

UNICEF Evaluation Management Response

Evaluation Title: Evaluation of China Country Programme (2021 – 2025)

Region: EAPRO

Office: China

Evaluation Year: 2025

Person-In-Charge for Follow-up to Management Response: Xin Xin Yang, Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist

Overall Response to the Evaluation: China CO recently conducted a country programme evaluation. The findings and recommendations represent a milestone in advancing evidence-based decision-making and will inform the design of the new country programme. However, several limitations were noted, including weak stakeholder cooperation, limited familiarity with project details, and insufficient documentation of pilot initiatives.

Planned Use of Evaluation: Shortly after the completion of the evaluation, UNICEF initiated a transformative shift under the Future Focus Initiative (FFI), including a change in office typology that significantly impacts the China Country Office. The CPD 2026–2030 is now being developed with a gradual exit strategy from the current programme model, placing greater emphasis on the rights of children through policy advocacy, partnerships, and upstream engagement. Consequently, some programme areas will transition into broader platforms such as Social Policy, Child Protection, Public Partnerships, and Climate. These post-evaluation developments mean that certain recommendations may no longer be fully relevant, and their use must be adapted to align with the evolving strategic direction.

UNICEF Evaluation Management Response Templates *who will edit the Management Response in the EMR Tracker*

RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:

Evaluation Recommendation 1: Support China's transition to high-income status by addressing emerging challenges impacting children and prioritising the well-being of disadvantaged groups.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

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

1. Develop the new Country Programme Document (CPD 2026–2030) with a strong focus on addressing emerging challenges and prioritizing the well-being of disadvantaged groups, particularly children, in support of China’s transition to high-income status.	Front Office and PME	Amanda Bissex and Patrick Shing	September 2025	Underway	Country Programme Document (2026-2030) drafted and submitted to the board secretariate.	Draft CPD 2026-2030
Evaluation Recommendation 2: Enhance SSC by establishing it as a cross-cutting programme to promote child rights within China and globally.						
Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially Agree						
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: While agree that SSTC is an important priority under the new CPD, SSTC priorities can be embedded across all programme sections and supported by the Public Partnerships section (PPS) in line with the CPD and PPS Explanatory Note, rather than a stand-alone cross-cutting programme that may potentially lead to siloed approaches.						
Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
2. Develop an office-wide South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Strategy, which is reflected in key programme planning documents (e.g. FOCAC action plan),	Programme Sections & Public Partnerships Section	Hyun Hee Ban, with Programmes (CHD, Climate Unit, Education, Child Protection, SPARK)	June 2027	Underway	A session with CMT members to initiate developing the office-wide 2026-2030 SSTC strategy was held, followed by a consultation with wider programme and cross-cutting sections (April-May 2025).	New CPD, PPT and draft strategy presented to CMT members during April stand-up meeting.

grounded in evidence-based good practices, incorporating a robust MEL framework and plan with a semi-annual review mechanism.						
3. Plan strong M&E component under the office-wide SSTC approaches, with an evaluation on SSTC to be included in the Costed Evaluation Plan for the next Country Programme (2026 – 2030)	Programme Sections, Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist & Public Partnerships Section	Hyun Hee Ban, with Programmes	January 2026	Underway	An evaluation of the UNICEF supported SSTC initiatives are planned as per the Costed Evaluation Plan (2026-2030).	Draft Costed Evaluation Plan (CEP)

Evaluation Recommendation 3: Strengthen private sector engagement and expand development partnerships.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

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. Develop a Partnerships Engagement Strategy for the new CPD (2026-2030) that is endorsed by the CMT. Designate	PI section together with focal points from sections	Derval Usher, with section focal points	June 2027	Underway	Partnership engagement strategy to be presented and endorsed by CMT.	Strategy document shared and kept updated regularly

<p>focal points with each programme section who can work with PI section on identifying suitable and impactful partnerships. The implementation of the Partnerships Engagement Strategy will be tracked on a quarter or semi-annual basis.</p>						
<p>5. Ensure sufficient support and acknowledgement for both income and influencing partnerships – financial and non-financial through CRB practices</p>	<p>PI section together with focal points from sections</p>	<p>Derval Usher, with section focal points</p>	<p>June 2027</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<p>Activities are planned to promote shared value partnerships with the private sector to maximize influence and impact across a broader range of stakeholders.</p>	

Evaluation Recommendation 4: Enhance management of pilot projects portfolio.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: China will transition from an upper-middle-income to a high-income country in the near future, necessitating a change in typology as per the decisions of the Future Focus Initiative (FFI). The new Country Programme (2026-2030) is designed with a gradual exit strategy from its current form, shifting towards a stronger focus on upholding the rights of children through engagement on policy, advocacy and partnerships. In this context, the previously successful pilots-to-policy-to-scale approach is no longer a feasible option. Instead, the programming is evolving towards promoting high-impact models for systemic improvements, with a greater emphasis on upstream engagement.

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6. Identify and secure board approval for the overall programme and cross-cutting priorities for the new CPD (2026-2030).	Front Office and PME	Amanda Bissex	September 2025	Underway	Priorities have been identified based on following criteria and analysis: (1) Fit with transition to high-income country typology; (2) the situation of children, informed by progress on SDG indicators and child rights reporting; and (3) UNICEF's unique role, informed by findings from the Country Programme Evaluation. The new CPD has been submitted for Board approval.	CPD 2026-2030
7. Develop a phase-out plan of related outcomes and outputs.	Front Office and PME	Amanda Bissex	July 2026	Underway	A draft matrix has been developed to propose future directions (maintain, transfer to the Government of China, integrate/shift into other remaining outputs, or successful closure).	Transition strategy
8. Implement the phase-out plan, guided by evidence-based assessment of future directions, including documentation of good practices and lessons learnt.	Front Office and PME	Amanda Bissex	December 2027	Not started	Integrate transition plan into 2026-2027 multi-year workplans.	2026-2027 multi-year workplans

Evaluation Recommendation 5: Focus on strengthening integrated systems, and improving data, evidence and policy analysis to drive more impactful outcomes for children during the next CP.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: The recommendation is multi-faceted and broad, making it complex to manage as a single entity. To address this, we break it down into more specific areas of engagement: 1) System strengthening and institutional investments with a focus on health, nutrition and environmental concerns under Child Health Development (CHD); 2) Improving data, evidence, monitoring and evaluation. The management response is set at 'Partially agree' for the first component and 'Agree' for the second component, which makes the overall response to this recommendation as 'Partially agree'.

A recent strategy released by DAPM in January of 2025 highlights the need to strengthen elements of Planning, Monitoring, Data and Analytics (PMDA). This is envisioned as part of a broader evidence ecosystem to drive high-impact, data-driven strategies for children. Whilst aligning with the UNICEF 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, it highlights the need for digital transformation, strategic planning, collaboration to accelerate progress toward the SDGs, ensure inclusive, evidence-based programming, to achieve sustainable and systemic change for children.

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				Cancelled		
9. Integrate upstream engagement of Health, Nutrition and Environmental Health within priority outcomes which are Social Policy, Child Protection, Public Partnerships and cross-cutting climate initiatives.	CHD	Ali Shirazi	Dec. 2027	Underway	Discussions have started within the team and with other sections on how to best proceed on each area of work	
10. Enhance PMDA (Planning, Monitoring, Data and Analytics) function to provide officewide support on monitoring, data, analytics and evidence generation. This includes 1) developing a strategy on engaging cross-office engagement under this PMDA strategy, 2) rolling out actions under the strategy for the duration of the country programme	PME	Patrick Shing	June 2027	Underway	Proposed PMDA organogram typology developed, for further approval, in-line with the CPMP process. The PMDA typology reflects the PMDA global strategy. The CCO strategy will depend on the FFI, to be completed.	
Evaluation Recommendation 6: Intensify advocacy efforts to drive policy responses and mobilise public action for the benefit of children						
Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree						
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
11. Complete public advocacy campaigns on the priority issues identified for the current CPD (positive parenting, obesity, mental health and ECD), plus the cross-cutting issue of climate change.	Comms and Advocacy, Social Behaviour Change, and Programme Sections	Andrew Brown	Dec 2025	Underway	Advocacy campaigns for positive parenting, obesity, mental health and ECD have been completed. The final campaign , focused on climate change, was launched on 30 May 2025 and will run for six months until November 2025, culminating in COP30 and World Children’s Day.	Press release: Step up for Climate campaign launched in Beijing
12. Complete direct policy advocacy on the above issues by end of the current CPD.	Programme Sections	Section chiefs	Dec 2025	Not started	VAC (positive parenting): two rounds of campaigns were completed in 2022 and 2023. Parenting programmes expanded significantly during the CP reaching 50,000 caregivers.	
13. Identify a new set of office-wide advocacy priorities (around 3) for the next CPD and develop action plans covering public awareness/comms, social and behaviour change (SBC) and policy advocacy. Comms will lead public campaigns, starting with disability,	Comms and Advocacy, SBC, Programme Sections	Andrew Brown and Amanda Bissex	June 2027	Not started		

while social policy and child protection will conduct direct policy advocacy in coordination.						
14. Organise periodic and opportunistic policy dialogue fora in order to strengthen national dialogue and evidence dissemination on important child related issues	Social Policy and programmes sections	Chief of Social Policy	Dec 2025	Underway	Quarterly policy dialogue for a has been started. Besides this an important national dialogue was organised in the midst of recent economic uncertainty including job losses. Social policy has also launched a quarterly policy focused newsletter disseminated widely across govt, researchers and academia.	