
- UNICEF (2020), Guide for Reasonable Accommodation Requests.
- UNICEF (2022), Global Staff Survey.
- UNICEF (2021), Inclusive Employment Guide. Disability and its intersections.
- UNICEF (2022), Seen, Counted, Included. Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities.
- UNICEF (2020), UNICEF is striving to be a disability-inclusive employer. (video)
- UNICEF (2021), UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (Executive Board Document).
- UNEG (2022), Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator.
- WHO (2020), Disability: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

List of individuals interviewed:

- Disability Inclusion Manager, Culture & Diversity team, Office of the Executive Director, UNICEF
- HR Specialist (Diversity and Inclusion), Culture and Diversity team, Office of the Executive Director, UNICEF
- Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, Culture & Diversity team, Office of the Executive Director, UNICEF
- Founder and Co-Chair of Disability Connect, UNICEF Employee Resource Group
- Formerly Head of UNICEF Disability Team
- Current Head of UNICEF Disability Team
- Social Protection Specialist, UNICEF
- Human Rights and Disability Advisor, OHCHR
- Disability Inclusion Officer, ILO Global Business and Disability Network
- Intern, ILO Global Business and Disability Network
- President and CEO, Disability:IN,
- Executive Vice President, Global Workplace Initiatives, Disability:IN
- Vice President, Global Disability Inclusion, Expedia Group
- Co-Director, Center for Inclusive Policy

Evaluation question	Sub-question	Indicator(s)	Data collection method(s)	Data source(s)
To what extent is the current model clearly and consistently defined, organized, and communicated?	To what extent are UNICEF employees and applicants aware of the provisions for reasonable accommodation? How is the necessary information about their use communicated to potential users in a timely and transparent manner?	Degree of awareness among employees and applicants (if identifiable) Timely and transparent information about the Fund	Document review Online survey Semi-structured interviews	Document: Global staff surveys Online survey with staff with disabilities Interviews with employees and applicants (if identifiable) with disabilities
	To what extent is the model and its governance well organized, especially with regard to the related application, decision-making and procurement processes?	Clarity and ease of understanding of the process Clear definition of stakeholders and people involved Clear criteria of who qualifies for RA Clear and transparent decision-making process Clear procurement process	Online survey Semi-structured interviews	Online surveys – one with employees with disabilities that have made requests and one with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests Interviews with RA Fund users and HR, operations/ procurement
	To what extent are the associated processes and decisions implemented consistently throughout the organization?	Consistency of decisions made Satisfaction of users	Online survey Semi-structured interviews	Online surveys – one with employees with disabilities that have made requests and one with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests Interviews with RA Fund users, RA Committee, and HR and procurement
What have been the main results achieved so far?	What estimated proportion of potential users are using RA so far?	Number of potential users versus actual requesters	Secondary data analysis	Global Staff Surveys and RA Fund request database
			Document review	Documents: World Report on Disability and other reports will prevalence data in workplace settings and globally
			Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with experts and researchers
To what extent was the provision of reasonable accommodation implemented effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with established procedures?	Degree of compliance or deviations between defined process and practice Perceived adequacy of procedures both by those	Document review	Document: RA Guide (2020)	
		Online surveys	Survey with employees with disabilities that have made requests and with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests	

Evaluation question	Sub-question	Indicator(s)	Data collection method(s)	Data source(s)
To what extent is the current model suitable to meet related objectives and requirements?		administering and by end users Established procedures in place	Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with colleagues from DHR, UNV team in UNICEF, Disability Connect, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, Reasonable Accommodation Committee and end users
	Are there any particular descriptive characteristics of people that influenced their decision whether to request reasonable accommodation?	Representation of certain groups in requests or approvals of RA	Secondary data compilation and analysis Semi-structured interviews Literature review	RA Fund requests database/online portal Interviews with end users Literature on disability inclusion in the workplace and around stigma and discrimination.
	To what extent do past or current users feel that it enabled them to have equal employment opportunities and that the Fund contributes to an equitable working environment?	Perceived contribution of the Fund and provision of RA to equal employment opportunities and equitable working environment from end users	Online survey Semi-structured interviews	Online survey with employees with disabilities that have made requests Interviews with end users
	What are the current shortcomings in the process?	Most common shortcomings reported by users and UNICEF employees administering requests	Online surveys Semi-structured interviews	Survey with employees with disabilities that have made requests and with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests Interviews with colleagues from DHR, Disability Connect, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, Reasonable Accommodation Committee and end users
	What have been the main strengths and enablers where it went well?	Most common strengths and enablers reported by users and UNICEF employees	Online survey Semi-structured interviews	Survey with employees with disabilities that have made requests and with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests Interviews with colleagues from DHR, Disability Connect, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, Reasonable Accommodation Committee and end users
	To what extent is the current approach 'fit for purpose', in particular with regard to requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy; and the goals laid out in UNICEF's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy?	Degree of compliance or deviations between Fund Design and Guideline with CRPD, UNDIS and DIPAS	Document review Semi-structured interviews	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF ExDir (2011), RA Guide (2020), intranet page dedicated to RA • CRPD, General Comments and other articles on implementation of the Convention and RA • UNDIS and Implementation Guidelines for UN Entities Interviews with CRPD experts, UNDIS team, representative of global federation of organization of persons with disabilities (International Disability Alliance)

Evaluation question	Sub-question	Indicator(s)	Data collection method(s)	Data source(s)
	How could the model and its implementation be further improved and what is the projected necessary increase in the Fund over the next years to meet the goals set forth in the DIPAS?	Indications how the model could be improved reported from internal UNICEF staff familiar with the Fund in order to meet expected growth of employees with disabilities in DIPAS	Online surveys Semi-structured interviews Semi-structured interviews	Survey with employees with disabilities that have made requests and with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests Interviews with colleagues from DHR, Disability Connect, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, Reasonable Accommodation Committee and end users Interviews with external organizations that have well-functioning RA funds and experts
		Estimates of required amount of Fund calculated based on current use, expected growth in number of employees with disabilities, assumed trends (e.g., inflation)	Secondary data analysis	Financial records of RA Fund
	To what extent are adequate data, M&E, and knowledge management systems in place to foster accountability and learning?	Clear data collection and management system	Document review	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA Fund records from Service Gateway RA Fund Annual Report 2020 or 2021 (if available)
		Clearly defined M&E plan for the Fund	Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with colleagues managing the Fund and on the Reasonable Accommodation Committee
		Clearly outlined knowledge management approach for Fund		
	What internal and external factors enhance or impede the provision and use of the RA Fund?	Occurrence of factors that enhance or impede provision of RA by users and in the literature	Online surveys Semi-structured interviews Literature review	Survey with employees with disabilities that have made requests and with staff that are working with or familiar with the Fund or have been involved with requests Interviews with colleagues from DHR, Disability Connect, Culture & Diversity Team, Disability Team, Reasonable Accommodation Committee, and end users Financial records of RA Fund

Annex 3: List of documents to be reviewed

Internal UNICEF documents:

- Executive Directive on Disability (2011)
- Executive Directive on Accessibility to UNICEF's Premises (2013)
- Procedure on Sick Leave (2017)
- Disability Survey for Staff (2017)
- Survey for managers and HR practitioners (2019)
- Procedure on Eco-efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations (2020)
- Global Staff Survey (2020)
- Procedure on Disability-Inclusive Human Resources Management (2020)
- Guide for Reasonable Accommodation Requests (2020)
- Reasonable Accommodation and Disability Inclusion at UNICEF Communication Plan (2020)
- Greening & Accessibility Fund Terms of Reference (2020)
- EDGE Survey (2021)
- Inclusive Employment Guide (2021)
- Procedure on Disability-inclusive Communication and Advocacy (2021)
- Global Staff Survey (2022)
- Accessibility Toolkit (2022)
- Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2022)
- Revised Special Education Grant for Children with Disability (2022)
- Revised Procedure on Flexible Working Arrangements (2022)
- Revised UNICEF Procedure on Mobility and Hardship Scheme (2022)
- UNICEF Procedure on Inter-Organizational Staff Mobility (2021)
- UNICEF Video: UNICEF Is Striving to be a Disability-inclusive Employer (2020)
- UNICEF travel policy or procedure
- UNICEF website '[A diverse and inclusive workforce is part of UNICEF's DNA](#)'
- UNICEF internal SharePoint sites/pages on matters related to inclusive employment and the Fund

United Nations documents:

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)
- United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy Entity Accountability Framework Technical Notes
- HLCM Procurement Network: Guidelines on the Implementation of Indicator 8 – Procurement
- United Nations CRPD Committee General Comment No. 6 on Equality and Non-discrimination (CRPD/C/GC/6 - 2018)
- United Nations CRPD Committee General Comment No. 8 on Work and Employment (CRPD/C/GC/8 - 2022 advance unedited version)
- General Assembly Human Rights Council Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Statistics and Data Collection under Article 31 of the CRPD (A/HRC/49/60 – 2021)
- United Nations Human Rights Officer of the High Commissioner Discrimination on the basis of disability; Module 5
- Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Through Workplace Adjustments: A Practical Guide (For companies), ILO (2016)
- Reasonable Accommodation Policies of other UN entities

Other documents:

- Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World (2021)
- Moving from Ad Hoc to Streamlined Efficiency: The Lloyds Banking Group Case Study (2014, Susan Scott Parker)
- [BenchmarkAbility](#), a self-assessment tool for organizations

- European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET) Discussion Paper on Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities: Exploring Challenges Concerning its Practical Implementation
- How to Put Reasonable Accommodation into Practice: Guide of Promising Practices, European Union (2020)
- Employers' Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
- JAN: Requests for Medical Documentation and the ADA
- JAN: Who Can Provide Medical Documentation for ADA Purposes?
- Bos & Glazier: Medical Exams and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- JAN: Personal Assistance in the Workplace
- JAN Accommodation Toolkit
- Jungelin vs. Sweden case documentation
- Disability Equality Index 2022 from Disability:IN
- WHO-UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology (2022)
- U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Enforcement Guidance on Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees under the ADA - 07-26-2000
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the ADA 10-17-2002
- AskEARN.org Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (United States)
- Journal articles and research studies and compendiums
- Sample forms for determining disability status and requesting RA from other organizations
- Government websites providing guidance on implementation of reasonable accommodation according to national legislation
- Webinars on the topics

Annex 4: Guiding structure for key informant interviews

The following elements will guide key informant interviews but will be adjusted depending on the interviewee and the background and context of the specific conversation.

Interviewee(s):

Function(s):
Date of the interview:
Interviewer(s):
Location: Online
In confidence/shareable: In confidence
Agreement for transcription:

Welcome and introductions

- Ensure everyone is online and can fully participate
- Thank the interviewee(s) for their time
- Round of introductions and clarification of roles of interviewers
- **Brief instruction on the Reasonable Accommodation Fund**
- **Purpose of the evaluation:** UNICEF Evaluation Office is currently undertaking an **Evaluation of UNICEF's Provisions for Reasonable Accommodation for Employees and Job Applicants with Disabilities** to assess the organization's current model and gather evidence-based findings and recommendations to ensure that its approach is meeting needs and expectations in line with international good practices and meet internal goals and targets.
- **Purpose of the interview:**
 - **For internal discussions:** To hear what is working, what has not worked so well, where you see opportunities to improve the Fund in the future. It is not an evaluation of anyone's performance, rather of the model and includes a learning piece as we look to what the Fund should look like moving forward.
 - **For external discussions:** To hear what the trends and good practices with RA are and ask for guidance and input on specific topics/questions the evaluation team has.
- Ask for **permission to use Otter to transcribe** the conversation for notetaking purposes, noting the transcript will be kept on evaluator's home computer and not shared
- Emphasize the conversation is **confidential** and permission will be sought before including any information about individual stories in the final report
- **Explain that if the interviewee feels uncomfortable at any time the interview can stop**
- Pause and check on accessibility and if there are any questions from the interviewee(s)

Questions

Below are some sample questions that will be asked. The questions will be individualized to the individuals background, experience and knowledge.

General opening questions:

- What is your role in the organisation and what do your job functions entail?
- Do you have experience or a background with reasonable accommodation? If so, please briefly explain.

For internal UNICEF interviews:

- How well do you think the RAF compliments or is aligned other HR tools and policies – both targeted and mainstream? Are there any overlaps? Any major gaps?
- To what extent do you feel UNICEF employees and applicants are aware of the RAF?
- Do you feel the necessary information about the RAF is communicated to potential users in a timely and transparent manner? Why or why not?
- What are your thoughts about the organization of the Fund and governance, especially related to the application, decision-making and procurement processes.

- In your opinion, how are the Fund processes and decisions implemented throughout the organization? Are they consistent?
- To what extent do you feel the provision of RA is implemented effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with established procedures?
- What do you see as shortcoming in the process?
- What have been the main strengths and enablers?
- How could the model and its implementation be further improved to meet DIPAS goals over the next years?
- Does the Fund have adequate data, M&E and knowledge management systems in place to foster accountability and learning in your opinion?
- What do you see as internal or external factors that enhance or impede provision and use of the Fund?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me/us about the Fund?

For external interviewees:

- If you have seen UNICEF's RAF Guidance, do you feel it fulfils the principles of the CRPD and UNDIS? (Will share the document with some interviewees in advance, where relevant)
- Does your organization have a policy, procedure or guidance on RA? If yes, is it something you can share with us? If so, how is your reasonable accommodation funding structured, how is it financed and by whom (centralized, business units), is there a limit to the Fund?
- What lessons have you learned through the implementation of the policy, procedure or guidance?
- Are you aware of other good and proven practices in terms of providing reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities?
- Does your organization have a governance mechanism (e.g., reasonable accommodation committee or similar body) to provide oversight of the Fund? If so, what are their primary responsibilities and can you share a TOR?
- Does your organization have clear guidance on disability criteria? Determining who are people with disabilities who can receive RA?
- What information do you ask for in forms regarding a person's disability or request for accommodation?
- What do you see procured most often with regards to RA? Any challenges with procurement?
- What does your company consider a reasonable response/fulfilment timeframe? Is it outlined in the policy/procedure/guidance?
- How do you define or what criteria do you use for undue hardship or burden? How is this address in your policy/procedure?
- What is the expectation of line managers in terms of RA? Do you expect them to mention RA in staff appraisals for example?
- Do you have a system to track or capture accommodations that are made without a cost, so for example flexible work arrangements?
- Are there other entities or individuals you think are doing a good job with RA that we should speak with or research? If so, would you be willing to share their contact information and make an introduction if we proceed in reaching out to them?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me/us about reasonable accommodation?

Wrap up and thank you

- Thank you and please share additional input via email.
- Mention a copy of the transcript is available upon request.
- Ask if it is okay to reach out if we have further questions.
- Mention the aim is to have the final evaluation report completed by the end of May or June and we will share the final document.

Annex 5: Management Team and Reference Group members

Management Team

NAME	ROLE / AFFILIATION
Simon Bettighofer	Evaluation Specialist, Institutional Effectiveness Section, Evaluation Office (acting as Evaluation Manager)
Kamilla Nabiyeva	Evaluation Officer, Institutional Effectiveness Section, Evaluation Office (supporting the Evaluation Manager)
Sreerupa Mitra	Project Manager, Culture & Diversity team, Office of the Executive Director (acting as Focal Point)
Victor Arita	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, Culture & Diversity team, Office of the Executive Director (supporting the Focal Point)

Reference Group

NAME	ROLE / AFFILIATION
UNICEF	
Adrian Shikwe	Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Office
Alexandre Cote	Social Protection Specialist, Social Policy, Programme Group
Anna Burlyaeva	Programme Specialist, Disability team, Programme Group Leadership Team
Claudia Cappa	Senior Adviser Statistics and Monitoring, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM)
Fernando Botelho	Assistive Technology Specialist, Disability team, Programme Group Leadership Team
Kristen Elsby	Senior Communication Manager, Division of Human Resources
Lemuel Fyodor Villamar	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Programme Section, East Asia and Pacific Region (EAPR)
Nora Shabani	Regional Disability Specialist, Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR)
Victor Arita	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, Executive Director's Office
Yetneberesh Nigussie Molla	Regional Disability Specialist, East and South Africa Region (ESAR)
Zarqaa Chohan	Human Resources Manager, Policy & Admin Law Team, Division of Human Resources
Zoe Elizabeth Hua Eng Gan	Programme Specialist, East Asia and Pacific Region (EAPR)

External experts and partners

Alberto Vásquez Encalada	Co-Director, Center for Inclusive Policy (CIP)
Catalina Devandas Aguilar	Executive Director, Disability Rights Fund, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN
Facundo Chavez Penillas	Human Rights & Disability Adviser, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Vladimir Cuk	Executive Director, International Disability Alliance

Annex 6: Biographies of the Evaluation Team

Amy Karageorgos, Evaluation Expert

Amy Karageorgos is a specialist in inclusive development, disability rights and sport for development. Amy has over 20 years of experience in disability and development, working in the UN system and with a wide range of governmental, non-governmental and sport organizations; including five years directly within UNICEF and more than five years supporting other UN agencies, UN country teams and regional offices.

Amy holds a Master's degree in Disability Studies and was involved in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), thus bringing a unique combination of knowledge and experience to this role. In a recent consultancy with the UN Development Coordination Office, Amy supported the human resources section with establishing its first reasonable accommodation approach. Beyond that, she authored numerous publications in the field of disability and inclusive development.

Ilene Zeitzer, Technical Advisor

Ilene Zeitzer is an internationally recognized expert on comparative disability policy, with a long and successful track record of working with governments, UN Agencies, organizations for persons with disabilities, and local and international non-governmental agencies. To date, she has worked in more than 85 countries to promote inclusive disability policies and programs for children and adults with disabilities.

Before starting her own consulting firm, Disability Policy Solutions in 2003, Ilene was the international expert in the U.S. Social Security Administration where her comparative research work centered on identifying and analyzing best practices in employment promotion strategies, especially in governmental programs. She was part of a small team that developed innovative programs that became codified in law to incentivize the U.S. rehabilitation sector to better serve people with disabilities to enter or return to the labor force. She has authored numerous analytical studies on program efficacy and policy implications concerning good practices in social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Annex 7: Terms of Reference

The full [Terms of Reference](#) for the evaluation can be accessed online.