

**UNICEF Evaluation Management Response to the
Evaluation of the UNICEF’s intervention “Systems building and capacity strengthening of the Ministry of Education and its
sub-national Directorates of Education for effective delivery of quality education outcomes” in Iraq. See [EISI link](#) [HERE](#)**

Region: MENA
Office: Iraq
Evaluation Year: 2023

Overall Response to the Evaluation: The evaluation process was inclusive and transparent, conducted under the supervision of the UNICEF Iraq Evaluation team and oversight of the Evaluation’s Steering Committee, engaging a large group of informants and stakeholders and ending with a clear final report. The report is comprehensive in terms of analysis, conclusions, and recommendations. The findings are largely informative, clear, concrete, and practical, facilitating follow-up of the lessons learned. Additionally, the involvement of key external partners from the beginning as members of the Evaluation Steering Committee (i.e., Ministry of Education counterparts and UNESCO) increased the transparency of the data collection process, information sharing, and collaboration throughout the evaluation. One limitation may be the tight and\ challenging timeframe of the entire full evaluation process. Partially due to this challenge, the analytical linkage between the findings and the recommendations appeared somewhat limited. The recommendations could have benefited more from the comprehensiveness and depth of the findings.

Sharing preliminary findings through an official webinar and informal online meetings with UNICEF’s Education Team was a practice particularly appreciated. Some findings fed into the development of a new education proposal funded by the EU. Further, as soon as the evaluation report became available, the findings and recommendations were disseminated and discussed in the Management Response Workshop held at the end of 2023 which was attended by both Ministry of Education (MoE) and Directorates of Education (DoE) representatives and UNICEF staff, helping to reflect collectively on the way forward for Iraq’s education sector.

Planned Use of Evaluation: The evaluation will be used fully to strengthen the continuation of certain components of the evaluated programme, through the new joint programme called “*Equitable Quality Education in Iraq: Improved Teaching and Learning and Enhanced Educational Management*”, starting in 2024 and implemented together with UNESCO. In addition, it is expected that the general lessons learned from this evaluation will provide evidence-based guidance to improve the implementation and monitoring of the new programme. Hence, the key intended users in addition to UNICEF Iraq staff, will be, among others, MoE, DoEs, EU, and UNESCO. It will be particularly useful for the system-strengthening components of the programme such as the actual use of EMIS data, the link between EMIS and the governorate education sector plans (GESPs), sector coordination, government partners’ ownership and contributions, horizontal and vertical coordination and high-level monitoring of the programme, and integration of the climate change education and mitigation into the programme. Through the implementation of the evaluation communication plan, the evaluation findings will reach multiple intended audiences who will be sensitised, and encouraged to use the evaluation (e.g. MoE, DoEs, the EU and other donors, UNICEF staff at different levels) or who will be informed of the ongoing UNICEF’s effort to assess and improve effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of its actions (e.g., external audiences).

Person-In-Charge for Follow-up to Management Response: Chief of Education

Evaluation Recommendation 1: *Maintain and Expand Work on Focus Areas of the Project.* UNICEF and its partners should plan for and implement further work on the focus areas of the project, to build upon its promising yet incomplete results. This should be done in the near-term, especially as the project’s achievements will weaken/become progressively more outdated over time.

Management Response: *Accepted*

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: *N/A*

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
<p>1. UNICEF* to develop together with EU, UNESCO (Admin Agency) and MoEs (federal and KRI), a new education system-strengthening programme proposal which builds on the results achieved and the lessons learned (GESPs, EMIS, etc.) from the previous EU-funded programme.</p> <p>* Given that this is a joint programme, the action is implemented jointly with partners MoE and UNESCO, and in collaboration with the EU; this applies to all other actions as well.</p>	UNICEF ICO – Education section	Chief of Education UNICEF Iraq	30 April 2024			
<p>2. UNICEF* to hold together with the EU, UNESCO and MoE at least 1 planning meeting to discuss lessons learned of the previous programme, to benefit the planning of the new programme.</p>	UNICEF ICO – Education section	Chief of Education UNICEF Iraq	30 June 2024			
<p>3. UNICEF* together with the EU and UNESCO, organise 2 kick-off meetings with the MoEs (federal, KRI) to launch the new programme.</p>	UNICEF ICO – Education section	Chief of Education UNICEF Iraq	30 June 2024			

Evaluation Recommendation 2: *Revise and Fine-tune Theory of Change and Project Design at Large.* UNICEF and its partners should also address challenges in the project’s design and implementation in any further work, by: ensuring that new capacities, tools and plans are effectively used as part of a process of organisational capacity building that leads to system strengthening (and that this is captured in a strong Theory of Change); building the MoE’s ownership by strongly engaging it in planning and implementation and with all partners making significant financial contributions; creating a demonstration effect by covering all the schools in governorates so that the EMIS and GESP can be used; connecting together different project components to create synergies; ensuring strong monitoring at output and outcome levels, with feedback loops to inform adaptive management; and, ensuring that teachers have Internet access and dedicated time for undertaking their EMIS work.

Management Response: *Accepted*

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
4. UNICEF to include in the new programme supporting EMIS, government contribution of public resources (including in-kind contributions) to the EMIS implementation as a way of increasing shared ownership and sustainability.	UNICEF ICO – Programme Department	UNICEF Deputy Representative, Programmes	30 June 2025			
5. UNICEF to include during a Steering Committee meeting of the programme, a discussion item on the follow-up of the request to the MoE (federal) for the contribution of public resources to EMIS.	UNICEF ICO – Programme Department	UNICEF Deputy Representative, Programmes	30 June 2025			
6. UNICEF, in collaboration with the DoEs to provide technical support to draft a theory of change to inform the roll-out of	UNICEF Education Section	Education Specialist, System Strengthening, UNICEF Iraq	30 June 2025			

EMIS across all schools of at least one governorate (full EMIS roll-out in one governorate).						
7. UNICEF to support the MoE (federal) and DoEs in documenting and monitoring how well the EMIS data is being used in the development of a new GESP, and using this information in the Steering Committee meeting for adaptive management decisions on education planning when required.	UNICEF Education Section	Education Specialist, System Strengthening, UNICEF Iraq	30 June 2025			
8. UNICEF, in close collaboration with UNESCO (Admin Agency), EU (Co-Chair of SC) and MoE (Co-chair of SC), to invite the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee (PMAC) to a national steering committee meeting and demonstrate the linkage between a full EMIS roll-out and sector planning process in a governorate, to advocate for high-level monitoring and its scale-up at the system level.	UNICEF Education Section	Chief of Education, UNICEF Iraq	30 June 2025			
9. UNICEF to systemically request MoE's presentations on the progress against GESP indicators at DoE sector coordination meetings to	UNICEF Education Section	Education Specialist, System Strengthening, UNICEF Iraq	30 June 2025			

strengthen the institutional monitoring mechanisms at the outcome level.						
10. During a programme steering committee meeting, UNICEF to engage in advocacy jointly with UNESCO (in charge of providing technical assistance to the MoE (federal) on the EMIS internet connectivity) for ensuring that the MoE (federal) improves internet connection and allows dedicated time for teachers to undertake their EMIS work.	UNICEF Education Section	Chief Education, UNICEF Iraq	31 December 2024			

Evaluation Recommendation 3: *Strengthening the Project's Partnership Approach.* The project's partnership approach is a strength that should be replicated in the future, while also ensuring that learnings from this partnership inform how they could be further improved. These include building in strong linkages between upstream and downstream components (and possibly sharing these components amongst partners); capitalising on partner strengths in assigning roles; building in conditional timeline commitments; building in mechanisms for each partner to be able to strongly support the other; incorporating robust communication mechanisms to support adaptive management; and, ensuring that linked partnership projects are evaluated together.

Management Response: *Accepted*

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: *N/A*

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
11. UNICEF, together with the MoEs and UNESCO, UNICEF to organize at least two strategic-level programme coordination committee meeting/year and several (quarterly) technical coordination meetings with partners, to	UNICEF	Chief of Education at UNICEF Iraq	31 December 2024			

reinforce the horizontal communication mechanism between all partners including MoEs, DoEs, and potentially the donor (EU) and to monitor horizontally, the programme implementation status against the agreed timelines and milestones and addresses any challenges arising from joint partnerships.						
12. UNICEF together with UNESCO to agree through an inter-agency coordination meetings involving their staff responsible for evaluation, on specific modalities of conducting a joint evaluation(s), including the purpose and objectives and management modalities of the joint evaluation.	UNICEF Education Section.	Chief of Education, UNICEF Iraq	31 March 2025			

Evaluation Recommendation 4: *Maintain Sensitivity to Shifting Needs of Target Populations in a Volatile Environment.* UNICEF should ensure that all components in its future projects are the most appropriate given the project's needs analysis and the project proposal, based on both the immediate context and longer-term aims.

Management Response: *Partially accepted*

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: The recommendation is too broad compared to the scope of the evaluation. Applying this the recommendation to all new UNICEF projects in Iraq requires a contextual analysis of future projects on a case-by-case basis, and an outcome-oriented adaptive management approach throughout the entire implementation phase of each project. The recommendation is therefore partially accepted and the action in response to this recommendation is limited to what the Education section can logically do to address this recommendation in the new project.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
13. In future education programs, UNICEF to deploy regular monitoring missions on the progress of the implementation approach against the expected output and outcome results in an evolving context. UNICEF to use the existing coordination mechanisms, namely,	UNICEF Education Section	Chief of Education	30 June 2025			

<p>national program steering committee meetings and DoE sector coordination meetings to loop the collected progress information back into the decision-making process for an adaptive management approach at both central and decentralized levels.</p>						
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Evaluation Recommendation 5: *Include climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.* Future project iterations should incorporate strong climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, particularly into education-related projects given the possibility of embedding such measures into policy and learning. This would include incorporating them into all future GESPs, the EMIS system, and capacity building measures.

Management Response: *Partially accepted*

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: While the need to proactively integrate climate change into programming has been emphasized over time, not enough evidence is available at this stage on the impact of climate change on Iraq’s education sector to develop corresponding actions allowing for comprehensive and effective program results. Therefore, systemic incorporation of climate change in “*all future GESPs, the EMIS system, and capacity building measures*” would need to be preceded by sufficient evidence collection and analysis to inform decision-making. As long as the study is not completed, there is insufficient information available to identify specific actions to incorporate climate change mitigation measures into all future GESPs, the EMIS system and capacity building measures. The actions therefore focus on conducting the study and using its insights for defining further actions.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
<p>14. UNICEF Iraq to conduct jointly with the members of the Education Sector Coordination Group, the MoEs and the DoEs a study on the impact of climate change on Iraq’s education sector; the study has the objective to inform decisions on the integration of strong climate change mitigation and adaptation measures</p>	<p>UNICEF Iraq Education Section in collaboration with MoE, DoEs, members of the Education Sector Coordination Group</p>	<p>Education Specialist, System Strengthening, UNICEF Iraq</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p>			

<p>into education-related projects, and specifically through assessing which school data EMIS could potentially collect that are relevant to climate change mitigation, through how the GESPs can adopt climate change mitigation measures and through assessing to what extent climate change mitigation should be (further) integrated in teachers training.</p>						
<p>15. Once the study is available, UNICEF provides technical support to the DoEs and the schools in developing school-level action plans and teacher training modules incorporating climate change to education system and schools in climate change-related risk reduction and management.</p>	<p>UNICEF Iraq Education Section in partnership with MoE, DoEs, schools</p>	<p>Education Specialist, Quality, UNICEF Iraq</p>	<p>31 October 2025</p>			
<p>16. UNICEF supports 8 DoEs in including a section dedicated to the analysis of climate change-related policies and actions in the development of new GESPs.</p>	<p>UNICEF Iraq Education Section in partnership with MoE and DoEs,</p>	<p>Education Specialist, System Strengthening, UNICEF Iraq</p>	<p>31 October 2025</p>			

Huda Al-saji, OIC Chief of Education Section

Date: 28 Feb 2024

Signature: 

Ken Legins, Deputy Representative - Programme

Date:

Signature:

for Sandra Lattouf, Country Representative

Date: 29.02.2024

Signature: Ken Legins
UNICEF Representative OIC

