



Evaluation of the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plans (GAP 2 and GAP 3)

Egypt Country Case Study

Evaluation of the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plans (GAP 2 and GAP 3): Egypt Country Case Study

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations	EYRS	End of Year Results Summary
ACDA	Assiut Childhood and Development Association	FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ADAP	Adolescent Development and Participation	FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
AMP	Annual Management Plan	GAP	Gender Action Plan
BLESS	Bishopric of Public Ecumenical, and Social Services	GBV	Gender- Based Violence
BPRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics	GEM	Gender Equality Marker
CBO	Community-Based Organization	GFP	Gender Focal Point
CCC	Core Commitment for Children	GIZ	German Cooperation for International Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	GPR	Gender Programmatic Review
CO	Country Office	HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
COAR	Country Office Annual Report	HQ	Headquarters
CPD	Country Programme Document	HR	Human Resources
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	ITF	Inclusion Task Force
CSD	Child Survival and Development	KII	Key Informant Interview
CSI	Core Standard Indicator	KPI	Key Performance Indicator
CSO	Civil Society Organization	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ECD	Early Childhood Development	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
ECO	Egypt Country Office	MIS	Monitoring Information System
EO	Evaluation Office	MoC	Ministry of Culture
EQ	Evaluation Question	MoE	Ministry of Education
EVAC	Ending Violence Against Children	MoETE	Ministry of Education and Technical Education
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women	MoICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
		MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
		MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity

MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NCCM	National Council for Childhood
NCPD	National Council for Persons with Disability
NCW	National Council for Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLP	Natural Language Processing
NPC	National Population Council
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OMP	Office Management Plan
OR	Other Resources
ORE	Other Resources Emergency
PSEA	Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSHAA	Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority
RAM	Results Assessment Module
RO	Regional Office
RR	Regular Resources
S4D	Sport for Development
SBC	Social and Behaviour Change
SDDirect	Social Development Direct
SEM	Socio-Ecological Model
SPCRM	Social Policy and Child Rights Monitoring
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRC	UN Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN-SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WRO	Women's Rights Organization



Executive summary

Introduction

This evaluation case study forms part of the evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plans (GAPs). Its purpose was to explore the implementation of the Gender Policy, GAP 2 and GAP 3 in Egypt; the contribution to shifts in workplace culture and accountability; as well as assess gender-related programmatic results for women and girls. Conceived as a learning exercise, it aimed to support the UNICEF Egypt Country Office (ECO) to improve its work on gender.

Egypt has a population of 113 million people. It is the most densely populated Arab country, yet only 7.7 per cent of its land is habitable. From 2018 to 2023, Egypt faced significant economic challenges, leading to fluctuations in gross domestic product (GDP) and high inflation. Disruptions in Ukrainian wheat imports due to the Russia-Ukraine war impacted food security and humanitarian crises in neighbouring countries have put further strain on the country. Gender disparities are pronounced, with Egypt ranking 134 out of 146 on the Global Gender Gap Index 2023. Despite achieving gender parity in school enrolment, 53 per cent of girls drop out at the secondary level due to child marriage and harmful gender norms. There are high rates of youth unemployment, which are higher among young women (60 per cent) than young men (16 per cent). Gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be a serious concern, with high rates of child

discipline and online violence. Although decreasing, 61 per cent of women and girls aged 15-19 years have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM).

The ECO works in partnership with the National Council for Women (NCW) to support the Government of Egypt to advance gender equality. With 97 staff employed, the ECO has a budget of US\$15.7 million in regular resources (RR) and US\$101.5 million in other resources (OR) for the period 2023-2027. The country office (CO) has a specialized gender focal point (GFP) located in the social and behaviour change (SBC) team, as well as an Inclusion Task Force (ITF).

Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

The case study aimed to assess UNICEF's performance and results in implementing the Gender Policy, GAP 2 and GAP 3 across the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus from 2018-2023 including progress made by the organization in 2024. The specific objectives of the evaluation, to which this country case study contributes were:

- ▶ To assess the relevance and coherence of the current Gender Policy, GAP 2 and GAP 3 in supporting gender equality and adolescent girls' empowerment from the point of view of UNICEF's mandate and the organization's commitments

to the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, as captured in the UNICEF Strategic Plan in development and humanitarian settings.

- ▶ To assess the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of implementing gender-related organizational changes and performance enablers of the GAPs across UNICEF policies, practices, systems, programming processes, organizational commitments, and accountability mechanisms.
- ▶ To determine the extent to which UNICEF meets the programmatic results set for all children, adolescents and women on gender equality across the five Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan and in both development and humanitarian settings.

The case study covered three main components: the Gender Policy and the GAP conceptual framework; institutional enablers and their implementation in Egypt; and programmatic results and integration of gender equality across programmes.

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR), the primary users of this evaluation are UNICEF employees at all levels, government and partners working with UNICEF to advance the rights of women and girls, and in particular, the senior leadership and the gender team in the ECO – to strengthen gender integration in policies and programmes.

Methodology

The evaluation used an analytical framework described in the Theory of Change (ToC) model developed during the inception phase, and the country case study in Egypt offers an opportunity to test whether the logic and assumptions of this model are verified in practice. The Gender Integration Continuum and GAP Standard Indicators were two key tools used for measuring and defining gender transformative results.¹

The case study took a mixed method approach, drawing on both primary and secondary data sources, including: a desk review of 69 documents; monitoring and financial data from the ECO; responses to the evaluation staff survey from the ECO; 45 individual key informant interviews (KIIs) with ECO staff, government stakeholders, United Nations (UN) agencies, and other development partners, donors and implementing partners from civil society, private sector and academia (72 per cent women; 27 per cent men)²;

two gender-segregated workshops with 27 ECO staff (12 women; 9 men) on organizational culture on gender equality; and four gender-segregated adolescent focus group discussions (FGDs) (17 adolescent girls; 18 adolescent boys) to discuss the contribution of the programmes to transformative results for gender equality. Data collection involved a field visit to Egypt including Cairo and Aswan. Following the mission, a debrief session was organized to discuss emerging findings with the ECO, to which the regional office (RO) and evaluation office (EO) participated.

Key findings

The main evaluation findings are presented along the three overarching questions that frame the evaluation.

1. Gender Policy and GAP 3 conceptual frameworks

There are mixed levels of awareness and use of the Gender Policy and GAP among ECO staff. Senior management, senior staff, the GFP, and long-term staff appear most familiar with the frameworks and believe the GAP has been able to provide adequate guidance and is integrated into the country programme document (CPD) effectively. Programmatic and operational staff who are unfamiliar with the Gender Policy and GAP attribute limited awareness to lack of exposure to and limited engagement with these tools, as well as framework fatigue due to a high number of frameworks and cross-cutting priorities that staff are expected to know and use.

It is largely agreed that the GAP is very theoretical and lacks practical guidance on how gender equality results are to be achieved through integrating gender equality in the different programmatic areas. The ECO is in the process of drafting a country-level adaptation of the global GAP. Draft priority actions include improving data collection, mapping services, and building capacity across section teams.

Staff are generally aware of UNICEF's broader commitment to gender integration with references to the gender integration continuum and gender-related office key performance indicators (KPIs), demonstrating some uptake of GAP's goals into the organizational culture. In parallel, the evaluation found increasing references to gender programmatic priorities over time in programme documents, despite the absence of explicit reference to the GAP.

2. Organizational changes and performance enablers of the GAPs

The ECO has made significant strides in integrating gender-responsive policies and practices into programming. The ITF and GFP are key elements of the gender architecture to achieving this. General awareness of the importance of gender equality among staff is high, however, more could be done to help staff understand how to advance these goals and what each individual's role should be. This includes opportunities for practical training and tools to increase staff capacity for gender.

The GFP is valued in the ECO, playing a key role in the design of flagship programmes. However, there was consensus that the current level of effort assigned to the position did not meet the needs and ambition of the CO on gender equality.

There is evidence of increasing efforts to harness data, research, and evaluation to inform gender equality policies and programmes. Within the ECO, gender analyses are not consistently conducted to inform programming, and this is an emerging priority to provide evidence-informed approaches for gender integration, specifically the need for a Gender Programmatic Review (GPR). The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks of programmatic areas are not adequately reflecting gender equality results. There is currently mixed use of gender-responsive monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms to improve learning and accountability. A new monitoring information system (MIS) launching in 2024 is expected to improve gender-related data accessibility and decision-making.

The ECO has consistently met GAP criterion on gender expenditure since 2020, with variations in the level of investment in gender equality results between Goal Areas. Data on gender equality expenditure may not however accurately reflect the full range of investment by the ECO and there may be some issues in tagging. The level of investment and reporting of gender equality results (under evaluation question (EQ) 3) do not correspond.

At the government level, the ECO collaborates with many ministries and national councils. Key programmes, including Dawwie, are supported by high-level political endorsement. The ECO is continuing efforts to influence gender integration in national policies, such as in the education policy and curriculum with the Ministry of Education (MoE). The ECO works with several UN agencies, specifically the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, and UN High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on gender-focused programmes. It contributes to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) initiatives, although could integrate stronger technical capacity for gender via working groups.

There are limited partnerships with girl-, youth- and women-led organizations in Egypt. ECO partners with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) like Caritas, Assiut Childhood and Development Association (ACDA), CARE, and Bishopric of Public Ecumenical, and Social Services (BLESS) and is valued for its flexibility and ability to work with diverse rights holders, training, and inputs on PSEA. Some partners are already committed to mainstreaming gender independent of their partnership with the ECO.

Leadership is generally perceived as supportive on gender equality issues, although variability in leadership attitudes can impact the organization's approach to gender issues. There is an opportunity for more transparency on accountability structures supporting gender equality. There is a varied perception of collective responsibility for gender equality among staff. To increase ownership of the gender mandate, there is a need for more practical guidance, training and clarity of responsibilities, and clearer understanding of accountability structures in place.

There is a focus on gender parity to hire more male staff, as influenced by gender diversity KPIs in human resources (HR). There are concerns that this impacts the quality of hires and influences the perception that gender can impact career progression.

3. Programmatic results for gender equality

There are good practice examples across ECO programmatic work that are achieving gender equality results, including Dawwie, Meshwary, Sport for Development (S4D), Positive Parenting, STEAM4GIRLS, SAWA and the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM. In most cases these programmes are inherently 'gender focused'.

Gender equality has been successfully promoted across a range of programmatic areas. With several examples in child protection, education and SBC programming. However, there is not equal focus placed on gender equality across all Goal Areas or sections. Whilst the draft ECO GAP outlines priority actions for social policy and child rights monitoring (SPCRM), early childhood development (ECD), child

protection, SBC, and education, it does not include priority actions for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health or nutrition.

The ECO has successfully leveraged partnerships with the government to influence national policy and processes to address harmful practices and strengthen gender equality. For example, work with UNFPA on the Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM has influenced law and policies relating to FGM and work through SAWA influenced the MoE to integrate gender equality in the national curriculum. Similarly, Dawwie received enhanced political support when it was placed under the auspices of the first lady of Egypt and included on the presidential priorities list.

The ECO have some well-designed adolescent programmes and adolescent girl programmes, that take a transformative approach based on socio-ecological design. The Dawwie and Meshwary programmes include storytelling circles, intergenerational and community dialogue, digital learning, and opportunities to build new skills, through life skills and employability training and career guidance. These programmes are achieving positive results related to adolescent girls' well-being and leadership. Girls appear to be positioned as agents of change and the work with parents and families through programmes like Dawwie and Positive Parenting is shifting gender norms in families. These are examples of opportunities where the ECO can further engage government stakeholders to influence national level policies linked to girls' empowerment which is key for creating an enabling environment for adolescent girls to achieve sustained and transformative change.

ECO achievements on gender equality results are most evident in dedicated gender or adolescent girls' programmes such as Dawwie, Meshwary, SAWA and Positive Parenting. These have reached vulnerable adolescent girls from a wide range of governorates in Egypt including refugee girls. These programmes are achieving rapid results in terms of adolescent girls' well-being and leadership, and interpersonal changes in attitudes and practices in broader family settings. However, change at community level is less evidenced through existing M&E systems. Some transformative change across national policy and/or systems have been achieved but through other programmes such as SAWA or the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM and based on long-term engagement with the ministry. There is real potential to contribute to transformative change more broadly, through coordination of efforts

towards achieving a contextually relevant, comprehensive GAP that covers all Goal Areas to maximize integration.

Conclusions and lessons learned

The ECO is in the process of drafting a contextualized country level GAP, that aligns to the transformative agenda of the global UNICEF GAP, but the draft ECO GAP does not cover all programmatic areas. The evaluation found that there is varied awareness and ownership of the gender equality agenda across the programmatic areas which influences implementation of commitments under the GAP and Gender Policy. There is an ambition for programming to be at least gender-responsive and whilst there are some programmes implemented across a sub-set of programmatic areas that are taking a transformative approach, in several cases programming adopts a more gender-sensitive approach falling short of the ambition.

The GFP role is seen as an asset amongst programme staff, providing contextually relevant and practical guidance on gender equality and furthering the agenda. However, the level of effort assigned to the GFP role (50 per cent full time) does not meet the current needs of the ECO, especially in a context where ambition on gender equality is growing. To maintain and build on existing progress and results on gender equality it is essential to increase the resources, expertise and capacity available to support gender equality. The GFP is supervised by a chief of section and can access senior leadership directly on gender issues. Yet there is consensus that the role needs more power to influence decision-making, and increased gender expertise across senior roles level would facilitate gender-related strategies and resource allocation across all sections.

Gender capacity remains a barrier to realizing the ECO's full potential to contribute to gender equality. On those programmes that are gender focused (e.g., UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme) or adolescent girl-focused (e.g., Dawwie), gender capacity is strong. However, this is not the case across all programming. Staff expressed a need and desire to increase their own gender capacity, have access to gender expertise and practical tools to inform gender-responsive programming or identify opportunities to take a transformative approach within their programmatic areas to amplify results.

There are efforts to contribute to and use gender data and evidence to inform programme interventions. However, this is not done consistently across programmatic areas, and there is also limited use of gender analysis during programme design or implementation. A challenge commonly noted was gaps in some of the national-level data available in Egypt. There is evidence that social policy and child rights monitoring supports the government to produce more evidence and data that is relevant for gender which could go some way to addressing challenges that prevent programmes from using gendered data.

There have been efforts to address inclusion within the ECO and culture through mechanisms such as the ITF and implementation of policies such as parental leave and flexible working. However, there remain some challenges with these policies that contribute to discrepancies in how they are implemented at an individual level, resulting in perceived inequalities. In addition, some gaps are identified in policies that support women, including topics such as nursing, menstruation and menopause.

The ECO has invested in its relationship with the government as a key partner and has leveraged this to influence policy and structures relating to gender equality. UNICEF's influence has contributed to changes in mandate, structures, national curriculums and laws that address gender inequality and harmful practices. However, the ECO has held fewer partnerships with women's rights organizations (WROs) or girls' networks.

Institutional and country level tools tracking the contribution and investment of the CO to gender equality work does not accurately reflect the work of the ECO on gender. The level of investment is high in some programmatic areas without yielding strong results, whilst others have lower levels of investment but are reporting transformative results. There is scope to enhance the focus on gender equality results and measuring norm changes when monitoring gender equality in programme interventions, beyond merely reporting the numbers of boys and girls benefitting from the programmes. Reviewing monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms to better capture this contribution could help UNICEF better understand what is working and refine approaches to achieve even greater gender equality outcomes.

The use of the socio-ecological model (SEM) and participatory methods in programme design and implementation has led to coordinated efforts that result in transformative change. There are good practice examples of this in adolescent girl programmes, e.g. Dawwie and Meshwary. SEM is also used in the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM, which has generated gender equality results that are transformative. Within education, programming that works at individual, school and national level takes a gender programming for transformative results approach. Where this model and approach is used at section or programme level there appears to be greater coordination across programmes and correlation with transformative change.

Recommendations

These recommendations are presented in order of priority and were derived from the evaluation's findings and conclusions. They were validated with the ECO during a workshop in October 2024.





Recommendation 1: The ECO should explore options for increasing gender capacity and access to gender expertise in the CO to strengthen gender integration across programmatic areas. Possible options to explore include:

Increasing gender capacity of staff:

- ▶ Further reflection on the uptake of existing gender training and gathering in-depth feedback on the training needs and preferences across staff. Design and provision of training and coaching opportunities to current staff to strengthen their capacity and enhance gender mainstreaming efforts driven by the ITF and GFP.
- ▶ Create space in capacity building training for critical reflection on staff's personal gender norms, with a view to tackle negative norms that are against UNICEF's agenda could create transformative change.
- ▶ Invest in the development of practical tools and guidance on integrating gender into programming across all areas.

Increasing access to gender expertise:





- ▶ Increase the number of gender experts available across Goal Areas through the creation of gender champion roles in programme sections who hold responsibility for implementing the draft ECO GAP and report to the GFP.
- ▶ Review and refresh the role of the ITF to explore whether this could be a possible option for a network of gender champions.
- ▶ Review upcoming recruitment for programme sections and include gender expertise skills.

 Priority: Very high
 Timeframe: Within the next year
 Responsible units: ECO management, GFP, human resources, chiefs of section
 Cost implications: Staff fulfilling champion roles, cost of training, investment to increase level of effort of GFP position

Recommendation 2: The ECO should maintain gender-focused and adolescent girls’ programmes to drive flagship contributions of the ECO to gender equality. Increase focus on coordinated and holistic efforts across programming areas to contribute to the enabling environment for girls at scale to amplify gender equality results. This should be done through:





- ▶ Finalizing the ECO GAP to cover all programme areas. For accountability and coordination purposes, this should be a key document to guide investment, programme design and implementation which is complementary and leads to more sustainable and transformative change. This should be facilitated using participatory process bringing together sections to identify the root causes of gender inequality and barriers faced by girls; map existing programmes; and identify the key outcomes they want to achieve on gender equality, with support from the GFP. Use SEM to identify how programming might contribute to this outcome at different levels to achieve transformative change. Lessons can be drawn from FGM and education programming in the ECO.

- ▶ Increased use of SEM and participatory methods in programme design and section level to coordinate actions across programmes being implemented at different levels (individual, family, community or national).

 Priority: Very high
 Timeframe: Within the next year
 Responsible units: ECO management, GFP, chiefs of section
 Cost implications: GFP and section lead time





Recommendation 3: Strengthen M&E frameworks that capture achievement of gender equality results across the gender continuum and review the accuracy of reporting against institutional tools. Strengthen the quantity, quality, relevance and use of data and evidence relevant to gender equality, including:

- ▶ Conduct more regular gender analyses of both the country context and ECO programming to provide gender data to inform and enhance gender integration across all programming responses, including tracking progress along the gender integration continuum. Undertaking a GPR could also inform future CPDs and strengthen gender programming.
- ▶ Review M&E frameworks at all levels to ensure they adequately capture sex-disaggregated data and results of transformative change. It is recommended to i) at a minimum, ensure all data is disaggregated by sex and age, ii) integrate one indicator under each programmatic area in the ECO GAP that measures the key gender equality results the area aims to contribute to, and iii) strengthening the capacity around gender-responsive M&E will be beneficial to ensure learning from programmes such as Positive Parenting.
- ▶ Continue and increase investment in efforts to support the government’s collection and use of reliable gendered data and evidence (examples seen in education and social policy).





 Priority: High
 Timeframe: Over the next two years
 Responsible units: ECO management, GFP, monitoring, evaluation and learning team, chiefs of section
 Cost implications: Training, and investment in work to support national data sources

Recommendation 4: Review and strengthen partnerships for gender equality, including:

- ▶ Continue efforts to integrate gender into partnerships and engage in bilateral capacity building of stakeholders. This includes learning from those that have pre-existing strong skills on gender mainstreaming to ensure transformative efforts are collaborative. Capturing insights from stakeholders who act as current programme facilitators (i.e., for Dawwie, Meshwary, Positive Parenting) can inform this process.
- ▶ Continue to build on the strong relationship between the ECO and the government as a trusted partner. UNICEF is well-positioned to advocate for change and influence the agenda on gender equality. To strengthen these efforts, the ECO might consider strengthening relationships with other UN agencies and women-led or youth-led organizations, joining together in their influencing and advocacy work. The ECO has partnered with UNFPA in this way, resulting in significant shifts in policy, structures and systems to address harmful norms.
- ▶ Increase partnerships with other UN agencies on gender equality programming to maximize impact, using UNFPA-UNICEF as an example. Consider a reflection session to understand the quality of these partnerships and identify ways to continue strengthening partnership principles.
- ▶ Explore options for partnering with WROs, girls' networks and/or CSOs with expertise in gender equality, for example, through the national investment framework. To begin, a participatory stakeholder mapping might be helpful.

 Priority: High
 Timeframe: Over the next two years
 Responsible units: Chiefs of section, programme implementation teams
 Cost implications: Neutral (requires a shift in way of working and targeting funding)

Recommendation 5: ECO management should provide support to the ITF and HR to review the findings from the staff workshop as presented in this evaluation and address gender and inclusion concerns of staff.

 Priority: High
 Timeframe: Over the next two years
 Responsible units: Human resources, ITF, ECO management, staff association
 Cost implications: Neutral

In addition to specific recommendations for the ECO, there are broader recommendations that are particularly relevant to this country case study but require attention at the headquarter (HQ) level. These relate to elements that are part of the recommendations set out in the main global evaluation and will be addressed in the corresponding management response.

Recommendation 6: The global gender team should provide clearer guidance on how to implement gender parity in country offices where the proportion of women in staffing surpasses 60 per cent, to consider, the broader context of women's voices and leadership alongside the numerical aspect of parity.

Recommendation 7: The current gender core standard indicators (CSIs) across the Goal Areas could be strengthened to better capture the work of the ECO and their achievements.



1

Introduction

This evaluation case study forms part of the evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plans (GAPs). The purpose of the case study was to explore the implementation of the Gender Policy, GAP 2 and GAP 3 in Egypt; the contribution to shifts in workplace culture and accountability; as well as assess gender-related programmatic results for women and girls. Conceived as a learning and accountability exercise, it will be useful to the ECO to improve its work on gender. In parallel, the findings from this case study have been compared with those from other countries, and analyses triangulated with other data sources to write the global evaluation report.

An appreciative inquiry approach was adopted to select countries for an in-depth case study. The selection of countries was made during the inception phase. COs that have effectively brought about institutional shifts in gender work, or countries that have reported transformative gender equality results were identified, according to UNICEF reporting mechanisms (GAP Standard Indicators). ROs were consulted and the final selection took into consideration the necessity to have a sample of COs representative of a range of UNICEF-specific and broader contextual factors (regional balance, humanitarian and development portfolio, country budget and size, broad gender context in the country, amongst others).³

The rationale for selecting Egypt is based on its status as a lower-middle-income economy with a mid-range Gender Inequality Indicator score and the presence of a gender flagship programme. It does not report gender equality results that are transformative (see H5.6) and does not score higher than 70 per cent on GAP Standard Score. In addition, Egypt is considered a large sized CO, with a relatively lower CO budget and gender spend from the regional shortlist.

The case study report presents the findings of the evaluation of UNICEF's performance and results in implementing GAP 2 and GAP 3, and the Gender Policy in the ECO. The report is organized into six sections. Following this introduction, Section 2 provides the background, as well as the purpose, objectives and scope. Section 3 presents the evaluation case study methodology. Section 4 presents the findings for each EQ, and Section 5 presents the conclusions derived from the findings. Section 6 contains the recommendations. The report is also supplemented by nine annexes which are included in a separate document.



2

Background

Context of the evaluation

Overview of the country context

Egypt has the largest, most densely settled population among Arab countries, reaching 113 million people in 2023.⁴ Despite its large geographic size, only 7.7 per cent of the land is habitable. Of the population, 43 per cent live in urban areas of which over half (56 per cent) are concentrated in the Greater Cairo Region as well as Alexandria Governorates.⁵

Egypt is a lower-middle income country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with a GDP of US\$395.93 billion in 2023.⁶ During the period 2018-2023, Egypt experienced major economic shocks which resulted in fluctuations in GDP and high levels of inflation impacting food and economic security. As the largest importer of Ukrainian wheat, the war between Russia and Ukraine and the subsequent cut in wheat imports increased food insecurity in Egypt. The cost of food increased by 64.4 per cent between November 2022 and November of 2023. Headline inflation reached 38 per cent in October 2023 compared to 16 per cent the previous year.⁷

Egypt has also faced shocks arising from humanitarian crises in neighbouring countries including Eritrea, South Sudan, State of Palestine, Sudan, and Syria. As of January 2024 and according to UNHCR, Egypt is hosting 480,000 registered refugees and

asylum-seekers from 62 countries - a 64 per cent increase compared to 2022.⁸ Close to 40 per cent of the registered refugee and asylum-seeker population are children.

Children represented almost 39 per cent of the Egyptian population in 2021.⁹ Overall, 25.5 million children were enrolled in 60,800 schools, with approximately 125,000 children dropping out of basic education in 2022. More boys enrolled in primary school (61 per cent) and slightly more girls in lower secondary school (52 per cent). For refugee children, approximately 21 per cent of sub-Saharan refugees and almost 15 per cent Syrians are out-of-school.¹⁰

Egypt ranks high on the human development index and was 105 out of 193 countries in 2022/2023.¹¹ However in relation to gender equality, Egypt ranked 134 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023.¹² Egypt advanced towards parity between 2017 (60.8 per cent) and 2021 (63.9 per cent), before regressing in 2022 (63.5 per cent) and 2023 (62.6 per cent). Prominent gender gaps exist in education and employment. According to the UNICEF Situation of Children Report (2022):¹³

- ▶ In 2020, 30 per cent of youth (aged 15-24 years) were not in education, employment or training, with a much higher rate for young women (44 per cent) than young men (17 per cent).

- ▶ In 2021, the labour force participation rate for youth (aged 15-24 years) was 21 per cent, with a lower rate for young women (8 per cent) than young men (33 per cent).
- ▶ In 2021, the unemployment rate amongst youth was 24 per cent, with a much higher rate for young women (60 per cent) than young men (16 per cent).

GBV is prevalent and has high levels of social acceptance. According to a recent survey by the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), 31 per cent of currently or previously married Egyptian women aged 15-49 years were subjected to some form of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse by their spouses in 2021. The international men and gender equality survey in Egypt found that two in three men (64 per cent) reported having ever sexually harassed a woman or girl (30 per cent in the previous three months), with younger men aged 18-24 years being most likely to sexually harass a woman. Furthermore, 74 per cent of men and 84 per cent of women believe that women who dress provocatively deserve to be harassed.¹⁴ The most recent demographic health survey reported that around one-third of ever-married women aged 15-49 years agreed that wife beating is justified in certain circumstances (2014).¹⁵ In addition, 87 per cent of women and girls aged 15-49 years have undergone some form of FGM and nearly 80 per cent of women and girls who have undergone FGM had it performed by a health care provider.¹⁶ In 2008, there was a strong push from the government to reduce the rates of FGM, including its criminalization – such as the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat FGM 2014-2018; the establishment of the National Committee to Eradicate FGM in 2019; and the development of a National Action Plan to Eliminate FGM

2022-2027. However, the country is yet to criminalize early child marriage¹⁷, according to Egypt's most recent Census (2017), 1 in 20 girls (4 per cent) aged 15-17 years are either currently married or previously married.¹⁸

Women are increasingly taking a more active role in decision-making, with 58 per cent of currently married women aged 15-49 years reporting that they alone or jointly have the final say in their own health care, large purchases and visits to family, relatives, and friends.¹⁹ The Egyptian government has articulated support for gender equality and women's empowerment, through the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 and NCW tasked with ensuring that Egyptian women enjoy equal political, economic, social and cultural rights as men.²⁰ Since 2019, UNICEF has worked closely with the NCW to advance change on gender equality in various areas. Both UNICEF programme staff and NCW respondents spoke highly of the partnership, although the former stressed that the engagement must be strategic and diplomatic in nature to progress on gender equality.

Overview of UNICEF work in Egypt

UNICEF has worked in Egypt for over 70 years. The ECO has programmes and operational teams. There are several sections in programming: SPCRM, SBC, ADAP, education, child protection, child survival and development (CSD), including WASH, health, nutrition, and ECD. Several programmes have a strong gender focus, often cross-cutting, but particularly within education, child protection, SBC and ADAP (see Table 2).

Table 1. UNICEF Egypt Country Office overview

Size of the office (staff)	100 staff (118 including 13 UN volunteers/ five consultants)
CPD years and budget	2018-2022: US\$14,205,000 (RR), subject to the availability of funds, and US\$80,000,000 (OR) 2023-2027: US\$15,730,000 (RR), subject to the availability of funds, and US\$101,497,000 (OR)
Field Offices	None
Active humanitarian responses	State of Palestine, Sudan and Syria

Source: UNICEF Internal Database System: inSight

The current CPD 2023-2027 sets out the ECO's vision and includes components, such as social inclusion, CSD, education, child protection, adolescents and young people, and programme effectiveness.²¹ Compared to the two previous CPDs 2013-2017 and 2018-2022, it places greater focus on adolescents and young people in line with UNICEF's strategy on adolescents. The current CPD is based on consultations with national counterparts, UN agencies and major development partners, considering UNICEF's comparative advantage and opportunities for synergies within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The ECO partners with government, other UN agencies, international NGOs and civil society in the

delivery of programmatic and advocacy initiatives. According to the ECO's annual report 2023, the main government partners on gender include the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), NCW, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE), Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Ministry of Culture (MoC), Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoICT), National Council for Persons with Disability (NCPD), and the National Population Council (NPC). In addition, the ECO partners with UNFPA on FGM programming, UN Women on gender programming, and UNHCR on ensuring the protection of children.

Table 2. Overview of ECO gender programmes

Programme	Focus	Key partners	Scale	Duration
Dawwie	National initiative engaging adolescent girls and boys in activities that help them express themselves and accept diversity and equality while fostering engagement from their families and communities, thus changing the way society sees and talks about girls. Activities include storytelling circles, and intergenerational and community dialogue (voice), digital learning, and opportunities to build new skills (skills), protection, health, and nutrition services (services)	NCCM, NCW, MoETE, MoSS, MoYS, MoC, MoICT, NCPD and international NGOs and CSOs, Egyptian Red Crescent, CARE International, and over 20 grassroots NGOs ²²	750,000 people engaged nationwide (over 70 per cent girls) 3.6 million engaged online	2019 – present
Meshwary	Helping young people to better navigate their realities, express themselves and identify brighter futures for themselves by providing access to life skills, employability skills, entrepreneurship skills, social innovation skills and career guidance training.	MoYS	22 governorates 270,000 adolescents received skills training 34,500 received career guidance. ²³	2008 – present
Positive Parenting	Building a strong healthy relationship between the parent and the child. This programme includes a gender-transformative parenting approach and addresses social norms around the role of fathers and teaches parents to address gendered needs of children.	MoSS	4,000 service providers trained 1.5 million parents reached	2018 – present

STEAM 4 Girls	STEAM4Girls (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) programme was developed to support students in reaching the low benchmark learning outcomes in core subjects, especially mathematics and science.	MoETE	293,700 students	2023 – 2027
SAWA	Mainstreaming gender into the national curriculum and education system through a training of trainers (ToT) approach. Training ministry officials, teachers and social workers.	MoETE	Under the Education 2.0 reform, the lower secondary education curriculum was developed and finalized for implementation in 2024, which will impact six million students	2023 – 2027
S4D	Focused on promoting positive gender socialization, empowering girls, and fostering social cohesion through sports and physical activities with predominantly female coaches	MoYS	12,500 adolescent girls across 12 governorates	2012 – present
UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM	UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA, works to tackle FGM. Activities include adaptive community engagement, awareness raising of FGM medicalization.	UNFPA	Over 31 million through community sensitization and mobilization efforts with support from National Committee. Over 15,000 girls and women received prevention and protection services on FGM.	2008 – present: 2008 – 2013 (Phase I), 2014 – 2017 (Phase II), 2018 – 2022 (Phase III), 2023 – 2030 (Phase IV)

Source: UNICEF Egypt Country Office

Purpose, objectives and scope

Purpose and objectives

This evaluation case study aimed to assess UNICEF's performance and results in implementing GAP 2 and GAP 3, as well as the Gender Policy in Egypt from 2018 to 2023, including progress made by the organization in 2024. It was a learning and accountability exercise, as part of the evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plans. The global evaluation report²⁴ will be presented to the UNICEF Executive Board in 2025.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were:

- ▶ To assess the relevance and coherence of the current Gender Policy, GAP 2 and GAP 3 in supporting gender equality and adolescent girls' empowerment from the point of view of UNICEF's mandate (i.e., Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) and the organization's commitments to the UN-SWAP, as captured in the UNICEF Strategic Plan in development and humanitarian settings.
- ▶ To assess the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of implementing gender-related organizational changes and performance enablers of the GAPs across UNICEF policies, practices, systems, programming processes, organizational commitments, and accountability mechanisms.
- ▶ To determine the extent to which UNICEF meets the programmatic results set for all children, adolescents and women on gender equality across the five Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan and in both development and humanitarian settings.

Scope

The main evaluation was global in scope, with in-depth case studies in a sample of countries, including Egypt and spans from 2018 to 2023, covering the implementation of GAP 2 and half of GAP 3.

The evaluation covered three main components:

- ▶ Gender Policy and GAP conceptual framework: The evaluation examines the positioning of gender in UNICEF's Strategic Plan, analysing the Gender Policy, GAP conceptual framework and ToC.
- ▶ Institutional enablers and their implementation: The evaluation assesses how the GAP is implemented, including programming processes, monitoring systems, financial resources, leadership and accountability, at the HQ, regional and country levels.
- ▶ Programmatic results and integration of gender equality across programmes: The evaluation examines overall programmatic results based on available indicators and implemented activities and assesses the outputs and the contribution to outcomes as defined in the GAPs in the selected case studies. In particular, the evaluation assesses to what extent UNICEF has mainstreamed gender equality across its five Goal Areas in the Strategic Plan.²⁵

The evaluation ToC is included in *Annex 1*. The ToC guided the design of the data collection tools, by ensuring that interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and workshops focused on key outputs, outcomes and tested the assumptions highlighted with a variety of stakeholders, from within and outside the organization.

Figure 1. UNICEF Goal Areas

Every child, including adolescents:



Source: UNICEF, UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025, 2022, pp10.

Audience and use

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR), the primary users of this evaluation are “UNICEF employees at all levels, government and partners working with UNICEF to advance the rights of women and girls, women- and girl-led organizations, and young people”. In particular, the country case study report aims to help the ECO – in particular senior leadership and the gender team – to strengthen gender integration in policies and programmes. It also aims to provide strategic guidance for the in-country GAP, the remaining two years of implementation of the CPD, and the formulation of the next CPD. The country case study report provided an opportunity to share learnings on how to integrate gender equality in programmes and organizations, and on building a culture of accountability, with government, other UN agencies, and implementing partners – including women- and girl-led organizations.



3 Evaluation case study methodology

Evaluation design and approach

The evaluation methodology used a mixed method approach, including qualitative methods such as key informant interviews (KIIs), document review, participatory workshops and FGDs. Quantitative data included an analysis of programme and expenditure quantitative data, survey data (conducted for this evaluation), and the GAP Standard Index.

The approach was theory-based, and an analytical framework described in the ToC, developed during the inception phase, was used, which helped to refine the change pathways that were implicit in the existing GAP ToC; to define explicit causal assumptions linking GAP support to identifiable results at the output, outcome and goal levels; and to refine the EQs to be investigated, against which findings and conclusions were reported. The ToC and assumptions developed informed the development of the evaluation matrix, including sources of information and data collection tools. It reflects a shared understanding among key UNICEF stakeholders and the evaluation team of the intended causal chains underpinning the Gender Policy and GAPs. It provides the theoretical framework for applying contribution analysis to assess causal linkages and infer the contribution UNICEF has made to the observed outputs and outcomes. Appreciative inquiry is an approach to organizational culture change that focuses primarily on strengths. This approach was adapted to evaluate the GAP

2, GAP 3 and Gender Policy, identifying lessons on what is working well to inform recommendations to accelerate organizational change.

Mixed methods included collecting data qualitatively from individuals either through interviews, group discussions or workshops (see sampling below). For the participatory workshop with adolescents, youth-friendly tools were used. For the workshop with UNICEF staff, participatory tools were used to elicit information. Quantitative data included the review of more than 18 documents and analysis of country-specific expenditure data, GAP survey, GAP Standard Indicators and programmatic indicators. A survey was also conducted at the global level, and data from Egypt was available from this survey. For qualitative tools used, please see annexes.

For the financial and expenditure data analysis, data was extracted from UNICEF's Cube database for 2018 to 2023 and analysed to draw trends in gender expenditure from 2022 (the start of GAP 2), also looking at expenditure by Goal Areas and GEM scores.

Evaluation criteria and questions

The criteria applied to the Gender Policy and GAPs evaluation, drawing on standard criteria, as well as UNICEF's definition of impact are described below (see *Table 3*). The detail of EQs and sub questions (and corresponding criteria) are outlined in the evaluation matrix in *Annex 8*.

Table 3. Evaluation criteria applied to the evaluation

Relevance	The extent to which the GAP is responsive to the various contexts in which UNICEF operates (development or humanitarian, low- and middle-income countries or middle-income countries and various continents), and to the diverse gender realities and needs; the extent to which it is grounded in evidence of what works.
Coherence	Internal coherence focuses on the alignment, synergies and interlinkages between the GAP and other UNICEF normative frameworks, including the coherence between the GAP and the Gender Policy. External coherence examines the alignment of the GAP with broader UN commitments and to governments.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the results intended by GAP 2 and GAP 3 have been realized (as far as feasible to discern at this stage) and whether contribution has been demonstrated towards results which could have been reasonably expected. Analysis of the varying importance of the results and differential results across groups and sectors and understanding the enabling and hampering factors that influence results.
Impact	The evaluation adopted UNICEF's definition of impact and sought to identify the plausible contribution to impact results. ²⁶
Sustainability	The robustness of the institutional enablers gives an indication of the sustainability of the changes observed, as well as the strength of UNICEF partnerships with governments and the civil society sector.

Source: OECD/DAC criteria as adapted to the evaluation by evaluation team

Data collection, stakeholders and sampling

The sampling was purposeful to ensure representation from all stakeholders relevant to the evaluation. Recommendations from the ECO were considered, and a final list was developed based on relevance and availability.

Key stakeholder types included in the evaluation

Table 4. List of stakeholders met during the evaluation

Stakeholder type	Purpose	Method (KII/ FGD/ Workshop)	# of women/ men/non-binary/ unknown ²⁷
ECO staff (programme staff, GFP, HR and management)	To gather information on understanding and implementation of the Gender Policy and GAP, as well as results, enablers and hindering factors and whether this has contributed to gender equality results that are transformative.	KII	Overall: 20 Women: 13 Men: 4
	To understand the perceived importance of gender as part of individual roles and as a cross-cutting priority within their work and explore workplace culture in relation to gender identity and inclusion.	Workshop	Overall: 27 Women:12 Men: 9
	To gather information on understanding and implementation of the Gender Policy and GAP, as well as results, enablers and hindering factors and whether this has contributed to gender equality results that are transformative.	Survey	Overall: 4 Women: 2 Men:1 Prefer not to say: 1
Other UN agencies (UNHCR and UN Resident Coordinator)	To explore the scope and nature of interagency collaboration and the extent to which it contributes to better gender equality results, as well as their perceptions on UNICEF's contribution to gender equality and their comparative advantage.	KII	Overall: 2
Implementing partners (ACDA, Bless, Care, Caritas, programme facilitators)	To explore the nature of partnerships between UNICEF and civil society, examining the scope and quality of these partnerships, their contribution to gender equality results. Drawing out enabling and hindering factors for partnership.	KII/FGD	Overall: 18 Women: 2 Men: 2
Government stakeholders (MoYS and NCW)	To examine political will to support gender equality and explore their perceptions of UNICEF's contribution to gender equality. Where they have worked in partnership with UNICEF, reflection on the nature and success of the partnership will be discussed.	KII	Overall: 4 Women: 1 Men: 3
Donors	To explore the role of donors in supporting gender equality and their perceptions of UNICEF's contribution to gender equality.	N/A	N/A
Adolescent and youth rights holders	To explore the direct and perceived impact of UNICEF on youth. Drawing out enabling and hindering factors for gender equality work that is transformative.	FGD & programme observation	Overall: 35 Girls: 17 Boys: 18

Source: Evaluation team

Overall, KIIs and FGDs took place with 44 individuals from UNICEF, UN agencies, government partners and implementing partners; 27 ECO staff participated in the male and female staff workshops; and 35 adolescents participated in the adolescent FGDs.

Selected sites for case study locations and sampling

Within Egypt, data was collected in Cairo, where the ECO and key stakeholders, including government bodies, are located. Here, the evaluation team conducted KIIs, adolescent FGDs, and both staff workshops. Upon consultation with the evaluation focal persons at ECO, it was determined that data collection would be complemented by travelling to Aswan, where several country programmes are undertaken with a diverse range of rights holders, including refugees from Sudan. Here, the evaluation team conducted KIIs and adolescent FGDs and observed some of the programme activities in-person.

Survey

The evaluation team developed an all-staff survey disseminated by the EO to HQ and all ROs and COs as part of this evaluation. The survey was anonymous and piloted for accessibility (including for screen reader use) and in all five UN languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and French) by several UNICEF staff. It was open between 13 March and 8 April 2024. The survey was circulated to all staff (UNICEF currently employs a total of 17,656 staff), and a self-selection sampling approach was taken given the size and scale of the population. Four people from ECO responded to the global survey.

Data analysis

The evaluation team used a thematic analysis approach²⁸ to analyse qualitative data from KIIs, FGDs and workshop outcomes to identify key trends and patterns. Both inductive and deductive coding were used against a base coding framework aligned to the evaluation matrix, including new thematic codes as trends are identified during analysis. Qualitative data from KIIs, FGDs and workshops was assessed using Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed method data software. Documents provided by the ECO and other stakeholders involved in the case study were coded using Excel. Triangulation across quantitative and qualitative findings took place following the coding of

the qualitative data. Where possible, sub-group analysis took place to ensure that an intersectional lens was applied. All data collected during the case study was disaggregated at a minimum by gender, age and disability, to ensure representation of a diverse range of voices and allow for sub-group analysis. When the draft report was ready, a virtual validation workshop was held with the ECO to present the findings and draft recommendations.

Ethical considerations

The case study was guided by a set of ethical principles to minimize the risk of doing harm, while seeking to maximize the benefits of the evaluation. The principles translated into practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, and safe and meaningful participation. This ensures that core principles such as do no harm and leave no one behind were adhered to and ensured that human rights, gender equality and equity considerations were built into the evaluation approach.

The evaluation was informed by ethical and safety considerations for research and adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines, World Health Organization's Ethical Research Guidance²⁹, UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research and Evaluation and UNICEF's Ethical Research Involving Children, UNICEF Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation, as well as SDDirect's Ethical Policy and our Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults (Safeguarding) Policy, which sets out overall values and principles and describes how the commitment to create a positive and safe environment for children and vulnerable adults who may be connected to the work was met. All staff have received an induction on these policies.³⁰

Additionally, ethical clearance was obtained for the overall evaluation through Health Media Lab³¹ Ethics Review Board (ID 863MULT24).

Limitations and mitigation measures

The evaluation faced several limitations both by design and in practice, with appropriate mitigations implemented where possible. The main limitations and mitigation measures are summarized below (see Table 5)

Table 5. Limitations and mitigation measures

Limitations	Mitigation measures
It proved challenging to secure interviews with relevant external stakeholders due to contextual factors (including government, UN and donors). As a result, the evaluation team were unable to speak with donor representatives but managed to secure interviews with representatives from other UN entities and government.	The evaluation team worked closely with the UNICEF evaluation focal points to reach out to these entities and schedule interviews, often travelling to their locations. Where stakeholder groups were not represented, key documents were drawn on to inform the evaluation.
Not all participants completed the descriptive data monitoring form, which restricted the level of data disaggregation possible.	Where this data has been supplied, it has been disaggregated and features in this report, otherwise references are made to the gender-specific workshop or FGD to differentiate responses based on gender.
Any mention of sexual orientation was excluded from the evaluation tools, including the interview and workshop guides, consent forms, and descriptive data monitoring forms, following the recommendation of the evaluation focal points. Consequently, disaggregation and analysis related to sexual orientation were not feasible.	This limitation is being clearly recorded and the context relevant to this decision is discussed under background and hindering factors.
The evaluation attempted to reach boys and girls from the same programmes through adolescent FGDs. However, with only four FGDs to be held this was not always possible and it is therefore not always possible to compare across sex for adolescent well-being and leadership findings.	Under EQ3 primary data from boys and girls has been drawn on to demonstrate change in gender equality and/or adolescent well-being and leadership. The programme that the adolescent participates in is noted.

Source: Evaluation team

These factors collectively influenced the comprehensiveness of the evaluation findings. Despite these limitations in data collection, the evaluation team was able to secure participation from most stakeholder groups envisaged in the case study design, surpassing the targeted number in most categories. Good participation and documentation made available by the ECO means that the case study for Egypt was informed by a strong evidence base.



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4

Evaluation findings

EQ1: Gender conceptual and policy frameworks

To what extent are the current Gender Policy and GAP 3 conceptual framework well-designed, relevant, and coherent to respond to the various needs of all children, adolescents and women, national government priorities, UNICEF normative framework (i.e., CRC, CEDAW, CRPD, CCC) and the organization's commitments to the UN-SWAP on gender equality?

In summary

There are mixed levels of awareness and use of the Gender Policy and GAP among UNICEF staff members. Senior management, senior section staff, GFP, and long-term staff appear most familiar with the frameworks and believe the GAP has been able to provide adequate guidance and is integrated into CPD effectively. Programmatic and operational staff who are not familiar with the Gender Policy and GAP attribute limited awareness to lack of exposure to and limited engagement with these, as well as framework fatigue due to high number of frameworks and cross-cutting priorities that staff are expected to know and use.

It is largely agreed that the global GAP is very theoretical and lacks practical guidance on how gender equality results are to be achieved through integrating gender equality in the different programmatic areas and contexts. The ECO is in the process of drafting a country-level adaptation of the GAP. Draft priority actions include improving data collection, mapping services, and building capacity across section teams.

Staff are generally aware of UNICEF's broader commitment to gender integration with references to the gender integration continuum and gender-related CO KPIs demonstrating some uptake of GAP's goals into the organizational culture. In parallel, the evaluation found increasing references to gender programmatic priorities over time in CPDs, despite the absence of explicit reference to the GAP.

Knowledge of the GAP and gender policy, relevance in the context, use and references in key CO frameworks

The ECO employs the Gender Policy and GAP developed at HQ level and are currently drafting a country-level GAP to better align with and increase relevance to Egypt's specific context (see sub-question 4.1.2 Gender guiding framework used in the country).

Despite being available online and accessible to all stakeholders, there appears to be mixed levels of awareness and use of these frameworks within the ECO. Among internal stakeholders familiar with and using the Gender Policy and GAP (57 per cent of KIIs), there is a consensus that these tools provide adequate guidance. The GAP is perceived as a valuable framework, having significantly increased the focus on gender over the past seven years and being effectively integrated into the current CPD. Those most familiar with the GAP and Gender Policy include senior management, senior section staff, GFP, and longer-term staff, especially those involved in the development of the GAPs over time and who report on its implementation.

Conversely, 45 per cent of internal stakeholders, including a mix of programmatic and operational staff across the organization, were unfamiliar with the GAP and Gender Policy. Several staff members – from both humanitarian and development context projects – indicated they had never used these materials or were unaware of them. Some staff expressed increased awareness due to data collection activities conducted by the evaluation team, but this was otherwise limited – “I am familiar due to the workshop, I cannot say I am super familiar with it.” (UNICEF staff member).

When discussing why awareness of the GAP and Gender Policy is limited, staff repeatedly cited “framework fatigue” as a key reason. Multiple respondents explained that there are too many frameworks and systems for staff to know and use. For example, one staff member noted, “[There are] too many guidelines. Too wide. People get lost in details. Even the GAP framework, there are too many. I understand that at global level there is a need for this, but we need to include disability, accountability to affected populations (AAP), gender, PSEA – it is too much. Country level is left to integrate this, and it is overwhelming.” (UNICEF staff member). Similarly, some UNICEF respondents believe that staff might not be aware of actions or decisions related to the Gender Policy because the framework is not widely shared:

“We are not very familiar of the policy itself and the technical parts of the Gender Policy. There is still a need to cascade the information on the policy with details. Staff are not aware of the taken actions/decision related to the policy. Guideline is not printed yet” (UNICEF staff member). It would appear programme and operational staff who are less familiar with the Gender Policy and GAP could benefit from a refresher session and systematic inclusion of these frameworks in the induction of new staff members, although this should be carefully balanced with information sharing about the other frameworks and cross-cutting priorities that staff are expected to understand and implement as respondents are already stating that there are too many theory-focused frameworks in play and not enough concrete guidance.

Although not all staff have specific knowledge of the Gender Policy and GAP, several staff acknowledged UNICEF's broader commitment to integrating gender in its work: “We don't know the Gender Policy or the GAP, we are more aware of their [UNICEF's] child's rights policies, protection, and no harm. We know that UNICEF is keen on the integration of gender in their work” (UNICEF staff member). Repeated references to the gender integration continuum and gender-related office KPIs across interviews and staff workshops, specifically those linked to gender parity in the workplace, demonstrate some uptake of the GAP's gender equality workplaces and practices goals into the organizational culture (see sub-question 4.2.4.2 Gender equality in the workplace: HR policies, PSEA for more details).

While there are mixed levels of awareness of the GAP and Gender Policy across the organization, the document review does show written alignment between ECO policies and ToRs in upholding the UNICEF core values and commitments towards equity, gender equality, inclusion, and participation. For instance, internal-facing documents including the ITF ToR and PSEA ToR both make explicit reference to the Gender Policy and the GAP.³² In operational and programming documents where neither the GAP nor the Gender Policy are explicitly referenced, it is apparent that references to GAP programmatic priorities have increased over time. For instance, while neither of the most recent CPDs mention the Gender Policy or the GAP explicitly, there is a noticeable increase across the two documents of GAP 3 programmatic priorities.³³ Both CPDs maintain a strong commitment to reducing FGM, child marriage, and forms of violence; support national strategies and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; and focus on improving access to quality

education and health services for girls and women. However, the current CPD shows a shift towards more integrated and mainstreamed gender equality initiatives across all sectors. It places a stronger emphasis on the empowerment of adolescents and young people, particularly girls, through skills development and participation in civic activities. It also includes a broader range of indicators and more specific targets related to gender equality, reflecting a more comprehensive approach to measuring progress.

Gender guiding framework used in the country

The ECO currently employs the Gender Policy and GAP 3 developed by UNICEF HQ. For those who are familiar and use these frameworks, respondents confirmed they are the core documents guiding gender work in the country. However, as already mentioned, there is mixed awareness of these frameworks within the ECO, leading to mixed consistency of their use and application to guiding and monitoring work on gender both programmatically and operationally. Evaluation survey data shows that three out of four respondents from the ECO to the global evaluation survey responded, 'I don't know' to the prompt 'My office has a Gender Action Plan.'

When discussing the relevance and evidence base for the GAP with those who are familiar and use it, most key informants agreed that while the global GAP provides overarching theoretical direction, it lacks contextualization and practical guidance, which

limits how well the GAP is used. Comments such as, "GAP 3 is still very theoretical. No notice in shift, and some see shift but shift is still theoretical without any practical guidance"; "GAP gives direction and it is left to the country office to localize," and "We are aware of the action plan and theory, but when asked for further guidance on its translation to programme and action, no guidance is given," highlight the need for a more practical focus, adapted for the Egypt country context, as well as programmatic areas. Specifically, there is a request for more detailed instructions on how to mainstream gender and apply a gender equality approach and move away from the use of these concepts as buzzwords.

Efforts are already underway to address these requests. A draft country-level GAP is being developed by the SBC team and has been included in the document review.³⁴ The draft draws on a 2021 Gender Situational Analysis for Egypt³⁵ as well as consultations with the MENA regional gender advisor and ECO teams, identifying priority actions by ECO programme sections, including SPCRM, ECD, child protection, SBC, and education. While these actions are targeted by section, cross-cutting priorities include improving data collection and analysis, mapping existing and needed services, and building capacity among stakeholders (staff and partners). This draft presents a key opportunity for the ECO to include practical tools and guidance, as requested by ECO staff members during KIIs and workshops, and to increase the consistency of gender frameworks being used to guide and monitor work on gender.

EQ2: Gender-related organizational changes and performance enablers

How well are the gender-related organizational changes and performance enablers of the GAPs implemented across UNICEF policies, practices, systems, organizational commitments and accountability mechanisms at all levels?

In summary

The ECO has made significant strides in integrating gender-responsive policies and practices. The ITF and GFP are key elements of the gender architecture to achieving this.

General awareness of the importance of gender equality among staff is high, however, more could be done to help staff understand how to advance these goals and what each individual's role should be. This includes opportunities for practical training and tools to increase staff capacity for gender.

The GFP is valued by the ECO, playing a key role in the design of flagship programmes. However, there was consensus that the current level of effort assigned to the role did not meet the current needs and ambition of the office on gender equality.

In summary

There is evidence of increasing efforts to harness data, research, and evaluation to inform gender equality policies and programmes. Within the ECO, gender analyses are not consistently conducted to inform programming and this an emerging priority to provide evidence-informed approaches for gender integration, specifically the need for a GPR.

M&E frameworks of programmatic areas do not adequately reflect gender-transformative results.

The ECO has consistently met the GAP criterion on gender equality expenditure since 2020, with variations in the level of investment in gender equality results between Goal Areas. Data on gender expenditure may not however accurately reflect the full range of investment by the ECO and there may be some issues in tagging. The level of investment and the reporting of gender equality results (under EQ 3) do not correspond.

At the government level, the ECO collaborates with many ministries and national councils. Key programmes, including Dawwie, are supported by high-level political endorsement. UNICEF is continuing efforts to influence gender integration in national policies, such as integrating gender in education policy and curriculum with the MoE. UNICEF works with several UN agencies, specifically with UNFPA, UN Women, and UNHCR on gender-focused programmes. It contributes to PSEA initiatives, though could integrate stronger technical capacity for gender via working groups.

There are limited partnerships with girl-, youth- and women-led organizations in Egypt. The ECO partners with NGOs and CBOs like Caritas, ACDA, CARE, and BLESS and is valued for its flexibility and ability to work with diverse rights holders; training; and inputs on PSEA. Some partners are already committed to mainstreaming gender independently of their partnership with UNICEF.

There is currently mixed use of gender-responsive monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms to improve learning and accountability. A new MIS launching in 2024 is expected to improve gender-related data accessibility and decision-making.

Leadership is generally perceived as supportive on gender equality issues, although variability in leadership attitudes can impact the organization's approach to gender issues. There is an opportunity for more transparency on accountability structures supporting gender equality.

There is a varied perception of collective responsibility for gender equality among staff. To increase ownership of the gender mandate, there is a need for more practical guidance, training and clarity of responsibilities, and clearer understanding of accountability structures in place.

There is a focus on gender parity to hire more male staff, as influenced by gender diversity KPIs in HR. There are concerns that this impacts the quality of hires and influences the perception that gender can impact career progression.

Enablers for gender-responsive work

Egypt has demonstrated continued improvement on the GAP Standard Index, introduced as part of GAP 2 to monitor and measure the organization's performance on key institutional elements for gender-responsive planning and programming. Between 2019 and 2021, the ECO improved its overall score from 60 to 80 per cent. In 2022, a new, more nuanced but harder to achieve GAP Standard Index was introduced, causing the ECO's score to drop below the target to 54 per cent. However, by 2023, Egypt surpassed the global target of 70 per cent, achieving a score of 74 per cent. Table 6 outlines Egypt scores for the 29 indicators within the nine key institutional elements/benchmarks or "criteria"³⁶, since 2019 (or since 2022 when no correspondence exists between GAP 2 and GAP 3 criteria and indicators).

Table 6. GAP Standard Index analysis for the ECO

Dimensions and indicators	Year				
	GAP 2			GAP 3	
(1) Culture	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Have a system in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.				0.00	1.00
Percentage of staff who agree with the gender equality statement.				0.32	0.32
At least one senior staff trained on in gender equality.				0.00	N/A
Overall				11%	66%
(2) Staffing	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Meeting the GAP staffing guidance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Virtual parity at all IP/NO/GS levels	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Overall	50%	50%	50%	0%	50%
(3) Capacity	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
At least one staff GenderPro Credentialed				0.00	0.00
At least 50 per cent of staff took the mandatory foundational gender (pro) training				1.00	0.00
Overall				50%	0%
(4) Leadership and accountability	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CO has a Gender Action Plan	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
CO has the leadership, oversight and accountability at an appropriate management level (deputy representative)	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
CO Programme Management Plan defines accountabilities to achieve gender results across sectors				0.00	1.00
CO organizes regular meetings on the implementation of the gender priorities				1.00	1.00
Overall	50%	50%	50%	75%	100%

(5) Partnerships	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Partnership with women and youth groups in programme design and monitoring				1.00	1.00
Partnerships with grassroots girls' and women's rights groups				1.00	0.00
Integration of gender issues in key partnership documents (proposals, request for proposals, programme cooperation agreements etc.)				1.00	1.00
CO has a joint programme on gender equality with other UN entities				1.00	1.00
Overall				100%	75%
(6) Resources	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
% expenditures	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(7) Gender analysis and planning	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GPRs: Systematic analysis of gender power dynamics and gender relations	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Clear gender results identified clear in key documents - CPD, annual workplan, regional office management plan/office management plan	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Integrating UNICEF's minimum standards for gender in the CCCs' in Emergencies				0.00	1.00
If operating in a humanitarian context, has the CO conducted a rapid gender analysis?				NA	1.00
Core package (GBV) GBV risk mitigation activities conducted during the reporting year?				0.00	1.00
Completion of gender analysis in the emergency preparedness platform				0.00	1.00
Overall	100%	100%	100%	20%	100%
(8) Gender data and M&E	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gender results assessment module (RAM) standard indicators used in programming platform	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.78
Level of sex-disaggregation on RAM standard indicators				NA	NA
Level of sex-disaggregation on CSIs				NA	0.95
Overall	100%	100%	100%	100%	86%

(9) Quality of gender results	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Reporting gender equality results that are transformative				0.00	0.57
At-scale programmes addressing gender discriminatory roles and practices are implemented				1.00	1.00
Gender-transformative child rights policies and programmes identified and financed				1.00	1.00
GBV risk mitigation results reported against by sectors				1.00	1.00
Overall				75%	89%
	GAP 2			GAP 3	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
OVERALL	60%	80%	80%	59%	74%

Source: UNICEF inSight internal gender dashboard

Staff capacity and gender architecture

According to the GAP Standard Index, the ECO has not met the GAP staffing guidance targets between 2019 and 2023 (see Table 6). Efforts to integrate gender-responsive work within its policies, practices, and systems have shown progress, particularly through gradual gender mainstreaming over the past seven years. Two key mechanisms driving gender integration across ECO work are the ITF and the GFP function.

ITF: Established in 2022, the ITF is a key coordination and monitoring mechanism for the ECO on cross-cutting thematic priorities including PSEA, AAP, gender equality, and disability inclusion.³⁷ The ITF includes programme and operational staff of varying seniority, such as the deputy representative (chair) and the GFP, working on four objectives: (1) PSEA; (2) support ECO focal points on AAP work; (3) monitor the adoption of gender equality principle; and (4) support inclusive programmes.³⁸ Specific annual objectives are articulated in an annual workplan, with knowledge sharing targets, system standardization goals, and monitoring efforts for cross-cutting priorities.³⁹ A review of the ITF's ToR and meeting minutes indicates that gender equality and integration are key priorities, regularly discussed in quarterly meetings.⁴⁰ However, the translation of decisions made during these meetings into action is unclear. For example, objectives "to define the Gender Action Plan for the next CPD", took place in September 2022, after the most recent

CPD publication (July 2022).⁴¹ It is therefore difficult to understand the ITF's objective in full, and how it aligns with GAP 3 timeframes (2022-2025) and CPD proposals (2023 – 2027). Similarly, the GAP was introduced to the ECO via the ITF, but mixed familiarity as explored in EQ 1 makes it difficult to determine the effectiveness of this approach.

GFP: There is one GFP at the ECO, with dedicated time for organizational gender mainstreaming alongside their programmatic role in the SBC team. The role ensures gender dimensions are included in the country-level workplan, CPD, Annual Management Plan (AMP), and section workplans. Chiefs of section are responsible for both the technical and operational aspects of gender mainstreaming, integrating gender into their section workplans and programming, and can draw on the GFP for support. Despite dedicating only 50 per cent of their time to gender mainstreaming, the GFP is a valuable resource, frequently consulted for programmatic insights. For instance, one staff member noted, "When I started in this role, I went to the gender focal point, and we worked closely on how to integrate gender in programmes, and she gave me documents to read" (UNICEF staff member). However, staff perceive the GFP as stretched thin: "Gender focal points are always overworked and not available for support as gender is their side job." (UNICEF staff member). Staff were also unclear about the selection process for the GFP and whether a singular GFP could have the technical

skills to cover all possible programmatic areas of the ECO's work, across development and humanitarian contexts. The GFP is a NO-C level role supervised by a section chief, there was also consensus emerging from KIIs and the staff workshops that "the gender focal point role needs more power to influence decision-making" (UNICEF staff member at female staff workshop) and "gender focal point structure needs to be revisited and have more authority/ independency in its reporting structure" (UNICEF staff member at male staff workshop).

Challenges and opportunities: Staff understand the importance of gender equality, but face challenges in consistent integration. High workloads and competing priorities, and the perception that gender mainstreaming efforts are primarily driven by the GFP and ITF hinder progress. One key respondent explained that the "gender focal point is supported to identify gender needs. Yet, the programmes are overwhelmed with many commitments." (UNICEF staff member). Both staff workshops revealed "that time resources are very scarce" and they are "overwhelmed with all the procedures and results they need to achieve", leaving them "exhausted by bureaucratic paperwork."

Differing views were also shared on the best way to improve gender integration within programmes: some sections prefer dedicated gender officers for each thematic area, acting as a trained 'Gender Champion' to help spread the workload of the GFP, while others advocate for enhanced gender training for all programme staff. Specifically, there were requests for contextually relevant gender training, that develops practical skills rather than teaching theoretical frameworks. Another suggestion is to prioritise gender experience when recruiting technical posts as a way of gradually building expertise in the office.

Several staff members also expressed a need for practical training and tools to increase awareness of shared gender responsibilities, accountability and develop more practical understandings of concepts. For example, the women's staff workshop agreed "Capacity building is needed to simplify concepts and show them in practical ways rather than theoretical" and "People do not have the technical capacity in gender integration. Learning and accountability are tied together. If there is no accountability for people, there will be no learning." Another staff member explained that training would create a space to ask questions; "an intensive workshop or training would be very good – I feel more able to ask questions."

Some staff stated having received gender training prior to joining UNICEF, and other trainings may have been provided at regional level, or via online platforms such as Agora⁴², but overall, staff feel a need for updated training. Finally, according to the GAP Standard Score, the capacity dimension scores 0 per cent, indicating that the ECO has not met criteria such as having at least one staff GenderPro credentialed or having at least 50 per cent of staff complete the mandatory foundational gender training (see *Table 6*).

Gender analysis, use of data research and evaluation to inform policies and programmes

The ECO has made increasing efforts over time to harness data, research, and evaluation to inform evidence-based policies and programmes, specifically targeting gender equality and the empowerment of adolescent girls. Although a GPR has not yet taken place at ECO, there are numerous examples of sections using sex-disaggregated data to inform programming and actively contributing to a gendered evidence base. However, challenges with nationally available administrative data create some barriers.

ECO programme sections make efforts to draw on gender evidence where possible to inform programmes and policy work. For example, as part of Phase IV of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Joint Programme for FGM Elimination, an FGM Context Analysis in Egypt was produced, which includes a gender analysis.⁴³ Similarly, the education team worked with the MoE to conduct an education sector analysis, encouraging a focus on data related to gender and inclusion. This approach has had a positive impact on informing the national curriculum design and increasing engagement on gender integration from the MoE. Further examples of where gender data has influenced policy and national programmes, includes work on FGM, breastfeeding, and the influence of NCW around Dawwie (see EQ 3). In some cases, there is evidence that disaggregated evidence is being collected and monitored, but it is less clear how it is being used to inform programme design, for instance the analysis of MoSS data shows disaggregation not just by sex, but by age, type of violence, educational status and disability but it is not immediately clear how this was applied to ongoing case management work and programme design.⁴⁴

Limited national data on gender-related issues poses a key challenge in informing programming and policy work. In part, this is because the government does not capture all data that would be relevant to UNICEF programming and in some instances the reliability of the data is questioned. To address these challenges, UNICEF is supporting CAPMAS to “influence national level surveys to ensure that the collection of critical information on women and children fills data gaps”.⁴⁵ KIIs confirm that the “UNICEF team have been in discussion about how to collect this data.” (UNICEF staff member). The 2022 End of Year Results Summary (EYRS) narrative states that efforts and investments need to continue to take advantage of upcoming opportunities, such as the National FGM Study with NCW, UNFPA and CAPMAS, and the Egypt Labour Market Panel Survey.⁴⁶ UNICEF is committed to continue support for the development, enhancement and utilization of data from administrative systems such as the health information system, case management system, and various online applications.⁴⁷

ECO staff agree that data on gender is valuable in driving programmatic and policy work, although it appears that the ECO does not regularly undertake gender analyses to provide this information. When discussing the extent to which gender analyses are conducted, and how effectively they are used to guide UNICEF’s work, a high number of staff responded the following in KIIs and both staff workshops: “Gender analysis does not happen here.” “There is a need for gender analysis for each programmatic intervention. The practice of integrating gender analysis is disproportionate” (UNICEF staff member), and “There is need for more support on the integration of gender analysis into programmatic interventions.” (UNICEF staff member at male staff workshop). The document review process included a 2021 Gender Situational Analysis for Egypt based on the Regional Situational Analysis for Women and Girls in MENA, providing contextualized evidence and insights on health and well-being, education, livelihood, GBV and leadership and participation, which could be used as a data source when conducting intervention-specific gender analysis.⁴⁸ However one respondent suggested that ECO staff have limited familiarity with this document and do not access it.

An emerging priority for the ECO is therefore to conduct a GPR of the country context and ECO programming to inform gender integration into programming response, as stated in the draft ECO GAP.⁴⁹ Looking ahead, the ECO has prepared a five-year costed evaluation plan that includes formative evaluations, including (a) UNICEF programmes under the Haya Karima programme⁵⁰;

(b) programming for children on the move; (c) education; and (d) programming for adolescents and youth, including girls, as well as a Gender Programme Review.⁵¹ These are key opportunities to conduct gender analyses and produce gender data that will inform future programmatic responses.

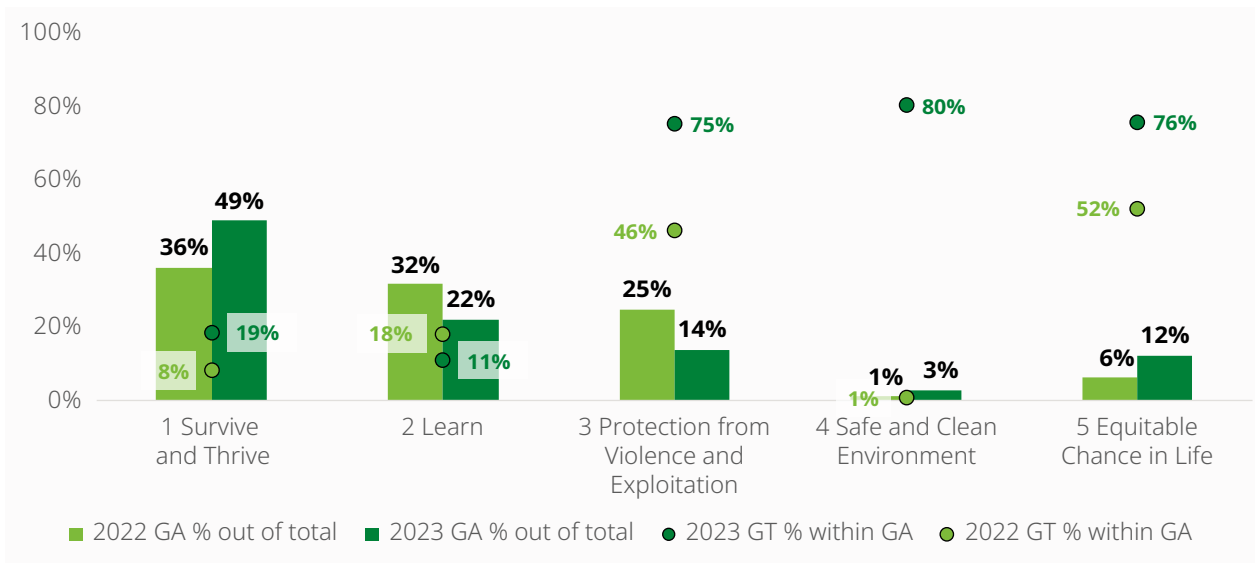
Resource mobilization

The ECO have consistently met the UN-SWAP resource allocation benchmark of 15 per cent for gender-related work from 2019-2023, surpassing it for 2022 and 2023. The financial data shows an overall increase in the level of gender equality expenditure⁵² from 23 per cent of the total budget in 2022 (US\$26,681,054) to 34 per cent of the total budget in 2023 (US\$43,249,846). There has been a proportional increase across all funding types, other resources emergency (ORE), OR and RR. The greatest increase was within the ORE budget, for which gender equality expenditure increased from 18 per cent in 2022 to 32 per cent in 2023.

Resources are tagged through gender equality markers (GEM). Overall, investment in gender principal programming (equivalent to GEM 3, for outputs that have advancing gender equality as the principal objective) has increased between 2022 and 2023, from 30 to 42 per cent. However, in 2023, over a quarter (26 per cent) of expenditure was tagged as GEM 0 (outputs that are gender blind or discriminatory).

Figure 2 presents i) the percentage of expenditure for Goal Areas out of the total expenditure, and ii) the percentage of gender equality expenditure within each Goal Area for 2022 and 2023. In 2023, the Goal Areas with the highest proportion of gender equality expenditure were Goal Area 3 (protection from violence and exploitation) at 75 per cent, Goal Area 4 (safe and clean environment) at 80 per cent, and Goal Area 5 (equitable chance in life) at 76 per cent. However, the combined expenditure of these three areas accounted for less than a third of the total expenditure across all Goal Areas. Goal Area 1 (survive and thrive) represents the highest proportion of expenditure, amounting to almost half of the total, but only 19 per cent of this was gender related. The percentage of gender equality expenditure increased between 2022 and 2023 for all Goal Areas, except for Goal Area 2 (learn). Notably, Goal Area 4 (safe and clean environment) saw a significant rise in the proportion of gender equality expenditure from 1 per cent in 2022 to 80 per cent in 2023.

Figure 2. ECO Goal Area expenditure and gender equality expenses out of total expenditure, by Goal Area 2022 and 2023

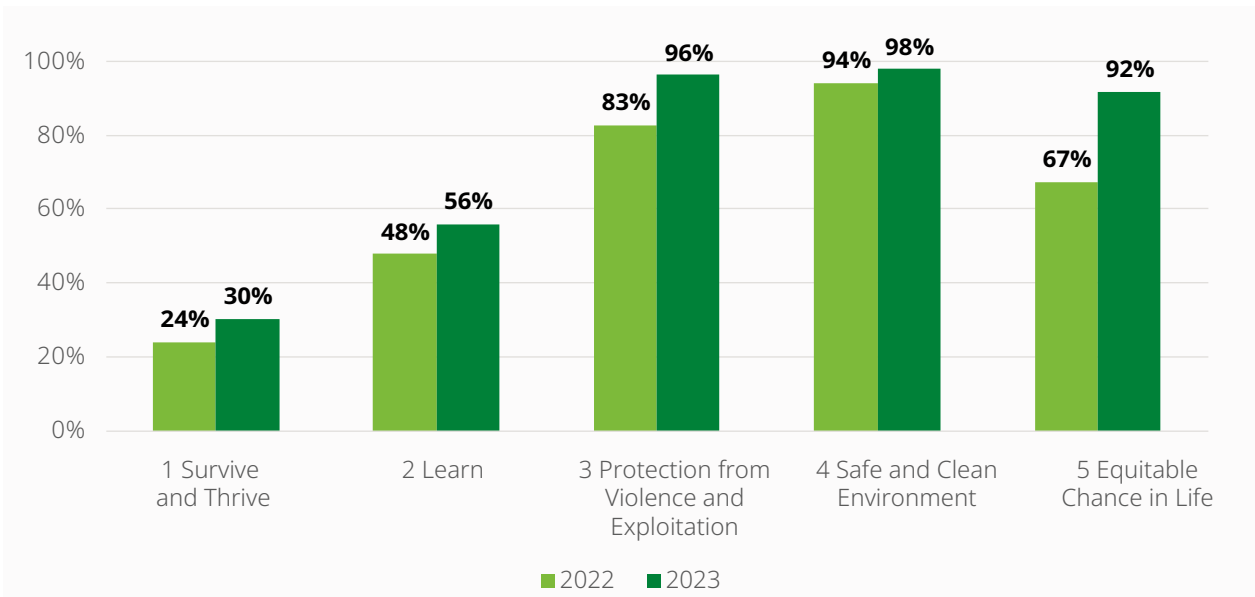


Source: UNICEF, Strategic Plan expenditure cube 2022-2025.

In terms of reported expenditure for activities, Figure 3 shows the proportion of expenditures for activities tagged as gender activities, out of the total

expenditure for 2022 and 2023. This increased for all Goal Areas between 2022 and 2023.

Figure 3. ECO proportion of gender tagged expenditure out of total expenditure by Goal Area 2022 and 2023



Source: UNICEF Strategic Plan expenditure cube 2022-2025

Table 7 below shows the ten donors with the highest absolute gender equality expenditure in 2023. The Netherlands had the highest overall gender equality expenditure of US\$2.8 million, accounting for 43 per cent of its total funding to the ECO. However, the

highest proportions of gender equality expenditure came from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (90 per cent) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (89 per cent).

Table 7. ECO total expense and gender expense by donor, 2023

	Donor	Gender expense (USD)	Expenses (USD)	% GT expense
1	Netherlands	2,846,781	6,614,647	43%
2	European Commission / ECHO	2,758,200	4,276,243	65%
3	Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance	2,711,179	8,763,435	31%
4	USA (STATE) Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM)	1,063,203	3,139,918	34%
5	UNICEF (for GR allocations only)	1,001,016	3,332,031	30%
6	USA USAID	746,074	2,055,872	36%
7	USAID	733,465	828,240	89%
8	Global – Thematic Humanitarian Resp	525,067	1,298,348	40%
9	UNOCHA	429,464	477,913	90%
10	Japan	273,613	4,439,061	6%

Source: UNICEF Strategic Plan expenditure cube 2022-2025

The growth in financial investment is proportional to the increasing prominence of the gender agenda within the ECO. In addition, a UNICEF staff member reported that resource mobilization for gender needs was growing, not only for programmes focused on gender but also for other programmes. The GFP's access to resource mobilization for gender has also increased over time, with more support from senior leadership. Staff workshops did however reveal confusion around the existing commitments to gender spending, with some respondents unsure of the exact commitment or unaware of any commitment, suggesting the need for further clarity around financial commitments towards gender-focused work.

However, challenges for gender integration include insufficient or limited flexibility in using funds, and short funding durations. Lack of financial support was mentioned multiple times as a challenge to advancing gender education programming. Some respondents believe this issue arises because other agencies, such as UN Women and UNFPA, are more explicitly focused on gender-based issues. When funds are available, "more flexible resource and longer-term grants" would be beneficial to create more sustainable impact. One respondent elaborated that "Two years is not enough to bring about social norms change, this is an appeal to headquarters, how do

we push forward on something like this?" (UNICEF staff member).

The current CPD commits to catalysing investments in gender equality programming under adolescent and youth programme priorities and outlines strategies to address under-resourcing risks through partnerships, resource mobilization, and coordination with other UN agencies.⁵³

Partnerships

With girl-, youth- and women-led organizations

The ECO partners with a range of NGOs and CBOs to deliver its portfolio of work, including gender-related work with Caritas, ACDA, CARE and BLESS. Key informants from these organizations reflected that UNICEF is highly sought after as a partner due to its extensive experience in child protection and its unique ability to work with a wide profile of rights holders, including nationals, migrants, and refugees, regardless of their status. This flexibility enables UNICEF's programmes to reach a larger number of rights holders and provide specialized services. Similarly, UNICEF is seen as well placed to connect CSOs with national partners to drive meaningful change: "UNICEF is very supportive. They always connect us with other partners, to raise awareness on the different efforts. They

connected us with people in the ministry to provide related training. Also, they connected us with the Dawwie team to learn and collaborate. They are very flexible to design the programme activities based on our experience in the field. We are able to contribute and there is always an ongoing conversation on the results.” (CSO implementing partner)

While strategic partnerships have been identified to influence gender equality, it does not appear that partnerships with girl-, youth- and women-led organizations and networks have been prioritized. One UNICEF key informant noted that the ECO has “partnerships with feminist partners but not with women-led organizations” although no further elaboration was provided on defining what these partnerships look like. The evaluation team identified barriers to working with these groups in Egypt, as many are unregistered, limiting collaboration opportunities. The registration process via government bodies is often difficult and time consuming, impacting partnership opportunities due to funding cycles and different timelines. This challenge appears to have impacted the overall GAP Standard score for partnerships, falling from 100 per cent in 2022 to 75 per cent in 2023 due to a reduction in partnerships with grassroots girls’ and WROs.⁵⁴ Despite this, the score remains high for other criteria, including partnerships with women and youth groups in programme design and monitoring, integration of gender issues in key partnership documents, and having a joint programme on gender equality with other UN entities (see *Table 6*).

CSO partners expressed general challenges related to reporting and logistics which impact funding and budget spending, as well as implementation of programmes and results. One partner explained “We spent a lot of time in the reporting. It is very long and exhausting. The e-tool and the system are very complicated. One time, after spending days in uploading the report, the system crashed, and everything was lost. We had to do it all over again. Reviewing time from their part takes long time. We receive the fund on quarterly basis. The delays in the reviewing and the time it takes result in delays in receiving the funds. This affects the implementation as we must implement in a very limited time span, and we have to spend the whole budget with little time to spend it.”

The shorter timeframes to implement funding appear to impact the extent to which transformative changes in gender norms and systems can occur, specifically for projects accessing emergency funds (see sub-question 3.3 for further details). One respondent

shared “I can’t claim that there is transformative change in our project as it is an emergency fund, and it is renewed year by year and sometimes there is long gaps because of the lack of funding.”

NGO partners highlighted the value of the ECO’s gender-related capacity building and trainings, including access to their online learning platform, case management training, and ToT opportunities with other UN agency partners. For example, NGO respondents explained that UNICEF “provided us with training on case management. We received GBV ToT by UNHCR as they are the main partner of UNICEF on child protection. They introduced us to the EQUIP platform that provides trainings to facilitators on gender-sensitive language and how to avoid reinforcing stereotypical roles and norms when working with children. It was very useful for our facilitators particularly, who are coming from the same communities as the refugees such as Sudanese and Syrian.” Some partners also expressed a need for more gender-specific training: “It is useful to be updated on the new tools and conversations on gender” (CSO implementing partner).

NGO partners, in particular, have benefitted from UNICEF’s capacity strengthening on PSEA, which has significantly influenced their internal policy development and practices. This positive impact extends beyond their direct partnership with UNICEF, as demonstrated by partner statements: “Now, we share our own [PSEA] policy with our different partners and ensure before starting any new partnership that due diligence takes place and that they abide to this policy” and “PSEA is more than just a requirement by UNICEF, we are very committed to it and we conduct refresher on PSEA every year.” Gender parity in programmes is another priority shared by the ECO with local partners. CSO representatives emphasized that their work with UNICEF always includes a focus on gender equity, aiming to reach a balanced ratio of girls to boys among programme participants.

While there is evidence that the ECO has had a positive influence embedding gender-related initiatives into work with partners to promote sustainability, NGO implementing partners mainstream gender in their work independently of their partnership with UNICEF, through for example the use of a gender integration continuum and gender markers to monitor their progress on gender equality, regular gender analysis, amongst others.

With government

The ECO has effectively identified and leveraged strategic partnerships with government bodies and is perceived as an influential actor in advocacy and large-scale national programmes, including those focused on girls' empowerment. For instance, UNICEF collaborates with the MoE, NCW, NCCM, MoYS and MoSS to reach a substantial number of children and women across the country. Government partners confirm that much of the work undertaken with UNICEF has a gender focus and supports national strategies in this area.

When prompted for examples of UNICEF's work on gender equality, the majority of respondents commented on UNICEF's work on Dawwie, with partners emphasizing its large-scale impact; "There are not too much programmes for girls' empowerment in the country that aims to inspire girls for a better future. We only have Noura⁵⁵ and Dawwie under national investment strategy, they are success stories." Dawwie, led by NCCM and NCW in partnership with multiple ministries is a multi-stakeholder initiative to advocate for girls' empowerment through enhanced access to quality services, skills development, and opportunities to participate and be heard.⁵⁶ In 2022, Dawwie received enhanced political support when it was placed under the auspices of the first lady of Egypt in commemoration of International Women's Day and included on the presidential priorities list.⁵⁷ This initiative has been recognized for its large-scale impact and is one of the few programmes in the country focused on girls' empowerment.

The ECO has demonstrated growing effectiveness in including a gender perspective within national systems and structure. For instance, recent work on education policy and system strengthening has successfully influenced the integration of gender considerations within broader educational frameworks. By collaborating with MoETE, the ECO supported the development and finalization of an evidence-based education sector plan, a process which included a gender analysis of the education sector. The ECO is now responsible for supporting the MoETE to design a lower secondary education curriculum, ensuring that aspects of equity and inclusion as well as other cross-cutting themes such as gender, life skills, and climate change were adequately considered in the new curriculum. The new curriculum is scheduled to be implemented in 2024 and six million students enrolled in public and private national schools are expected to benefit from it.⁵⁸ To complement the development of a

gender-responsive curriculum, 100 MoETE officials participated in capacity building workshops to analyse the curriculum from a gender lens and integrate gender equality and other cross-cutting themes such as climate change and life skills through UNICEF support.⁵⁹ This work is recent and ongoing, yet KIIs already recognize some positive shifts in attitude within government stakeholders towards gender integration. This level of influence has been recognized by other external stakeholders, including the German Cooperation for International Development (GIZ) and Save the Children, who have sought to partner with the ECO on integrating gender into national education.

Further examples of the ECO's influence on including gender perspectives within national systems and structures include current work supporting national Dawwie partners to mainstream the use of a national dashboard to monitor outcome and output level indicators relevant to girls' agency, access to skills development opportunities and services aligned with the national strategies, UNSDCF and its focused output on adolescent girls, as well as the GAP 2022-2025.⁶⁰ The ECO is also training MoYS to use participatory action research led by young people, with research on the key drivers of acceptance of diversity and gender equality in targeted governorates was planned for 2023.⁶¹ Lastly, NCW respondents noted that UNICEF has influenced them to expand their scope, and extend their work to include adolescent girls.

Despite these successes, integrating gender into policy remains challenging due to cultural sensitivities around gender terminology. Some of the terminology commonly used in the sector to describe change as transformative or gender-transformative is confusing to those outside of the sector and pose a barrier to engaging with gender equality work.

With other UN agencies

UNICEF works with several UN agencies on girl's empowerment initiatives in Egypt, including UNFPA for the elimination of FGM, UN Women on gender programming,⁶² and UNHCR on mainstreaming the Dawwie methodology within camps for refugee children and migrants.⁶³

As a key partner in the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM, several essential "building blocks to prevent and respond to violence against children are now in place under government leadership, although progress is constrained by traditional norms and insufficient resources".⁶⁴ Although decreasing, the prevalence of FGM remains high, with 61 per cent of women and girls aged 15-19 years having undergone FGM.⁶⁵ The joint programme, now in its fourth phase, has been active in Egypt since 2008.⁶⁶ In 2019, it supported the establishment of the National Committee for the Eradication of FGM, and its national efforts to reach over 3.4 million people through awareness raising activities and public declarations against FGM.⁶⁷ According to the current CPD, this work has successfully resulted in making FGM one of the Egyptian government's priorities.⁶⁸

KIIs indicate that the ECO recently signed a joint project with UN Women and UNFPA. However, there is limited information available on this partnership in the 2019-2023 country office annual reports (COARs), EYRSs, and RAM country programme approved reports. The 2023 RAM country programme approved report mentions collaborations with UN Women on gender programming, as well as with UNFPA on the Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM. It also mentions a new strategic programme with UN Women on the empowerment and protection of women and girls from violence. These are prospective opportunities for the ECO to leverage and advance gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women and support the inclusion of a gender perspective moving forward.

According to the document review, UNICEF has forged a partnership with UNHCR to harness respective strengths on children on the move and ECD, enabling UNICEF to expand youth employability services to additional governorates and support the inclusion of migrant and refugee youth in education and skills training.⁶⁹ In 2022, UNICEF also contributed to improved coordination and synergies amongst humanitarian actors providing services for refugee and migrant children by acting as co-chair of

the education working group alongside UNHCR.⁷⁰ Through this close collaboration, and with the support of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), a needs assessment and education strategy for mainstreaming refugee children into public schools was completed – this was not provided in the document review for assessment of how gender has been integrated. The 2023 RAM Report states this partnership has positively contributed towards the output statement the 'adolescent and youth have a reduced acceptance of discriminatory gender norms', such that "Dawwie was integrated through expanded partnerships at zero cost and implementation was cascaded by UNHCR through refugee camps, MoYS S4D geographical expansion camps as well as civic education and model parliaments, and 16 CBOs resulting in engaging over 213,000 community members, across 23 governorates."⁷¹

Key informants from UN agencies in Egypt explain that other gender-focused work has included developing a network on PSEA and establishing this as a foundational need across humanitarian response; education as a safe space; and work on child protection and GBV cases. Overall, key informants at UN agencies in Egypt acknowledge that UNICEF is catalysing national policies and investment for gender-focused work. Yet when discussing the ECO's programmatic approaches to systematically integrating gender, respondents provided feedback that internal coordination at UNICEF could be improved, and stronger gender capacity of those representing UNICEF in cross-agency working groups.

Accountability and leadership

GAP M&E system utilization

There appears to be mixed use of gender-responsive monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms to improve learning and accountability. Qualitative data from the evaluation indicates variability in how different sections utilize these systems programmatically. For instance, while the SBC team demonstrated familiarity with CSIs and actively used them to measure gender integration, respondents from child protection, education, humanitarian, health, and nutrition were not as familiar. This discrepancy may be attributed to the presence of the GFP within the SBC team, highlighting the importance of dedicated gender roles in promoting effective use of gender-responsive tools.

Despite the availability of a GAP Indicator Matrix⁷² drawing from the results framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025⁷³, the integration of gender equality in programmatic areas remains primarily focused on responding to reporting requirements and ensuring data is disaggregated by gender. A large proportion of the documents reviewed demonstrate the use of disaggregated data, and while this appears to have increased over time, this is not standardized across or throughout all documents. For instance, a review of annual humanitarian situation reports, the main reporting tool to monitor UNICEF's humanitarian response, shows limited gender disaggregation in 2022 under the summary analysis of health programme response.⁷⁴ More sections use disaggregated data in 2023 humanitarian situation reports, including under response provided by child protection, education and social protection (but not under health, nutrition and WASH).⁷⁵ As emergencies are ongoing, it is understandable that the availability of data is limited and impacts the opportunity for disaggregation, yet this appears to contrast with the template instructions of presenting key disaggregation by gender, age and geographic location.⁷⁶ Looking at the EYRS narrative reports, a high proportion of the results were disaggregated in 2022 and 2023 including results related to education, SBC and child protection, yet not under results from WASH, and health.⁷⁷ As previously mentioned, data may not be disaggregated where sections are less familiar with integrating gender-responsive tools.

Those who do use gender indicators note an over-reliance on data about reach (i.e. disaggregated number of children reached) rather than impact on children and measurements of norm changes over time. Respondents from child protection note that "Gender indicators are not there. What is there is about reach to boys and girls. In most of the programme it is easier to reach boys than girls. Indicators are sex-disaggregated. Child marriage and harmful practices have more gender indicator." There are some good practice examples of programmes that are designing M&E frameworks aimed at capturing changes in norms, with M&E staff at UNICEF explaining "We use advanced statistical techniques, regression modelling, to understand whether gender impacts experience" including for the Positive Parenting programme: "We include these gender norms questions in the pre and post-test. E.g. if you have minimal resources, would you send your daughter or your son?" (UNICEF implementing partner).

Overall, the 2023 GAP Standard Score for gender data and M&E is 86 per cent, a reduction from 100 per cent in 2022. This is due to an increase in the applicable scores in 2023 and a slight reduction in the use of gender RAM indicators. According to the ECO GAP Standard Score, there is still some room for improvement in the gender data and M&E category particularly in the use of gendered and sex-disaggregated RAM indicators and CSIs. The score for quality of gender results has increased to 89 per cent in 2023 from 75 per cent in 2022, due to improved reporting of gender equality results that are transformative. The scores across other criteria have remained successfully fulfilled, including at-scale programmes addressing gender discriminatory roles and practices are implemented; transformative child rights policies and programmes identified and financed; GBV risk mitigation results reported against by sectors.

Among those interviewed, there was limited familiarity of the gender dashboard and GAP indicators, except for respondents from M&E and SBC sections referencing their use and application. The introduction of a new M&E platform in 2024, which will include a gender pillar, is a step towards enhancing the visibility and mainstreaming of gender issues within the organization. The ECO MIS is expected to make gender-related data more accessible to technical staff, thereby supporting more informed decision-making and programme adjustments. One of the key objectives of this new platform is to ensure that any gender-related indicators collected from various programmes are visualized effectively in a dashboard, thus promoting transparency and accountability. Insights from the M&E team also suggest this would be complemented by strengthening the capacity of field monitoring of day-to-day activities integrating gender. Institutionalizing this approach more would reduce gaps in the data availability; "The better the data is, the more the GAP can be adopted." (UNICEF staff member).

There was consensus among respondents that improving the collection and visualization of sex-disaggregated data is crucial for enhancing learning and accountability. The new MIS platform's gender dashboard is a promising development in this regard, but its success will depend on widespread adoption and familiarity with gender-responsive indicators across all sections. Ensuring comprehensive training and support for technical staff in utilizing these tools will be essential to realize the full potential of gender-responsive monitoring systems in improving organizational learning and accountability.

Accountability mechanisms

The ITF – which is a key space for acting on UNICEF’s cross-cutting priorities, including gender – stipulates the deputy representative as chair in its ToR, as well as representation from a mix of programmatic and operational staff. Since the meeting is chaired by the deputy representative, it is expected that “the attendance for quorum will be at the most senior level”.⁷⁸ As outlined in sub-question 2.1, although a review of the ITF’s ToR and meeting minutes indicates that gender equality and integration are priorities for the ECO, and there is a dedicated space to discuss UNICEF’s cross-cutting priorities, the translation of decisions made during these meetings into actionable and implemented strategies is not evident. This gap in implementation makes it difficult to assess the ITF’s effectiveness and accountability in enhancing gender programming or technical work.

KIIs with senior leadership highlighted their specific responsibilities for gender equality, including creating a gender-sensitive programmatic and working environment, meeting gender diversity KPIs in recruitment, achieving good programmatic results, and developing the capacity of government counterparts and internal staff. However, it was clear from staff workshops that other staff are not aware of these specific gender-commitments by leadership. For example, some staff believe that having gender as a programmatic responsibility led by the GFP and section chiefs, rather than being led by the deputy representative limits its influence. They argue that other key initiatives led by the deputy representative have more influence and suggest that gender equality efforts would benefit from similar structural elevation. Qualitative feedback from the evaluation staff survey supports this: “Gender is discussed a lot at the office, but the follow-through from management is limited. As such it doesn’t get the required emphasis which has led to gender not being sufficiently considered at many stages through the programme.”

Overall, while leadership understand their responsibilities regarding gender equality, including via the ITF, other staff members were less clear about what these responsibilities entailed for senior leadership. This indicates a gap in communication or understanding that could potentially hinder the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives uniformly across the ECO.

Senior leadership commitments to gender equality

The commitment of senior leadership to gender equality within the ECO is broadly perceived to be supportive and proactive. Staff members generally feel that the leadership is approachable regarding gender equality issues and that any concerns raised would be addressed appropriately, including the allocation of necessary financial resources. For instance, staff workshop participants emphasized “There is the freedom and space to discuss gender equality, if we want to discuss it. [...] we would be able to via general meetings, section meetings (and many other channels). It would be possible for everyone to bring up.” Insights from the staff workshop suggest this perception is largely based on how a gender lens has been increasingly applied in decision-making processes by leadership over time. This positive trend suggests a growing recognition of the importance of integrating gender considerations into the strategic and operational aspects of the organization.

The impact of leadership prioritization of gender equality was a recurring theme in the staff workshops. There was a consensus that when senior leadership personally prioritizes gender equality, it creates a supportive environment that trickles down through the various teams. One respondent shared, “One good aspect was the senior management aspect to integrate results and indicators that are gender-transformative/-responsive/-sensitive in programming. There was a senior management drive and advocacy to integrate this. Senior management was very in tune with the GAP – [they were] interested to apply this in the office, and everyone else followed suit. Started by social and behavioural change communication then moved into other sectors.” (UNICEF staff member).

Staff members also observed that management’s commitment to gender equality is driven, in part, by specific office KPIs, which help monitor progress and ensure ECO accountability. For example, “Management is committed to gender equality because of indicators and KPIs. It is now a global agenda.” (UNICEF staff member). The most frequently cited KPI was gender diversity under “people management and staff diversity”.⁷⁹

While leaders expressed a strong sense of accountability for the GAP and outlined their responsibilities, and staff perceive them as broadly committed to gender equality, staff workshops revealed that many staff “were largely unclear on the commitments to

gender equality across leadership.” This discrepancy presents an opportunity for leadership to share more about their commitments and accountability structures in place to support gender equality operationally and programmatically.

Overall, the 2023 GAP Standard Score for leadership and accountability is 100 per cent, up from 75 per cent in 2022 (see Table 6).⁸⁰

Staffing and culture

Ownership of the gender mandate at all levels

The extent to which gender equality is considered the responsibility of everyone at the ECO varies among staff, as indicated during the staff workshops. Some participants feel that gender equality is indeed viewed as a collective responsibility, especially among programmatic staff, regardless of their own gender. However, others highlighted the failure to meet basic gender commitments, like collecting sex-disaggregated data, as evidence that gender equality is not perceived to be the responsibility of everyone.

Several suggestions were put forward to clarify and enhance gender-related responsibilities for ECO staff. Participants emphasized the need for more practical guidance on gender responsibilities, rather than relying on theoretical concepts. Simplifying these concepts and providing technical integration resources would help contextualize gender in programmes more effectively, and in turn impact the sense of shared responsibility. This view was also supported by a GAP evaluation survey respondent, who noted, “Focusing on gender is sometimes still contested. There remains confusion around the gender continuum and gender is not obviously embedded at all parts of programme.” Training on gender-related issues was also suggested, including a review of the gender integration continuum and how it applies to UNICEF’s technical Goal Areas. There was also a noted lack of personal accountability for gender equality, with a disproportionate focus on programmatic commitments over office culture. Including more explicit gender responsibilities in job descriptions was suggested to foster greater accountability and ownership.

The link between learning and accountability was highlighted repeatedly, with staff noting that without clear accountability, there is little motivation for learning and improvement. Many felt that responsibilities related to gender equality are not clearly defined in job descriptions unless one is directly

involved in a gender-focused programme. This lack of clarity can hinder the integration of gender considerations across all areas of work. It was also noted that personal passion for gender issues and previous experience greatly influence how staff engage with and integrate gender in their technical work.

Despite these challenges, there are positive signs of commitment to gender equality at the management level. As mentioned in previous sections (see sub-question *Senior leadership commitments to gender equality*), ECO management has shown ownership and responsibility for gender equality. They engage in its implementation through mechanisms such as the ITF and monitoring gender-related KPIs and are measured on their commitments via their performance review. This top-down commitment is crucial, but for gender equality to be truly embedded as a collective responsibility at UNICEF, it is essential that clear, practical guidance and accountability measures are established and communicated across all levels of the organization.

Gender equality in the workplace: HR policies, PSEA, gender parity and career progression

HR policies: ECO staff appreciate the progressive work culture compared to other workplaces in-country, commenting on equitable policies and entitlements that support gender equality and caring responsibilities, including maternity and paternity leave policies, remote working options, financial support for work travel with children, and the PSEA Policy.

During staff workshops, both men and women discussed the current Maternity Leave Policy at UNICEF, noting that the introduction of non-gestational parent leave as a positive shift and contributor to gender equality. However, they also noted that the policy for gestational parent leave is not aligned to UNICEF’s programmatic advice to mothers to breastfeed for six months. Noting that the ‘UNICEF Procedure on Family and Parental Leave 2023’ allows for a maximum of six months of leave (26 weeks), which consists of ‘two-week pre-delivery leave and 24-week post-delivery leave’. The two-week pre-delivery leave cannot be used after the birth and if not taken it is forfeited.⁸¹ It was suggested that maternity leave should be extended to allow women to take leave up to two weeks ahead of the birth (if it is needed) and still provide at least six months post-delivery to support breastfeeding. Staff also discussed the non-gestational parental leave, this was viewed as supportive of gender equality, however it was

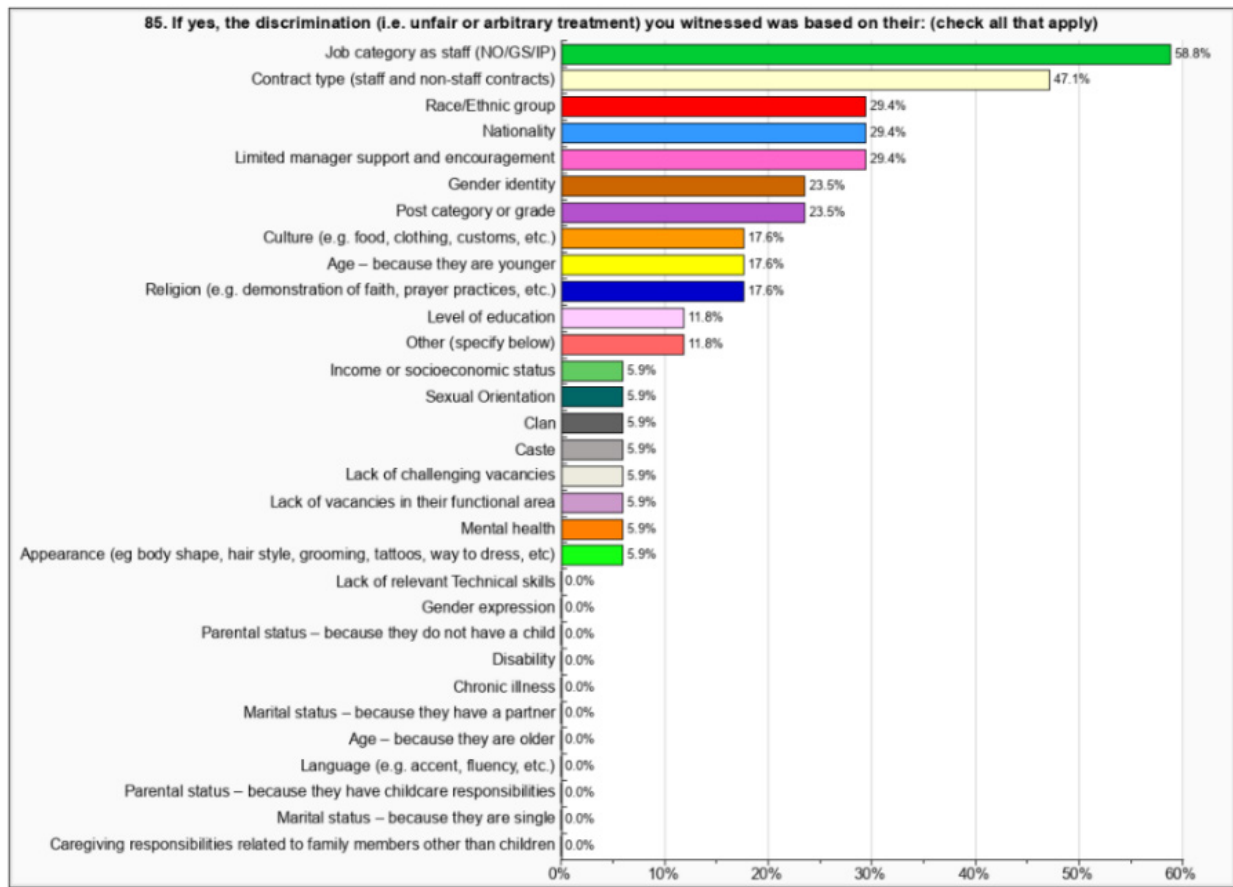
noted that non-gestational parents leave can be used more flexibly than that of the gestational parent leave which the staff felt was not equal, one participant in the female staff workshop explained “Paternity leave can be used flexibly, and many use this in summer or something to extend their annual leave” (UNICEF staff member). In the ECO context, staff felt that this policy needed further contextualization and that there is a need for better sensitization of fathers on this policy to ensure they utilize it effectively for child support. In addition, the current percentage of partial daily subsistence allowance for nursing babies (10 per cent) limits the ability of nursing mothers from joining missions, due to associated costs that the mother must pay to be accompanied by her breast-fed baby. Both male and female staff workshops also highlighted the need for policies addressing specific issues affecting women, such as menstrual hygiene and menopause support.

Remote and a flexible working culture (i.e. teleworking) were also perceived as equitable benefits, especially to support care responsibilities⁸², although approval is at the discretion of line managers, and has resulted in some perceived inequality between international and national staff. Whereby it was perceived by national staff in both male and female staff workshops that international staff members appear to work more flexibly (teleworking) than they felt that they had access to. Informal practices, such as avoiding meetings after 3 p.m. to maintain a flexible work-life balance, have shifted as new staff members join and old practices fade. Despite these changes, the overall work-life balance remains positive, with colleagues reporting not having to work late often, and thus supporting a gender-responsive workplace.

PSEA: The ECO has a PSEA Policy in place as well as a ToR for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (PSEA/PSHAA) Focal Points. The ToR refers to UNICEF’s Strategy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment,⁸³ and features specific responsibilities around prevention, reporting, response and monitoring across ECO roles.⁸⁴ Implementation of a PSEA system has also positively impacted the GAP Standard Index Score to 66 per cent in 2023, up from 11 per cent in 2022.

Despite these efforts, male and female staff workshops revealed a handful of staff are not familiar with the PSEA policy and reporting process, even though information is visibly posted in common areas of the ECO in both English and Arabic.⁸⁵ While the staff workshops included a subset of ECO staff, the 2022 UNICEF global staff survey data for Egypt suggests 80 per cent of respondents know how to report sexual harassment in UNICEF, and 82 per cent know how and to whom to report misconduct to within UNICEF.⁸⁶ Some workshop participants perceived that reporting issues through formal channels can be slow and frustrating, with complaints sometimes taking up to two years to resolve. Some staff expressed hesitation about reporting due to fears of retaliation and other risks, influenced by their type of employment contract, national versus international staff, and position on the organizational hierarchy. The 2022 UNICEF global staff survey report for Egypt demonstrates just 29 per cent of respondents felt comfortable speaking up or supporting the attacked person(s) after witnessing discrimination in the office. When considering gendered dimensions, the survey revealed that job category and contract type were the top reasons for discrimination, while gender identity ranked sixth and sexual orientation 14th. Of the 17 per cent of respondents who responded yes to having personally experienced discrimination (i.e. treated unfairly or arbitrarily) in UNICEF, the top reasons were nationality, limited manager support, job category as staff, and contract type, with gender identity and sexual orientation ranked lower (see Figure 2).⁸⁷ Overall, the mixed awareness of the PSEA Policy and reporting process, and the broader resistance of speaking up and reporting issues in the organizational culture, warrant further investigation to align with the commitment that “UNICEF will create an environment where...individuals, communities, UNICEF personnel and partners feel safe to report violations and trust that immediate and decisive action will be taken against perpetrators.”⁸⁸

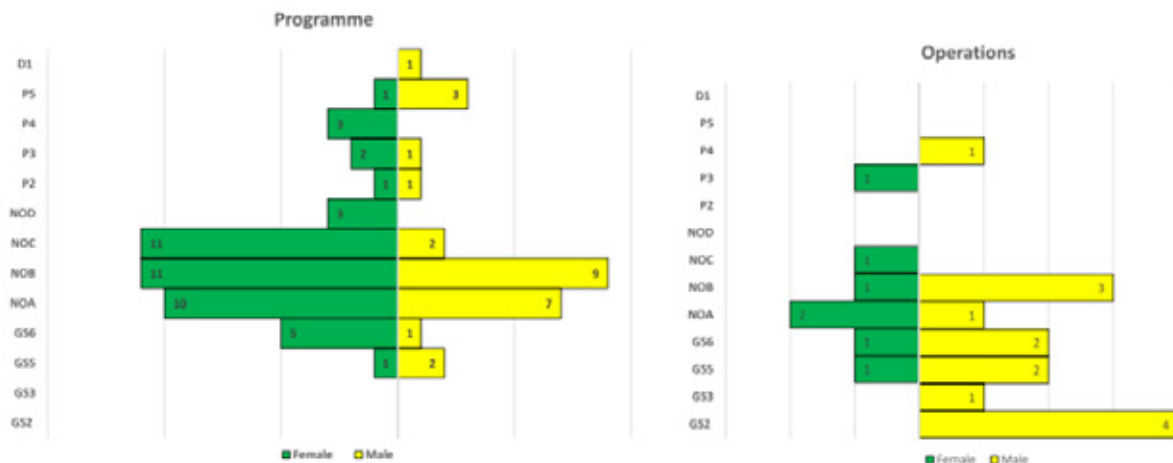
Figure 4. Types of discrimination seen by respondents who have witnessed another person being discriminated in the ECO



Source: Agenda Consulting, UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2022- Individual Demographic Report for Egypt, 2022, pp13.

Gender parity: KIIs and staff workshops highlighted the ECO’s efforts to promote gender parity. It appears that current HR efforts focus on male recruitment as there is a higher proportion of women employed in ECO (see Figure 3). The AMP progress tracker indicates a shift in gender balance among international professional staff from 44 per cent male and 56 per cent female in 2022, to 38 per cent male and 62 per cent female in 2023.⁸⁹ The 2023 Egypt Country RAM elaborates that “Seven recruitments were rejected on the basis of gender or by the candidate (one P-5, one P-4, one NO-D, one NO-A, three GS-6).”⁹⁰

Correspondingly, the RAM explains that “HR continues to emphasize to hiring managers the need to exert particular effort in targeted outreach to male candidates during the advertisement stage of the vacancy. HR has ensured that the communication section published vacancies on social media (including targeted marketing to males on Facebook) and hiring managers are encouraged to publish these within their professional networks too”.⁹¹ These findings contrast with the most recent GAP Standard Index Score for staffing, whereby virtual parity was reported at ECO at all IP/NO/GS levels (see Table 6).

Figure 5. Gender pyramid of all grade levels across ECO programme and operations (2024)

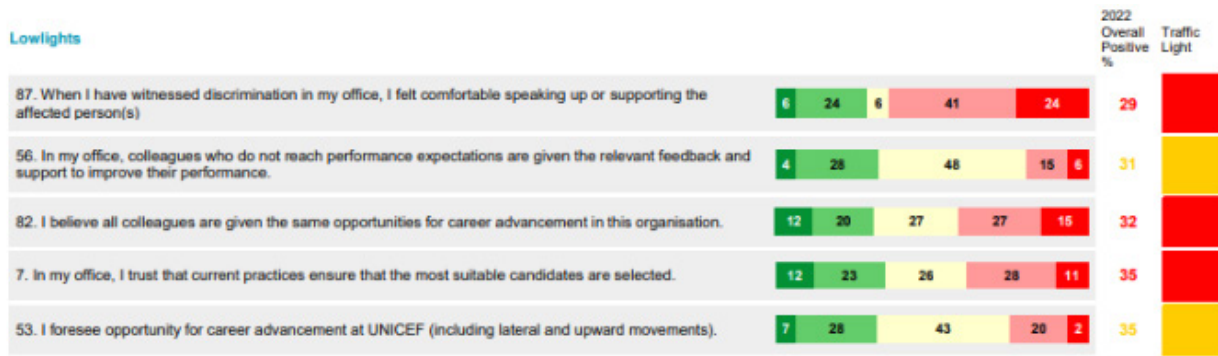
Source: ECO, Country Management Team (CMT) March 2024 – Gender Pyramid, 2024.

In the pursuit of parity, there is a concern that the quality of hires is compromised, as evidenced by reported instances where male candidates were included in interview processes despite lower qualifications, job postings shared multiple times to maximize applications by male candidates, and an indication of higher salaries to amplify the postings to men. This opinion is shared by multiple respondents, for example “Reaching parity has its negative and positive sides. It causes delay in hiring because of the process and affecting programme delivery and implementation. Sometimes hiring candidates to fulfil quota could come on the expense of having less qualified candidates” (UNICEF staff member). And “Reaching parity is a priority, there are some concerns that it compromises quality.” (UNICEF staff member). The 2022 global staff survey results demonstrate broader sentiments around recruitment, whereby 35 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement ‘In my office, I trust that current practices ensure that the most suitable candidates are selected’ (see Figure 4).⁹² A recurring concern that emerged from KIIs and staff workshops over parity is the lack of contextualization of the KPI for the country-context and sector demographics, for example “Imposing the sex balance in the recruitment without considering the context, it is not practical – in Egypt the development field is dominated by females and the practical fields are dominated by men.” (UNICEF staff member). The 2023 Egypt Country RAM confirms that “Gender diversity at national level did not improve due to composition of the qualified workforce within the country.” Overall, a purely numerical approach to staff parity

does not appear to respond to staff concerns, and a shared understanding of gender parity across all levels needs to be made clearer to support its integration in the workplace.

Career progression: Looking at the GAP Standard Index Score, there is low level of agreement amongst staff with the gender equality statement: “I believe all colleagues are given the same opportunities for career advancement in this organization” (see Table 6). This corresponds with 2022 global staff survey results, whereby 32 per cent of respondents agreed with the same statement (see Figure 4).⁹³ Some KII respondents and staff workshop participants believe that as a result of the gender parity goal, there is a perception among male and female staff that gender could influence career progression within the ECO. The male staff workshops emphasized a discrepancy between policy versus practice: “In theory gender should not result in discrimination for career progression, however the approach seeking equal gender parity does not support equal opportunities among staff, which does more harm than good” (UNICEF staff member). This is not exclusive to hiring practices however, but also due to the perception that “career progression opportunities feel limited for women when men hold many of the senior management positions in-country” (UNICEF staff member). While this sentiment was not shared by all staff, the findings highlight the need for continued efforts to ensure that gender equality is embedded in the organizational culture and that all staff, regardless of gender, feel supported and valued in their career development.

Figure 6. 2022 Global staff survey lowlights for ECO



Source: Agenda Consulting, UNICEF global staff survey 2022- Individual Demographic Report for Egypt, 2022.

EQ3: Programmatic results

To what extent have UNICEF’s programmatic results for gender equality throughout the life course been met across all five Goal Areas, particularly to advance adolescent girls’ leadership and well-being, in both development and humanitarian settings?

In summary

There are good practice examples across the ECO’s programmatic work that are achieving gender equality results, including Dawwie, Meshwary, S4D, Positive Parenting, STEAM4GIRLS, SAWA and the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM. In most cases these programmes are inherently ‘gender focused’.

Gender equality has been successfully promoted across a range of programmatic areas, with several examples across child protection, education and SBC programming. However, there is not equal focus placed on gender equality across all Goal Areas or sections. Whilst the ECO GAP outlines priority actions for SPCRM, ECD, child protection, SBC and education, it does not include priority actions for WASH, health and nutrition.

The ECO has successfully leveraged partnerships with government to influence national policy and processes to address harmful practices and strengthen gender equality. For example, work with UNFPA on the Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM has influenced laws and policies relating to FGM and work through SAWA influenced the MoE to integrate gender equality in the national curriculum. Similarly, Dawwie received enhanced political support when it was placed under the auspices of the first lady of Egypt and included on the presidential priorities list.

The ECO has some well-designed adolescent programmes and adolescent girl programmes, that take a transformative approach based on socio-ecological design. The Dawwie and Meshwary programmes include storytelling circles, intergenerational and community dialogue, digital learning, and opportunities to build new skills, through life skills and employability training and career guidance. These programmes are achieving positive results related to adolescent girls’ well-being and leadership. Girls appear to be positioned as agents of change and engagement with parents and families through programmes like Dawwie and Positive Parenting is shifting gender norms in families. These are examples of opportunities where the ECO can further engage government stakeholders to influence national level policies linked to girls’ empowerment which is key for creating an enabling environment for adolescent girls to achieve sustained and transformative change.

In summary

ECO achievements on gender equality results that have the potential to be transformative are most evident in dedicated gender programmes or adolescent girl programmes such as Dawwie, Meshwary, SAWA and Positive Parenting. These programmes have reached vulnerable adolescent girls from a wide range of governorates in Egypt including refugee girls. They are achieving rapid results in terms of adolescent girls' well-being and leadership, and interpersonal changes in attitudes and practices in broader family settings. However, change at community level is less evidenced through existing M&E frameworks. Some transformative change across national policy and/or systems have been achieved but through other programmes such as SAWA or the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme and based on long-term engagement with the ministry. There is real potential to contribute to transformative change more broadly, efforts would be improved through coordination of efforts towards achieving a contextually relevant, comprehensive GAP that covers all Goal Areas to maximize integration.

Gender equality across all Goal Areas

The ECO's approach to achieving gender equality results is two pronged. The first prong is the design and implementation of 'gender focused' programming, flagship programmes that take a transformative approach and specifically aim to address the root causes of gender inequality. The second is through the integration of gender across all programmes to ensure all programming is 'gender-responsive'.

The ECO's programmatic work achieves gender equality results that are transformative, although not consistently across all five Goal Areas (see Figure 1). When looking at the results reported via the CSIs between 2019 and 2023 and through annual reports during the same period, it is noticeable that some of the Goal Areas are reporting fewer gender equality results including WASH, health, nutrition and social protection. The differences in gender results across Goal Areas are driven by the location of gender focused programmes and the quality of gender integration, which is not systematic and does not appear to be grounded in a common approach. Review of key documents and interviews with UNICEF staff revealed that:

The ECO invested in a series of 'gender focused' programming, these are not equally distributed across Goal Areas. Reviews of COAR and EYRS between 2019 and 2023 and interviews indicate that the gender equality results are primarily achieved by the gender focused programmes.

Not all Goal Areas have articulated goals and actions related to gender in the ECO GAP which outlines priority actions for SPCR, ECD, child protection, SBC, and education. Specific Goal Areas that are not fully covered include WASH, health, nutrition, and social protection.⁹⁴

There was a consensus among UNICEF staff that whilst there had been strong growth in gender integration across the programmatic areas that this is not fully realized. With some staff members sharing

scenarios or programming areas in which they struggle to integrate gender.

Goal Area 1: Every child including adolescents survives and thrives with access to nutritious diets, quality health care, nurturing practices and essential supplies

The health and nutrition Goal Area covers a broad spectrum in UNICEF, including access to nutritious diets, quality primary health care, nurturing practices and essential supplies. There are some efforts within this Goal Area to integrate gender into the programmatic work, such as:

- ▶ Efforts to influence attitudes related to child nutrition and breastfeeding. These efforts aim at attitudinal change of men and at national policy level. The ECO have implemented campaigns to address attitudes of men in relation to their role in child nutrition. UNICEF staff felt that "There has been change in mindset and that the maternal nutrition is not only the concern of women, but men need to actively engage. We are reaching out fathers and men in mass media."
- ▶ The Positive Parenting programme is contributing to results in this sector. As part of the ECD programme, the ECO works with families to address gender norms and roles between mothers and fathers, with the aim of strengthening ECD through greater engagement of both parents.
- ▶ Despite these anecdotal results, it is evident that there are challenges with the integration of gender into programmes in this Goal Area. There are fewer examples of gender integration into broader vaccination or nutrition and UNICEF staff shared that child health indicators are not always disaggregated by sex.

Gender CSIs for Goal Area 1 focus on the training of health workers to support maternal, newborn and child health services, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention indicators and anaemia and prevention and nutrition counselling in pregnancy. According to the data reported, the ECO trained 8,830 health workers between 2021-2023 and in 2021 worked on HIV-prevention interventions (no further reporting). These gender CSIs do not currently capture the gender equality results uncovered through interviews.

Goal Area 2: Every child including adolescents learns and acquires skills for the future

Education is recognized internally within the ECO as doing well on gender integration, and evidence gathered during the evaluation supports this view. Interviews with UNICEF staff revealed the use of gendered data to inform programme design: “We started with an education sector analysis and according to this, 53 per cent of girls drop out [of school] due to child marriage and according to the CAPMAS one in three girls/women experience GBV.” (UNICEF staff member). The ECO is implementing several gender-responsive education initiatives such as rolling out of inclusive education in school, a STEAM4Girls programme which has reached 293,700 students according to the 2023 COAR, and training educators on gender-responsive education through SAWA.⁹⁵ ECO advocacy has successfully influenced MoETE to integrate gender equality into the national curriculum re-design and conduct the first government-led gender analysis. The 2023 RAM Report presented that the newly designed curriculum for lower secondary will include aspects of equity and inclusion as well as other cross-cutting themes such as gender, life skills, and climate change and will be launched in 2024 reaching six million Egyptians (49.1 per cent girls).⁹⁶

Despite these results, the ECO only reported data against one of the three CSI gender indicators relevant for this Goal Area. They did not report against indicators that were related to the presence of an inclusive or gender-responsive education system in the country. However, results were reported against indicators relating to the number of out-of-school children who accessed education through UNICEF – a total of 701,676 students in 2021 which declined to 19,015 in 2023. For Goal Area 2, CSI reporting does not adequately capture gender equality results.

Goal Area 3: Every child including adolescents is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices

The scope of work related to child protection is closely associated with gender equality given that it includes focus on sexual and GBV and harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage. This section implements ‘gender focused’ programming on FGM (UNFPA-UNICEF), a subject that is also the focus of other adolescent girls’ programmes such as Dawwie and Meshwary. According to the data reported against the gender CSIs for this Goal Area, there was a significant increase in the number of girls and women who receive prevention and protection services on FGM through UNICEF-supported programmes (aged 10-19 years) from 3,920 in 2019 to 139,192 in 2023. The ECO worked closely with UNFPA and the Government of Egypt to achieve results related to FGM:

- ▶ ECO advocacy contributed to amendments to the law criminalizing FGM, increasing sentencing and stipulating those medical professionals (i.e., doctors and nurses) who perform genital mutilation can face between 10-15 years in prison. Whilst these amendments are generally seen as positive, UNICEF staff flagged other areas of the amendment, such as increasing penalties and sentencing for parents, poses a risk of harm to girls and their families “Recently, FGM law increased sentences for FGM to 10 years, you do not want to imprison parents after going through FGM for 10 years” (UNICEF staff member). There was concern that this law could potentially leave a girl who had undergone FGM in a situation where both parents are imprisoned.
- ▶ UNICEF jointly with UNFPA provided technical advice to the National Committee for the Eradication of FGM to develop the FGM National Action Plan 2021-2026.
- ▶ SPCRM and child protection section in the ECO are working jointly with the NCW and CAPMAS, in collaboration with UNFPA, to advise on the design and implementation of a household survey that aims to identify the social norms that drive FGM: “The FGM survey will uncover so many things that are useful to us (to what extent social pressure/norms will be impactful).” (UNICEF staff member).

► Awareness raising efforts around FGM and initiatives to promote dialogue on the subject are impacting attitudes and in some cases behaviour. An international NGO partner shared, “The storytelling circle has had a major impact. Initially, in schools with Syrian refugees, discussions about child marriage and FGM were met with rejection. However, we approached these topics gradually, and over time, the idea became more acceptable.” A Dawwie facilitator shared, “They now see that FGM is something wrong. Of course, in the village the idea is made that you grow up for children in a generation that understands that this issue is wrong, and they go out and don’t do it. This is of course a great thing.” Evidence of this change exists at individual and community level; it is not possible to comment on whether this is having a broader impact on norms and awareness at a national level.

The ECO has also increased its focus on child marriage, which was not articulated in the former CPD but introduced in the current CPD. A staff member shared, “We identified that we are not doing well on child marriage. It was not included in the last country programme.” Fewer results are reported on child marriage in annual reports and interviews, but it was noted that ‘UNICEF is advocating for child marriage criminalization’.⁹⁷

The 2023 CSI data shows that UNICEF reached 1.115 million mothers, fathers and caregivers through parenting programmes and UNICEF-supported programmes. One of the largest programmes is Positive Parenting which also contributes to gender results under social protection. This social and behavioural model addresses the root causes of violence against children and creates an enabling environment for children to learn and fulfil their full potential, by focusing on girls’ empowerment and positive parenting as key drivers of change.⁹⁸ The ECO reached around 1.1 million parents under the national social assistance programme “Takaful and Karama” with a positive parenting model, benefitting three million children.⁹⁹ The model covers gender-related curriculum topics, such as the roles of mothers and fathers, maternal mental health, and intergenerational dialogue on topics such as FGM. There is some evidence that this programme is impacting gender attitudes and norms of those directly involved. Young men engaged in the programme reported that they had deep discussions about shared parenting responsibilities, maternal mental health and the challenges faced by new fathers: “We discussed that

children are not mothers’ responsibility, and she shouldn’t be spending 24 hours with them, which creates a burden on her and her mental health. We talked about postpartum depression in the case of mothers. Also, how new fathers are not sure how to deal with the newborn.”

However, there was a sense that more could be done to integrate a gender lens in broader protection work beyond child marriage and FGM, but UNICEF was currently limited due to capacity gaps. For instance, a recent opportunity with an Italian donor had strict requirements for the programme to be gender-transformative. Although UNICEF used this language in their bid, the donor pushed them to be specific on what this would look like. CSI data reveals a decline in numbers reached in relation to survivor support or prevention of GBV.¹⁰⁰ CSO partners provided examples of how they were integrating a gender lens to their work but were not yet able to articulate results, for example some partners implementing child-friendly spaces described including Dawwie storytelling circles in their work to discuss GBV but not measuring how this impacted participants.

Goal Area 4: Every child including adolescents has access to water, sanitation and hygiene and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment

Despite no gender results being reported through CSI gender indicators, the evaluation revealed initiatives to support girls and adolescent girls’ sanitation and hygiene needs, most notably initiatives to support menstrual health and hygiene. Staff outlined work on awareness raising on menstrual hygiene reaching over 500 communities, a costing study of menstrual hygiene and others spoke of provision of gender WASH facilities in emergency response settings. Despite this, the ECO did not report against the gender CSI “Number of women and adolescent girls reached whose menstrual health and hygiene needs are addressed through UNICEF-supported programmes [adolescents aged 15–19 years]”.

There does appear to be some strong capacity to integrate gender within WASH and efforts being made to consider gender at design stage. There was some demonstration of gender-sensitive design in humanitarian response, whereby separate bathrooms by gender were provided.

Goal Area 5: Every child including adolescents has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty

SPCRM identified 'support to poverty analysis from academic evidence to generate disaggregated data by sex and adolescents/children as indicators on how public finance can be used to reduce poverty' as a priority in the ECO GAP. The evaluation found examples where the ECO was influencing the government to include gender more centrally in public finance and in their survey data. A UNICEF staff member explained their work in this space, "The main focus is always to see to what extent the national surveys have the child lens that would allow for proper and solid reporting on SDG-related indicators. And also, gender perspective, by gender we had discussions a long time ago. They look at the data by female /male – sex – they started to target gender related issues in national surveys." The SPCRM team are considering gender in their work and were able to talk about influencing government to consider gender in public assignment, to invest in sex disaggregated national data. The team are producing evidence that is relevant to inform programming on FGM and menstrual hygiene, however there was a lack of clarity on how this was being used by other sections to inform programming. The work of the SPCRM team covers only part of the themes articulated under the social protection Goal Area and broader results on gender lens in poverty reduction were less clearly articulated.

In summary, gender equality results are not achieved in equal measure across the Goal Areas, and in many cases the existence of gender equality results is correlated where key gender flagship programmes are located. This is further confused by the lack of alignment between the Goal Areas as articulated and the components identified in the CPD and ECO GAP. There was a general sense of agreement across levels and sections within the ECO that gender capacity varied by team/section and that there is more to do to ensure all programmes are gender-responsive at a minimum and produce gender equality results. The evaluation found evidence of gender equality results across the Goal Areas that the gender CSIs were not adequately capturing.

Results on adolescent girls

The ECO has developed a strong workstream on adolescent girls, with several key programmes implemented through the ADAP and SBC teams, with the support of the GFP. The current CPD includes a new component, 'Adolescents and young people', the draft ECO GAP¹⁰¹ outlines a focus on adolescent girls and presents the below ToC for adolescent girls (see Figure 5).

Two of the key adolescent girl programmes include Dawwie and Meshwary, which are implemented across 22 governorates.

- ▶ Dawwie has been designed using SEM ensuring a transformative and a holistic approach, working with girls, boys and their families. The programme aims to shift norms that hold back adolescent girls and includes initiatives such as storytelling circles, and intergenerational and community dialogue (voice), digital learning, and opportunities to build new skills (skills), protection, health, and nutrition services (services). Dawwie has reached 600,000 people to date.
- ▶ Meshwary works across 22 governorates targeting adolescent girls, with a focus on developing life and employment skills. The programme includes initiatives such as training in life skills, employability skills, entrepreneurship skills, social innovation skills and career guidance. A total of 270,000 adolescents have been received skills training and 34,599 have received career guidance.

In many locations these programmes work in parallel, complementing one another so many of the targeted adolescent girls benefit from both programmes. In addition, smaller initiatives such as S4D were also implemented alongside these larger programmes providing girls access to sport and addressing stigma surrounding it.

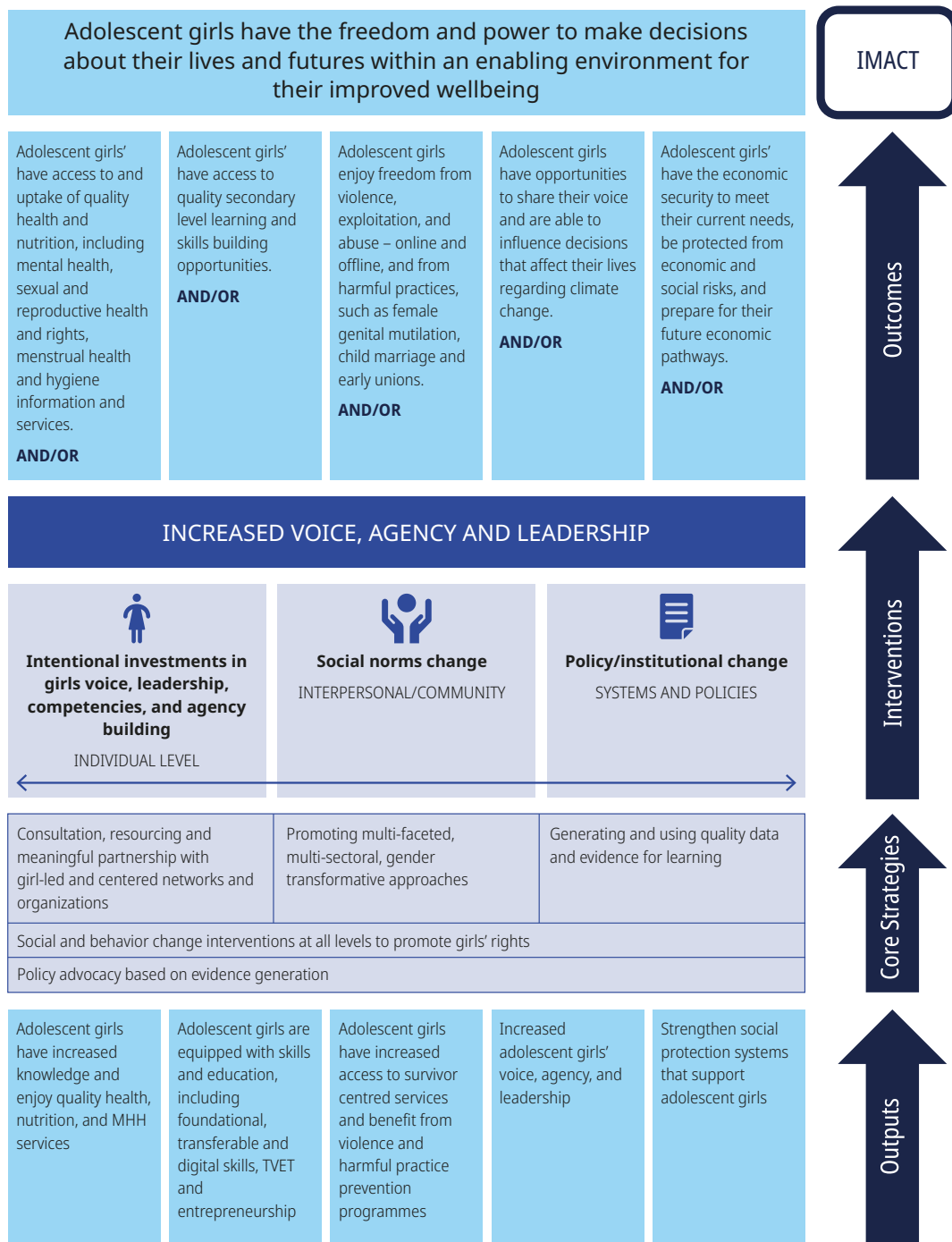
These programmes focus on a transformative approach to achieve gender equality for girls in line with the GAP and the regional Adolescent Girl Strategy. There is strong consensus across respondents from UNICEF, CSO partners, government and the adolescents that these programmes are producing gender equality results that are transformative for adolescent girls, supported by results articulated in COARs and captured through the programmes M&E systems. The 2022 COAR states that over one million people have been reached through Dawwie digital platforms. Overall, 40 per cent of the 58,000 boys and girls who completed the Dawwie digital literacy package demonstrated increased acceptance of gender equality.¹⁰²

Through this evaluation, participatory FGDs with adolescents from the Dawwie and Meshwary programmes explored themes of leadership, participation and well-being to map out changes in girls’ lives as a result of the relevant UNICEF programme. Adolescent girls reported increased self-confidence, social capital acting as a support network, and changed attitudes and beliefs about their own potential.

In the FGDs, adolescent girls shared stories of how they initially faced prejudice from family and community for joining the Meshwary programme, as it was

seen as unsafe for girls due to its presence in youth centres and focus on sports. Over time, this perception changed as parents saw the positive impact on their daughters. Dawwie facilitators shared how parent’s perceptions of girls playing sports change over time, whereby they were initially reluctant but “Now parents come to us and ask us how they can make their kids participate in the programme.” Government respondents also agreed that “There has been a significant increase in girls’ inclusion in youth centres compared to before” (MoYS respondent).

Figure 7. MENA Theory of Change for adolescent girls



Source: ECO, Draft ECO Gender Action Plan 2023-2027, 2023.

Adolescent girl participant

Before the programme:

“I grew up thinking that playing out in the streets was bad for girls. I was taught that acting was forbidden, and ballet was also not appropriate. Every single activity seemed bad and forbidden for girls.”

After the programme:

I believe “It is okay to love ballet, dancing, and being eager to learn about them. I can act and perform, and it is not a shameful thing to do. I can play out in the street as a girl, and this does not make me any less worthy.”

There was a general consensus amongst girls from the Meshwary and Dawwie programmes that their increased self-confidence was due to their participation in the programmes. Several were able to share examples of how the activities had positively impacted their confidence and commented on the life skills training provided, noting that “The training helped me approach challenges differently” (Female adolescent participant). Many felt that this has equipped young girls to cope better with setbacks or challenges. In addition, adolescent girls in both FGDs commented that their engagement in the story-telling circles had increased their confidence to speak and share with peers.

Meshwary: Adolescent girl participant

“I enjoyed the training on managing negative thoughts. It was very useful to me personally. I now focus on what I can do rather than what others think I cannot or should not do especially as a girl.”

These programmes have initiatives focused on intergenerational dialogue, there was a consensus amongst the adolescent girl participants that this component of the programmes was positively impacting their relationship with their parents. In several cases, examples were shared of how inter-generation dialogues were addressing gender norms in families leading to increase opportunities for girls.

Daawie: Adolescent girl participant

Before the programme:

One of the participants shared that she used to fear her mother. She would not ask her mother for anything directly. Instead, she would ask her elder sister to speak on her behalf. When she became interested in theatre and acting, she did not know how to talk to her mother about it. She wanted to ask for her approval to participate in the theatre activities but could not bring herself to do so.

After the programme:

Due to her participation in the intergenerational dialogue, she had a conversation with her mother about her love for acting and realized that her mother was very understanding. She said, “I thought my mother was an evil person, and I do not know why I thought this.” Since this conversation, whenever she asks her mother for anything, her mother responds in a very calm and supportive way.

These initiatives are also contributing to increasing adolescent girls’ aspirations and ambitions. Several of the female respondents shared stories during the body mapping exercise of how their beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and aspirations changed during their participation in UNICEF programming.

Dawwie: Adolescent girl participant

Before the programme:

“I thought that girls do not have a place in the society. Home is the only acceptable place for us. Girls are not given any spaces in the society. They shouldn’t continue their education after preparatory school, and the kitchen is their place.”

After the programme:

“In our storytelling circles, I discovered that girls can be anything they want. I wish to finish my education and pursue postgraduate studies. Girls could be doctors and ministers.”

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Dawwie and Meshwary programmes are contributing to the agency and leadership of adolescent girls they engage with directly. Many girls agreed that they felt better equipped to speak with confidence, express their needs and make decisions as a result of their participation in the programme. This was seen to have a direct impact on girls; freedom of movement, independence and participation in decision-making about their life choices. One girl noted that “My communication with my parents changed completely. I can now have conversations about what I want and can convince them through proper communication.” Other examples of adolescent girls increased independence were also shared by ministry officials and programme facilitators.

Dawwie: Adolescent girl participant



Before the programme:

“I was a very hesitant person. My voice is always low, and no one can hear me. Taking a decision was difficult for me.”

After the programme:

“In Dawwie’s activities, I learned to speak up and voice my opinion. I no longer feel hesitant when I try to make a decision.”

The scalability of the results and ensuring transformative changes across SEM are well considered in programme documents for the Dawwie and Meshwary programmes. Through these programmes there is a strong focus on empowerment at an individual level for adolescents and their immediate families. Whilst there is an understanding that sustainable, transformative change requires broader sensitization at community and national level, there are fewer results articulated from these programmes at community and national level.

There was a clear intention across the ADAP and SBC teams (inclusive of the GFP) that the initiatives under these two programmes are designed to be utilized under other programmes to encourage cross-fertilization and integrate focus on adolescent girls’ empowerment. The evaluation revealed some examples of this, including the embedding of Dawwie storytelling circles in education and protection programming. This approach may still be in the early stages and/or not enough alone to realize the

agenda on adolescent girls as the evidence gathered through the evaluation does not point to a consistent integration of adolescent girls’ empowerment across UNICEF’s other areas. Whilst some programmes that sit outside of ADAP include a focus on adolescent girls’ empowerment such as STEAM4GIRLS, the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme or Positive Parenting this is not a consistent practice. FGDs with adolescent boys engaged in child-friendly spaces and Positive Parenting programmes suggest different levels of gender integration and adolescent empowerment in the programmes. These showed that despite the reported mainstreaming of the storytelling circles, there was little evidence of change in their empowerment or perception of gender norms that relate to adolescent girls. However, adolescent boys engaged in the Positive Parenting programme demonstrate positive changes in their perceptions related to gender and their own empowerment. Which further indicates that the approach to adolescent girls’ empowerment is inconsistently applied, this is a missed opportunity for the programming and ECO to realize greater impact on adolescent girls.

External respondents, including from the government and implementing partners, overall had positive views of the work UNICEF had done on adolescent girls’ empowerment. These two programmes in particular were frequently mentioned, and the partnership with government ministries in the delivery of these initiatives has been very positive. The Dawwie programme is in the auspice of the first lady and government official flagged the importance of this programme, given the lack of other adolescent girl empowerment initiatives. There were some concerns shared regarding ongoing funding for the initiative.

Transformative changes in gender norms and systems

As outlined above, ECO adolescent programmes outline a transformative approach and ambition for adolescent girls, and in most cases, this is also true for ‘gender focused’ programmes (e.g. Meshwary). These programmes in general make attempts to address the root causes of gender inequality and attempts are made to address some of the structural barriers faced by girls. There are some examples of broader programming that meaningfully integrates gender in a transformative way, such as the Positive Parenting programme which aims to challenge gender norms and roles in unpaid care. It might not always be possible for programmes to implement initiatives at all levels of SEM, however through section coordination,

the ECO has been able to achieve gender equality results that have potential to be transformative at several levels of SEM. For example, in education, there are separate programmes which address gender equality at individual, school and national policy levels. This approach is also evident to some extent in the ECO's work to address FGM through the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM and Dawwie, which work at individual, community and national level.

However, this is not the norm and much of the ECO's programming can be classified as gender-responsive or -sensitive, focusing on ensuring that disaggregated data is collected, and putting emphasis on addressing the specific needs of boys and girls in accessing health, education, water and sanitation and social services.

The ECO's programmatic work and partnerships with numerous ministries have generated some gender equality results that are transformative at individual, family and national level:

Transformative changes in adolescent girls' agency:

- ▶ As presented under sub-question 3.2, the Dawwie and Meshwary programmes have generated results that are transformative within adolescent girls' agency and well-being at an individual level. Beyond this there are results from programmes such as Dawwie, Meshwary and Positive Parenting that demonstrate that gender norms and attitudes towards harmful practices such as FGM are being addressed.

Change in gender norms at family level:

- ▶ Evidence presented under evaluation sub-question 3.2 draws out examples of positive shifts in gender attitudes and beliefs within nuclear and extended families as a result of the intergenerational dialogues held under the Dawwie and Meshwary programmes. Over 40 per cent of the 58,000 boys and girls completing the Dawwie digital literacy package demonstrated enhanced acceptance of gender equality, which resulted in increased agency for adolescent girl participants and in some cases the female facilitators. These changes have allowed for increased freedom of movement for girls and women, increased access to male dominated activities and skills, and in some cases attitudinal change towards the practice of FGM (see qualitative examples presented under sub-question 3.2).

- ▶ There is also evidence of similar transformation in norms amongst adolescent boys (aged 18-24 years) from the Positive Parenting programme that showed changes in their knowledge and attitudes about the roles of fathers and mothers. The group challenged the idea that fathers are solely providers of income and advocated for them to actively participate in parenting. This evidence is indicative of change amongst young men engaged in the programme however the scale change is not known without wider evidence collected.

Transformative change in national policy, systems and structures:

- ▶ ECO advocacy with MoETE resulted in the integration of gender equality into the curriculum re-design and a government-led gender analysis. The UNICEF education team are now co-delivering the SAWA programme with MoETE. This programme trains ministry officials, social workers and educators in gender-responsive sector planning and education. The ToT model is being implemented with the intention of creating a "multiplier effect" and there is some evidence that this is happening, however the scale is unclear. "We supported the Ministry of Education to conduct an analysis of the curriculum using the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) tools for gender analysis and brought experts in to do this. Now we asked them – you have the knowledge, we asked the MoE to conduct a gender analysis of the curriculum, and they have completed it. This is the first time that they have done this – it was a big turning point." (UNICEF staff member).
- ▶ The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM supported the establishment of the National Committee to Eradicate FGM in 2019. In 2021, amendments to the law criminalizing FGM were made, increasing the maximum and minimum prison sentences imposed on FGM crimes. The amendments also stipulated those medical professionals (i.e., doctors and nurses) who perform genital mutilation can face between 10-15 years in prison.
- ▶ The ECO's collaboration with various ministries has also led to gender-responsive changes in national policies or structures. Prior to engagement with UNICEF, the NCW did not focus on girls and adolescent girls within their mandate. This changed in 2019, and NCW have attributed this

shift to the ECO's influence. This mandate reinforces the need for collaboration between NCW and NCCM to ensure that girls are supported through the life course. This has the potential to bring about transformational change in the longer term, bringing together work across 'ending violence against children' (EVAC) and 'ending violence against women' (EVAW).

The interviews with ECO staff revealed differing opinions on progress toward gender equality and UNICEF's contribution to transformative change. Many felt that gender equality was progressing, but there was however less consensus around the contribution to transformative change. Unless involved or aware of one of the gender flagship programmes (e.g. Dawwie, Meshwary, STEAM4GIRLS, SAWA, Positive Parenting etc) respondents from the ECO, government, other UN entities and partners struggled to identify UNICEF's contribution to gender equality. This points again to a need to strengthen gender integration and monitor ambitious change across broader programmes. UNICEF working in partnership with the government is seen as essential to enact transformative change on gender equality in Egypt, several highlighted the importance of fostering government relationships to influence the broader agenda on gender equality due to specific sensitivities around terminology. There have been some positive outcomes from the approach to partnership with government, UNICEF is well regarded by the ministries they work closely with and well positioned to continue to influence the agenda on gender equality for children and adolescent girls. Despite these results, when asked whether UNICEF is influential on gender equality, other UN entities did not strongly feel that they were and appeared less clear on the influence of UNICEF on gender at a national level.

Enabling (and hindering) factors and processes, within and outside UNICEF

The evaluation has revealed several enabling factors to implement the GAP and Gender Policy, including:

Internal enabling factors:

- ▶ The placement and approach of the GFP are highly regarded across the organization. The GFP has a direct line to leadership (deputy representative and representative) and is required to review key country documents, including the CPD. This direct access is considered by leadership and staff as an effective way to influence decisions. The placement of the GFP in the SBC team appears to have

worked well, as it was noted that there is a natural overlap between SBC and gender equality work.

- ▶ An unintentional yet key factor enabling gender integration has been the recruitment of staff with pre-existing gender expertise into different sections. For example, staff with pre-existing gender expertise were recruited into the education section. One UNICEF staff member suggested, "We are not asking about gender – and there could be a question in the interview e.g. 'How would you make your work inclusive?'".
- ▶ The socio-ecological framework used to design Dawwie has been effective in bringing about attitudinal change at the individual, cultural and national levels. This framework can be considered an enabling factor to achieving change in gender norms.
- ▶ Components of Dawwie have been embedded in other initiatives across the ECO programmatic work, "We collaborate with other initiatives by UNICEF that work on girls' empowerment. We do the storytelling circles for boys and girls on how to avoid gender-based discrimination." (CSO implementing partner)

External enabling factors:

- ▶ Where there is a strong relationship with government partners across sections, this is seen to have a positive impact on the scale and scope of programming. It also serves to lay the groundwork for UNICEF to influence policy, processes and structures to further gender equality. Examples of ECO's influence include: (1) NCW to include a focus on girls in their mandate; (2) MoETE to mainstream gender equality in the national curriculum; and (3) UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM on the government's work on FGM.
- ▶ Donor ambitions for gender equality can facilitate increased focus on gender integration and increase motivation across UNICEF staff. For example, a recent opportunity with an Italian donor had strict requirements for the programme to be gender-transformative. Although UNICEF used this language in their bid, the donor pushed them to be specific on what this would look like.

The evaluation has identified a series of factors or challenges that hinder the progress on the implementation of the GAP and Gender Policy, these are summarized as:

Internal hindering factors:

- ▶ Challenges with staff and partner gender capacity and access to timely gender expertise, is limiting the potential for integration of gender across programming. Evidence from the staff workshops and interviews revealed varying levels of gender capacity across the ECO, with some sections having less experience and training. Most participants at the staff workshops shared that they would benefit from more contextually relevant training. Others highlighted that the GFP is very busy with the implementation of flagship proposals and is not always able to provide ad-hoc support to proposals or programmes to integrate gender.
- ▶ Some partners expressed a desire for more training on gender equality from UNICEF: “UNICEF didn’t provide much on technical capacity building related to gender for our organization. We received more training from other agencies.” (CSO partner)
- ▶ Some colleagues flagged that the guidance and the gender continuum are too theoretical and are not useful when they are posed with the challenge of integrating gender across programme areas such as alternative care or emergency response. There were specific requests for practical/operational tools that are contextualized (i.e. indicators, lessons learned from evidence-based interventions, etc.)
- ▶ Programme and global M&E frameworks are not consistently capturing and reporting gender equality results that are transformative, such as evidence relating to change in gender norms. Instead, there is an over-reliance on indicators relating to reach, making it more challenging to understand the transformative impact of ECO programming. There are some good practice examples of programmes that are designing M&E frameworks aimed at capturing a change in norms, such as the Positive Parenting programme which is attempting to embed a measure of attitudinal change within the M&E systems and UNICEF has also commissioned an evaluation of the Dawwie programme.
- ▶ Time pressure is a significant challenge for integrating gender, according to UNICEF staff and implementing partners. A UNICEF staff member shared, “We are under a lot of pressures, time pressure, a lot of KPIs under a lot of tasks and we have to run the programme.” A CSO partner

noted, “The main challenge we face is the long process with project documents as it takes a lot of time and effort to be reviewed.”

- ▶ Short-term programming is not long enough to achieve a transformational change in gender norms, as highlighted by UNICEF staff and CSO partners. “Two years is not enough to bring about social norms change. This is an appeal to headquarters: how do we push forward on something like this?” (CSO partner).

External hindering factors:

- ▶ Several ECO staff members highlighted that there is a lack of reliable national level data relating to gender that can be drawn on to inform programming. The SPCRM team have made concerted efforts to work with the government to strengthen the quality of data and evidence produced, as well as analyse secondary data to produce materials for colleagues.
- ▶ Funding poses a significant challenge. There is a perception that funding for gender equality is drying up, and the available funding is often inflexible and short-term. It is widely understood that gender norms change takes a long time, and in Egypt, programmes that are contributing to gender norms change are long-standing initiatives like Meshwary, which began implementation in 2007. Staff, partners and government generally agree that more flexible resources and longer-term grants are needed.



5 Conclusions and lessons learned

The overarching conclusions presented below are derived from the findings of this evaluation that were analysed based on the assumptions in the evaluation ToC.

Conclusion 1: The ECO is in the process of drafting a contextualized ECO GAP, that aligns to the transformative agenda of the global UNICEF GAP but currently does not cover all programmatic areas. The evaluation found that there is varied awareness and ownership of the gender equality agenda across the programmatic areas which influences implementation of commitments under the GAP and Gender Policy. There is an ambition for programming to be at least gender-responsive and whilst there are some programmes implemented across a sub-set of programmatic areas that are taking a transformative approach, in several cases programming adopts a more gender sensitive approach falling short of the ambition.

Conclusion 2: The GFP role is seen as an asset across the programmatic staff at the ECO, providing contextually relevant and practical guidance on gender equality and furthering the agenda. However,

- ▶ The level of effort assigned to the role (50 per cent full time) does not meet the current needs of the ECO, especially in a context where ambition on gender equality is growing, as noted through greater inclusion in the most recent CPD. To maintain and build on existing progress and results

on gender equality it is essential to increase the resource, expertise and capacity available to support gender equality.

- ▶ The GFP is supervised by a chief of section and can access senior leadership directly on gender issues. Yet there is consensus that this role needs more power to influence decision-making, and increased gender expertise across senior roles level would facilitate gender-related strategies and resource allocation across all sections.

Conclusion 3: Gender capacity remains a barrier to realizing the ECO's full potential to contribute to gender equality. On those programmes that are gender focused (e.g. UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM) or adolescent girl focused (e.g. Dawwie), gender capacity is strong however, this is not the case across all programming. Staff expressed a need and a desire to increase their own gender capacity, have access to gender expertise and practical tools to inform gender-responsive programming or identify opportunities to take a transformative approach within their programmatic areas to amplify results.

Conclusion 4: There are efforts to contribute to and use gender data and evidence to inform programmatic interventions, however this is not done consistently across programmatic areas. There is evidence within SBC, education, SPCRM, child protection and ADAP that gendered data is being used to inform

programming. However, there is limited use of gender analysis during programme design or implementation. A challenge commonly noted by programmatic areas was gaps in some of the national level data available in Egypt, and there is evidence that the SPCRM section is supporting the government to produce more evidence and data that is relevant for gender which could go some way to addressing challenges that prevent programmes from using gendered data.

Conclusion 5: There have been efforts to address inclusion within the ECO and culture, through mechanisms such as the ITF and implementation of policies such as the parental leave and flexible working. However, there remain some challenges with the existing policies (e.g. parental leave, gender parity quota and flexible working) that contribute to inclusion and discrepancy in how they are implemented at an individual level that is generating some perceived inequalities. In addition, there are some identified gaps in policies that support women, including topics such as breastfeeding, menstruation and menopause.

Conclusion 6: The ECO has invested in its relationship with the government as a key partner and has leveraged this to influence policy and structures relating to gender equality. The government has been a key partner across the ECO's work, UNICEF's influence has contributed to changes in mandate, structures, national curriculums and laws that address gender inequality and harmful practices. However, the ECO has held fewer partnerships with WROs or girls' networks, where CSO partners have gender expertise the gender equality results have more potential to be transformative.

Conclusion 7: Institutional and country office tools tracking the contribution and investment of the ECO to gender equality work do not do justice to the work of the ECO on gender, as the extent of achievements is not being properly documented and built into reporting. There is scope to enhance the focus on gender equality results and measuring norms change when monitoring gender equality in programme interventions, beyond merely reporting the numbers of boys and girls benefitting from the programmes. In addition, the evaluation found that the data available on investment does not correlate with the results – whereby level of investment is high in some programmatic areas without yielding strong results, whilst others have lower levels of investment but are reporting transformative results. Reviewing monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms to better

capture this contribution could help UNICEF better understand what is working and refine approaches to achieve even greater gender equality outcomes.

Conclusion 8: The use of SEM and participatory methods in programme design and implementation has led to coordinated efforts that result in change that is transformative. There are good practice examples of this in adolescent girl programmes, e.g. Dawwie and Meshwary. SEM is also used in the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM, which has generated gender equality results that are transformative. Within the education section, programming that works at individual, school and national level take a gender-transformative approach. Where this model and approach is used at section or programme level there appears to be greater coordination across programmes and correlation with transformative change.

Lessons learned for broader application in programme design and implementation

The work of the ECO on gender equality has generated important learning that could inform other country programmes. The following is a summary of lessons drawn from the report.

The ECO has successfully implemented programmes whose design have been based on SEM. Even in an adverse socio-cultural context and with girls from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds, gender and adolescent girl-focused programmes have generated gender equality results that are potentially transformative.

Realizing transformative changes at scale requires a long-term contextualized strategy for gender equality and adolescent girls' empowerment that covers and coordinates efforts across all programmatic areas. The most notable gender equality results come from themes or areas that are coordinating their efforts on gender equality at system, community, family and individual level. For example, the work on FGM, with the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM achieving national level change and Dawwie contributing to norms change at individual, family and community level.

It is also important to ensure that M&E framework and systems are set up to capture change of this nature.

UNICEF is well positioned to influence the government and can leverage its position as an influential child rights organization alongside other UN agencies and development partners to advance key rights issues on child marriage, abortion and gender diversity as part of the child rights agenda. This allows working with sections of the political spectrum and society that may be reticent to discuss gender equality as the primary topic.

Beyond the programmatic areas of learning identified above, overall lessons learned from this country case study include:

- ▶ Having a dedicated GFP with a clear mandate and direct line of communication to leadership, supports UNICEF to fulfil its niche role on girl leadership and empowerment. Just 50 per cent of time available to this role is however insufficient to ensure adequate support and integration of a gender transformative approach across all programmatic work. This requires availing stronger staff capacity and accountability to the function.
- ▶ UNICEF's positioning on gender equality from a child rights perspective, together with the influence and convening power of the organization with the government constitute a unique added value of the organization. UNICEF can further its goals in this area through fully employing these levers in joint advocacy initiatives with UN and other like-minded organizations.
- ▶ Parity conceived as a numerical issue, does impact organizational culture and perception of career progression. The use of parity measures and KPIs needs to be carefully considered, and the motivation clearly articulated to avoid negative implications.



6

Recommendations

These recommendations are presented in order of priority and were derived from the evaluation’s findings and conclusions. They were validated with the ECO during a workshop in October 2024.

For ECO

Recommendation 1 (linked to conclusion 1, 2 and 3) – Explore options for increasing gender capacity and access to gender expertise in the office to strengthen gender integration across programmatic areas. Possible options to explore include:

Increasing gender capacity of staff:

- ▶ Further reflection on the uptake of existing gender training and gathering in-depth feedback on the training needs and preferences across the staff. Design and provision of training and coaching opportunities to current staff to strengthen their capacity and enhance gender mainstreaming efforts driven by the ITF and GFP.¹⁰³
- ▶ Create space in capacity building training for critical reflections on staff’s personal gender norms, with a view to tackle negative norms that are against UNICEF agenda could create transformative change.

- ▶ Invest in the development of practical tools and guidance on integrating gender into programming across all areas.


Increasing access to gender expertise:

- ▶ Increase the gender experts available across Goal Areas through the creation of gender champion roles across Goal Areas/teams who hold responsibility for implementing the ECO GAP and report to the GFP.
- ▶ Review and refresh the role of the ITF to explore whether this could be a possible option for a network of gender champions.
- ▶ Review upcoming recruitment for the programmes team and include gender expertise in the skills.

Priority: Very high
Timeframe: Within the next year
Responsible units: ECO management, GFP, human resources, chiefs of section
Cost implications: Staff fulfilling champion roles, cost of training, investment to increase level of effort of GFP position

Recommendation 2 (linked to conclusion 2 and 8) – Maintain gender focused and adolescent girls’ programmes to drive flagship contributions of the ECO to gender equality but increase focus on coordinated and holistic efforts across programming areas to contribute to the enabling environment for girls at scale to amplify gender equality results. This should be done through:

- ▶ Finalizing the ECO GAP to cover all programmatic areas, for accountability and coordination purposes. This should be a key document to guide investment, programme design and implementation which is complementary and leads to more sustainable and transformative change. This should be a facilitated and participatory process that brings together sections to identify the root causes of gender inequality and barrier faced by girls, map their existing programmes and identify the key outcome they want to achieve on gender equality under each section, with support from the GFP, and use SEM to identify how their programming might contribute to this outcome at the different levels to achieve transformative change, lessons can be drawn from the FGM and education programming in the ECO.
- ▶ Increased use of SEM and participatory methods in programme design and section level to coordinate actions across programmes being implemented at different levels (individual, family, community or national).

 **Priority:** Very high

 **Timeframe:** Within the next year


 **Responsible units:** ECO management, GFP, chiefs of section


 **Cost implications:** GFP and chiefs of section time


Recommendation 3 (linked to conclusion 4 and 7) – Strengthen M&E frameworks that capture achievement of gender equality results across the gender continuum and review the accuracy of reporting against institutional tools. Strengthen the quantity, quality, relevance and use of relevant data and evidence relevant to gender equality, including:

- ▶ Conduct more regular gender analyses of both the country context and ECO programming to provide gender data for use to inform and enhance gender integration across all programming responses, including tracking progress along the gender integration continuum. Undertaking a GPR could also inform future CPDs and strengthen gender programming.
- ▶ Review M&E frameworks at all levels to ensure they adequately capture sex-disaggregated data and results of transformative change. It is recommended to i) at a minimum, ensure all data is disaggregated by sex and age, ii) integrate one indicator under each programmatic area in the ECO GAP that measures the key gender transformative results the area aims to contribute to and iii) strengthen the capacity around gender responsive M&E to ensure learning from programmes such as Positive Parenting.
- ▶ Continue and increase investment in efforts to support government’s collection and use of reliable gendered data and evidence (examples seen in the education and SPCRM sections).

 **Priority:** High

 **Timeframe:** Over the next two years

 **Responsible units:** ECO management, GFP, monitoring, evaluation and learning team, chiefs of section

 **Cost implications:** Training, and investment in work to support national data sources

Recommendation 4 (linked to conclusion 6) – Review and strengthen partnerships for gender equality, including:

- ▶ Continue efforts to integrate gender into partnerships and engage in bilateral capacity building of stakeholders. This includes learning from stakeholders that have pre-existing strong skills on gender mainstreaming to ensure transformative efforts are collaborative. Capturing insights from stakeholders who act as current programme facilitators (i.e. for Dawwie, Meshwary, Positive Parenting) can inform this process.
- ▶ Continue to build on the strong relationship between the ECO and the government as a trusted partner. UNICEF is well positioned to advocate for change and influence the agenda on gender equality. To strengthen these efforts, the ECO might consider strengthening relationships with other UN agencies and women-led or youth-led organizations, joining together in their influencing and advocacy work. Where the ECO has partnered with UNFPA in this way, it has resulted in significant shifts in policy, structures and systems to address harmful norms.
- ▶ Increase partnerships with other UN agencies on gender equality programming to maximize impact, using UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme for the Elimination of FGM as an example. Consider a reflection session to understand the quality of these partnerships and identify ways to continue to strengthen partnership principles.
- ▶ Explore options for partnering with WROs, girls' networks and/or CSOs with expertise in gender equality, for example through the national investment framework. To begin, a participatory stakeholder mapping may be helpful.

Priority: High
Timeframe: Over the next two years
Responsible units: Chiefs of section, programme implementation teams
Cost implications: Neutral (requires a shift in way of working and targeting funding)

Recommendation 5 (linked to conclusion 5) – ECO management should provide support to the ITF and HR to review the findings from the staff workshop as presented in this evaluation and address the gender and inclusion concerns of the staff.

Priority: High
Timeframe: Over the next two years
Responsible units: Human resources, ITF, ECO management, staff association
Cost implications: Neutral

For HQ

In addition to specific recommendations for ECO, there are broader recommendations that are particularly relevant to this country case study but require attention at the HQ level. These relate to elements that are part of the recommendations set out in the main evaluation report (at global level) and will be addressed in the corresponding management response.

Recommendation 6 (linked to conclusion 5) – Global gender team should provide clearer guidance on how to implement gender parity in offices where the proportion of women in staffing surpasses 60 per cent, to consider, the broader context of women’s voices and leadership alongside the numerical aspect of parity.

Recommendation 7 (linked to conclusion 7) – Current gender CSIs across Goal Areas could be strengthened to better capture the work of the country offices and their achievements across Goal Areas. Some points for consideration include:

- ▶ Across Goal Areas, the indicators demonstrate very different levels of ambition on gender equality and understanding of what an outcome is. It is recommended that these are reviewed to ensure that they present similar levels of ambition and understanding of outcome level change.

- ▶ The current indicators do not portray an accurate picture of the gender equality results achieved at the CO level. It might be worth considering alternative options for aggregating impact of UNICEF on gender equality e.g. introducing sub-themes under the Goal Areas with pick lists of indicators that measure outcome level change across different levels of SEM.
- ▶ For some indicators, the current wording makes it difficult to capture change and contribution of UNICEF. For example, indicator '2.1.1. Percentage of countries with inclusive and gender-equitable system for access to learning opportunities' is a binary indicator asking about the current state of the education system rather than measuring incremental change towards this. As a result, Egypt was unable to report against this despite their contributions to transformative change in the education sector at a national level. There might be benefit in considering the use of progress markers or shifting toward indicators that aim to capture contributions towards system change.



List of annexes

The annexes below are included in a separate document.

- ▶ **Annex 1:** Evaluation Terms of Reference
- ▶ **Annex 2:** Case study Terms of Reference
- ▶ **Annex 3:** List of persons interviewed, and sites visited
- ▶ **Annex 4:** List of documents reviewed for case study
- ▶ **Annex 5:** Methodology: Application of criteria to the evaluation design
- ▶ **Annex 6:** Methodology: Interviews and focus group discussion tools
- ▶ **Annex 7:** Evaluation team and biography
- ▶ **Annex 8:** Evaluation matrix
- ▶ **Annex 9:** Evaluation Theory of Change

Endnotes

- 1 Marcus, R., Samuels, F., Jalal, S., & Belachew, H., *Gender Transformative Programming in Background Paper Series UNICEF Gender Policy and Action Plan 2022-2025*, 2021.
- 2 This data is taken from the sample of descriptive data forms collected.
- 3 More details on the methodology to select case study countries can be found in the Inception Report here: <https://evaluation-reports.unicef.org/GetDocument?documentID=19821&fileID=52474>
- 4 World Bank Group Data, *Population, total – Egypt, Arab Rep.*, 2023.
- 5 UN Habitat, *Egypt*, 2024.
- 6 World Bank Group Data, *GDP (Current US\$) – Egypt, Arab Rep.*, 2023.
- 7 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2023*. 2023.
- 8 UNHCR, *Fact Sheet – Egypt*. 2024.
- 9 UNICEF, *The Situation of Children Report 2022*, 2022.
- 10 Ministry of Education, Egypt, *Statistical Yearbook 2022*. 2023.
- 11 Egypt's HDI value for 2022 is 0.728, putting the country in the high human development category. In terms of global ranking, Egypt climbed from 116th out of 189 countries in 109 to 105th out of 193 countries and territories in the 2022/2023 Human Development Index. This advancement illustrates Egypt's efforts to narrow the development gap. For more, see UNDP, *Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarized World*, Human Development Report 2023/2024, 2024.
- 12 World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Index Report 2023*, 2023. 'The Global Gender Gap Index annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment)'
- 13 UNICEF, *The Situation of Children Report 2022*, 2022.
- 14 UNICEF ECO, *Gender Situation Analysis*, 2021.
- 15 Ministry of Health and Population and ICF International, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014, 2015*.
- 16 UNICEF ECO, *Gender Situation Analysis*, 2021.
- 17 UNICEF ECO, *Situation Analysis of Children (SitAn) in Egypt 2021: Key Highlights*. 2021.
- 18 UNICEF ECO, *Child marriage policy brief*, 2017.
- 19 UNICEF ECO, *Gender Situation Analysis*, 2021
- 20 NCW, *National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian women 2030*, 2017.
- 21 UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022.
- 22 Caritas, Terre des Hommes, American University in Cairo, Pathfinder, Egyptian Red Crescent, Catholic Relief Services, Egyptian Association for Societal Consolidation, National Foundation for Family and Community Development, Egyptian Foundation for Advancement of the Childhood Conditions, Cairo Foundation for Development and Law, Rakhawy Institute and Assiut Childhood and Development Association.
- 23 UNICEF ECO, *End of Year Results Summary Narrative 2023*, 2023.
- 24 Based on the triangulation of several sources of data, including this Case Study (as well as 4 other case studies, quantitative and qualitative data, a comparative study)
- 25 See the full Strategic Plan at UNICEF, *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025*, 2022.
- 26 The "positive and negative, direct or indirect, primary and secondary, short, medium or long-term change in the lives of children and families produced by an intervention". UNICEF, [UNICEF Evaluation of Impact Strategy and Action Framework 2022-2025](#), 2023.
- 27 The gender of the participants was gathered using a voluntary descriptive data form, the gender information presented here is taken from these forms. Where the number does not add up to the overall figure this is because the individual/s did not want to complete the form.
- 28 Thematic analysis involves identifying and analysing patterns or themes within qualitative data. It is a flexible and adaptable approach that can be used to analyse data from various sources, such as interviews, focus groups, and open-ended survey responses.
- 29 See UNEG, *Code of Conduct for UN Evaluation*, 2008.; WHO, *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Intervention Research on Violence Against Women*, 2016.; and UN, *United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners*, 21 March 2018.
- 30 The national consultant involved in data collection activities attended an online workshop which covered all ethical principles and procedures in the evaluation. The training included SDDirect's safeguarding policies and code of conduct, including how to report suspected safeguarding concerns and how to act if a participant discloses situations of violence and/or abuse.
- 31 An autonomous committee authorized by the United States Department of Health and Human Services
- 32 See UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force (ITF) Terms of Reference*, 2022.; UNICEF ECO, *Terms of Reference - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (PSEA/PSHAA) Focal Points*, 2021.
- 33 See UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2017.; UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022.
- 34 UNICEF ECO, *Draft ECO Gender Action Plan 2023-2027*, 2023.
- 35 Strigelli, Gaia Chiti, *Egypt Situational Analysis Gender*, 2021. Note prepared based on the Regional Situational Analysis for Women and Girls in MENA. For internal use only.
- 36 CO are attributed a 1 or a 0 for most indicators within each criterion depending on whether they meet the indicator or not – few indicators can take any number between 0 and 1. A criteria average is then calculated for each of the 9 criteria. The final score is an average of the 9 criteria averages. For more information, visit [GAP Standards \(sharepoint.com\)](#).
- 37 The ITF ToR stipulates key priorities for each of these themes, identifying five key actions for strengthening gender equality in UNICEF programmes and office culture, including supporting gender analyses to better understand barriers and progress towards gender equality; promoting gender equality and empowerment in programming, advocacy and awareness raising; and capacity building of UNICEF staff members, implementing partners and government counterparts. See UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force (ITF) Terms of Reference*, 2022.

- 38 The full objective on gender equality is as follows: "In support of the ECO focal points, per the UNICEF guidance and in alignment with the UNPDF/UNSDCF, monitor the adoption of the following principle to promote gender equality: a) recognising that gender equality is key to realising children's rights; b) applying a dual approach which requires gender integration across sector strategies alongside a few targeted priorities; c) advancing intersectional programming as gender is a complex, multi-dimensional equity issue; d) moving towards transformative programming to both tackle root causes of gender inequality and redress power dynamics and structures; e) using a multi-sectoral approach to address the interconnectedness of inequality; f) institutional transformation within ECO for greater gender equity through an inclusive, diverse and gender equitable work environment with greater gender equity at all levels" UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force (ITF) Terms of Reference*, 2022.
- 39 UNICEF ECO, *MoM – Inclusion Task Force 03 of 03 – Sunday, 27th November 2022*, 2022.
- 40 See UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force (ITF) Terms of Reference*, 2022.; UNICEF ECO, *MoM – Inclusion Task Force September 2022*, 2022.; UNICEF ECO, *MoM – Inclusion Task Force 03 of 03 – Sunday, 27th November 2022*, 2022.; UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force Meeting Minutes 8 November 2023*, 2023.
- 41 UNICEF ECO, *MoM – Inclusion Task Force September 2022*, 2022.
- 42 Although the Evaluation team does not have details on capacity building sessions on gender held in the last for years or number of staff trained on Agora
- 43 UNFPA & UNICEF, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme for FGM Elimination Phase IV 'Delivering the Global Promise' – FGM Context Analysis in Egypt*, No Date.
- 44 UNICEF ECO & MoSS, *Analysis of MoSS 2022 Data*, 2022.
- 45 UNICEF ECO, *2022 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2023.
- 46 UNICEF ECO, *2022 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2023.
- 47 UNICEF ECO, *2022 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2023.
- 48 Strigelli, Gaia Chiti, *Egypt Situational Analysis Gender*, 2021. Note prepared based on the Regional Situational Analysis for Women and Girls in MENA. For internal use only.
- 49 UNICEF ECO, *Draft ECO Gender Action Plan 2023-2027*, 2023. See also reference to this recommendation in UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force Meeting Minutes 8 November 2023*, 2023.
- 50 The Haya Karima (Decent Life Initiative) targets 58 million low-income most underprivileged citizens with multi-faceted development assistance and enhance livelihoods opportunities according to the UNICEF ECO, *Country Office Annual Report 2023*, 2023.
- 51 UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022.
- 52 This is calculated considering all the activities tagged as gender activities at reporting phase under outputs tagged with Gender Marker 3 (gender as principal objective) at planning stage.
- 53 UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022.
- 54 See Table 6: GAP Standard Index analysis for UNICEF Egypt Country Office.
- 55 Noura is a government-owned programme led by NCW with the technical support of UNFPA.
- 56 Dawwie, *The National Girls' Empowerment Initiative – Dawwie Brief*, 2023.
- 57 Dawwie, *The National Girls' Empowerment Initiative – Dawwie Brief*, 2023.
- 58 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2023*, 2023.
- 59 UNICEF ECO, *Results Assessment Module 3 - Country Programme Full Approved Report*, 2023.
- 60 UNICEF ECO, *Integrated Adolescent Girls Programming Country Proposal Template*, 2022.
- 61 UNICEF ECO, *Integrated Adolescent Girls Programming Country Proposal Template*, 2022.
- 62 UNICEF ECO, *2023 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2024. Note: the term gender programming is drawn from this source, the evaluation team acknowledges it is a general term but no more specifics are provided from the document review.
- 63 UNICEF ECO, *Ripple the Change Global Learning Series - Girls' Empowerment*, No Date.
- 64 UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022.
- 65 UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022.
- 66 UNFPA & UNICEF, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme For FGM Elimination Phase IV 'Delivering the Global Promise' – FGM Context Analysis in Egypt*, No Date.
- 67 UNICEF ECO, *2019 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2020.
- 68 UNICEF ECO, *2023 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2024.
- 69 UNICEF ECO, *2020 End of Year Results Summary Narrative*, 2020.
- 70 UNICEF ECO, *2022 End of Year Summary Narrative*, 2022.
- 71 UNICEF ECO, *Results Assessment Module 3 - Country Programme Full Approved Report*, 2023.
- 72 UNICEF, *UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2022-2025 Indicator Matrix*, 2021.
- 73 UNICEF, *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025*, 2022.
- 74 See for example, UNICEF ECO, *Country Office MENARO Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4*, 2022. and UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Humanitarian Annual Situation Report – Syrian Response No. 4*, 2022. shared with the evaluation team.
- 75 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Humanitarian Situation Report – Sudan Response No. 7*, 2023.
- 76 See template and instructions shared with the evaluation team: UNICEF, *MENARO HAC SitRep – 2021*, no date,
- 77 UNICEF ECO, *End of Year Results Summary Narrative 2023*, 2023. And UNICEF ECO, *End of Year Results Summary Narrative 2022*, 2023.
- 78 UNICEF ECO, *Inclusion Task Force (ITF) Terms of Reference*, 2022.
- 79 UNICEF ECO, *Key Performance Indicators Dashboard*, 2023.
- 80 According to the GAP Standard, the ECO has successfully fulfilled each criteria: ECO has a Gender Action Plan; ECO has the leadership, oversight and accountability at an appropriate management level (deputy representative); ECO Programme Management Plan defines accountabilities to achieve gender results across sectors; ECO organizes regular meetings on the implementation of the gender priorities.
- 81 UNICEF, *UNICEF Procedure on Family and Parental Leave*, February 2023.

- 82 UNICEF, *UNICEF Procedure on Flexible Working Arrangements*, July 2022.
- 83 UNICEF, *UNICEF's Strategy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment Summary*, 2019.
- 84 Roles included for the CO representative, deputy representative programmes, deputy representative operations/ chief of operations, PME chiefs or specialists, programme managers, programme officers, office PSEA focal points, and harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT)/ partnerships focal point or PRC secretary. Specific responsibilities for the focal points including SEA reporting (i.e. receive complaints and reports of alleged SEA from staff, partners, community members; support all sections (programme & operations) to ensure complaint mechanisms are in place; and ensure complaints are reviewed in a timely manner), SEA response and monitoring response (i.e. refer SEA survivors to appropriate service providers; provide updated data on reported allegations of SEA falling under UNICEF remit), and SEA prevention (i.e. participate in specific training for PSEA focal points on their role and responsibilities; provide refresher/training sessions on PSEA, for UNICEF staff in their respective office, twice a year; and coordinate with the PSEA Network and with local partners to have in place an appropriate community-based complaint mechanism on PSEA). See UNICEF ECO, *Terms of Reference - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (PSEA/PSHAA) Focal Points*, 2021.
- 85 UNICEF ECO, *Reporting and Resolving Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority – PSEA Guideline Poster*. No date.
- 86 Agenda Consulting, *UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2022- Individual Demographic Report for Egypt*, 2022, UNICEF.
- 87 Agenda Consulting, *UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2022- Individual Demographic Report for Egypt*, 2022, UNICEF.
- 88 UNICEF, *UNICEF Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment*, 2019.
- 89 UNICEF ECO, *Annual Management Plan 2023 Progress tracking excel*, 2023.
- 90 UNICEF ECO, *Results Assessment Module 3 - Country Programme Full Approved Report*, 2023.
- 91 UNICEF ECO, *Results Assessment Module 3 - Country Programme Full Approved Report*, 2023.
- 92 Agenda Consulting, *UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2022- Individual Demographic Report for Egypt*, 2022.
- 93 Agenda Consulting, *UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2022- Individual Demographic Report for Egypt*, 2022.
- 94 UNICEF ECO, *Country Programme Document – Egypt*, 2022. And UNICEF ECO, *Draft ECO Gender Action Plan 2023-2027*, 2023.
- 95 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2023*, 2023.
- 96 UNICEF ECO, *Results Assessment Module 3 - Country Programme Full Approved Report*, 2023.
- 97 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2022*, 2022.
- 98 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2020*, 2020.
- 99 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2023*, 2023.
- 100 The number of child survivors of violence reached by UNICEF has fluctuated over the period with an upper limit of 28,731 in 2019 and declining to 14,754 in 2023 (no data reported in 2021). There has been a decline in the number of women, girls and boys reached with risk mitigation, prevention and response interventions to address gender-based violence in the period from 21,729 in 2019 to 3,121 in 2023.
- 101 UNICEF ECO, *Draft ECO Gender Action Plan 2023-2027*, 2023.
- 102 UNICEF ECO, *Egypt Country Office Annual Report 2022*, 2022.
- 103 This could include specifically blended learning principles, drawing on methods that lend themselves well to practical learning such as role-play and scenario-based learning, shadowing and should be a participatory training developed for the Egypt context.



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