



Evaluation of UNICEF's work in contributing to child poverty reduction, including in humanitarian and fragile settings

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Preface

Child poverty remains one of the most pressing global challenges today, affecting millions of children and their families. As of 2022, an estimated 829 million children lived in monetarily poor households, and 333 million children lived in households struggling to survive on less than PPP USD 2.15 per person per day while roughly 1 billion children experienced multidimensional poverty. These numbers are exacerbated by economic instability, conflict, and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic further deepened poverty, reversing progress in child welfare and disrupting efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1, which seeks to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030.

Despite these challenges, UNICEF remains at the forefront of global efforts to reduce child poverty, leveraging strategic partnerships, policy advocacy, and direct support to national governments. In its 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, UNICEF has reinforced its commitment to ensuring that every child, including every adolescent, has access to inclusive social protection and can live free from poverty.

This evaluation, covering the period from 2018 to 2023, provides a critical assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of UNICEF's efforts to help reduce child poverty, with a particular focus on humanitarian and fragile contexts. The findings highlight significant progress in social protection systems, poverty measurement, and policy advocacy while identifying key areas for enhancing impact. Challenges such as limited government ownership of poverty measurement, political sensitivities, and gaps in UNICEF's internal processes emphasize the necessity for ongoing adaptation and strategic guidance.

The evaluation also identifies opportunities to enhance UNICEF's role in child poverty reduction, namely by strengthening policy engagement, expanding resource mobilization, and ensuring that poverty measurement is effectively used to inform programming and national policy decisions. It additionally underscores the need for more integrated strategies to address child poverty in complex humanitarian environments.

This work would not have been possible without the dedicated contributions of UNICEF staff, government partners, and key stakeholders. Special thanks are owed to UNICEF country offices in Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, for their in-depth insights, as well as the country offices in Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malaysia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Peru, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Yemen through remote engagements. We also extend our appreciation to the reference group members—Jennifer Yablonski, Sólrún Engilbertsdóttir, Enrique Delamónica, Jessica Owens, Jean Dupraz, Paul Quarles Van Ufford, Monica Rubio, David Gordon, and Gustavo Angeles Tagliaferro—whose rigorous feedback enriched the evaluation process and findings.

The evaluation was conducted by the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), led by Dr. Michael Samson, with support from Ana Muñoz, Annu Itty, and Armita Behboodi, alongside contributions from Dr. Alberto Minujin and Mariela Giacomponello from the Equity for Children Center, The New School. The study was led and supervised by Denis Jobin, Senior Evaluation Specialist, with support from Adrian Shikwe, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Evaluation Office.

We are grateful for the collaborative spirit and insights shared throughout this process, all of which will help shape stronger, evidence-based strategies to reduce child poverty and create a more equitable future for all children.

Robert McCouch
Director of Evaluation, UNICEF

Contents

Preface	3
Abbreviations and Acronyms	7
Executive Summary	9
Evaluation conclusions	10
Key recommendations.....	12
Introduction	13
Evaluation background.....	14
Evaluation purpose and objective	17
Subject.....	17
Scope	17
Ex-post evaluation theory of change	18
Evaluation questions	21
Evaluation Approaches and Methodology	23
Evaluation approach	24
Secondary data-collection methods	24
Primary data-collection methods	25
Methodological limitations	25
Ethical considerations.....	25
Evaluation findings	26
Key Evaluation Question 1	26
Key Evaluation Question 2	45
Key Evaluation Question 3	62
Key Evaluation Question 4	67
Recommendations	72
Annexes	78

List of tables

Table 1. Evaluation questions and subquestions	21
Table 2. Evaluation country sample.....	24
Table 3. UNICEF's relevant approaches towards the five milestones in Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.....	51
Table 4. Adaptation of UNICEF's work in Milestone 4 in humanitarian and fragile settings	60
Table 5. Countries where UNICEF undertook direct programme implementation as a crisis response	61
Table 6. Effectiveness of UNICEF country office capacity-building activities in in-depth case study countries.....	65
Table 7. Evaluation Matrix	93
Table 8. Country sample and criteria for selection.....	110
Table 9. Comparison of recommended countries for qualitative analysis sample.....	111
Table 10. Basis for selection of countries for in-depth analysis.....	112
Table 11. Number of conducted KIIs across stakeholder groups and levels.....	115
Table 12. Milestone 2 (child poverty measurement) necessity and sufficiency table.....	119
Table 13. Milestone 4 (child poverty reduction policy and programme change) necessity and sufficiency table	119
Table 14. Milestone 2 truth table	120
Table 15. Milestone 4 truth table	121
Table 16. Synthesis of UNICEF's contributions to child poverty measurement	121
Table 17. Synthesis of the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy efforts.....	122
Table 18. Synthesis of UNICEF's support for social protection policy and programme change.....	123
Table 19. Synthesis of UNICEF's effectiveness in supporting national commitments to end child poverty	124
Table 20. UNICEF's relevant approaches towards the five milestones in Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka (Extended)	125
Table 21. Proposed evaluation questions.....	148

Table 22. Country selection for case studies approach.....	154
Table 23. Proposed Timeline.....	160
Table 24. Schedule of payments	161

List of figures

Figure 1. Ex-post theory of change	20
Figure 2. An increasing number of country offices are measuring both monetary and multidimensional poverty.....	29
Figure 3. The process of multidimensional child poverty measurement.....	30
Figure 4. Despite progress in child poverty measurement, the uses of measurement remain limited.....	34
Figure 5. Increase in coverage of UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes.....	37
Figure 6. Percentage of country offices supporting family-friendly policies.....	39
Figure 7. Degree of country offices' use of child poverty analysis in social protection work.....	40
Figure 8. Level of UNICEF country offices' support for social sector budgets.....	44
Figure 9. Analysis of expenditure by goal area and within Goal Area 5 (2018-2022).....	47
Figure 10. UNICEF's support for the integration of gender into social protection programmes.....	56
Figure 11. Level of disability-inclusiveness of national social protection programmes supported by UNICEF	57
Figure 12. Capacity-building for child poverty reduction assessment framework.....	64
Figure 13. Programming domains affected by political sensitivity	71
Figure 14. Analytical approaches by evaluation question	114
Figure 15. Theory of Change implied in milestone's framework	153

List of boxes

Box 1. Key Concepts.....	15
Box 2. 5 Milestones and indicators	16
Box 3. Analysis tools to understand child poverty and its drivers.....	40



Abbreviations and Acronyms

C-MPI	Child Multidimensional Poverty Index	GHC	Ghanaian cedi
CO	Country office (UNICEF)	GIZ	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
COARs	Country office annual reports	HQ	Headquarters (UNICEF)
CLADHO	Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda	ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute of Family Welfare)
CPD	Country programme document	ILO	International Labour Organization
CSIs	Core Standard Indicators	KIIs	Key informant interviews
CSOs	Civil society organizations	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund	LODA	Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (Rwanda)
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (National Administrative Department of Statistics, Colombia)	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
DCS	Department of Census and Statistics (Sri Lanka)	MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance (Cambodia)
DNP	Departamento Nacional de Planeación (National Planning Department, Colombia)	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
DPS	Departamento de Prosperidad Social (Department of Social Prosperity, Colombia)	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific	MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government (Rwanda)
ECA	Europe and Central Asia	MIS	Management Information System
ECD	Early childhood development	MODA	Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis
EO	UNICEF Evaluation Office	MoI	Ministry of Interior (Cambodia)
EPRI	Economic Policy Research Institute	MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (Cambodia)
ERD	External Resources Department (Sri Lanka)	MoWCASE	Ministry of Women, Child Affairs, and Social Empowerment (Sri Lanka)
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa	MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
EU	European Union	NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	NISR	National Institute of Statistics (Rwanda)
GAS	Goal Area 5 (of UNICEF Strategic Plan)	NPD	National Planning Department (Sri Lanka)
GAP	Global Advocacy Priorities		

NSPC	National Social Protection Council (Cambodia)
NSPPF	National Social Protection Policy Framework
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Funds
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PF4C	Public Finance for Children
PPP	ide
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
RAM	Results Assessment Modules
RO	Regional Office (UNICEF)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SMQ	Strategic monitoring questions
ToC	Theory of change
UCBs	Universal child benefits
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (Rwanda)
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WCA	West and Central Africa



Executive Summary

In 2022, an estimated 829 million children were living in monetarily poor households (PPP \$3.65), and 333 million children lived in households struggling to survive on less than PPP \$2.15¹ per person per day.² Further, around one billion children live in multidimensional poverty, with 45 per cent of children in developing countries suffering at least one deprivation.³ Aligned with efforts to achieve SDG 1, Goal Area 5 in UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 emphasizes the commitment that: “Every child, including adolescents, has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty”.⁴ In light of this commitment, in 2023 the UNICEF Evaluation Office commissioned the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), a global organization based in South Africa, to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of UNICEF's approaches and programming aimed at reducing child poverty by assessing the following milestones of UNICEF's work in contributing to child poverty reduction and elimination in the period from 2018 to 2023:

1. Building partnerships and a national pathway to end child poverty
2. Measuring child poverty
3. Putting child poverty on the map through child poverty advocacy

4. Supporting policy and programme change
5. Supporting strategic commitments to ending extreme poverty and halving it by national definitions.

The evaluation was guided by the following objectives: i) Assess the achievements of results in child poverty reduction under Goal Area 5 and its linkages to social protection and identify the specific interventions that led to the results; ii) gauge the role, prioritization and relevance of UNICEF child poverty reduction work among all UNICEF levels and external stakeholders; iii) assess UNICEF's capacities to achieve child poverty objectives by building national government systems in a sustainable manner and to assess the status of UNICEF's resources to deliver on its child poverty agenda; and iv) identify lessons learned and good practices from UNICEF child poverty reduction work and pathways on incorporating them to ensure that future decisions and programming have maximum impact. The primary users of the evaluation are the UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group staff members at Headquarters (HQ), Regional Offices (ROs) and Country Offices (COs), the UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring section staff members, and UNICEF's Executive Board.

The evaluation methodology for assessing UNICEF's work in child poverty reduction took a mixed-methods approach, using qualitative and quantitative data-collection and analysis methods. It involved desk research, key informant interviews with UNICEF staff members, government stakeholders, and development partners, and a validation survey. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) was employed, among other techniques, to assess selected evaluation questions. The sample consisted of 20 countries, of which Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka were selected for in-depth analysis. The evaluation involved both remote and in-person data-collection activities, including field visits to the four countries selected for in-depth analysis.

Evaluation conclusions

This evaluation documents a complex and multidimensional landscape of UNICEF's work in contributing to child poverty reduction, marked by significant progress in supporting governments in measuring child poverty, strengthening social protection systems, advocating for policy changes, and establishing strategic partnerships.

Objective 1

Assess the achievements of results in child poverty reduction under Goal Area 5 and its linkages to social protection and identify the specific interventions that led to the results.

Conclusion 1

While UNICEF's initiatives in reducing child poverty have shown progress across the five milestones, some challenges remain. Through the establishment of global partnerships, advocacy for policy reforms, and the improvement of child poverty measurements, UNICEF COs have contributed to enhancing social protection systems and integrating child poverty reduction strategies into national development agendas. However, UNICEF faces challenges in raising awareness, providing advice on comprehensive policy packages to reduce child poverty, and maintaining its relevance in budgetary and planning processes.

- ▶ **Building partnerships and a national pathway to end child poverty (Milestone 1):** At the global level, UNICEF has successfully led development partner efforts within the Coalition to End Child Poverty and formed multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance social protection

systems and measure child poverty at the country level. However, at the country level, this evaluation documents a limited focus on identifying a national pathway to end child poverty across the sampled countries. This limited focus relates to the political sensitivity surrounding child poverty in certain contexts and the preference for collaborating on narrower policy domains aligned with partners' expertise and priorities.

- ▶ **Measuring child poverty (Milestone 2):** At the global and country levels, UNICEF has contributed to the measurement of child poverty through strategic partnerships, technical guidance, and the implementation of child-focused surveys, leading to an increased number of countries assessing multidimensional child poverty. Despite this progress, the limited clarity and understanding of the appropriate uses of child poverty measures across the organization restricts the effective use of child poverty rates and analyses for guiding and monitoring policies and programmes. This challenge has also hindered government ownership and routine measurement.
- ▶ **Putting child poverty on the map through child poverty advocacy (Milestone 3):** The efforts of UNICEF country offices to advocate for improvements to specific policies and initiatives on child poverty measurement, social protection coverage and public spending in child-focused sectors have been largely effective. However, the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy in raising general awareness about child poverty among key stakeholders and in the public agenda within the sampled countries is limited to a few cases. Challenges for putting child poverty on the map include the political sensitivity of child poverty and the prioritization of other work areas within Social Policy.
- ▶ **Supporting policy and programme change to reduce child poverty (Milestone 4):** While UNICEF COs have effectively improved and expanded social protection programmes and systems, COs have supported other relevant child poverty reduction policies, such as care and employment policies, in a limited manner. UNICEF has opportunities to use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice and technical assistance on child poverty reduction programmes and policies and to integrate child poverty into the monitoring of the social protection result area. The Social Policy Sections of UNICEF country offices have provided limited

advice and technical support on sectoral policies aimed at increasing access to services as part of the work in the child poverty result area. Responsibility for this programming lies primarily with other UNICEF sections. Furthermore, sector-specific deprivation indicators guide UNICEF's sectoral interventions, with monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates not proving relevant for guiding these interventions.

- ▶ **Supporting strategic commitments to ending extreme poverty and halving it by national definitions (Milestone 5):** UNICEF has supported the integration of child poverty reduction objectives within national plans and broader national poverty reduction priorities to a varied extent across the sample, while support for child poverty reduction strategies remains limited. UNICEF's effectiveness in incorporating child poverty into SDG monitoring and national policy evaluation has been mixed. While there has been limited support for integrating child poverty into Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), significant progress has been made in a few cases. Further, while COs support budget allocations for child-focused sectors and policies through PF4C initiatives, the clear consideration of child poverty for informing and advocating budgetary decisions is limited.

Objective 2

Gauge the role, prioritization and relevance of UNICEF child poverty reduction work among all UNICEF levels and external stakeholders.

Conclusion 2

Although UNICEF has prioritized child poverty reduction at a strategic level within HQ, ROs and most COs, as reflected in strategic documents and country programme priorities, the practical implementation of child poverty reduction initiatives does not often align with these strategic priorities. Challenges such as financial constraints, a preference for projects with immediate outcomes, and insufficient emphasis on UNICEF's global advocacy hinder policy support in this area. These factors result in inconsistencies in programming across the five milestones and a gap between strategic objectives and actual implementation at the country level. This highlights the need for enhanced integration, advocacy, and resource allocation to prioritize child poverty effectively across all levels of the organization.

UNICEF's work under the child poverty result area demonstrated coherence with national agendas despite governments' overall limited operational commitments to reduce child poverty. UNICEF's programming towards the five milestones has adjusted to the preferred approaches of government partners, navigated political sensitivities, and responded to the unique needs of each country context. However, the adequacy of CO's initiatives varies across the five milestones (**Findings 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5 and 2.2.6**).

UNICEF consistently considered the needs of economically vulnerable girls, children with disabilities and children facing other individual or social vulnerabilities through its support of social protection. However, data constraints and insufficient integration of gender and disability considerations within programming hinder UNICEF's ability to adequately measure and address child poverty among these groups.

The relevance of UNICEF's approaches in humanitarian and fragile settings depends on governance levels and crisis severity without a comprehensive framework guiding UNICEF's efforts to reduce child poverty in these contexts. The existing Milestones framework provides limited guidance for adapting child poverty reduction work in these settings. While Milestones 1, 2, 3 and 4 can be, to some extent, adapted based on the crisis context, but for Milestone 5 this is generally less applicable. **[Conclusion 2.3]**

Objective 3

Assess UNICEF's capacities to achieve child poverty objectives by building national government systems in a sustainable manner and assess the status of UNICEF's resources to deliver on its child poverty agenda.

Conclusion 3

UNICEF faces challenges in supporting governments to reduce and eliminate child poverty due to limitations in financial and organizational capacities (Finding 3.1.1). The primary constraint is financial capacity, affecting staffing and technical proficiency and hindering innovation and policy support execution. Improvements are needed in organizational capacity, especially in promoting intersectoral collaboration to alleviate financial constraints and enhance coordination of child poverty initiatives. UNICEF COs have contributed effectively to building government capacities in certain domains, notably for measuring child poverty and

strengthening social protection systems. However, there are opportunities for improving the depth and consistency of capacity-building for statistics units. COs have opportunities to facilitate coordination among government entities and sectors to improve their capacity to implement integrated policies and programmes aimed at reducing child poverty. By fostering knowledge-sharing, UNICEF supports its global and national development partners' capabilities to contribute to child poverty reduction.

Objective 4

Identify lessons learned and good practices from UNICEF child poverty reduction work and pathways for incorporating them to ensure that future decisions and programming have maximum impact.

Conclusion 4

This evaluation identified collaborative practices within COs, comprehensive approaches to child poverty advocacy and leveraging partnerships to support child poverty measurement capacities as good practices of the work of UNICEF COs in achieving the child poverty reduction milestones. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of collaborative work across UNICEF CO sections for leveraging capacities and supporting intersectoral programming and the role of political sensitivity as a challenge for UNICEF's work.

Key recommendations

Recommendation 1

Strengthen UNICEF's role as a policy advisor on comprehensive policy packages (across goal areas) to reduce child poverty and maintain adaptability in the framing of this work, focusing on narratives that are most relevant to the country context.



Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group and relevant divisions/offices



Priority level: High

Recommendation 2

Leverage child poverty measurement and analysis, in collaboration with government and development partners, to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of UNICEF's country programme and government policy.



Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group, UNICEF Global Office of Research and Foresight (GoRAF), the Poverty and Gender Unit of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM), and with the relevant divisions/offices.



Priority level: High

Recommendation 3

Expand resource mobilization efforts for the child poverty reduction result area by prioritizing the issue within global fundraising efforts and reviewing internal resource allocation for these activities.



Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group with the relevant divisions/offices, including Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division.



Priority level: High

Recommendation 4

Develop strategic guidelines for child poverty reduction programming in humanitarian and fragile settings, highlighting innovative approaches to measure child poverty and strengthening the integration of immediate relief for deprived children with efforts to enhance government capacity and good governance.



Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group with UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes.



Priority level: High

1

Introduction

Against the backdrop of COVID-19 and other external shocks, poverty rates have increased globally; in 2022, an estimated 829 million children were living in poverty (PPP \$3.65 per day), and 333 million children in extreme poverty (PPP \$2.15 per day),⁵ marking an estimated increase in extreme child poverty of 19 million compared to 2019.⁶ Further, around one billion children live in multidimensional poverty, with 45 per cent of children in developing countries suffering at least one deprivation.⁷ Children experience vulnerabilities more deeply than adults. Poverty intensifies children's diverse deprivations, magnifying challenges beyond household income poverty. Deprivations in nutrition, health care, water, sanitation, education and shelter deeply impact children, leaving enduring, irreversible effects on their physical and emotional well-being. Growing up in poverty can impede cognitive and physical development, perpetuating disadvantage across generations.⁸

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established targets to reduce child poverty by 2030. However, only a limited number of governments worldwide have made reducing and eliminating child poverty a national priority.⁹ In a best-case scenario, it is estimated that countries will take at least seven to eight years to recover and return to pre-COVID child poverty levels.¹⁰ UNICEF supported governments

to measure, analyse and respond to child poverty by providing technical and functional support to strengthen social protection systems. Goal Area 5 in UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 emphasizes this commitment: "Every child, including adolescents, has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty".¹¹

In light of the prevailing need for evidence on what works and to provide organizational direction, UNICEF's Evaluation Office (EO) commissioned the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), a global not-for-profit organization based in Cape Town, South Africa, to work with the EO to evaluate UNICEF's approaches and programming towards reducing and eliminating child poverty by assessing the following milestones:

1. Building a national pathway to end child poverty
2. Measuring child poverty
3. Putting child poverty on the map through child poverty advocacy
4. Supporting policy and programme change
5. Supporting strategic commitments to ending extreme poverty and halving it by national definitions.



Evaluation background

Child poverty affects millions of children globally, with around one billion children living in multidimensional poverty, and 45 per cent of children in developing countries suffer at least one deprivation.¹² Child poverty generates long-lasting effects on children's development and future opportunities and negatively affects the multiple dimensions of child well-being. UNICEF adopts a comprehensive approach to child poverty, aligning with a 2007 UN General Assembly resolution that acknowledges how poverty deprives children in multiple dimensions, including nutrition, health care, water and sanitation, shelter and education, hindering their rights, potential and ability to engage fully in society.^{13 14 15} Poverty uniquely affects children compared to adults due to their age and dependency, often leading to more severe and lasting consequences compared to adults. Growing up in poverty can harm children's development, causing long-term cognitive and physical issues that sustain a cycle of disadvantage across generations. This perpetuation of poverty not only impacts the individual child but also contributes to societal inequality. Addressing child poverty, a complex and multifaceted issue, demands a coordinated response, including investments in child-sensitive social protection systems.¹⁶

Amid rising child poverty in numerous low- and middle-income countries,^{17 18} it is vital for governments to swiftly develop and execute comprehensive strategies addressing children's multiple vulnerabilities. Accordingly, this evaluation is guided by UNICEF's multidimensional approach to child poverty, **concerning thresholds of "material deprivation [including basic social services], as well as additional essential factors that enable a child to survive, develop and participate in society."**¹⁹

UNICEF's approach to reducing and eliminating child poverty

UNICEF prioritized diverse activities aligned with its 2022–2025 Strategic Plan and Goals to address child poverty. The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children, is a collaborative initiative aiming to raise awareness, support global and national efforts, and unite various stakeholders – including NGOs, research institutions, and other global partners – to generate evidence, advocate for change, and monitor data on developments towards achieving the shared objective of ending child poverty as part of advancing SDG 1.

UNICEF and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty introduced a strategic framework outlined in the report *A world free from child poverty: a guide to the tasks to achieve the vision*.²⁰ The framework revolves around five milestones, each encompassing specific action areas, activities, and key indicators to measure progress. These milestones offer clear steps for UNICEF and its partners to address child poverty. Box 1 outlines key concepts and Box 2 outlines the five milestones that constitute UNICEF's foundational work towards ending child poverty and their corresponding key indicators.



BOX 1**Key Concepts**

Child poverty: a child living in poverty may be defined as one who lives in a condition of thresholds of "...material deprivation [including basic social services], as well as additional essential factors that enable a child to survive, develop and participate in society."²¹

Multidimensional poverty: a condition in which people experience multiple deprivations in key areas such as health, education, and standard of living. This approach recognizes that poverty is not solely about income but involves a range of factors that affect people's well-being and opportunities.²²

Monetary poverty: a condition where an individual's or household's income or consumption falls below a specified minimum threshold needed to meet basic needs. According to international standards, an individual is considered poor if their income falls below PPP \$3.65 per day and extremely poor if it falls below PPP \$2.15 per day.

UNICEF's child poverty work: UNICEF's strategic work towards the five milestones, the framework introduced in the report *A world free from child poverty: a guide to achieving the vision* (the specific activities required to achieve the milestones are outlined in Box 2).

The Strategic Plan 2022–2025 recognizes the importance of GA5 programming in areas affected by conflict, fragility and other humanitarian crises, including those worsened by climate change. The compounding effects of vulnerabilities are evident in fragile settings, where over 75 per cent of the world's extremely poor live. The Strategic Plan identifies risk-informed humanitarian and development nexus programming as one of the change strategies of its Goal Area 5. This programming includes risk-informed social protection and financing, strengthening climate- and conflict-sensitive analyses, enhancing local governance and improving financing for emergency preparedness. Accordingly, the Strategy strongly focuses on strengthening social protection design and implementation to respond to climate- and conflict-related risk and vulnerability and contribute to peace-building processes. While the five milestones framework outlined in the Global Coalition's Guide does not explicitly focus on humanitarian and fragile settings due to their unique needs and constraints, this evaluation undertook an exploratory assessment of UNICEF's efforts to achieve the milestones in these contexts.



BOX 2**5 Milestones and indicators****MILESTONE 1: BUILDING A NATIONAL PATHWAY TO END CHILD POVERTY**

Relationships built with key stakeholders.

Clear understanding of the role poverty measurement and analysis plays in national decision-making.

Clear understanding on the situation of child poverty measurement and analysis, and agreement on whether increased action is needed.

As appropriate, agreement on key milestones and activities to measure and address child poverty.

MILESTONE 2: MEASURING CHILD POVERTY

Agreement on a national approach to measuring child poverty, including for SDG reporting.

Child poverty rate and key disaggregations calculated.

Key actors engaged, and national ownership and publication of data.

Agreement to routinize measurement as relevant surveys are produced.

MILESTONE 3: PUTTING CHILD POVERTY ON THE MAP THROUGH CHILD POVERTY ADVOCACY

Child poverty appears regularly in media/social media.

Child poverty becomes part of engagement with actors such as Ministries of Finance and the World Bank.

Stakeholders other than core child poverty advocates are stressing the importance of child poverty.

Child poverty measures and concepts become part of discourse in major policy discussions.

MILESTONE 4: SUPPORTING POLICY AND PROGRAMME CHANGE

Clear understanding of the child poverty profile – which children are living in poverty, where and why.

Clear understanding of policy environment and where engaging makes sense.

Policy and programme analysis to support and influence policymakers on approaches to reduce child poverty.

A change in a programme or policy, and a reduction in child poverty.

MILESTONE 5: SUPPORTING STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS TO ENDING EXTREME CHILD POVERTY AND HALVING IT BY NATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Child poverty targets aligned to the SDGs included in national plans with a clear time frame.

A funded national strategy or plan to achieve the targets, which includes a package of interventions to reduce child poverty and achieve the goals.

Consistent monitoring, evaluation and advocacy to assess progress and hold decision makers accountable.

Being on track to achieve the SDGs, and a world in 2030 where extreme child poverty is ended and child poverty, as defined nationally, is at least halved.

Source: UNICEF and Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, A world free from child poverty: a guide to the tasks to achieve the vision, 2017

Evaluation purpose and objective

The purpose of this evaluation is twofold:

- ▶ Evaluate UNICEF's child poverty work in influencing national processes and interventions to bring about a positive impact on the lives of children living in poverty.
- ▶ Identify actionable steps informed by the findings and key lessons learned from UNICEF's experience to improve its work on child poverty reduction.

The evaluation aims to achieve the following objectives:²³

- ▶ Assess the achievements of results in child poverty reduction under Goal Area 5 and its linkages to social protection and identify the specific interventions that led to the results.
- ▶ Gauge the role, prioritization and relevance of UNICEF child poverty reduction work among all UNICEF levels and external stakeholders.
- ▶ Assess UNICEF's capacities to achieve child poverty objectives by building national government systems in a sustainable manner and assess the status of UNICEF's resources to deliver on its child poverty agenda.
- ▶ Identify lessons learned and good practices from UNICEF child poverty reduction work and pathways on incorporating them to ensure that future decisions and programming have maximum impact.

Intended users and uses: The primary users of the evaluation are the UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group staff members at Headquarters (HQ), Regional Offices (ROs) and Country Offices (COs), the UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring section staff members, and UNICEF's Executive Board. The evaluation provides insights to other development partners associated with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty. The intended use of the evaluation is for UNICEF divisions and offices to inform and update their technical guidance and oversight accountabilities as necessary across HQ, ROs and COs.

Subject

In view of the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the subject of the evaluation is classified into two levels. The **primary level of analysis** focuses on UNICEF's supporting activities for a national child poverty reduction pathway and interventions defined by the Global Coalition's milestones, outlined in the theory of change (ToC) (Figure 1). The **secondary level of analysis** focuses on the role of the broader national context, such as the existing plans, policies and programmes, child poverty rates, fiscal space and political economy determinants within the focal countries, among other factors. While the focus of the evaluation is primarily on the first level of analysis, the analysis drew on specific factors of relevance from the secondary level in each focal country under evaluation.

Scope

Temporal scope: The evaluation covered the period from 2018²⁴ to 2023, using UNICEF's previous (2018–21) and current Strategic Plan (2022–2025). The proposed temporal scope is deemed sufficient to allow the assessment of results achieved, given the time trajectory of the underlying ToC.

Thematic and programmatic scope: The evaluation centres on UNICEF's work to reduce and eliminate child poverty, involving programmatic work under the child poverty result area towards the five milestones. When referring to child poverty work, this evaluation refers to the strategic work under the child poverty result area or programmatic work towards the milestones, which constitutes the programmatic scope of this evaluation. The level of assessment involving these components depends on the evaluation subquestions. UNICEF programmes in Goal Area 5 support countries' efforts to address child poverty, promote monetary and multidimensional child poverty measurement, and support government policies, programmes, and public budgets. The evaluation also explored the relevance of UNICEF's strategic work on child poverty in humanitarian and fragile settings.

Within Goal Area 5, the evaluation focused on the activities conducted as part of the child poverty result area. In this regard, the evaluation only considered connections to other components of Goal Area 5, including public finance and social protection, when directly related to the Country Offices' child poverty initiatives (e.g., a significant overlap with social protection was anticipated when evaluating Milestone 4, though the evaluation excluded a comprehensive assessment of the social protection result area). Although the evaluation investigated the linkages of the Social Policy section's interventions to reduce and eliminate child poverty, it did not encompass the assessment of UNICEF's efforts in other sections, such as Education, WASH, Health, Nutrition, and Child Protection, even though work in those sections also contributes to the overall reduction and elimination of multidimensional child poverty.

Organizational scope: The evaluation's approach covers all three of UNICEF's organizational levels – HQ, RO and CO – taking into account, among other things, the different levels of accountability and roles of each level, while the analysis of the country data points focused on the country office level. In line with the guidance in the terms of reference (ToR), EPRI's approach mainly concerned Social Policy sections.

Geographic scope: The evaluation has a global outlook and is not limited to a specific region. However, extensive primary qualitative data-collection activities and an integrated analysis with secondary data are limited to four countries selected for in-depth analysis: **(1) Cambodia, (2) Colombia, (3) Rwanda and (4) Sri Lanka.** The evaluation examined 16 additional countries through qualitative analysis of documents and validation KIIs. It also examined ten countries with humanitarian or fragile setting components. All UNICEF regions are represented in the country sample. Table 2 shows the country sample of this evaluation, and Annex 4 provides additional details on the country sampling strategy.

Ex-post evaluation theory of change

The evaluation ToC constitutes the evaluation framework and maps how UNICEF's inputs towards and across the five milestones achieve the intended results. The components of the ToC are described below and outlined in Figure 1.

Approaches and activities: UNICEF activities were grouped into five approaches based on activities outlined in strategic documents. In particular, activities draw from the broad set of strategies in the Coalition's Guide,²⁵ the Change Strategies for Goal Area 5 in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, Action Areas from the Social Protection Framework²⁶ and Public Finance for Children,²⁷ in addition to other documents relating to UNICEF's work on child poverty.^{28 29}

Programmatic approaches and activities include measurement and evidence generation, advocacy and partnerships, policy and strategy development, domestic resource mobilization, and capacity-building and implementation.

Intermediate and longer-term outcomes: The set of outcomes linking UNICEF's actions to the specific components of national milestones and which determine progress towards each milestone's key indicators. Longer-term outcomes are the successful achievement of each milestone according to relevant indicators.

Impact: Child poverty reduction was part of SDG 1 according to the specific targets to be met by 2030: Target 1.1: the eradication of extreme child poverty by 2030. Target 1.2: halving child poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. Target 1.3: substantial social protection coverage for vulnerable children.

Enabling determinants: UNICEF's organizational and technical capacities, prioritization of child poverty work, and financial resources dedicated to Goal Area 5 and the achievement of SDG 1.

Cross-cutting issues: Thematic issues highlighted in UNICEF's Strategic Plan as cross-cutting programme areas for Goal Area 5. These include gender, disability and approaches in humanitarian and fragile settings.

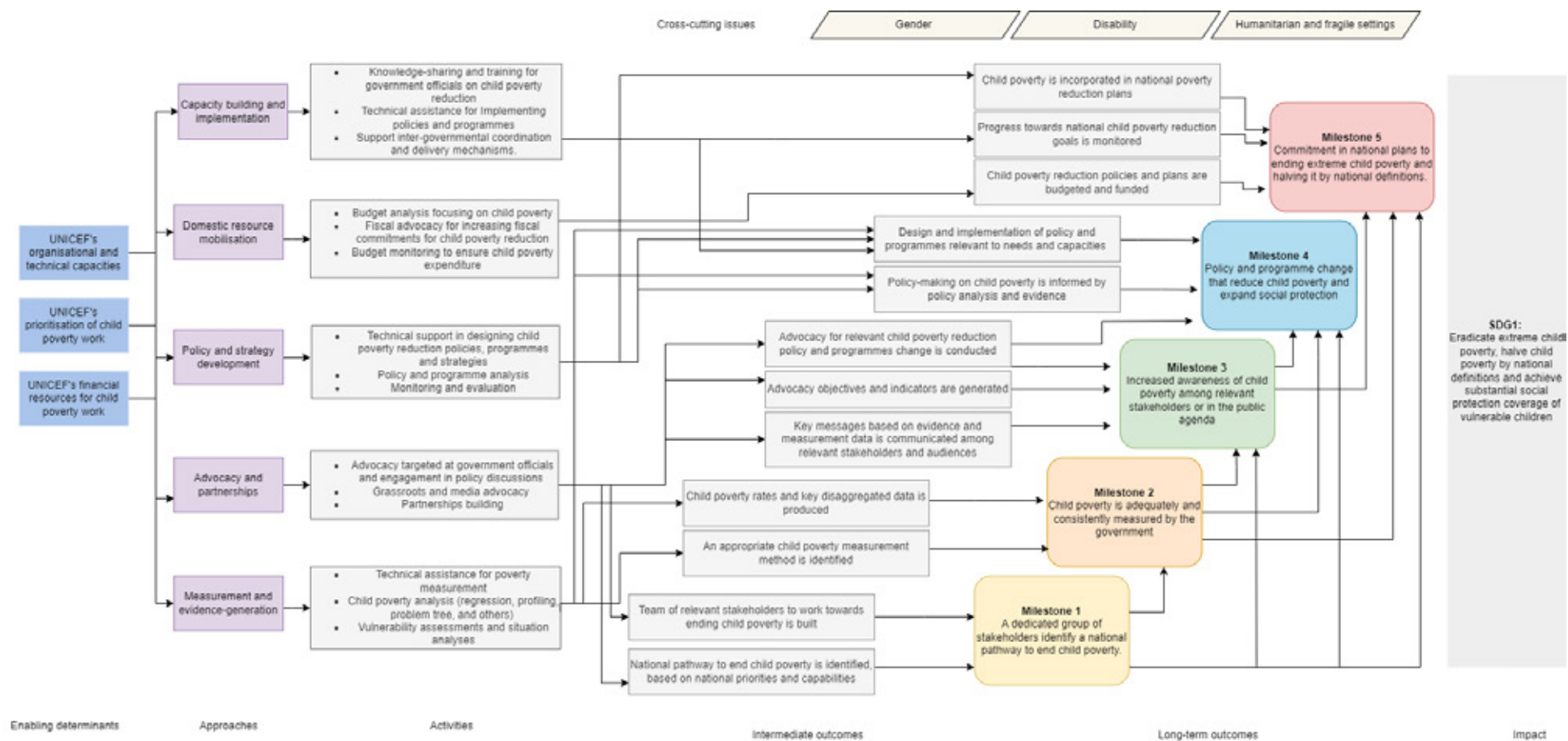
The ToC in Figure 1 shows the mechanisms through which UNICEF activities relating to the five milestones lead to longer-term outcomes in each domain that increasingly lead to higher-level impacts. The left side shows UNICEF's activities related to the milestones (input level). These activities can address various milestones; for example, advocacy efforts may support poverty reduction and elimination or influence the expansion of social protection programmes. Some activities align more closely with specific milestones: advocacy relates strongly to Milestone 3, policy support to Milestone 4, and poverty measurement exclusively to Milestone 2.

When oriented towards the specific outcomes in the five milestones, this set of UNICEF activities (input level) can achieve a degree of progress within each milestone (intermediate outcomes level). For instance, UNICEF can provide policy advisory support to design a programme that responds to the country's needs and capacities. Further, more significant progress within each milestone can lead to longer-term positive effects in each domain (long-term outcomes level); for example when the design of a relevant programme leads to its successful implementation and government ownership, achieving programme change (Milestone 4 long-term outcome).

The five milestones in this ToC follow a progressive logic: one milestone builds upon the next, and linear progress across milestones implies movement towards higher-level impacts. However, alternative change pathways can exist, deviating from this generic trajectory. For instance, successful poverty measurement might occur without broad stakeholder support, or a programme might begin without consistent advocacy efforts. Long-term outcomes are anticipated to approach impact by reducing child poverty nationally and globally as a higher-level goal. The evaluation identified various outcomes, regardless of whether they follow the generic trajectory.



Figure 1. Ex-post theory of change



Evaluation questions

Four overarching evaluation questions were asked in order to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and results of UNICEF's work towards reducing and eliminating child poverty, guided by 13 evaluation subquestions. Table 1 outlines the evaluation objectives, overarching questions and subquestions. The evaluation matrix in Annex 3 specifies the constructs, indicators and means of verification utilized to respond to each evaluation subquestion.

Table 1. Evaluation questions and subquestions

Objectives	Evaluation question	Evaluation subquestions
<p>Objective 1: To assess the achievement of results in child poverty reduction under Goal Area 5 and its linkages to social protection, identifying the specific interventions that led to those results.</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>1. Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results on child poverty reduction? (5 Milestones)</p>	1.1. To what extent has UNICEF partnered with and supported relevant stakeholders to identify a national pathway to end child poverty?
		1.2. To what extent has UNICEF's work contributed to the routine and nationally owned measurement of monetary and multidimensional child poverty?
		1.3. To what extent have UNICEF's advocacy efforts contributed to increasing awareness of child poverty among relevant stakeholders or in the public agenda?
		1.4. To what extent has UNICEF's child poverty work supported social protection policies and programmes?
		1.5. To what extent has UNICEF's child poverty work supported sectoral policies and programmes?
		1.6. To what extent have UNICEF activities supported the enshrinement of strategies to reduce child poverty in national plans?
<p>Objective 2: To gauge the role, prioritization, and relevance of UNICEF child poverty reduction work among all UNICEF levels and external stakeholders.</p>	<p>Relevance</p> <p>2. To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones? (Overarching)</p>	2.1. To what extent is UNICEF's child poverty work prioritized at HQ, RO and CO levels?
		2.2. To what extent has UNICEF's work in child poverty been relevant to addressing national needs (including the needs of the most vulnerable children)?
		2.3. How has UNICEF adapted its work on child poverty in humanitarian and fragile contexts, and which of the identified approaches and strategies prove relevant in these contexts?

Objectives	Evaluation question	Evaluation subquestions
<p>Objective 3: To assess UNICEF's capacities to achieve child poverty objectives by building national government systems in a sustainable manner and to assess the resources required for UNICEF to deliver on its child poverty agenda.</p>	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>3. To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty? (Overarching)</p>	<p>3.1. Are UNICEF's organizational capacities and resources (at HQ, RO and CO levels) adequate and sufficient to achieve its child poverty reduction goals?</p> <hr/> <p>3.2. To what extent has UNICEF's work contributed to increasing its national and global partners' capacities to reduce child poverty?</p>
<p>Objective 4: To identify lessons learned and good practices from UNICEF child poverty reduction work and pathways on incorporating these to ensure that future decisions and programming have maximum impact.</p>	<p>Learning</p> <p>4. What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction? (Overarching)</p>	<p>4.1. What good practices have emerged from UNICEF's work on reducing child poverty?</p> <hr/> <p>4.2. What lessons can be learned from UNICEF's work on reducing child poverty?</p>

2



Evaluation Approaches and Methodology

The evaluation methodology for assessing UNICEF's work in child poverty reduction involved primary qualitative data collection, surveys, and secondary data analysis.³⁰ EPRI selected **20 countries** as the qualitative analysis sample, of which **four countries** were selected for in-depth analysis. The sampling approach was purposeful, considering thematic and programmatic relevance, the potential for lessons learned, progress towards the five milestones, geographic balance and recommendations by HQ and ROs. Rwanda, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Cambodia were selected for in-depth analysis. Another group consisted of countries with humanitarian or fragile settings. These countries were identified based on the publication *UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2022*. The group included the top 10 countries identified by the report with the highest funding required for humanitarian action for children in 2022, from which a random sample of 10 countries was drawn. This group was included to capture the unique characteristics of countries facing humanitarian crises, and the random sampling ensured an unbiased representation of this group. Table 2 outlines the countries in the evaluation sample and the data collection approaches to be used for each group.

Annex 4, an expanded version of this methodology section, provides a detailed description of the criteria employed to select countries for qualitative review, in-depth analysis and those with humanitarian and fragile settings.

Table 2. Evaluation country sample

Sampling groups	Countries	Data collection type
Group 1: In-depth analysis countries	Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka	In-person KIIs with UNICEF COs' staff, government officials and development partners. Structured desk review and quantitative data analysis
Group 2: Qualitative review sample	Argentina, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Georgia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malaysia, Montenegro, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Tanzania, Uganda, Uzbekistan	Structured desk review and remote KIIs with UNICEF COs' Social Policy Chiefs
Group 3: Countries in humanitarian contexts	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen	Desk review and remote KIIs with UNICEF COs' Social Policy Chiefs

Evaluation approach

Qualitative and quantitative analysis

Thematic analysis and pattern matching were the main means of analysing qualitative data. The key themes related to each of the evaluation questions and each of the milestones were identified, guided by the evaluation matrix and theory of change (ToC). Comparative analysis in this evaluation focused on comparing countries in the sample and identifying the main factors contributing to the achievement of UNICEF objectives per milestone. The team used pattern matching to identify and confirm patterns contributing to outcomes across countries and enable the comparison of mutually exclusive rival patterns with the observed pattern in each country. The evaluation team used NVIVO as the primary tool for qualitative analysis.

To complement thematic and pattern analysis, Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), a theory-driven approach to examine the conditions that lead to defined outcomes, was employed.³¹ Accordingly, based on insights from desk review, primary data, and the validation survey, the evaluation team identified relevant conditions expected to lead to the outcomes outlined in the theory of change. The team presented these conditions in truth tables (found in Annex 5) and identified key patterns across the data points to establish causal attribution, exclusively for analysing subquestions 1.2 and 1.4, where this approach proved most adequate.³²

The specialized 'Fuzzy' package in Stata facilitated the QCA analytical process. A methodological note outlining the steps taken to conduct the QCA can be found in Annex 5. A comparative case study approach supported the QCA analysis by comparing insights across the four countries selected for in-depth analysis to support the causal attribution of findings.³³

The quantitative data collected, including core standard indicators (CSIs), data from UNICEF's data bank, financial data and survey responses, were analysed through descriptive statistical techniques.

Secondary data-collection methods

Structured desk review

The evaluation team collected data from various key UNICEF strategic documents for the 20-country sample, including Country Office Annual Reports (COARs), Country Programme Documents (CPDs), Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), Results Assessment Modules (RAMs), and other internal monitoring, financial, and strategy documents. Additionally, the desk review involved analysis of reports, policy briefs, evaluations, research and other materials produced by UNICEF related to poverty reduction efforts, as well as documents providing insights into national child poverty profiles, such as Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports and strategic plans. The evaluation team analysed CSIs and data available at UNICEF's data bank.

Primary data-collection methods

Key informant interviews

The evaluation team conducted in-person KIIs in four countries to gain detailed insights into UNICEF's progress and challenges in addressing child poverty. Between 12 and 20 stakeholder consultations were held per country, involving UNICEF staff, government officials, civil society members and development partners. Field visits were made to Rwanda, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Cambodia in October 2023. The evaluation team also conducted remote KIIs with the chiefs of Social Policy in country offices from the rest of the 16 sampled countries, Social Policy specialists at regional offices, key staff involved in child poverty work at HQ and global partners from the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty. The evaluation involved ten remote KIIs with Social Policy staff members working in countries with humanitarian and fragile settings.

EPRI conducted **KIIs with 137 stakeholders**, combining in-person interviews during field visits and remote interviews. The selection of interviewees at different levels was done with input from UNICEF COs and used a chain referral approach to diversify and enrich the pool of participants. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish and French. Annex 2 provides an overview of the KIIs conducted across different levels.

Validation survey

The evaluation team implemented an online survey during January and February 2024, which served three purposes: i) addressing gaps and complementing primary and secondary data sources, especially CSIs and UNICEF's monitoring databases, ii) validating insights to strengthen or modify key preliminary findings, and iii) complementing data to inform the QCA. The survey was administered to Social Policy chiefs in the 20-country sample, and 18 responses were obtained.

Methodological limitations

Limitations of the evaluation involve the geographical representation and the robustness of information provided by stakeholders inherent to qualitative evaluation methods. The in-depth analysis is geographically limited to four countries, implying that external validity and generalizability of findings are inherently limited. The research approach offsets this to some extent through the desk-based analysis of 20 countries. Another limitation relates to difficulties verifying certain statements provided by key informants without relevant secondary data sources.³⁴ Nevertheless, triangulation within and between multiple data sources served to control for some of these constraints. An additional consideration is that given the small number of countries analysed, the sample does not ensure optimal geographical and income status representativeness or other relevant characteristics, such as the prevalence of child poverty. However, since UNICEF's work in child poverty has been most productive in the selected countries, this geographic focus maximizes the evaluability and relevance.

Ethical considerations

Professional standards and ethical principles in line with the *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (2016) developed by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNICEF's *Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis* guided all the steps of this evaluation.³⁵ Prior to conducting KIIs, EPRI gathered informed consent from all interviewees, explaining the purpose of evaluation, their role, and the information required. Verbal consent was obtained from all evaluation participants. EPRI assured interviewees of confidentiality and voluntariness in their responses. Responses were summarized in the research report without identifying respondents by name or any other specific characteristics except for stakeholder type and country. All information gathered during the study was recorded on secured devices, kept strictly confidential, and not shared unless through verbal or written dissemination of the study findings. Annex 7 expands on the ethical considerations and principles of this evaluation.

3



Evaluation findings

Key Evaluation Question 1: Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results in child poverty reduction?

Conclusion 1: While UNICEF initiatives in reducing child poverty have shown progress across the five milestones, some challenges remain. Through the establishment of global partnerships, advocacy for policy reforms, and the improvement of child poverty measurements, UNICEF COs have contributed to enhancing social protection systems and integrating child poverty reduction strategies into national development agendas. However, UNICEF faces challenges in raising awareness, providing advice on comprehensive policy packages to reduce child poverty, and maintaining its relevance in budgetary and planning processes.

Milestone 1: At the global level, UNICEF has successfully led development partner efforts within the Coalition to End Child Poverty and formed multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance social protection systems and measure child poverty at the country level (**Finding 1.1.1**). However, at the country level, this evaluation documents a limited focus on identifying a national pathway to end child poverty across

the sampled countries. This limited focus relates to the political sensitivity surrounding child poverty in certain contexts and the preference for collaborating on narrower policy domains aligned with partners' expertise and priorities (**Finding 1.1.2**). [**Conclusion 1.1**]

Milestone 2: At the global and country levels, UNICEF has contributed to the measurement of child poverty through strategic partnerships, technical guidance, and the implementation of child-focused surveys, leading to an increased number of countries assessing multidimensional child poverty globally (**Finding 1.2.1**). Despite this progress, the limited clarity and understanding of the appropriate uses of child poverty measures across the organization restricts the effective use of child poverty rates and analyses for guiding and monitoring policies and programmes (**Finding 1.2.4**). This challenge has also hindered government ownership and routine measurement (**Findings 1.2.2 and 1.2.3**). [**Conclusion 1.2**]

Milestone 3: The efforts of UNICEF COs to advocate for improvements to specific policies and initiatives on child poverty measurement, social protection coverage and public spending in child-focused sectors have been largely effective (**Finding 2.3.1**). However, the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy in raising general awareness about child poverty

among key stakeholders and in the public agenda within the sampled countries is limited to a few cases. Challenges for putting child poverty on the map include the political sensitivity of child poverty and the prioritization of other work areas within Social Policy (**Finding 1.3.2**). [**Conclusions 1.3**]

Milestone 4: While UNICEF COs have effectively improved and expanded social protection programmes and systems (**Finding 1.4.1**), COs have supported other relevant child poverty reduction policies, such as care and employment policies, in a limited manner (**Finding 1.2.2**). Moreover, UNICEF has opportunities to use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice and technical assistance on child poverty reduction programmes and policies and to integrate child poverty into the monitoring of the social protection result area (**Finding 1.2.3**). [**Conclusion 1.4**]

The Social Policy sections of UNICEF COs have provided limited advice and technical support on sectoral policies aimed at increasing access to services as part of the work in the child poverty result area. Responsibility for this programming lies primarily with other UNICEF sections (**Finding 2.5.1**). Furthermore, sector-specific deprivation indicators guide UNICEF's sectoral interventions, with monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates not proving relevant for guiding these interventions. (**Finding 2.5.2**). [**Conclusions 1.5**]

Milestone 5: UNICEF has supported the integration of child poverty reduction objectives within national plans and broader national poverty reduction priorities to a varied extent across the sample, while support for child poverty reduction strategies remains limited (**Finding 1.6.1**). UNICEF's effectiveness in incorporating child poverty into SDG monitoring and national policy evaluation has been mixed. While there has been limited support for integrating child poverty into Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), significant progress has been made in a few cases (**Finding 1.6.2**). Further, while COs support budget allocations for child-focused sectors and policies through PF4C initiatives, the clear consideration of child poverty for informing and advocating budgetary decisions is limited (**Finding 1.6.3**). [**Conclusions 1.6**]

Evaluation subquestion 1.1: To what extent has UNICEF partnered with and supported relevant stakeholders to identify a national pathway to end child poverty?

Conclusion 1.1

At the global level, UNICEF has successfully led development partner efforts within the Coalition to End Child Poverty and formed multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance social protection systems and measure child poverty at the country level (**Finding 1.1.1**). However, at the country level, this evaluation documents a limited focus on identifying a national pathway to end child poverty across the sampled countries. This limited focus relates to the political sensitivity surrounding child poverty in certain contexts and the preference for collaborating on narrower policy domains aligned with partners' expertise and priorities (**Finding 1.1.2**).

Finding 1.1.1

UNICEF led development partner efforts within the Coalition to End Child Poverty at the global level and formed partnerships to measure child poverty and enhance social protection systems at the country level.

As a co-chair of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, UNICEF stands at the forefront of global efforts to tackle child poverty. During consultations, most stakeholders from member organizations identified UNICEF as a key leader within the Coalition, not only as a co-chair alongside Save the Children but as the foremost technical and resource contributor. UNICEF facilitates knowledge management, including the compilation of multidimensional child poverty reports, country papers, and geographical mapping of children living in poverty across the world.³⁶ Although the Coalition is a vital platform for global knowledge-sharing and advocacy, the most effective collaborations between its members take place at the country level.

Within the country sample, UNICEF COs in Cambodia, Colombia, Ghana and Nigeria have actively participated in technical working groups to support governments in measuring child poverty and placing children's rights at the centre of policy debates and decision-making. Notably, in Cambodia, the UNICEF CO is part of the National Poverty Measurement Working Group and supports the Royal Government of Cambodia in undertaking poverty measurement and analysis, along with other development partners.

Similarly, in Ghana, the UNICEF country office is working with a technical working group composed of the National Development Planning Commission, the Ghana Statistical Service, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, as well as the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources to support the government's ownership of multidimensional child poverty measurement.^{37 38}

UNICEF COs' efforts to engage national stakeholders in partnerships resulted in improved, multidimensional poverty analyses and dialogue in Egypt, Ghana, Malaysia, Montenegro, Tanzania and Uganda. In Egypt, the CO initiated a collaboration with the Information Decision and Support Centre of the Egyptian Cabinet to expand the reach of evidence and author two diagnostic papers on child poverty and vulnerability for the Common Country Analysis of Egypt.³⁹ Moreover, in partnership with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and government entities, the CO supported the institutionalization of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, including a component on child deprivation.⁴⁰ Similarly, in Georgia, UNICEF CO collaborated with the National Statistics Office of Georgia to conduct a child welfare study at the request of the Ministry of IDP, Labour, Health and Social Affairs and the Parliament of Georgia. The study was developed in consultation with key partners, including UNICEF Innocenti, and incorporated the Child Deprivation Index, an indicator widely used by EU member states for measuring routine child multidimensional poverty.⁴¹

UNICEF COs have prioritized building multi-stakeholder partnerships and participating in technical working groups to support governments in strengthening child-sensitive social protection systems. The collaboration of UNICEF country offices within multi-stakeholder partnerships has focused on broader objectives for enhancing social protection systems. UNICEF COs have collaborated with other UN agencies in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Georgia, Guatemala, Montenegro, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and Rwanda, working together under joint programming and other initiatives to assist governments in enhancing child-sensitive social protection and attaining SDG targets. Notably, in Montenegro, UNICEF led the preparations for a new UN joint programme named 'Activate', funded by the Joint SDG Fund. The programme commenced in 2021, with a primary focus on improving the effectiveness of social protection policies and advocating

for inclusive services to benefit excluded youth, a critical step in the ongoing fight against child poverty in Montenegro.^{42 43} Similarly, in Rwanda, the CO's partnership with UN agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), exemplifies an effective approach to joint social protection programming for child poverty reduction. These partnerships, emphasizing resource pooling and innovative solutions at policy, systems and community levels, have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of social protection policies.⁴⁴ The successful implementation of the Joint Programme (JP) on social protection in Rwanda, under UNICEF's leadership, has been a key factor in driving integrated social protection delivery and supporting crucial policy reforms. This collaboration, marked by a clear division of labour and focus on areas like shock-responsive and climate-sensitive social protection, showcases UNICEF's strategic and influential role in the United Nations system, specifically in strengthening social protection mechanisms.

Finding 1.1.2

This evaluation documents a limited focus on identifying a national pathway to end child poverty across the sampled countries.

While this evaluation highlights UNICEF's achievements in establishing partnerships for measuring child poverty and strengthening social protection systems, it documents an inadequate focus on identifying a national pathway and establishing national milestones of progress to end child poverty among countries in the sample, a key component of Milestone 1 of the Global Coalition Guide. The limited focus on defining a pathway to end child poverty within COs' partnership-building efforts responds to challenges in advancing programming explicitly aimed at reducing child poverty due to its political sensitivity in certain contexts. Furthermore, engaging partners in specific policy actions has proven to be a more practical approach than involving them in broader efforts to define a pathway to end child poverty, given the narrower specialization or priorities of each partner in different sectors and programmatic areas. Consequently, bilateral partnerships have focused on narrower and more specific activities, particularly related to child poverty measurement, and multi-stakeholder partners have focused on broader social protection programming without an explicit focus on child poverty (**Finding 1.1.1**) but with results that often advance the well-being of children.

Evaluation subquestion 1.2: To what extent has UNICEF's work contributed to the adequate⁴⁵ and consistent⁴⁶ measurement of child poverty?

Conclusion 1.2

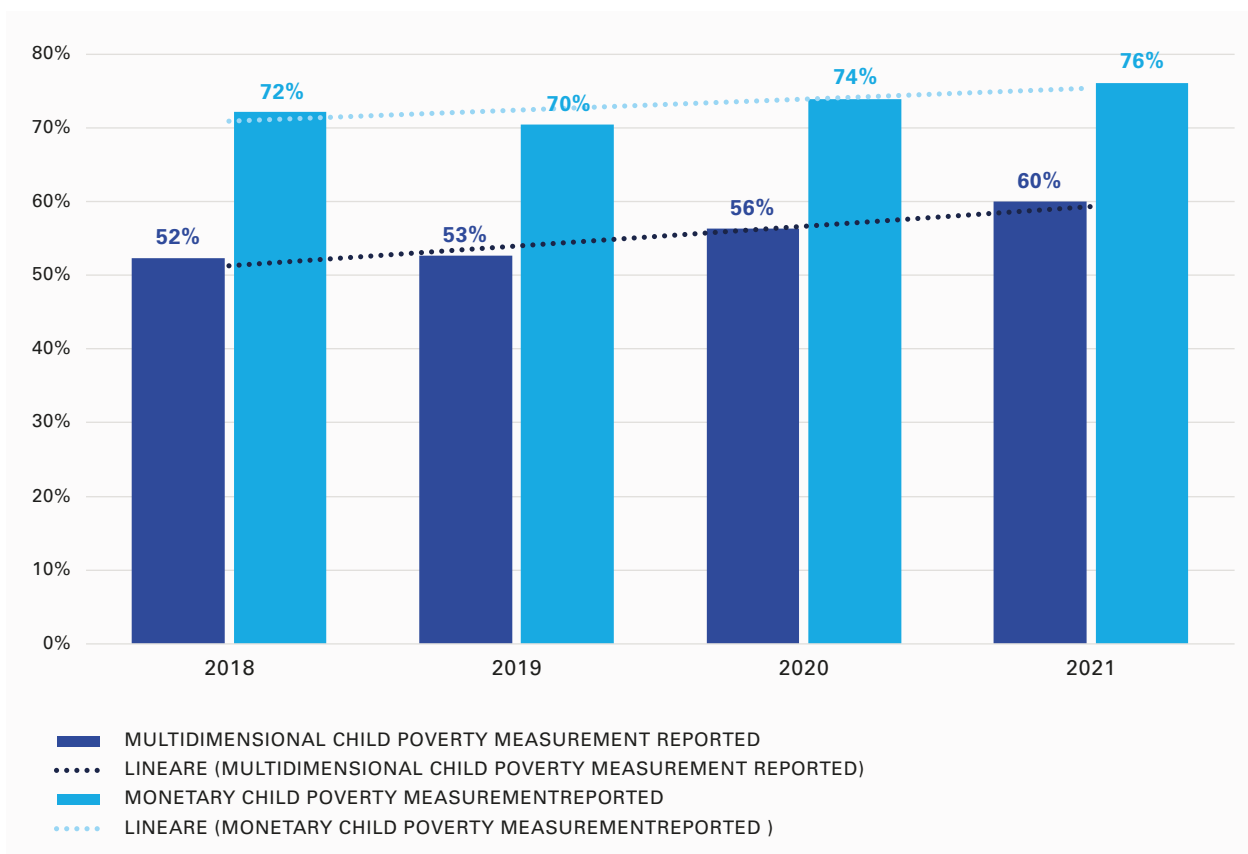
At the global and country levels, UNICEF has contributed to the measurement of child poverty through strategic partnerships, technical guidance, and the implementation of child-focused surveys, leading to an increased number of countries assessing multidimensional child poverty globally (Finding 1.2.1). Despite this progress, the limited clarity and understanding of the appropriate uses of child poverty measures across the organization restricts the effective use of child poverty rates and analyses for guiding and monitoring policies and programmes (Finding 1.2.4). This challenge has also hindered government ownership and routine measurement (Findings 1.2.2 and 1.2.3).

Finding 1.2.1

UNICEF effectively broadened the scope of child poverty measurement, supporting 59 per cent of countries in calculating multidimensional poverty and 77 per cent in calculating monetary poverty globally. Relevant approaches include strategic partnerships, technical assistance and support for child-focused surveys.

UNICEF CO's provision of technical advice, alongside the deployment of child-centric surveys, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), notably advanced the measurement of child poverty globally. A significant number of countries now engage in measuring multidimensional child poverty, evidencing the impact of UNICEF efforts (Figure 2). At the HQ and RO levels, UNICEF has provided adequate and timely technical guidance to COs, supporting them in advising governments during child poverty measurement processes. In some instances, the technical role of regional offices (ROs) proved particularly relevant by supporting some COs in the actual calculation processes. This support was enabled by ROs' capacities involving a dedicated staff member to provide support in this area. Table 16 in Annex 5 synthesizes UNICEF's contributions to child poverty measurement across the country sample.

Figure 2. An increasing number of country offices are measuring both monetary and multidimensional poverty⁴⁷

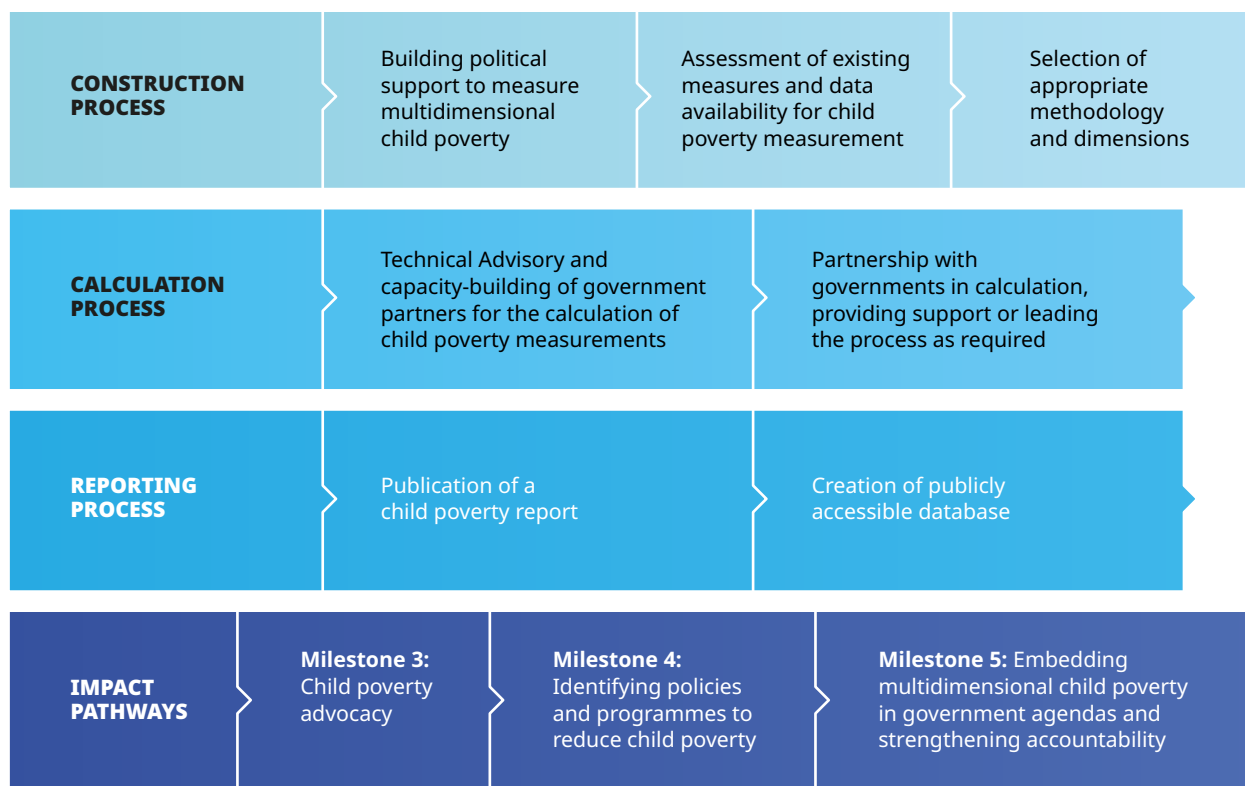


UNICEF emphasizes the measurement of all dimensions relevant to children through multidimensional child poverty measurement, a more relevant approach than age-disaggregation of household poverty measures, reflecting SDG 1.1.2.⁴⁸ Across the country sample, UNICEF has shown commitment to advancing child poverty measurements through government, stakeholder and research partnerships. These strategic partnerships have supported a collaborative yet distinct division of labour in poverty measurement, with UNICEF and other organizations such as OPHI leading the support on multidimensional child poverty measurements while partners such as the World Bank steer monetary child poverty measurements. UNICEF's commitment to multidimensional child poverty measurements has led to significant progress, with the completion of measurements in 91 countries and ongoing initiatives in others. While the current division of labour and collaboration with the World Bank has resulted in advancements in child poverty measurements globally, the partnership for the measurement of child poverty could benefit from being further formalized.

Discussions with UNICEF headquarters and development partners documented that, while coordination initially relied on ad hoc arrangements and the initiative of individual members from each institution, there has been progress towards the formalization of this partnership with recently assigned staff members dedicated to this joint agenda.^{49 50} To harness the full potential of this collaboration and to ensure consistent and widespread measures of child poverty, a move towards a more institutionalized form of partnership with greater top-down accountability is necessary.⁵¹ Such a formalized alliance would not only provide a clear framework for cooperation but would also facilitate the allocation of dedicated resources, ensuring sustained and focused joint efforts.

Central to UNICEF's strategy is the continuous provision of technical support throughout the measurement process. This support spans from the inception of the measurement frameworks to the processes of data calculation to the impact pathways for the use of poverty measurements (Figure 3).⁵²

Figure 3. The process of multidimensional child poverty measurement



In the initial construction process, UNICEF has been instrumental in cultivating political support for child poverty measurement, facilitating workshops and collaborative working groups that not only bolster political will but also refine the conceptual framework of child poverty and its various dimensions, as evidenced in Colombia and Ghana. In Colombia, prior to 2018, UNICEF began by engaging in dialogues with government officials, which underscored the need for a multidimensional approach to child poverty measurement. This led to UNICEF playing a role in facilitating technical discussions with the National Planning Department (DNP), the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and the Department of Social Prosperity.⁵³ The country office's involvement was further solidified by contributing to several Expert Committee sessions starting in 2019. This committee offered technical insights vital for the development of the Child Poverty Index's methodology and indicators and took an active part in the National Commission of Experts and the launch of the National Strategy for Eradicating Child Poverty.⁵⁴ Similarly, in Ghana, UNICEF's participation in advisory and technical working groups with relevant ministries and academia served as the basis for government commitment to the analysis of child poverty.⁵⁵

Data availability is another vital aspect of this measurement process, and UNICEF has contributed significantly to data generation through initiatives like MICS, which has been implemented in 118 countries.⁵⁶ While MICS is a reliable source for comprehensive child poverty data, its infrequent data-collection cycles can challenge timeliness,⁵⁷ sometimes resulting in the use of outdated data to calculate child poverty rates. In some countries within the sample lacking MICS data, UNICEF assisted in identifying and utilizing alternative data sources like demographic and health surveys and national surveys to ensure robust data sets for comprehensive multidimensional poverty analysis. In Georgia, the Welfare Monitoring Surveys (CWS) were implemented from 2009 to 2017, providing essential panel data on variables affecting children, including multidimensional deprivations.⁵⁹ Post-project, UNICEF advocated for the integration of the CWS questionnaire into Georgia's Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES).⁶⁰ In Uzbekistan, UNICEF supported the creation of a survey tailored for multidimensional child poverty measurement, offering age-disaggregated, non-monetary poverty insights.⁶¹ In Uganda, UNICEF leveraged the Uganda National Household Survey to gather necessary data for child poverty measurement, which was subsequently integrated into the national survey.⁶²

UNICEF also takes an active role in the calculation phase, providing not just advisory and capacity-building efforts but also active participation in the measurement process, sometimes leading or fully undertaking calculations in collaboration with government entities. Although UNICEF's lead has yielded successful measurements, the focus must remain on cementing government ownership and institutionalization of these processes, recognizing the need for governments to sustain these efforts independently. Following the calculation, UNICEF often collaborates with governments to generate child poverty reports, providing a detailed overview of methodologies employed and findings and presenting a clear picture of the deprivations children face.



Finding 1.2.2

UNICEF effectively adapts and promotes diverse approaches and formulas for multidimensional child poverty measurement, considering national stakeholders' preferences. However, limited clarity on best practices for selecting dimensions, indicators and weightings often hinders the accuracy and relevance of measurement. There is a need for improved collaboration with other development partners to harmonize measurement efforts within a given country, avoiding duplication and confusion.

The adaptability of UNICEF COs in supporting diverse approaches to measure multidimensional child poverty has been instrumental in supporting an increasing number of countries in undertaking these measurements (Finding 1.2.1). The evaluation documents a consensus among stakeholders that UNICEF should emphasize adaptability and avoid becoming embroiled in competitive dynamics among proponents of different approaches, particularly considering the methodological similarities among approaches like Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA), the Bristol approach and the Counting Multidimensional Poverty Index (CMPI). In Sri Lanka, for example, the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) had already decided to calculate the MPI, and UNICEF adeptly supported the extension to include the child MPI. UNICEF assistance helped the DCS embed the child module into the existing Household Income and Expenditure Survey, making it possible to calculate the child MPI.⁶³ A similar approach is observed in Colombia, one of the pioneering countries in conducting an MPI.⁶⁴ Here, UNICEF played a significant advocacy and technical support role, emphasizing the importance of a child-specific poverty measurement. This advocacy and support have been influential in securing the commitment to measuring child poverty in Colombia.^{65 66 67}

In most countries in the sample, UNICEF's consultative work with national statistics institutes, child representatives, and other relevant partners has supported governments in defining the dimensions of child poverty that are most relevant to their contexts.⁶⁸ The case of Uganda further exemplifies the importance of UNICEF's support for approaches and dimensions that are relevant to national contexts. In this case, the initial use of the Bristol approach to measure multidimensional child poverty did not align well with the government's priorities.^{69 70} Recognizing this mismatch, UNICEF introduced the Consensual Approach (CA), which was integrated into a one-page overview within national household surveys. This approach marked

a significant shift, gaining the attention of government stakeholders by offering a nuanced measure that considered the distinct needs of children and adults.⁷¹ This pivot to the CA not only engaged government stakeholders more effectively but also underscored the importance of including indicators that are relevant to the national context. Building on the success in Uganda, UNICEF, in collaboration with the University of Bristol, is developing a CA package to assist governments further by refining measurement methodologies to improve their relevance.⁷²

However, in some instances, UNICEF faces challenges in selecting appropriate dimensions, indicators and their weightings for measuring child poverty due to the limited clarity and understanding across the organization of the types of deprivations that constitute child poverty. In these cases, limited clarity on the best practices for the weighting of indicators and dimensions, and the adequate representation of different age groups hinders the accuracy of child poverty estimates. The abundance of similar measurement approaches and potential competitive dynamics exacerbates these challenges. Stakeholders have emphasized the critical need to maintain consistency in approaches, indicators and weightings within a given country, particularly by adhering to government-approved and -owned measurements. Deviations from these standards can confuse and deter government partners involved in the measurement process. Such challenges underscore the importance of considering the country-specific needs and government priorities, as well as UNICEF guidelines, highlighting an opportunity for greater collaboration with other development partners to unify child poverty measurement efforts in a given country.

UNICEF COs have employed both innovative simulations and qualitative techniques tailored to diverse data landscapes and contexts. For instance, in Georgia, a Microsimulation Model offers predictive insights into the impact of COVID-19 on child poverty, guiding policy decisions.⁷³ In contrast, Lebanon's approach draws on children's visual narratives, and Tanzania explores urban children's perceptions of poverty, highlighting unique challenges.^{74 75} Egypt's phone-based surveys provided timely data on the effects of the pandemic, demonstrating agility in data collection. Meanwhile, Montenegro complemented MODA analysis with qualitative insights for a deeper understanding of multidimensional poverty.⁷⁶ These varied approaches are a demonstration of UNICEF's commitment to employing diverse and context-sensitive approaches.

Finding 1.2.3

UNICEF has dedicated efforts to foster government ownership of measurement processes through capacity-building and a participatory approach across the country sample. Despite these efforts, the perceived limited applicability of child-specific poverty measurements among government partners has hindered the adoption and routine measurement of child poverty across the sampled countries.

Government ownership is crucial for the sustainability and continuity of child poverty measurement.⁷⁷ Achieving this requires transferring knowledge and processes to maintain measurements without UNICEF's direct involvement. UNICEF COs have effectively integrated capacity-building activities and undertook consultations with government officials to promote the government ownership of child poverty measurements. Through Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of data points, the evaluation documented that UNICEF's support in capacity-building and building national consultations is not only necessary but pivotal for achieving government ownership of child poverty measurements (Annex 5). Rwanda exemplifies UNICEF's success in fostering government ownership. Initially, the launch of the first MODA report in 2018, led by UNICEF in partnership with the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), featured a relatively limited role for the latter.^{78 79} However, following this initial engagement, UNICEF underscored the importance of refresher training and actively supported the capacity enhancement of government officials in both the measurement and application of MODA. This included the provision of training to 16 statisticians from NISR.⁸⁰ Such capacity-building efforts, combined with technical assistance and a conducive political climate focused on poverty reduction, facilitated the integration of child poverty measurement within Rwanda's multi-year household survey. Consequently, the most recent report was developed and published by NISR, with plans for routine measurement being firmly established within the household survey.

A significant challenge to achieving government ownership is the limited clarity and understanding of the policy relevance of child-centric measurements vis-à-vis age disaggregates of household-level measures. This issue has been identified in the evaluation survey as the primary barrier to the routine measurement of child poverty, affecting the strength and utility of these measures in policy applications; 75 per cent of the country offices surveyed reflected this as a factor that impedes the ownership of child

poverty measures. In contexts like Tanzania, integrating child poverty analysis into national systems has proven challenging. While there is a strong interest in its inclusion, its utility is questioned as it fails to resonate across various ministries or contribute significantly to policy dialogues.⁸¹ This reflects a broader issue of aligning child poverty measurement with national policy priorities and making it a routine part of governmental planning and evaluation.

A potential pathway to overcome these challenges involves reframing child poverty measurement not as an isolated policy area but as a crucial component of broader governmental poverty reduction initiatives. Egypt is a successful example of this approach, where UNICEF supported the institutionalization of a multidimensional poverty measurement with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. This effort led to the development of two national measures within the overall framework of poverty reduction goals – one for households and another for child deprivations – in collaboration with a range of partners.⁸² This new national poverty measurement framework marked a milestone in Egypt's efforts to reduce poverty, showcasing a key tool for planning and tracking progress.⁸³ The pursuit of government ownership and the alignment of child poverty measurements with policy priorities underscore the ongoing challenge of translating these efforts into actionable strategies for poverty reduction.



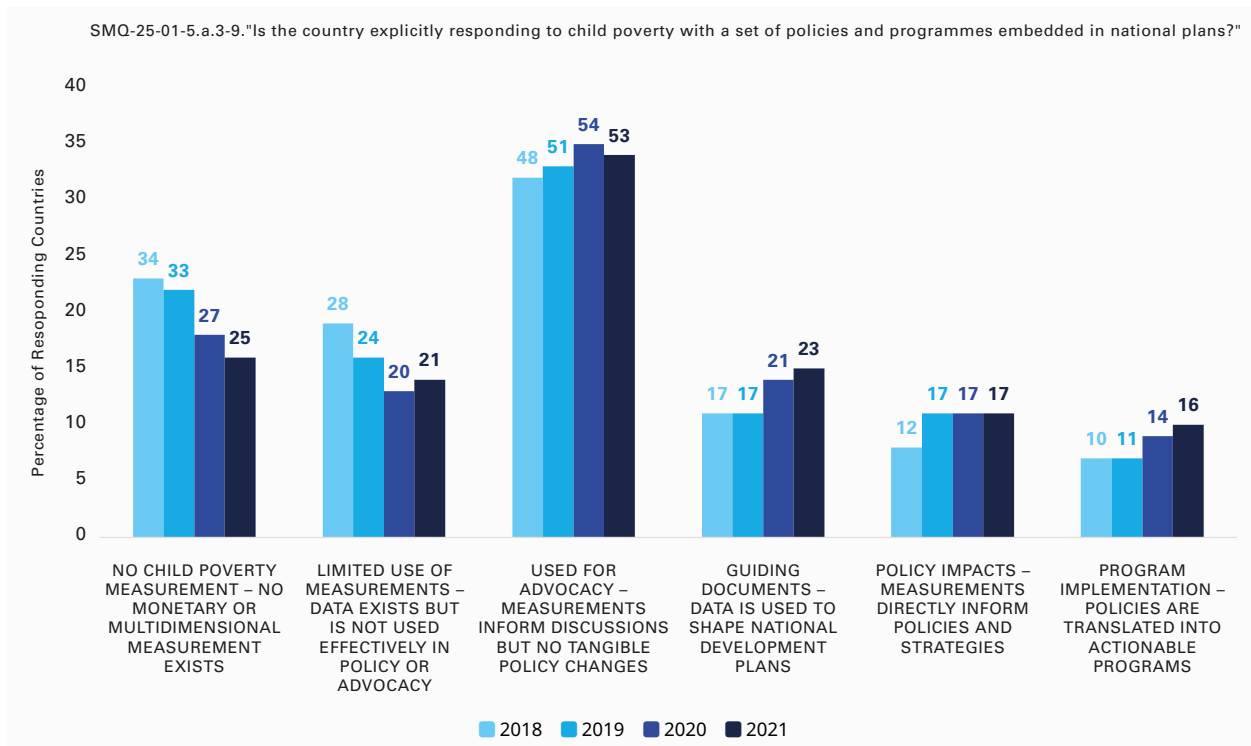
Finding 1.2.4

The evaluation identified a gap in country offices' efforts to analyse child poverty measures for informing and monitoring child poverty reduction policies and programmes. However, UNICEF has opportunities to improve guidance on the appropriate use of measurement, including expanding its use in monitoring frameworks.

This evaluation observed a growing imperative across UNICEF COs to move beyond the confines of child poverty measurement as a mere statistical exercise and enable better use of measurement. Figure 4 shows trends in the use of child poverty measurements for shaping policies and programmes. Despite a notable shift towards more comprehensive measurement – as evidenced by the decline in the

number of nations who do not carry out any poverty measurement – there is still a significant bottleneck. Many countries are stalled at the stage of using these data for advocacy without actual policy change taking place. This suggests a disconnect between the adoption of measurements and their effective use to inform and monitor child poverty reduction policies and programmes. This challenge is echoed in the Review of the Use of Multidimensional Poverty Measures, which finds that advocacy is the prevalent application of measurement and it has limited use in other impact pathways such as categorical targeting, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, guiding multisectoral interventions and coordination, and influencing national and subnational budgets.⁸⁴

Figure 4. Despite progress in child poverty measurement, the uses of measurement are still limited.⁸⁵



Note: Label displays number of total UNICEF countries reporting to SMQ in a given year that have chosen specified option

Through the production of child poverty reports and the dissemination of child poverty results, UNICEF advocacy has played a pivotal role in transforming the understanding of poverty, moving beyond income-based measures to highlight the specific dimensions of deprivations affecting children.⁸⁶ Another potential application of multidimensional child poverty measurements is in guiding the design of policies and programmes. These measurements help inform categorical targeting of geographic areas and the prioritization of groups experiencing the highest levels of multidimensional poverty. However, there

is limited use of child poverty measurements for household targeting due to the constraints in the geographic disaggregation of the surveys employed and the preference for more inclusive approaches, particularly given the high exclusion errors associated with household- or individual-level targeting approaches.⁸⁷ Burkina Faso is a noteworthy example where multidimensional child poverty measurement was used to guide the implementation of a cash-plus programme, geographically targeting the four regions with the highest incidence of multidimensional child poverty.⁸⁸

One of the primary challenges for the effective use of child poverty measurement beyond advocacy efforts is the limited clarity among COs about the appropriate use of the metric in policymaking discussions and modelling. Moreover, the evaluation documented inadequate efforts to ingrate measurement within monitoring frameworks for both UNICEF programming and national poverty reduction policies and programmes, as elaborated in Finding 1.6.3. UNICEF has scope to enhance its guidelines on the appropriate use of measurement in child poverty reduction efforts. This includes reassessing the relevance of these measurements for informing policy design and guiding fiscal allocations, as well as considering the implications of certain technical aspects – such as the selection of indicators and weightings – for policy appropriateness, impact and equity.

Evaluation subquestion 1.3: To what extent have UNICEF's advocacy efforts contributed to increasing awareness of child poverty among relevant stakeholders or in the public agenda?

Conclusion 1.3

UNICEF COs' efforts to advocate for improvements to specific policies and initiatives on child poverty measurement, social protection coverage and public spending in child-focused sectors have been largely effective (Finding 2.3.1). However, the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy in raising general awareness about child poverty among key stakeholders and in the public agenda within the sampled countries is limited to a few cases. Challenges for putting child poverty on the map include the political sensitivity of child poverty and the prioritization of other work areas within Social Policy (Finding 2.3.2).

Finding 1.3.1

UNICEF's advocacy efforts to improve specific policies and initiatives on child poverty measurement, social protection coverage and public spending in child-focused sectors have been largely effective.

UNICEF advocated effectively with government entities, notably with statistics units, for the institutionalization of child poverty measurement. Advocacy efforts in Colombia and Sri Lanka led to commitments to measure child poverty, highlighting the importance of technical dialogues and international expertise in effective advocacy strategies beyond their advisory function. In Colombia, through dialogues with key government agencies like the DANE⁸⁹ and

the National Planning Department, UNICEF offered technical guidance and facilitated knowledge-sharing with international experts. These inputs spurred commitments among government technical teams to develop both a child poverty measurement and strategy. In Sri Lanka, collaborative technical dialogues with OPHI, alongside knowledge-sharing events involving various national stakeholders, including think tanks and civil society organizations, generated commitments among the Department of Census and Statistics officials to advance the child poverty measurement agenda. These efforts resulted in the inclusion of a child module in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey and the calculation of multi-dimensional child poverty rates in 2019.⁹⁰ Table 17 in Annex 5 provides a synthesis of the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy efforts.

The sampled COs were largely effective in conducting advocacy activities aimed at influencing specific policies and initiatives contributing to expanding social protection coverage and increased spending on child-focused sectors. Advocacy efforts proved effective in 12 cases for driving specific policy outcomes through ongoing dialogues with government stakeholders and the use of pertinent evidence. In 15 countries within the sample, COs used child poverty rates to advocate for the expansion or improvement of social protection programmes; in 5 countries, COs used measurement to advocate for improving child-sensitive budget allocations. Advocacy activities were effective in boosting budget allocations for social sectors in Bangladesh and Cambodia, enhancing the coverage and adequacy of social protection programmes, notably in Argentina, Montenegro, Uzbekistan and Georgia, and influencing other development partners' programming in Ghana. For example, in Ghana and Sri Lanka, COs participated in discussions and recommended that the IMF increase the social spending floor established in Extended Credit and Fund Facilities. Successful advocacy efforts by the UNICEF Ghana CO and the World Bank led to an increase in the IMF Extended Credit Facility's social protection benchmark, resulting in the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty's (LEAP) budget doubling from GHC197 million in 2022 to GHC395 million in 2023 and improving the benefit size.⁹¹ In Sri Lanka, the IMF increased the safety net spending floor from 0.6 to 0.7 per cent of GDP in 2023.⁹²

Finding 1.3.2

UNICEF's advocacy efforts to raise awareness of child poverty among key stakeholders and in the public agenda within the sampled countries have been effective in a few instances.

Across the sampled countries, UNICEF COs' effectiveness in putting child poverty on the map, as understood in Milestone 3 of the Global Coalition Guide, is limited to a few cases. Fourteen countries undertook advocacy activities emphasizing key messages about country child poverty profiles to raise awareness among key audiences. These efforts proved significantly effective in Argentina, Lebanon, Malaysia and Montenegro.⁹³ Supporting political stakeholders and leveraging qualitative insights proved particularly effective advocacy approaches in these cases.

Advocacy efforts targeting political stakeholders raised awareness of child poverty during decisive moments and increased commitments to addressing it. In Argentina, during the 2023 presidential elections, the UNICEF CO launched the Vote for Childhood campaign, urging voters and candidates to prioritize reducing child poverty. The campaign mobilized child poverty rates and was effective in raising awareness among the public by garnering substantial attention in social media and traditional media.^{94 95 96} In 2020, UNICEF Montenegro CO, in partnership with the Parliament, launched a year-long campaign to raise awareness about multidimensional child poverty. Using evidence on multidimensional poverty and a study on policy options conducted with the World Bank, these efforts significantly influenced the government's decision to implement a quasi-universal child allowance in 2021 and a universal child allowance in 2022.^{97 98 99} **Good Practice 2** elaborates further on these cases.

Qualitative evidence disseminated in compelling formats increased the visibility of children's experiences of poverty among a broad audience. In Lebanon, the UNICEF CO launched the *Deprived Childhoods* campaign based on a qualitative study on multidimensional deprivations. This widespread campaign, involving local partners, reached a significant audience through media briefs and articles. Moreover, a round-table discussion with civil society members led to a collective call to action to tackle multidimensional poverty in Lebanon.^{100 101}

In 2018, UNICEF Malaysia CO conducted the study *Children Without: A Study of Urban Child Poverty and Deprivation in Low-Cost Flats*, which received substantial media attention and successfully raised awareness about child poverty among key political stakeholders. It prompted the government to allocate approximately (US\$635,000) for health and nutrition interventions to mitigate child stunting and improve the adequacy of the cash benefit.¹⁰² During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CO conducted a similar study titled *Families on the Edge*. This study informed advocacy for social protection reform and gained significant media exposure.¹⁰³

Most child poverty advocacy initiatives use research evidence to target their various audiences. Globally, 24 per cent of COs have used child poverty measurements to inform policy dialogues or advocacy,¹⁰⁴ while in eight countries in the sample, child poverty measurement informed advocacy activities. COs disseminated child poverty messages and evidence in seven countries through media and social media, collaborating with journalists and news editors in Argentina and Bangladesh on child poverty reporting.

UNICEF COs have further opportunities to enhance advocacy efforts to raise awareness of child poverty among key audiences and the public agenda. Among the sampled countries, 12 COs have established indicators to guide their child poverty advocacy efforts, but only seven have developed comprehensive engagement plans to strategically achieve objectives. In-depth case studies documented certain challenges in conducting advocacy activities to raise awareness of child poverty. These include the political sensitivity surrounding child poverty, prompting COs to adopt a cautious approach to preserve trust with government partners, and the prioritization of other objectives within Social Policy, such as social protection and public finance, even while these areas substantially advance the well-being of children and consequently reduce child poverty.

Evaluation subquestion 1.4: To what extent has UNICEF's child poverty work supported social protection policies and programmes?

Conclusion 1.4

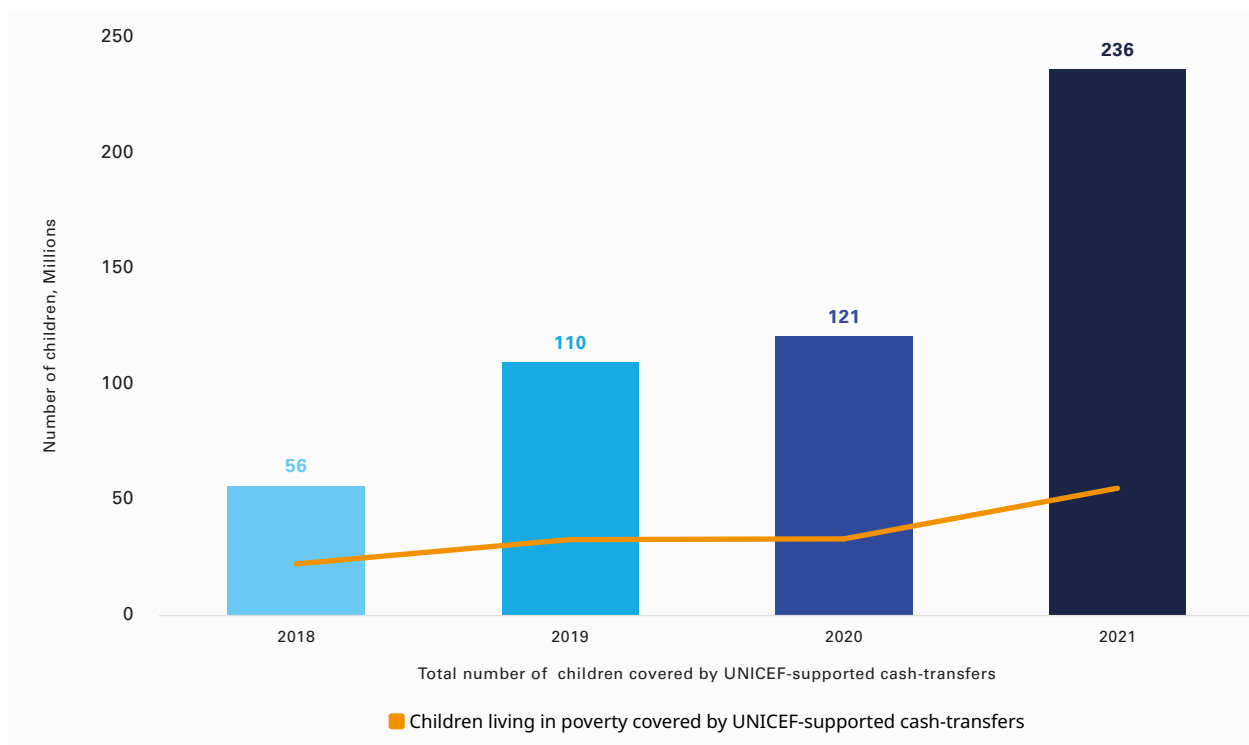
While UNICEF COs have effectively improved and expanded social protection programmes and systems (Finding 2.4.1), COs have supported other relevant child poverty reduction policies, such as care and employment policies, in a limited manner (Finding 4.2.2). Moreover, UNICEF has opportunities to use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice and technical assistance on child poverty reduction programmes and policies and to integrate child poverty into the monitoring of the social protection result area (Finding 4.2.3).

Finding 1.4.1

UNICEF COs have effectively provided technical assistance to improve and expand social protection programmes and systems with a focus on cash transfers.

Through technical advice and advocacy, COs have been effective in supporting design improvement or the expansion of cash transfers. This approach stands as the core strategy to enact policy and programme changes aimed at reducing child poverty (Milestone 4). Globally, UNICEF made progress in increasing the coverage of cash transfers for children and children living in poverty in the period 2018–2021, as Figure 5 illustrates. Table 18 in Annex 5 presents a synthesis of UNICEF's contributions towards Milestone 4 across the country sample.

Figure 5. Increase in coverage of UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes¹⁰⁵



In over half of the sampled countries, UNICEF supported the expansion of social protection programmes in terms of coverage, benefit levels, geographic reach, or age groups. The QCA (Annex 5) highlights COs' effectiveness in supporting governments to expand or improve social protection policies and programmes. Advocacy and technical assistance were identified as necessary conditions, with technical assistance proving highly necessary. In all cases of expansions or improvements, COs engaged in advocacy or provided technical assistance. Even when advocacy was carried out, technical assistance was still needed. The combination of conditions linked to a

higher number of cases of expansion or improvement also includes poverty analysis for informed advice, the use of child poverty measurement for advocacy or technical assistance and participation in a social protection working group. This underscores the importance of these actions in supporting governments in enhancing social protection programmes to address child poverty.

Across seven countries in the sample, UNICEF provided technical assistance to refine targeting mechanisms and contributed to improvements in Georgia, Lebanon and Uzbekistan. Notably, in

Georgia, UNICEF effectively used evidence on the impacts of the Targeted Social Assistance programme to advocate for a cash-based system rather than food vouchers to better respond to children's needs.¹⁰⁶ In Peru and Uzbekistan COs supported improvements to targeting mechanisms intended mainly to broaden coverage and ensure inclusive and child-centric targeting criteria. In Peru, the CO provided technical assistance to update the registry of recipients and enhance its interoperability to extend rights-holder targeting in urban areas.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, in ten countries in the sample, UNICEF COs have effectively supported integrated programmes through technical assistance and policy analysis. Increased awareness among government stakeholders of the multifaceted nature of poverty has increased UNICEF's support for this approach. Notably, UNICEF's technical and financial support for Ghana's Integrated Social Services (ISS) initiative demonstrates the organization's commitment to integrated programmes that increase access to essential services. The ISS connects rights holders from the LEAP flagship programme with health insurance and child protection services.¹⁰⁸ However, while cash-plus approaches enhance access to services for poor households at a localized scale, comprehensive demand-side sectoral interventions at a national scale are necessary to address deprivations across the various dimensions of poverty.¹⁰⁹

In most countries analysed, UNICEF's efforts extended beyond supporting individual programmes and aimed to strengthen social protection systems. In nine countries, UNICEF provided technical assistance, policy analysis, and recommendations for developing social protection policies or strategies, effectively enacting changes in seven countries. Supporting social protection systems has allowed UNICEF to establish linkages with other key services, such as health insurance, thereby enhancing responses to non-monetary deprivations. The cases of Lebanon CO's support for developing a Social Protection Strategy and Cambodia CO's support for the Family Package illustrate UNICEF's efforts for progressively and comprehensively supporting social protection systems.

In certain instances, UNICEF proposed policy options to progressively expand social protection coverage to all children. In nine countries in the sample, COs engaged in advocacy, evidence generation, or dialogues concerning the progressive realization of universal social protection, including advocating for universal child benefits (UCBs). However, challenges arise due to limited political appetite for universal programmes and constrained fiscal capacities, hindering the support for this approach. Among the sampled countries, only Montenegro and Argentina have implemented universal or quasi-universal social protection for children, with UNICEF playing a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of UCBs in Montenegro. In certain cases, such as Georgia and Uzbekistan, UNICEF provided technical assistance to refine the targeting mechanisms of cash transfer programmes while simultaneously advocating for establishing universal programmes. In Uzbekistan, the CO supported the registry digitization and the definition of eligibility criteria for the child benefit programme to reduce exclusion and inclusion errors as an alternative measure to the government's intention to make targeting criteria more stringent. Simultaneously, the CO advocates for universal coverage for certain age groups. Table 16 in Annex 5 provides a synthesis of UNICEF COs' contributions to social protection policy and programme change across the country sample.

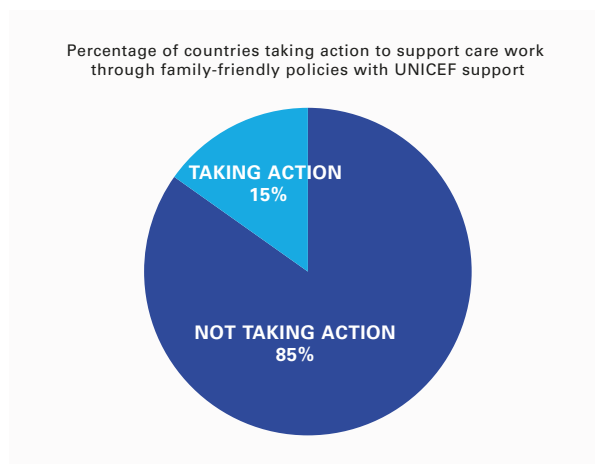


Finding 1.4.2

Aside from social protection benefits/cash transfers, country offices have supported other relevant child poverty reduction policies in a limited manner.

In addition to child benefits, the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty emphasizes employment policies promoting decent work and care policies as relevant components of the child poverty reduction policy package;¹¹⁰ nonetheless, the policy advice and technical assistance provided by UNICEF Social Policy sections on these approaches remains limited, partly because employment policies fall into the workstreams of other UN agencies. Global trends indicate that COs' support for family-friendly policies is still nascent, as Figure 6 indicates. In Colombia, the CO advocated with the government to guarantee that the formulation of a national integrated care system policy and institutional arrangements on care prioritize a child-friendly and inclusive approach. The CO also supported family-friendly initiatives through collaborations with private sector entities.^{111 112} Among the examined COs, 11 have supported care policies. Peru provides an example of Social Policy's support for care policy, where the CO provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations for establishing a national care system by supporting the design of the governance model and conducting a consultative process.¹¹³ This resulted in a care policy proposal harmonizing programmes to protect children, adolescents and unpaid caregivers against poverty.^{114 115 116} At the RO level, the Latin America Regional Office demonstrates a notable commitment to advancing the care agenda by developing a framework for Integrated Care Systems, which is projected to become a key component of the region's approach to social protection.¹¹⁷

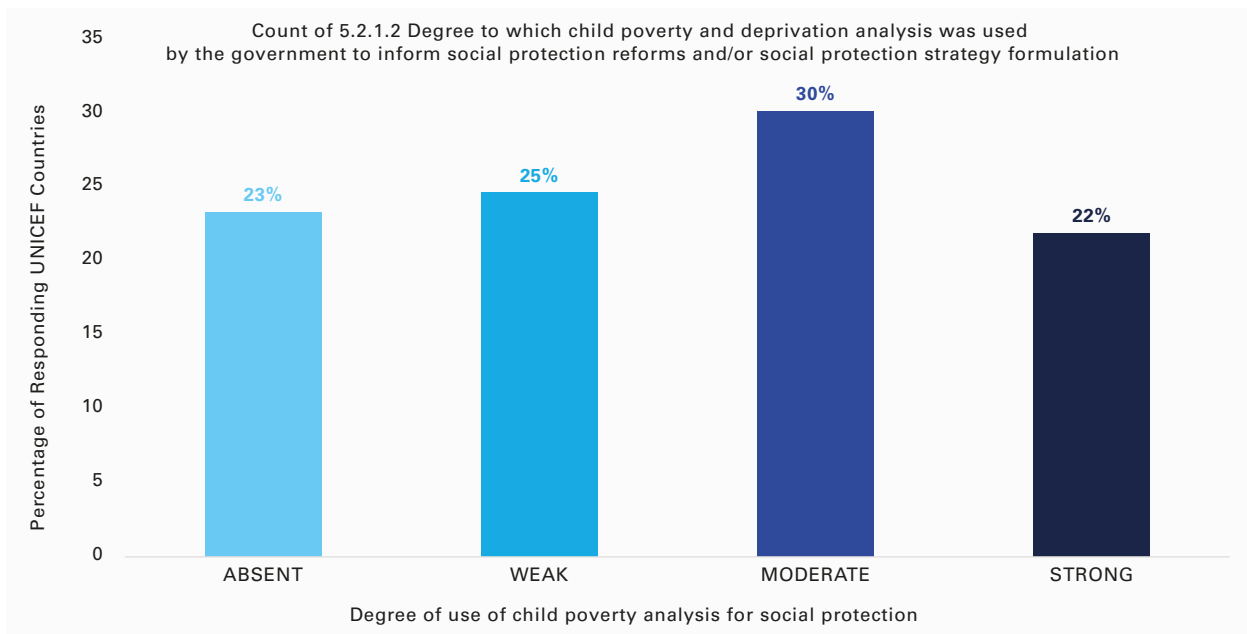
Figure 6. Percentage of country offices supporting family-friendly policies¹¹⁸

**Finding 1.4.3**

UNICEF has opportunities to use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice on social protection and to integrate child poverty rates into the monitoring of the social protection result area.

UNICEF country offices have, to some extent, used child poverty measurement to inform technical advice for enhancing social protection. Globally, nearly half of COs have not supported, or have only provided limited support for, the use of poverty analysis to inform advice on programmes, while in nearly all of the other countries governments have made moderate or strong use of poverty analysis (see Figure 7). Lesotho and Uganda both employed multidimensional poverty evidence to identify geographic areas for programme implementation and expansion.



Figure 7. Degree of country offices' use of child poverty analysis in social protection work¹¹⁹

Note: Absent: Country hasn't conducted child poverty and deprivation analysis to inform social protection reforms. Weak: Country has conducted/ used child poverty and deprivation analysis but hasn't used it to inform social protection reforms and/or social protection strategy formulation. Moderate: Country has conducted and used child poverty and deprivation analysis to inform national social protection reforms but in a limited way and children are not appropriately covered/ reflected in SP strategy. Strong: Child poverty and deprivation analysis led/ fed into the development of national social protection reforms/ strategy and children are strongly featured as a key vulnerable group.

The evaluation found mixed evidence among COs in the sample of the systematic identification of the causes of poverty through child poverty profiling, regression analyses and problem tree analyses to determine the most suitable policy packages, as the Global Coalition Guide recommends (Box 3). While 14 COs report having analysed child poverty profiles, only 5 undertook regression analysis, and 3 completed a problem tree analysis to inform their policy advice on social protection. The evaluation also found that there was not enough clarity among UNICEF CO staff members on the specific policies that work to reduce monetary and multidimensional poverty beyond cash transfer programmes. Alternatively, COs often adopt a pragmatic approach, supporting policies and programmes presenting viable opportunities for influencing and improving. In some instances, COs took proactive steps to enhance the poverty focus of programmes. For instance, the Lesotho CO specifically used multidimensional child poverty measurement to design the cash plus component of the Child Grants Programme. The CO prioritized community councils based on the 2021 N-MODA,¹²⁰ along with more updated administrative data and a food security indicator,¹²¹ and designed the complementary components based on the main deprivation drivers identified in the analysis.¹²²

BOX 3

Analysis tools to understand child poverty and its drivers

- ▶ **Child poverty profiling:** Use of household survey that produces poverty measurement and disaggregation of the poverty rate by different factors to capture the characteristics of children living in poverty.
- ▶ **Multivariate regression analysis:** Regressions can account for multiple possible drivers of child poverty. This method can show how each factor is correlated with child poverty when other variables are controlled.
- ▶ **Problem tree analysis:** Participatory tool to qualitatively map out all the potential drivers of child poverty, incorporating different perspectives on the problem. It can identify factors that cannot be captured in household surveys.

Source: UNICEF and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, *A world free from child poverty: a guide to the tasks to achieve the vision*, 2017.

There were examples showing that the effective dissemination and technical use of policy analysis can catalyse policy changes, enhancing measures to reduce child poverty. For instance, in Montenegro, the CO used child poverty analysis and evidence from a social protection system assessment (SPSA) to support plans for reforming the social protection system, and collaborated with the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare to develop a simulation tool for poverty reduction scenarios. These scenarios included expanding child allowance for children aged 6–17, expanding the family material allowance, and implementing income tax reform to fund the expansion of social protection.¹²³ Analyses demonstrated the potential impact of policy reforms on reducing child poverty rates, contributing to the government's decision to introduce the universal child allowance and to enhance its design.

The analysis of country programme documents (CPDs) of the sampled countries underscores an opportunity to increase the use of child poverty rates for monitoring the progress of the social protection result area to strengthen the linkage between the two result areas. While the social protection result area considers child poverty reduction as one of the indicative outcomes in CPDs, in about half of the countries examined, child poverty indicators actually serve to assess these outcomes. In 31 per cent of the CPDs examined, the indicative outcomes focusing on social protection are reported against key progress indicators that include monetary or multidimensional poverty rates.¹²⁴

Evaluation subquestion 1.5: To what extent has UNICEF's child poverty work supported sectoral policies and programmes?

Conclusion 1.5

UNICEF COs' Social Policy sections have provided limited advice and technical support on sectoral policies aimed at increasing access to services as part of the work in the child poverty result area. Responsibility for this programming lies primarily with other UNICEF sections (Finding 2.5.1). Furthermore, sector-specific deprivation indicators guide UNICEF's sectoral interventions, with monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates not proving relevant for guiding these interventions (Finding 2.5.2).

Finding 1.5.1

COs have provided limited advice and technical support on sectoral policies aimed at increasing access to services under the child poverty result area.

This evaluation found limited evidence of Social Policy sections supporting sectoral policies or sectoral interventions aimed at reducing multidimensional poverty among the monetarily poor by improving access to key services. This limited engagement is anticipated, as the responsibility for such sectoral interventions generally lies with the respective UNICEF sections, contributing to reducing deprivations in specific dimensions, hence contributing to reducing multidimensional poverty. In a few countries in the sample, such as Nigeria and Ghana, the Social Policy section supported access to health insurance as part of the social protection work.^{125 126}



Finding 1.5.2

Sector-specific deprivation indicators guide UNICEF's sectoral interventions. Monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates have not proved relevant for guiding these interventions.

While other UNICEF sections allocate considerable efforts to strengthen policies and interventions for improving access to services, corresponding key progress indicators in CPDs across the sample do not include improved access among the monetarily or multidimensionally poor. A notable case is Egypt, where some early childhood development, education and child protection indicators are disaggregated by wealth quintile.¹²⁷ Although not the rule, in Egypt and Rwanda, certain sectoral interventions focused on poor children. For example, the UNICEF Education section in Egypt facilitated the implementation of education reform focused on marginalized children with interventions aiming to improve the quality of education and develop skills among children in border governorates characterized by high poverty rates.¹²⁸ Moreover, the Health section supported initiatives to include the poorest families in the health-care system.¹²⁹ In Rwanda, the Nutrition section supported the expansion of a nutrition-sensitive Village Savings and Loans Associations model targeting poor households,¹³⁰ and the Education section supported the government in increasing access to education for poor and vulnerable children.¹³¹

In-depth case studies suggest that other UNICEF sections do not use multidimensional child poverty measurement to inform and target sectoral interventions. This is because of the limited utility of child poverty measurement for targeting sectoral programming. Instead, disaggregated indicators specific to each sector offer more adequate insights for guiding support for policies and programmes to increase access to services across different sectors.

Evaluation subquestion 1.6: To what extent have UNICEF activities supported the enshrinement of strategies to reduce child poverty in national plans?

Conclusion 1.6

UNICEF has supported the integration of child poverty reduction objectives within national plans and broader national poverty reduction priorities to a varied extent across the sample, while support for child poverty reduction strategies remains limited (Finding 1.6.1). UNICEF's effectiveness in incorporating child poverty into SDG monitoring and national policy evaluation has been mixed. While there has been limited support for integrating child poverty into Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), significant progress has been made in a few cases (Finding 1.6.2). Further, while COs support budget allocations for child-focused sectors and policies through Public Finance for Children (PF4C) initiatives, the clear consideration of child poverty for informing and advocating budgetary decisions is limited (Finding 1.6.3).

Finding 1.6.1

UNICEF has supported the integration of child poverty reduction objectives within national plans and broader national poverty reduction priorities to a varied extent across the sample; however, support for child poverty reduction strategies remains limited. Challenges include securing government commitment and navigating political transitions.

Through strategic engagement and technical support, UNICEF has contributed to the incorporation of child poverty targets within national development frameworks. In Bangladesh, the organization has been pivotal in streamlining a multitude of programmes into a unified National Social Security Strategy, thereby strengthening the country's focus on reducing child poverty.¹³² Similarly, in Ghana, the adoption of UNICEF-supported multidimensional child poverty measures into the national development framework showcases the organization's effectiveness in influencing policy through evidence and strategic advocacy.¹³³ In Malaysia, UNICEF supported the integration of addressing poverty and narrowing inequality from a multidimensional perspective into the national development plan, an important step towards opening discussions about child poverty as a unique form of poverty.¹³⁴ Table 19 in Annex 5 presents a synthesis of UNICEF's effectiveness in supporting national child poverty reduction commitments.

In some instances, UNICEF has supported the integration of child poverty reduction objectives within broader national poverty reduction priorities and SDG commitments. In Rwanda, UNICEF supported the integration of child poverty considerations into the national poverty graduation strategy. In 2021, the organization forged a partnership with the Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative of the NGO BRAC and the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) options paper to measure graduation from extreme poverty, which fed into the new graduation strategy.¹³⁵ With UNICEF's support, child poverty measurements were included in the options paper. This initiative is significant as it provides a tangible mechanism for tracking progress and identifying successful exits from poverty, contributing to the broader Graduation strategy. Nevertheless, UNICEF has encountered obstacles in securing consistent government endorsement, especially in the face of changing political landscapes. For instance, the Egyptian social protection strategy discard and awaiting official ratification despite UNICEF's persistent advocacy efforts.¹³⁶

Within the country sample, UNICEF supported the development and implementation of a national child poverty reduction strategy only in Colombia. By providing technical assistance, advisory services, and strategic engagement with various government departments, as well as supporting inter-agency coordination, UNICEF contributed effectively to the strategy's development. This strategy aimed to harmonize existing policy packages across sectors and government levels to reduce multidimensional child poverty. However, changes in institutional frameworks, government transitions, and varying levels of commitment at higher government tiers remain challenges for strategy implementation. The varied understanding of child poverty among government agencies and coordination challenges among implementing entities hindered the strategy's clear articulation and execution. While UNICEF's technical involvement was significant, it was not paralleled by the same level of engagement at the higher tiers of decision-making, emphasizing the necessity for persistent and strategic advocacy efforts that resonate with the evolving priorities of government leadership.

Finding 1.6.2

UNICEF's effectiveness in incorporating child poverty into SDG monitoring and national policy evaluation has been mixed. While there has been limited support for integrating child poverty into Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), significant progress has been made in a few cases.

This evaluation documented opportunities for UNICEF to increase its support for strengthening mechanisms for monitoring child poverty, including child poverty within the SDG framework national plans and its use as a monitoring tool for national programmes and policies. According to the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, 31 per cent of countries that report on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) have reported on monetary child poverty, and only 13 per cent have reported on multidimensional child poverty.¹³⁷ In a few countries in the sample, UNICEF demonstrated effective work towards including child poverty within monitoring frameworks. In Bangladesh, for example, UNICEF's efforts led to the integration of Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) estimates into the VNR, demonstrating a clear commitment to SDG tracking and informing the upcoming Five-year Plan.¹³⁸ The creation of an electronic monitoring mechanism and an SDG dashboard further solidifies this commitment, enabling the systematic review of policy impacts on child poverty.¹³⁹ In Nigeria, child poverty measurements will serve as a baseline to monitor SDG progress at the federal and state levels with UNICEF support.¹⁴⁰

At the national policy level, UNICEF's support for integrating child poverty measures into monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems has improved policy responsiveness in a few instances. In Uganda, UNICEF's collaboration with governmental bodies has made child poverty measurement a routine part of social protection programme evaluations.¹⁴¹ Similarly, in Rwanda, UNICEF-supported M&E recommendations were crucial in informing the National Graduation Strategy M&E plan, providing clear targets for graduation from poverty in the short and long term.¹⁴² However, the variable depth and consistency of monitoring efforts across different countries indicates that there is still room for improvement. The evaluation documented a need for stronger multisectoral planning and monitoring, emphasizing the necessity for ongoing technical support and advocacy to ensure the sustainability of child poverty interventions to comprehensively address its various dimensions.

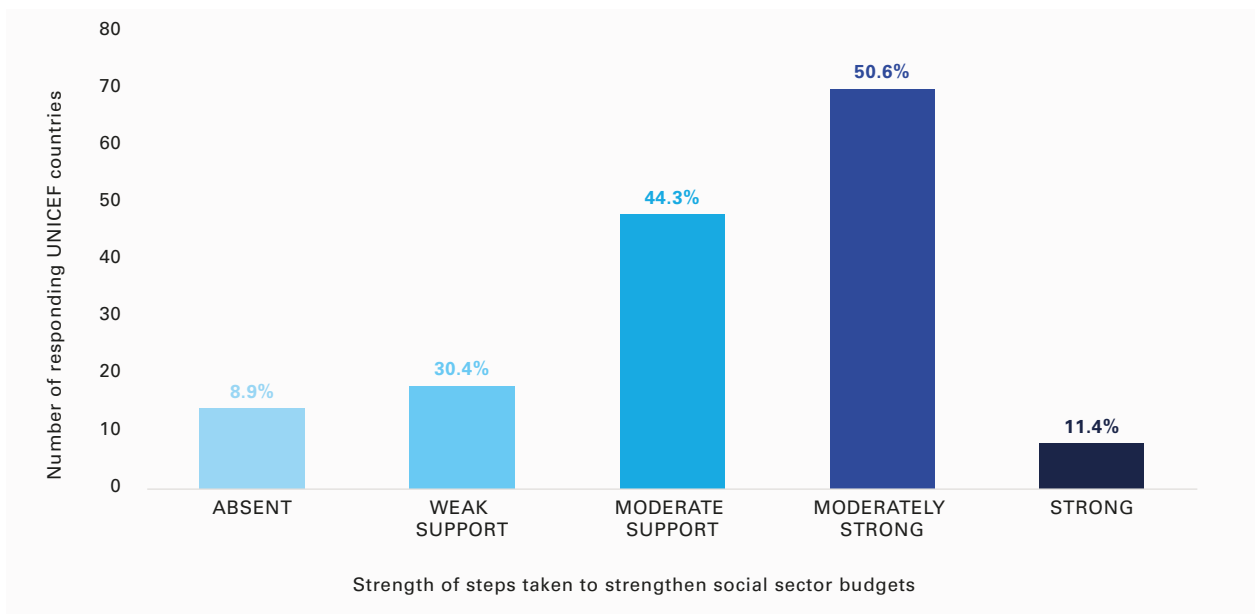
Finding 1.6.3

While COs support budget allocations for child-focused sectors and policies through PF4C initiatives, the clear consideration of child poverty for informing and advocating budgetary decisions is limited.

UNICEF's Public Finance for Children (PF4C) initiative has notably contributed to enhancing child-sensitive budgets, thereby creating an enabling environment for the improvement of social protection and sectoral policies to reduce child poverty. Globally, 44 per cent of COs engage in moderately strong support for social sector budgets, and 30 per cent in moderate support, as Figure 8 indicates. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF supported two Provincial Councils in publishing Citizens' Budgets, simplifying complex budget information for public accessibility. Concurrently, the

CO completed a Public Expenditure Review for Social Protection and developed budget briefs for five key social sectors, advocating for more effective government investment in child well-being.¹⁴³ Similarly, in Colombia, UNICEF helped the government launch a benchmarking exercise focused on optimizing public spending for children.¹⁴⁴ In Rwanda, UNICEF facilitated consultations to ensure the priorities of children and youth were reflected in district-level budget allocations, highlighting its commitment to inclusivity in financial decision-making processes. These efforts exemplify UNICEF's comprehensive approach to public finance, emphasizing not just budget increases but also the efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness of budget management and allocation to ultimately support policies and programmes.¹⁴⁵

Figure 8. Level of UNICEF country offices' support for social sector budgets¹⁴⁶



Nevertheless, the direct incorporation of child poverty into budgetary decisions has been somewhat limited, with few notable examples of the use of child poverty measurements to directly influence budget allocations and guide intergovernmental transfer prioritization based on the most severe deprivations. In Uganda, for instance, integrating multidimensional child poverty into national statistics and developing subcounty-level poverty maps have notably influenced local government allocations and the national equity agenda.¹⁴⁷ Ghana's collaboration with the University of Ghana to modify the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) highlights the direct impact on budget allocation considering district poverty levels.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, in Cambodia, the inclusion of multi-dimensional child poverty in strategic frameworks

has guided annual budget formulation.¹⁴⁹ These examples underscore the impact that child poverty rates and estimates can have in advocating for the inclusion of poverty considerations in budget allocations. This evaluation documented that child poverty is not always deemed a relevant measure for governments in their budgetary decisions due to its level of specificity. Instead, whole-of-population poverty measures are often more suitable, reflecting a life-cycle approach to poverty reduction in budgets.

COs have used child poverty measurement effectively to advocate for child-sensitive budgeting in certain cases. This strategy involves leveraging evidence about child poverty to highlight areas where budget allocations can be more effectively tailored to

benefit children. In Argentina, Ghana, Montenegro and Rwanda, UNICEF COs have successfully advocated for an increased budget allocation towards children by incorporating child poverty measurement and explicit child poverty messages into their budget analysis. COs have focused on analysing national budgets and creating sector-specific budget briefs. This initiative aims to safeguard against reductions in the allocated budget for children and improve the overall allocation. In 2023, UNICEF Argentina CO analysed budgetary allocations for the fiscal year with a focus on children. The analysis highlighted several budget cuts for national programmes for children, amounting to an 8 per cent reduction in the budget for children. Due to increasing public pressure resulting from the analysis, the Government of Argentina expanded the budget for child-sensitive social policies by adding an additional 8.9 per cent to the original budget.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, in Montenegro, in 2020, the CO developed a position paper on child poverty in response to the budget cuts in social spending.¹⁵¹ In Rwanda, the CO successfully incorporated child multidimensional deprivation indicators within the Social Protection Budget Brief in 2023 to advocate for universal social protection for the most vulnerable population, including children.¹⁵²

Key Evaluation Question 2: To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones?

Conclusion 2: Although UNICEF has prioritized child poverty reduction at a strategic level within HQ, ROs and most COs, as reflected in strategic documents and country programme priorities, the practical implementation of child poverty reduction initiatives does not often align with these strategic priorities (**Finding 2.1.1**). Challenges such as financial constraints, a preference for projects with immediate outcomes, and insufficient emphasis on UNICEF's global advocacy hinder policy support in this area. These factors result in inconsistencies in programming across the five milestones and a gap between strategic objectives and actual implementation at the country level. This highlights the need for enhanced integration, advocacy and resource allocation to prioritize child poverty effectively across all levels of the organization (**Findings 2.1.2 and 2.1.3**). [**Conclusion 2.1**]

UNICEF's work in the child poverty result area demonstrated coherence with national agendas despite governments' overall limited operational commitments to reduce child poverty (**Finding 2.2.1**). UNICEF's programming towards the five milestones has adjusted to the preferred approaches of government partners, navigated political sensitivities, and responded to the unique needs of each country context. However, the adequacy of CO initiatives varies across the five milestones:

1. UNICEF COs' focus on building partnerships around specific objectives has proven relevant for leveraging partners' expertise and aligning with their priorities. This approach facilitated progress in vital policy areas for reducing child poverty (**Finding 2.2.2**).
2. UNICEF COs' support for measuring child poverty aligns with national efforts and promotes government ownership. Yet, efforts to use measurements to inform support for child poverty reduction policies and programmes remain inadequate, mainly due to the limited clarity on the policy uses of measurement (**Finding 2.2.3**).



3. While UNICEF COs have adequately adapted advocacy efforts to country contexts to support specific policy changes, efforts to raise awareness of child poverty remain inadequate in most cases (**Finding 2.2.4**).
4. UNICEF COs' support for cash transfer programmes and social protection systems responds to country needs and government policy preferences. Nevertheless, the evaluation underscores UNICEF's insufficient role as a policy advisor on comprehensive child poverty reduction policy packages (**Finding 2.2.5**).
5. UNICEF COs' initiatives to integrate child poverty into national plans and frameworks have aligned with government priorities. However, the relevance of these efforts largely depends on the government's existing commitments to poverty reduction (**Finding 2.2.6**).

UNICEF consistently considers the needs of economically vulnerable girls, children with disabilities and children facing other individual or social vulnerabilities through social protection. However, data constraints and insufficient integration of gender and disability considerations within programming hinder UNICEF's ability to adequately measure and address child poverty among these groups. **[Conclusion 2.2]**

The relevance of UNICEF's approaches in humanitarian and fragile settings depends on governance levels and crisis severity without a comprehensive framework guiding UNICEF's efforts to reduce child poverty. The existing Milestones framework provides limited guidance for adapting child poverty reduction work in these settings: milestones 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be adjusted based on the crisis context, but for Milestone 5 this is generally less applicable. **[Conclusion 2.3]**

Evaluation subquestion 2.1. To what extent is UNICEF's child poverty work prioritized at HQ, RO and CO levels?

Conclusion 2.1

Although UNICEF has prioritized child poverty reduction at a strategic level within HQ, ROs, and most COs, as reflected in strategic documents and country programme priorities, the practical implementation of child poverty reduction initiatives does not often align with these strategic priorities (**Finding 2.1.1**). Challenges such as financial constraints, a preference for projects with immediate outcomes, and insufficient emphasis on UNICEF's global advocacy hinder policy support in this area at the global and country levels (**Findings 2.1.2 and 2.1.3**). These factors result in inconsistencies in programming across the five milestones and a gap between strategic prioritization and actual implementation (**Findings 2.1.2 and 2.1.3**).

Finding 2.1.1

UNICEF's commitment to child poverty reduction, while strategically prioritized, faces inconsistencies in implementation across organizational levels, highlighting a gap between strategic objectives and programmatic execution.

The extent of prioritization of child poverty work within UNICEF showed variable results, documenting a discrepancy between the strategic commitment to the child poverty result area as part of Goal Area 5 and the actual prioritization and implementation of work across the five milestones for child poverty reduction on a programmatic level. UNICEF's institutional commitments through the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 demonstrate strategic prioritization, as the plan highlights the reduction of child poverty as one of the result areas of Goal Area 5.¹⁵³ This prioritization becomes even more apparent in country office strategic documents, such as country programme documents (CPDs), where child poverty emerges as a priority in 51 per cent of the 37 CPDs reviewed as a country programme priority and an outcome of UNICEF's work.¹⁵⁴

However, in limited cases, the child poverty result area goes beyond social policy to become a leading goal of the entire country programme. In Malaysia, for example, reducing child poverty is part of the overarching vision of the country programme to deliver positive change for the most vulnerable and marginalized children.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, in Egypt, the

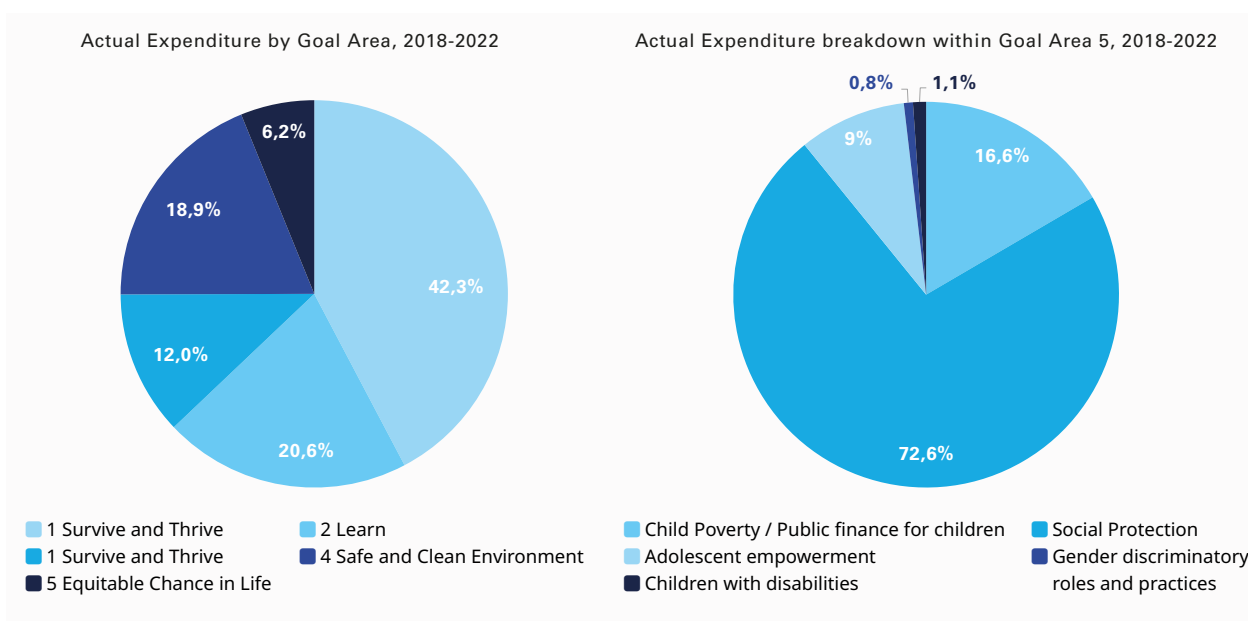
country programme evaluation highlighted the country programme's overall aim to support child poverty reduction efforts.¹⁵⁶ Montenegro is another case where the country programme aims to contribute to the progressive realization of the rights of children, with a special focus on children affected by poverty.¹⁵⁷ These instances underscore the potential for UNICEF to implement a more holistic strategic approach to prioritizing child poverty, facilitating strengthened and more integrated programming across the five milestones. In cases where the Social Policy section operates as a cross-cutting section, fostering collaboration on multidimensional child poverty, work across the five milestones has proven more effective, as shown in Best Practice 1.

Finding 2.1.2

Financial constraints and preferences for immediate, visible outcomes over long-term structural solutions significantly impact UNICEF's capacity to prioritize and finance the child poverty result area at the global and country levels. This results in a skewed allocation of resources towards projects with tangible results, such as measurement, and diminishes the focus on policy and programme support for child poverty reduction.

Alongside organizational challenges, financial constraints inhibit the overall human capacity for work across the five milestones and determine the prioritization between the five milestones. This evaluation documents that one of the primary financial barriers to better financing the child poverty result area is the heavy reliance on donor funding, which often prioritizes projects with immediate and visible results over long-term, structural solutions such as the work done in Goal Area 5. The inherent negative framing of this issue – focusing on the reduction of poverty rather than the provision of benefits – also diminishes its attraction to donors, who are often drawn to more visibly affirmative and positive framings of the outcomes. This preference influences the allocation of resources, limiting the potential for broader and more impactful child poverty initiatives. This issue is starkly evidenced in Figure 9, which shows that the financial allocation for Goal Area 5 represents only 6 per cent of UNICEF's total expenditures, the lowest among all goal areas. The long-term and not easily measurable nature of child poverty work further exacerbates this issue, so that there is little priority for expense allocation to this result area, even within the underfunded Goal Area 5. The child poverty result area, which also incorporates funding allocated to PF4C activities, accounted for only about 16.6 per cent of aggregate country office Goal Area 5 expenditure and 0.74 per cent of total expenditure between 2018 and 2022.^{158 159}

Figure 9. Analysis of expenditure by goal area and within Goal Area 5 (2018–2022)¹⁶⁰



The prioritization of funding within the result area of child poverty reduction has inadvertently limited the capability of country offices to allocate resources comprehensively across the five milestones. Specifically, in Rwanda, there was a significant shortfall in funding for outcome 7, with a focus on the poorest benefiting from strengthened and adequately resourced integrated social protection. This particular outcome was underfunded by 60 per cent in the 2022–2023 workplan developed in collaboration with MINALOC.¹⁶¹ The preference for projects yielding immediate, visible outcomes has also shaped the prioritization across the milestones, resulting in a greater emphasis on milestones with tangible results, like measurement (Milestone 2) and advocacy (Milestone 3), over the deeper programmatic elements of child poverty reduction. This approach has somewhat overshadowed the importance of Milestones 4 and 5, which are crucial for providing structural support and long-term solutions to child poverty.

Finding 2.1.3

Insufficient emphasis on child poverty in UNICEF's global narrative and advocacy efforts undermines the potential for comprehensive prioritization and effective implementation of work across the five milestones.

Child poverty is not distinctly highlighted in UNICEF's formal mission statement or overarching narrative. References to poverty reduction are absent from UNICEF's explicitly stated mission, which may lead to ambiguity regarding its position as a focal point of the organization's agenda.¹⁶² UNICEF staff members have reflected that the work on child poverty is done within the silo of the Social Policy team at the HQ level with limited cross-over into other sectional work. This is also reflected in the strategic plan, with minimal mention of poverty outside of Goal Area 5.¹⁶³

Moreover, in UNICEF flagship publications and advocacy initiatives, discussions of poverty reduction tend to be subsumed within broader thematic areas, addressed as chapters in flagship reports like the *State of the World's Children*, rather than as a dedicated topic meriting its own focused report. This is reflected in the exclusion of child poverty and inclusive social protection as part of the Global Advocacy Priorities, with only "indirect [mention], primarily through support and capacity-building initiatives."¹⁶⁴ The intricate and multifaceted nature of multidimensional child poverty creates a degree of uncertainty within UNICEF regarding its conceptualization. This uncertainty impedes the effective prioritization of the issue at senior management levels due to the complexities involved in fully grasping its scope and implications. The insufficient prioritization of child poverty within the organizational narrative and beyond the sphere of Social Policy at HQ also hampers UNICEF's ability to shape external prioritization, thereby affecting resource mobilization. This shortfall in prioritization creates a self-perpetuating cycle whereby limited global advocacy results in subdued donor mobilization, leading to constrained resource allocation at the country office level. This limitation, in turn, undermines the capacity of the COs to implement and operationalize child poverty initiatives effectively despite a clear strategic commitment to this area.



The regional offices serve a pivotal role in UNICEF, linking headquarters' directives with country-level implementation, making the priority of child poverty contingent upon both country-level needs and the overarching global narrative of UNICEF. There is a shared recognition among regional offices that child poverty is not made an adequate institutional priority at the headquarters level, which in turn hampers their capacity to elevate this issue within their agendas and therefore affects the priority in the country offices.

While UNICEF shows a strategic commitment to addressing child poverty, its prioritization across the HQ, the RO and the CO levels remains insufficient and faces significant challenges. These challenges include a lack of donor prioritization, limited integration of child poverty work across different sectors of UNICEF, and a lack of emphasis on child poverty in the global advocacy and institutional narrative of the organization. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to enhance cross-sectoral integration, advocate for a shift in donor focus on long-term child poverty initiatives and increase the global prioritization of child poverty within UNICEF's broader strategic objectives.



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Evaluation subquestion 2.2: To what extent has UNICEF's work in child poverty been relevant to addressing national needs (including the needs of the most vulnerable children)?

Conclusion 2.2

UNICEF COs' work under the child poverty result area demonstrated coherence with national agendas despite governments' overall limited operational commitments to reduce child poverty (Finding 2.2.1). UNICEF's programming towards the five milestones has adjusted to the preferred approaches of government partners, navigated political sensitivities, and responded to the unique needs of each country context. However, the adequacy of CO initiatives varies across the five milestones:

1. UNICEF COs' focus on building partnerships around specific objectives has proven relevant for leveraging partners' expertise and aligning with their priorities. This approach facilitated progress in vital policy areas for reducing child poverty (Finding 2.2.2).
2. UNICEF COs' support for measuring child poverty aligns with national efforts and promotes government ownership. Yet, limited clarity on the best practices for selecting dimensions, indicators and weightings often reduces the accuracy and relevance of measurements (Finding 2.2.3).
3. While UNICEF COs have adequately adapted advocacy efforts to country contexts to support specific policy changes, efforts to raise awareness of child poverty remain inadequate in most cases (Finding 2.2.4).
4. UNICEF COs' support for cash transfer programmes and social protection systems responds to country needs and government policy preferences. Nevertheless, the evaluation underscores UNICEF's insufficient role as a policy advisor on comprehensive child poverty reduction policy packages (Finding 2.2.5).
5. UNICEF's initiatives to integrate child poverty into national plans and frameworks have aligned with government priorities. However, the relevance of these efforts largely depends on the government's existing commitments to poverty reduction (Finding 2.2.6).

UNICEF consistently considered the needs of economically vulnerable girls, children with disabilities and children facing other individual or social vulnerabilities through social protection. However, data constraints and insufficient integration of gender and disability considerations within programming hinder UNICEF's ability to adequately measure and address child poverty among these groups (Finding 2.2.2).

Finding 2.2.1

UNICEF's strategic work under the child poverty result area demonstrated coherence with national agendas despite governments' overall limited operational commitments to reduce child poverty.

Close collaboration among UNICEF and government partners across the 20 sampled countries in developing CPDs, annual workplans and situation analyses enhanced the responsiveness of UNICEF to country-specific needs and priorities. In Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, alignment between UNICEF's child poverty programming and governments' priorities is evidenced by the coherence of poverty reduction objectives in government strategies, with notable emphasis on child poverty in Colombia and Rwanda. Evidence of this strategic alignment is corroborated by most government and civil society actors and development partners who consider UNICEF's work on child poverty reduction relevant to the national context. The UNICEF Rwanda CO country programme aligns with Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation 2017–2024, underscoring the policies and programmes for reducing poverty, extreme poverty and malnutrition.^{165 166} In Colombia, the CO programme aligns with the National Development Plans' 2018–2022 and 2022–2026 commitments to measure child poverty and to operationalize the Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty.^{167 168} In Cambodia, UNICEF's country programme aligns with the government's Pentagonal Strategy Phase I, particularly with objective three on reducing poverty rates below 10 per cent.¹⁶⁹ In Sri Lanka, UNICEF's country programme aligns with the Government's Public Investment Programme 2017–2020 and 2021–2024, particularly with the former plan focusing on poverty alleviation as a budgetary priority.¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, stakeholder consultations, strategic documents, and a review of the programmes and policies in these countries suggest that governments often do not consider child poverty reduction a primary strategic priority in practice, instead placing a stronger focus on broader development objectives. The evaluation documented that among the in-depth case studies, only Rwanda's government priorities and policies exhibit a high level of commitment to child poverty reduction as part of the overall poverty reduction agenda. The governments' prioritization of child poverty often faces a challenge due to limited conceptual clarity and the political sensitivity surrounding poverty, as explained in [Lesson Learned 2](#). Governments, development partners and UNICEF staff members frequently have diverse understandings of child poverty, and this shapes approaches to measure and address it. Consultations with government stakeholders in the four in-depth study countries and key UNICEF stakeholders across the sample and at different levels reflect a general agreement on the multidimensional nature of child poverty, yet differing perspectives prevail. Some view it primarily in terms of material deprivations, while others see it as a broader concept encompassing overall well-being, including non-material aspects. UNICEF programming towards the five milestones has adjusted to the preferred approaches of government partners, navigated political sensitivities, and responded to the unique needs of each country context, as outlined in Table 3.¹⁷¹

Table 3. UNICEF's relevant approaches towards the five milestones in Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka

	Milestone 1: Partnerships	Milestone 2: Measurement	Milestone 3: Advocacy	Milestone 4: Policies and Programmes	Milestone 5: National Commitments
Cambodia	Led relevant collaborative efforts with the ILO and EU on the joint programme Accelerating Social Protection in Cambodia; with the EU on public financial management to increase budgets for social protection programmes; ¹⁷² with the WFP to improve the shock-responsiveness of the Family Package; ¹⁷³ and with the World Bank and UNDP to promote the government's commitment to measure multidimensional child poverty. ¹⁷⁴	Organized national and subnational level capacity-building programmes on the Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA) measurement methodology as an adequate entry point to foster government commitments to regularly measure child poverty and include the MODA measurement among official poverty measures.	Advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, key social ministries, and subnational authorities have proved relevant to increasing budget allocations for social services, social assistance programmes, and interventions targeting poor and vulnerable children. ¹⁷⁵	Supported the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) in designing the Family Package of integrated social assistance programmes, ¹⁷⁶ aligning with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019–2023 priorities of improving children's welfare and social assistance for vulnerable populations and achieving the goal of an inclusive social protection system outlined within the NSPPF. Responding to the low number of identified children with disabilities, ¹⁷⁷ the CO supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) in developing a disability identification mechanism.	Aligning with the priorities of the Public Financial Management Reform Programme 2004–2025, ¹⁷⁸ the CO promoted the strengthening of subnational child-sensitive budgeting. The SDG Fund for Social Protection, the subregional Public Financial Management Facility, and an initiative funded by the European Union contributed to linking social protection with public financial management. ¹⁷⁹

<p>Colombia</p>	<p>UNICEF has established relevant partnerships with key government entities, including the National Planning Department (DNP), Department of Social Prosperity (DPS), Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE). The CO's role as a convener among these entities proved vital during the planning processes of the child poverty measurement and the development of the National Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty.^{180 181}</p>	<p>Appropriate and technically sound technical assistance, involving experts' advice and knowledge-sharing on global lessons, to inform the methodology and definition of the multidimensional child poverty index.¹⁸² Showcased insights from participatory studies to ensure the relevance of dimensions of children's needs.¹⁸³</p>	<p>Technical advocacy proved relevant for leveraging commitment to child poverty reduction efforts in situations where strong government ownership or political sensitivity might constrain the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy for new initiatives.</p>	<p>Providing technical advice and financial support to enhance the social registry's child sensitivity. In the context of a transition in the social protection system, UNICEF's efforts aim to ensure the inclusion of children in the registry and their adequate targeting for the social protection programme Renta Ciudadana.¹⁸⁴</p>	<p>Contributed technical expertise to Colombia's Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty, participating in the Experts Committee in 2019, adequately informing conceptual and technical aspects.¹⁸⁵ Assisted in conceptualizing child poverty and offered recommendations during the drafting phase.^{186 187 188 189}</p>
<p>Rwanda</p>	<p>By leading collaborations on the UN Joint Programme for Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection¹⁹⁰ and the development partners' social protection working group, UNICEF promotes policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaborations.¹⁹¹</p>	<p>Partnership with the NISR and involvement in technical discussions during the measurement planning stages proved relevant to facilitate the government's ownership of the MODA in both 2018 and 2022.^{192 193}</p>	<p>Relevant high-level advocacy activities, including presenting key messages to parliament and advocating for increased budget allocations in social sectors, yielding positive results.¹⁹⁴</p>	<p>Through the UN Joint Programme on Social Protection, UNICEF supported the roll-out of the Village Savings and Loans Associations, linking groups to social protection services,¹⁹⁵ which was incorporated into the poverty reduction strategy.¹⁹⁶ Responding to high stunting rates, the CO supported a targeted nutrition-focused cash-plus programme in districts with high poverty rates, contributing to the national strategy for sustainable graduation.¹⁹⁷</p>	<p>By supporting the formulation of the National Child Development Policy and the Graduation Strategy, UNICEF enhanced a comprehensive framework and tools for monitoring child poverty reduction policies. Supported integration of child poverty considerations into the National Poverty Graduation Strategy.¹⁹⁸</p>

Sri Lanka

Partnerships with the EU and UNDP through the Public Finance Facility and the Finance Flagship Initiative, respectively, supported relevant evidence to improve fiscal allocations for social protection.¹⁹⁹ UNICEF's and UNDP's leading roles in the UN Country Team Results Groups on Social Protection and SDG Planning, Financing, and Data Results strengthen the coherence of this collaboration.²⁰⁰ Highly relevant partnership with OPHI and Department of Census and Statistics to support child poverty measurement.

Capacity-building activities were relevant for enhancing the Department of Census and Statistics' capacities and commitments to measure child poverty based on existing plans to calculate the MPI.²⁰¹

Due to the acute fiscal constraints the government faces, consistent advocacy efforts for a universal child benefit were unsuccessful. Consequently, UNICEF took a flexible approach and adjusted its strategy to advocate for the age expansion of the existing Pregnancy Voucher Programme (PVP).²⁰²

Introduced a short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer programme in 2022 to provide temporary income support for young children and their families during the economic and financial crisis. The nutrition component of the programme addressed the country's issue of malnutrition among children under 5 years old, with stunting rates at 17.3 per cent and wasting rates at 15.1 per cent.²⁰³ Consultations with the National Planning Department and Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment ensured the programme's institutional appropriateness.

Evidence generation on fiscal space for social protection addressed the imperative to safeguard and enhance budgets for social protection amid an acute economic crisis, responding to key challenges for enhancing the social protection system.²⁰⁴

Finding 2.2.2

[Milestone 1] At the country level, focusing on building partnerships around specific objectives has proven relevant for leveraging partners' expertise and aligning with their priorities. This approach facilitated progress in vital policy areas for reducing child poverty.

UNICEF's partnership building has been relevant in driving collaborative efforts that have been instrumental in enhancing social protection systems and measuring child poverty (**Finding 1.1.1**). In Cambodia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, UNICEF's leadership in social protection working groups improved the design, implementation and funding of social protection policies and programmes. Partnerships with statistics departments and development partners played a crucial role in supporting commitments to measuring child poverty, as the case of Sri Lanka illustrates (**Good Practice 3**). While this evaluation notes a limited emphasis on establishing a national pathway to eradicate child poverty across the sampled countries (**Finding 1.1.2**), focusing on narrower objectives has proven relevant for leveraging partners' expertise and aligning with their priorities. This approach has facilitated more efficient progress in crucial policy areas for reducing child poverty, such as social protection and measurement.

Finding 2.2.3

[Milestone 2] UNICEF COs' support for measuring child poverty aligns with national efforts. Yet, limited clarity on the best practices for selecting dimensions, indicators and weightings often reduces the accuracy and relevance of measurements.

UNICEF's flexibility in supporting different approaches to child poverty measurement through capacity-building activities, technical guidance and the implementation of child-focused surveys has proved a relevant approach for supporting the governments' commitments to measuring child poverty and improving the adequacy of measurements for country contexts (**Finding 1.2.2**). For instance, in Colombia and Sri Lanka, UNICEF leveraged the government's previous experience and interest in the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to support commitments to measuring child poverty. In Uganda, adapting UNICEF's support for a measurement methodology to the government's preference for the consensual approach was vital for supporting the ownership of child poverty measurement.

However, the evaluation documented limited clarity and understanding within the organization about the deprivations that define child poverty. The limited adoption of clear best practices for selecting and weighting dimensions and indicators, as well as representing different age groups, often hampers the accuracy of child poverty estimates and their appropriateness for application in policy and monitoring.

Finding 2.2.4

[Milestone 3] While UNICEF COs have adequately adapted advocacy efforts to country contexts to support specific policy changes, efforts to raise awareness of child poverty remain inadequate in most cases.

Advocating for specific improvements in policies, programmes and initiatives through policy dialogues and recommendations proved relevant for enhancing social protection, child poverty measurement, and child-sensitive budgets (**Finding 2.3.1**). The cases of Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka exemplify how COs adapted their advocacy objectives and approaches to the country context. For example, in Sri Lanka, the CO switched from advocating for a universal child benefit to supporting the age expansion of the Pregnancy Voucher Programme (PVP).^{205 206} Considering the individual countries' context and political sensitivity to child poverty, certain COs adopted nuanced approaches to advocacy focused on technical dialogues or broader well-being objectives. For instance, in Colombia, advocacy efforts adopted a technical dialogue. The evaluation highlights untapped opportunities to employ advocacy strategies to raise awareness of child poverty among stakeholders and on the public agenda. COs have opportunities to mobilize child poverty measures and qualitative evidence more extensively through advocacy campaigns tailored to the country context (**Finding 1.3.2**). The cases of Montenegro and Argentina exemplify comprehensive approaches to child poverty advocacy (**Good Practice 2**). In these instances, COs raised awareness of child poverty among candidates and parliamentarians.

Finding 2.2.5

[Milestone 4] UNICEF CO's support for cash transfer programmes and social protection systems responds to country needs and government policy preferences. Nevertheless, the evaluation underscores UNICEF's insufficient role as a policy advisor on comprehensive child poverty reduction policy packages.

UNICEF COs provided adequate technical assistance and policy advocacy to enhance and expand cash transfer programmes and social protection systems. Relevant approaches involved advising on universal child benefits, bolstering social protection policies and systems to offer comprehensive support throughout various life stages, and supporting integrated programmes (Finding 1.4.1). UNICEF tailored its technical support to specific country needs; for instance, in Rwanda and Sri Lanka, UNICEF supported relevant programmes addressing the link between child poverty and malnutrition. In Rwanda, the CO supported a targeted nutrition-focused cash-plus programme in districts with high poverty rates, contributing to the national strategy for sustainable graduation.²⁰⁷ In Sri Lanka, a short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer initiative addressed immediate needs in districts with higher child wasting and stunting rates,²⁰⁸ responding to the issue of malnutrition among children under five years old, with stunting rates at 17.3 per cent and wasting rates at 15.1 per cent.²⁰⁹ Moreover, the case of Cambodia exemplifies the relevance of UNICEF's holistic approach by strengthening social protection systems with a focus on the lifecycle, aligning with the government's priorities. The Cambodia CO supported the Royal Government of Cambodia in developing the Family Package of integrated cash transfers for pregnant women and children under two years of age, children in primary and secondary school, persons with disabilities, older people and people living with HIV-AIDS.²¹⁰ However, the evaluation highlighted UNICEF's inadequate role as a policy advisor on child poverty reduction policies, noting limited efforts to recommend comprehensive child poverty reduction policy packages, including care and employment policies, based on child poverty analysis (Findings 1.4.2 and 1.4.3).

Finding 2.2.6

[Milestone 5] UNICEF CO's initiatives to integrate child poverty into national plans and SDG monitoring frameworks have aligned with government priorities. However, the relevance of these efforts largely depends on the government's existing commitments to poverty reduction.

UNICEF's technical assistance and advocacy were relevant for embedding child poverty into national plans and strategies, and into SDG monitoring frameworks, ensuring alignment with national development agendas and the broader SDG objectives (Finding 1.6.1 and 1.6.2). The cases of Colombia and Rwanda exemplify the relevance of UNICEF's approaches to supporting the inclusion of child poverty reduction in national strategies. In Colombia, the CO provided technical expertise to Colombia's Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty, effectively informing both conceptual and technical aspects.²¹¹ However, this case underscores the importance of advocating and engaging government stakeholders at decision-making levels, alongside officials at technical levels, to influence national strategic commitments.²¹² In Rwanda, UNICEF provided relevant support for integrating child poverty considerations into the Graduation Strategy. In partnership with BRAC and MINALOC, the CO provided an options paper to measure graduation from extreme poverty, informing the Graduation Strategy's M&E plan.²¹³ The effectiveness of these initiatives in both countries also depended on the governments' pre-existing commitments to poverty reduction, illustrating that the impact of child-focused poverty reduction efforts varies significantly based on governmental priorities regarding poverty alleviation. This underscores the variable relevance of the work conducted under Milestone 5, which is highly dependent on the existence of broader poverty reduction objectives in a given country.

Finding 2.2.7

UNICEF COs consistently considered the needs of economically vulnerable girls, children with disabilities and children facing other individual or social vulnerabilities through social protection. However, data constraints and insufficient integration of gender and disability considerations within programming hinder UNICEF's ability to adequately measure and address child poverty among these groups.

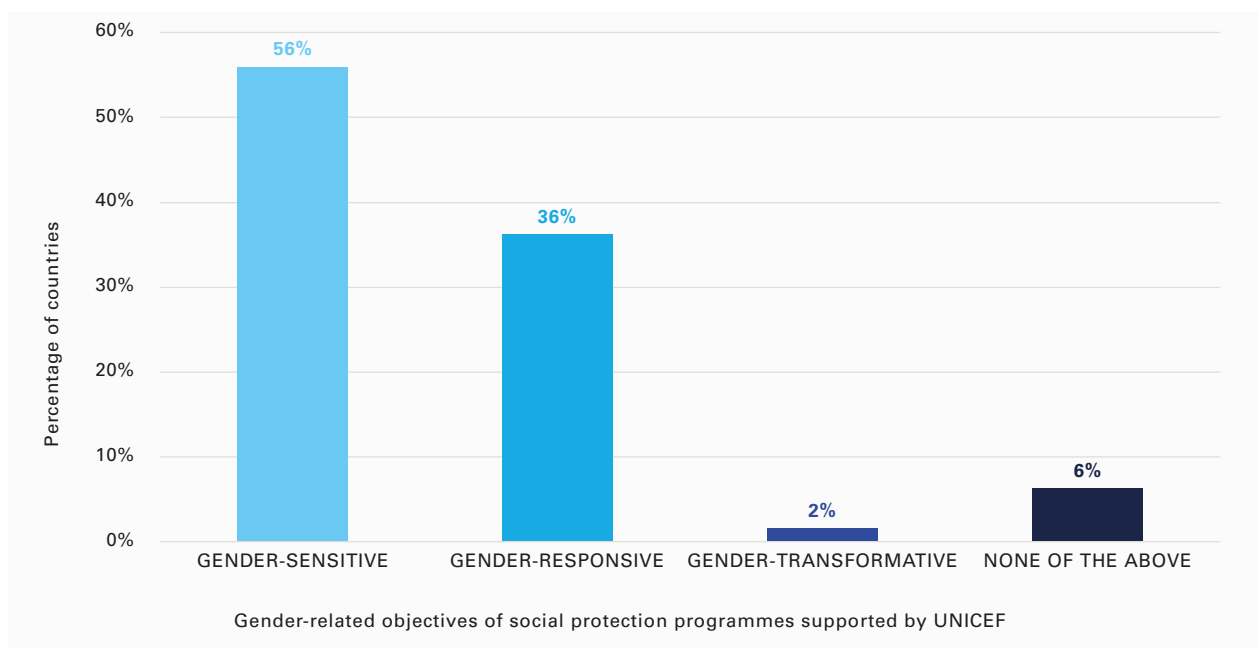
Poverty often overlaps with other forms of vulnerability, such as those stemming from individual characteristics like disabilities or from social norms related to gender and ethnicity. This overlap means that children from certain groups living in poverty face disproportionate deprivations, requiring adequate interventions to address their unique needs.²¹⁴ Although UNICEF has consistently incorporated gender and disability perspectives in social protection efforts, the consideration of these cross-cutting issues is not systematic. Limited data availability poses a significant challenge in measuring child poverty among girls and children with disabilities. While UNICEF HQ has worked on advancing techniques – such as key disaggregates and indicators – and guidance to address the intersection of gender and disability with poverty, only a few COs have shown awareness and incorporated these elements into their programmes.

The lack of data on certain indicators is a primary obstacle in quantifying poverty levels for girls. The absence of additional indicators for girls' specific needs in most measurements poses challenges for

accurately measuring the multidimensional poverty differences between boys and girls.²¹⁵ Accordingly, UNICEF HQ advised integrating indicators capturing aspects relevant to girls into child poverty measurements, with menstrual hygiene management being included in UNICEF's guidelines on measuring child poverty in 2020.²¹⁶ However, the limited availability of relevant indicators in country data poses challenges for incorporating girl-specific indicators in child poverty measurements.

Reducing poverty among girls requires considering the intersection of child poverty and gender in social protection programme design by enhancing gender-responsive and transformative programmes. Globally, UNICEF supports social protection programmes with a gender focus, mainly gender-sensitive initiatives. At the country level, 36 per cent of COs globally support gender-responsive programmes, and 2 per cent support gender-transformative programmes, as illustrated in Figure 10. Comprehensive gender-responsive and transformative programmes are more likely to tackle the intersection between gender and poverty than gender-sensitive programmes. The Girls Education Project in Sokoto State in Nigeria and the Girls Empowering Girls programme in Kampala, Uganda, exemplify support for gender-transformative programmes promoting girls' access to services and skills development in underserved areas. However, responding adequately to this intersection at a large scale requires strengthening integrated responses across key sectors such as WASH, nutrition and child protection.

Figure 10. UNICEF's support for the integration of gender into social protection programmes²¹⁷

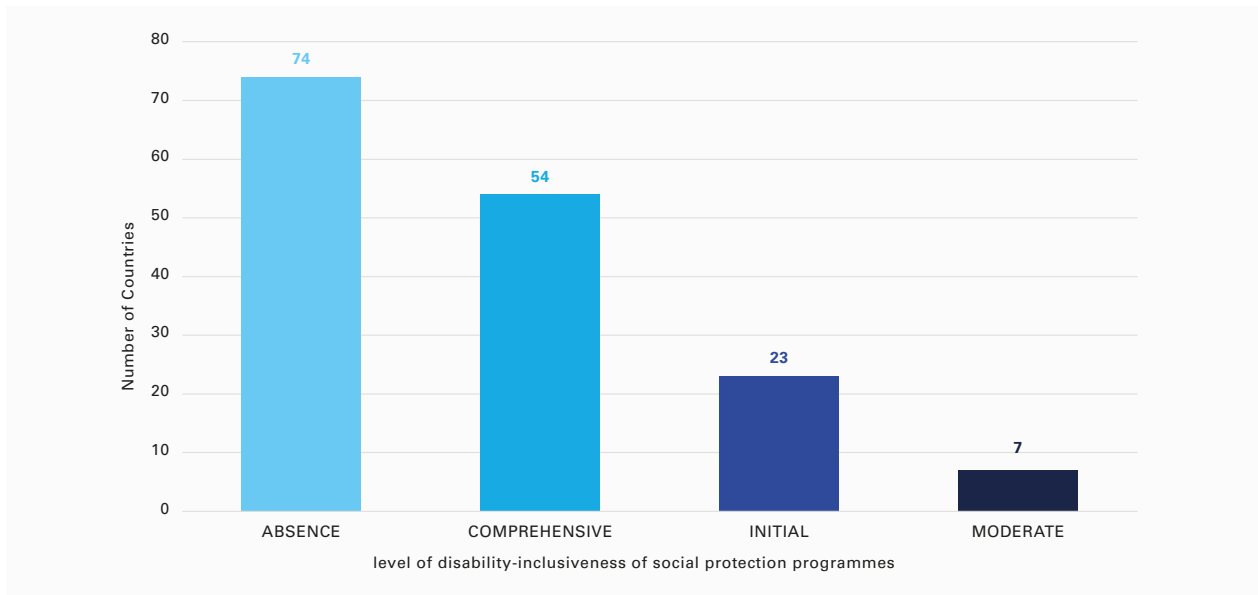


Challenges in estimating child poverty rates among children with disabilities include the inconsistent adoption of tools to identify children with disabilities in household surveys, such as the Child Functioning Module. Moreover, the relatively small number of children with disabilities in many contexts results in small sample sizes to obtain adequate estimates. Despite this, UNICEF HQ has made efforts to estimate poverty levels among this group. In 2021, UNICEF HQ estimated multidimensional child poverty rates among children with disabilities for certain countries using MICS data, as outlined in the report *Seen, Counted and Included*.²¹⁸ Moreover, among the countries in this evaluation sample, COs in Cambodia, Georgia, Lebanon, Montenegro, Nigeria and Tanzania calculated disability-disaggregated child poverty rates. In Cambodia, the CO supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) to roll out the national disability identification programme, increasing access among poor people and children with disabilities to the national disability allowance and social services.²¹⁹ UNICEF

supported the roll-out of a data-collection tool and strengthened the disability management information system. These efforts contributed to an increase in the coverage of the disability allowance for 16,586 rights holders in 2022.^{220 221}

UNICEF HQ contributed to developing a methodology to estimate the added costs of disability, and collaboration with the World Bank aims to formalize this approach in poverty measurement. In Georgia and Peru, COs, with UNICEF HQ support, conducted pilot studies to estimate additional costs for accessing goods and services for children with disabilities.^{222 223} Notably, the Georgia CO, in partnership with the government, has used these results to redefine the social protection policy package for this group. Globally, UNICEF supported comprehensive disability-inclusive social protection in 54 countries, while support is absent in 74 countries, as Figure 11 shows.²²⁴ In 12 countries in the sample, UNICEF worked to improve the inclusivity and adequacy of programmes targeting children or caregivers with disabilities.

Figure 11. Level of disability-inclusiveness of national social protection programmes supported by UNICEF²²⁵



Note: Data label reflects the percentage of countries in a given region that are within the given category

UNICEF has an opportunity to better address the intersection of poverty with gender and disability through social protection. This is underscored by the fact that support for disability-inclusive programmes is absent in 46.8 per cent of COs globally; also, 56 per cent of countries support gender-sensitive programmes rather than gender-responsive programmes. The absence of systematic integration of gender and disability within UNICEF COs' programming can limit COs' commitments to addressing the needs of girls and children with disabilities in child poverty and social protection initiatives, as highlighted by UNICEF staff members working on these issues. Government interest and CO leadership enable the successful development of CO support for disability-inclusive social protection. For example, in Cambodia, Georgia and Lebanon, government support for disability-inclusive social protection played a pivotal role in UNICEF's support of this work.

UNICEF adapted child poverty reduction initiatives to address the needs of other vulnerable groups, including migrants, orphans and ethnic minorities, especially through social protection. Globally, UNICEF COs supported the temporary or routine inclusion of migrant children in social protection programmes in 26.5 per cent of countries.²²⁶ UNICEF COs supported cash benefits for orphaned children in Lesotho and Peru and a focus on marginalized groups, such as Roma children in Montenegro and Indigenous populations in Argentina.

Evaluation subquestion 2.3: What approaches or strategies would be relevant for UNICEF's work to reduce child poverty in humanitarian and fragile settings?

Conclusion 2.3

The relevance of UNICEF's approaches in humanitarian and fragile settings depends on governance levels and crisis severity because there is no comprehensive framework guiding UNICEF's efforts to reduce child poverty in these contexts. The existing Milestones framework provides limited guidance for adapting child poverty reduction work in these settings. While Milestones 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be, to some extent, adapted based on the crisis context, but for Milestone 5 this is generally less applicable. Annex 6 presents the framework used to assess the relevance of UNICEF's child poverty reduction work across the five milestones in humanitarian and fragile settings.

Finding 2.3.1

Milestone 1 – In humanitarian settings, building a national pathway for child poverty reduction is significantly challenged by weak or absent government structures. While UNICEF has successfully built partnerships with development partners through cash transfer working groups, systematic integration of child poverty reduction objectives and measurements within emergency response frameworks remains limited. Moreover, engagement and capacity-building for local actors are still limited.

The relevance of Milestone 1 in humanitarian settings is highly dependent on the governance context. In situations where government structures are weak or absent, building a national pathway for child poverty reduction is particularly challenging. In these contexts, UNICEF has prioritized establishing and strengthening partnerships with development partners. However, the scope for creating partnerships focused on child poverty reduction remains limited. The primary frameworks guiding initiatives, such as the Core Commitments for Children and other emergency response protocols, tend to focus on immediate relief rather than integrating long-term developmental strategies aimed at reducing child poverty.



To bridge the gap between immediate crisis response and long-term developmental objectives, UNICEF has in some instances strategically formed robust partnerships with governments and development partners. These collaborations, often within cash working groups, proved vital for providing comprehensive, coordinated services, including cash and cash-plus programmes, to vulnerable children and families. Key examples include UNICEF's work with the World Food Programme (WFP) in Afghanistan, where they coordinate cash transfer programmes to prevent overlap and ensure efficient aid distribution.²²⁷ This case highlights that partnerships extend beyond immediate crisis response, serving as a conduit for long-term development objectives.

In Yemen, for example, UNICEF's collaboration with the government focuses on sustainable programme development and capacity-building, ensuring a transition to government-led social services. This approach demonstrates UNICEF's commitment to strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, contributing to long-term social service provision and poverty reduction.²²⁸ This reflects the previously highlighted strength of UNICEF's work in strengthening national systems' capacities for humanitarian response linked to development.²²⁹ However, UNICEF has further opportunities to incorporate system-strengthening and capacity-building models to build local civil society capacities. Often, the continuum of UNICEF coordination for child poverty within the nexus framework is between government partners and international development partners, with limited inclusion of local civil society.²³⁰

Finding 2.3.2

Milestone 2 – UNICEF has adapted child poverty measurement activities in both localized and complex humanitarian settings using innovative techniques to overcome data limitations. These measurements are vital for informing internal planning and advocacy, and ensuring timely interventions. However, in the absence of strong governance, UNICEF leads these efforts with limited scope for government ownership and routine measurement.

In settings with stable government infrastructure and localized crises, child poverty measurement efforts typically follow the UNICEF and Global Coalition guide. However, data availability can be challenging in crisis-affected areas. This challenge presents opportunities for UNICEF to enhance its approach by applying innovative measurement techniques used in severe humanitarian contexts, with

geographic and extreme poverty disaggregation remaining crucial for understanding child poverty dynamics in affected areas.

In regions with weak or absent government infrastructure, measuring child poverty faces significant challenges. The lack of robust statistical systems and clear governmental partnerships complicates data collection and analysis. In these contexts, UNICEF often relies on innovative measurement and estimation techniques, such as simulations and qualitative assessments, to understand child poverty levels despite instability. While the unstable environment often limits plans for routine measurement and government ownership, in some cases in the sample, such as in Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar and Haiti, UNICEF has demonstrated adaptability to changing circumstances, ensuring that the measurement process continues. In Afghanistan, for instance, prior to the Taliban takeover, when the humanitarian situation was more stable and data were available, UNICEF advocated with government partners to successfully use the MPI – calculated in partnership with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) – to identify priority provinces for scaling up cash transfers.^{231 232} After the escalation of the humanitarian situation following the Taliban takeover, there was a demand for up-to-date information on the current situation by development partners and for UNICEF internally. Adapting to this demand, UNICEF supported OPHI in conducting simulations of the impact of the situation on multidimensional child poverty, using Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) data.²³³ This analysis was then used to inform the internal planning of humanitarian response and for external advocacy for the importance of inclusion of a child-focused response. After the completion of MICS data collection,²³⁴ the UNICEF CO is working with HQ to conduct the multidimensional child poverty measurement, adjusting to available data to enhance the accuracy of humanitarian programming. This case underscores the ability to adapt measurement to the humanitarian situation and data availability as central to UNICEF's approach to reducing child poverty within humanitarian settings.

Finding 2.3.3

Milestone 3 – In humanitarian contexts with weak or absent governmental structures, UNICEF has effectively adapted its advocacy efforts, focusing on donors and development partners to support child-sensitive and integrated responses. Yet, child poverty reduction often remains marginal in policy discussions focused on immediate needs.

In humanitarian settings, the relevance of child poverty advocacy depends heavily on the governance context. In regions with weak or absent governmental structures, such as Afghanistan, Yemen and Myanmar, UNICEF's advocacy focuses on securing support from international donors and development partners to integrate child-sensitive responses within broader humanitarian frameworks. Advocacy is strategically adapted to these contexts, emphasizing the need for international engagement to secure necessary funding and support for humanitarian response. Advocacy efforts are crafted to be focused, delivering highly summarized and concise briefs tailored for effective communication with key actors. The concept of multidimensional child poverty serves as a strong advocacy tool, promoting an integrated approach to service provision and providing a useful picture of the current situation of children when data are often limited. However, child poverty reduction is often still marginal in policy discussions, with most observed countries focusing on immediate humanitarian needs. The challenge remains to consistently advocate for child poverty reduction efforts as both an immediate concern and a long-term developmental strategy. When stable governments are in place,

advocacy efforts in response to localized humanitarian situations shift towards influencing government-led social service provision. The evaluation documented that countries in the sample use child poverty reports to advocate for child-sensitive social protection systems and increased budget allocations, maintaining objectives similar to normal programming. The key adaptations in UNICEF's work in child poverty advocacy occur when faced with weakened or absent governments, requiring shifts in the target audience of advocacy, the advocacy tools, and the desired outcomes.

Finding 2.3.4

Milestone 4 – UNICEF shifts its focus from policy support and capacity-building in more stable contexts to direct implementation through parallel programming in areas lacking robust governance structures. Funding constraints hinder the effectiveness of poverty reduction support, underscoring the necessity of a more integrated approach within the humanitarian-development nexus, including adequate financing.

In contexts where government structures are relatively stable and localized crises occur, UNICEF uses local planning processes to support and implement inclusive, evidence-based social protection programmes and policies, aligning with Milestone 4 guidelines. Table 4 highlights some cases where UNICEF has adapted its work in Milestone 4 to support poverty reduction policies and programmes in localized humanitarian settings.

Table 4. Adaptation of UNICEF's work in Milestone 4 in humanitarian and fragile settings

Country	Key Actions
Nigeria	UNICEF supported national policy and the expansion of social protection, building government capacity and launching shock-responsive measures to integrate government structures into humanitarian aid delivery. ²³⁵
Burkina Faso	Partnering with NGOs, UNICEF strengthened the humanitarian-development nexus through a multisectoral programme in the crisis-affected Est region. This initiative, starting in early 2020, aims at multidimensional child poverty reduction and resilience-building via 'cash transfer plus' interventions across WASH, Nutrition, and Social Inclusion sectors. ²³⁶
Lebanon	'Haddi', a UNICEF-implemented emergency child grants programme, reached 70,000 vulnerable children and evolved into a nationally owned programme, complemented by the Integrated Child Wellbeing Package, which connects social assistance to poor and vulnerable children. ²³⁷

In contrast, in the absence of a stable governance structure, UNICEF supports direct implementation through parallel programming. This shift is characterized by scaling up humanitarian cash transfer programmes and taking over social services that governments previously provided to meet immediate

needs, with less emphasis on systems strengthening due to the lack of a reliable government partner. Table 5 synthesizes the cases in the sample where UNICEF has shifted its work in Milestone 4 for direct implementation and parallel programming in response to a humanitarian crisis.²³⁸

Table 5. Countries where UNICEF undertook direct programme implementation as a crisis response

Country	Key Actions
Afghanistan	Before the Taliban resurgence, UNICEF supported child-sensitive social protection policies and cash transfers for vulnerable children through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. After the takeover, UNICEF directly implemented cash transfers for over 116,000 households. ^{239 240}
Haiti	UNICEF assisted the Haitian government in developing the National Social Protection and Promotion Strategy, focusing on humanitarian social protection and cash transfers. ²⁴¹ Additionally, UNICEF has expanded a cash-plus programme to address immediate humanitarian needs, financial barriers, and access to education amid acute child poverty. ²⁴²
Myanmar	Before the coup, UNICEF supported the roll-out of the National Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme and strengthened technical capacities for emerging social protection technologies and an integrated social management information system. ²⁴³ After the coup, political upheaval led UNICEF to directly implement shock-responsive social protection interventions through shadow alignment of the MCCT scheme. ²⁴⁴ UNICEF plans to introduce an unconditional cash grant targeting children under 2 in crisis-affected townships, using the Multidimensional Disadvantage index. ²⁴⁵
Yemen	The CO prioritized immediate humanitarian needs and long-term planning by delivering an unconditional cash transfer programme covering 1.45 million families and promoting the Integrated Model for Social and Economic Assistance and Empowerment. ^{246 247}
South Sudan	UNICEF linked humanitarian response with systems strengthening for social protection programmes through coordination between the National Social Protection Working Group and Development Partners Cash Working Group, supporting the development of the Social Protection Management Information System. ²⁴⁸

The relevant approach in the most severe emergencies, such as the Level 3 crisis in Afghanistan, prioritizes immediate relief efforts, while in less severe situations it adopts a multifaceted approach that includes the 'Triple nexus' of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives. There is increasing recognition among the stakeholders consulted of the need to integrate poverty reduction into humanitarian programming, with an emphasis on the use of multidimensional child poverty for emergency responses. Such integration is essential not only for effective humanitarian action but also as a catalyst for governance-building and forging a stronger linkage between humanitarian aid and development efforts.

Nevertheless, the findings of this evaluation reflect those of the formative evaluation of UNICEF work to link humanitarian and development programming, highlighting that "lack of funding is often the most significant constraint to undertaking nexus work".²⁴⁹ Child poverty reduction efforts and Social Policy sections generally are known to be acutely underfunded due to the long-term nature of this work, which often competes with the demands of short-term acute needs. This can be attributed to tensions between humanitarian and development mandates and the failure to adequately coordinate and connect the two approaches with the coherence that a nexus approach calls for.²⁵⁰ UNICEF faces

challenges in maintaining the relevance of its work on child poverty reduction as humanitarian needs intensify, due to the limited funding allocation and capacity constraints driven by the prioritization of short-term responses. In regions where the emergency status is less severe, there is a shift towards development and resilience-building measures. In these contexts, with a moderated crisis level, there is a greater opportunity to prioritize comprehensive, multisectoral programming aimed at reducing child poverty by leveraging the humanitarian-development nexus.

Key Evaluation Question 3. To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty?

Conclusion 3: UNICEF faces challenges in supporting governments to reduce and eliminate child poverty due to limitations in financial and organizational capacities (Finding 3.1.1). The primary constraint is financial capacity, affecting staffing and technical proficiency, hindering innovation and policy support execution. Improvements are needed in organizational capacity, especially in promoting intersectoral collaboration to alleviate financial constraints and enhance coordination of child poverty initiatives [**Conclusion 3.1**]. UNICEF COs have contributed effectively to building government capacities in certain domains, notably for measuring child poverty and strengthening social protection systems. However, there are opportunities for improving the depth and consistency of capacity-building for statistics units (**Finding 3.2.1**). COs have opportunities to facilitate coordination among government entities and sectors to improve their capacity to implement integrated policies and programmes aimed at reducing child poverty (**Finding 3.2.2**). By fostering knowledge-sharing, UNICEF supports its global and national development partners' capabilities to contribute to child poverty reduction (**Finding 3.2.3**). [**Conclusion 3.2**].

Evaluation subquestion 3.1: Are UNICEF's organizational capacities and resources (at HQ, RO and CO levels) adequate and sufficient to achieve its child poverty reduction goals?

Conclusion 3.1

UNICEF faces challenges in supporting governments to reduce and eliminate child poverty due to limitations in financial and organizational capacities (Finding 3.1.1). The primary constraint is financial capacity, affecting staffing and technical proficiency, hindering innovation and policy support execution. Improvements are needed in organizational capacity, especially in promoting intersectoral collaboration to alleviate financial constraints and enhance coordination of child poverty initiatives.

Finding 3.1.1

UNICEF faces significant challenges in achieving child poverty reduction goals due to critical limitations in financial and organizational capacities.

This evaluation of UNICEF's capacities provides evidence that significant gaps create challenges impeding the achievement of child poverty reduction goals. Despite its strong commitment to addressing child poverty, UNICEF confronts critical limitations across financial and organizational dimensions. The foremost constraint is financial capacity, which severely impacts staffing levels. This issue was consistently raised by key stakeholders in our evaluation, with a notable consensus that inadequate financial resources hinder UNICEF's work. The low allocation of expenses to the child poverty result area and Goal Area 5, as illustrated in Figure 9, clearly reflect this barrier.

The limited financial capacity sets off a chain reaction in which resource constraints restrict UNICEF's ability to hire enough staff members, leading to an overburdening of personnel who are forced to juggle multiple responsibilities. This, in turn, hampers technical capacity. For instance, in Colombia three members of the social policy team are responsible for handling various result areas, including child poverty, social protection, PF4C, local governance and SDG monitoring. Within this limited staff, only one, the chief of the section, concentrates on child poverty, but this role also entails balancing other responsibilities.²⁵¹ These human resource limitations are mirrored at the headquarters level, with only two staff members dedicated to the child poverty result area.

Discussions with UNICEF country offices have documented varying levels of technical proficiency within the organization in work towards child poverty reduction. While some teams excel in data-driven advocacy and policy formulation, others struggle with complex methodologies and child poverty measurements. These disparities can often be traced back to resource constraints, with single staff members in COs having to manage diverse responsibilities spanning child poverty analysis, social protection and PF4C outcomes. Juggling such a broad spectrum of tasks presents challenges in maintaining technical expertise across all domains, resulting in a heavy reliance on a select group of key UNICEF staff, often located at headquarters, to provide support for child poverty analysis across global offices. Several key informants from countries such as Colombia and Afghanistan have mentioned their reliance on the senior statistics and monitoring advisor at headquarters for assistance with measurement activities in COs. Furthermore, efforts to ensure technical proficiency at the country level have led some nations to depend heavily on external consultants for analytical and technical work related to child poverty measurements.

In facing these challenges, COs have to make difficult decisions about where resources are best allocated. In Tanzania, for example, there has been an intentional allocation of resources to maintain a top-heavy in-house team, thereby avoiding the need for external contracts and preserving expertise within UNICEF.²⁵² The limitations in financial capacity extend beyond affecting staff capabilities; they also act as a barrier to UNICEF's ability to provide financial support to governments for project implementation. Government stakeholders in Rwanda have expressed a preference for greater financial support from UNICEF to implement projects on which they have received capacity-building and design support.²⁵³ In Georgia, the limited financial resources compared to other development partners have been cited as a limitation to UNICEF's influence.²⁵⁴ However, these challenges can be addressed through concerted efforts to leverage other advantages, such as advocacy and technical support from headquarters, to maintain engagement in policy discussions and ensure that child poverty remains a priority amid competing interests.

Organizational capacity, especially concerning intersectoral collaboration, emerges as an area in need of improvement. While there are instances of successful collaboration, they tend to be exceptions rather than the norm. Nevertheless, these examples demonstrate the potential benefits of intersectoral collaboration in addressing capacity constraints. For instance, in Egypt, the Social Policy team's ability to pool resources from cross-sectoral funds due to the multidimensional nature of child poverty suggests that greater intersectoral collaboration could alleviate some of the financial capacity issues. However, such collaboration remains sporadic, and where it does exist, evidence indicates that it needs to be better structured and leveraged to avoid the diffusion of responsibility and ensure effective coordination and implementation of child poverty initiatives.

The interconnection between financial, technical and organizational capacities is a critical factor in the efficacy of UNICEF's child poverty initiatives. Financial limitations directly impact staff and technical capacities, affecting the organization's ability to innovate and execute policy effectively. Organizational capacity, which could benefit from intersectoral collaboration, remains underleveraged and faces challenges in ensuring coordinated and focused action.



Evaluation subquestion 3.2: To what extent has UNICEF's work contributed to increasing its national and global partners' capacities to reduce child poverty?

Conclusion 3.2

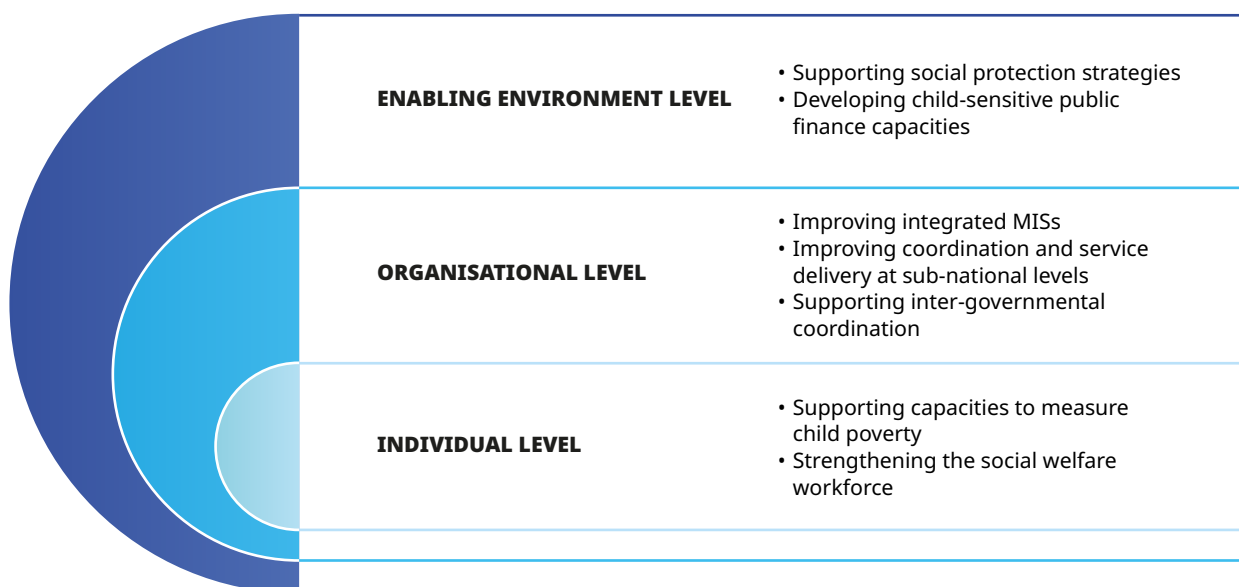
UNICEF COs have contributed effectively to building government capacities in certain domains, notably for measuring child poverty and strengthening social protection systems, although there are opportunities for improving the depth and consistency of capacity-building for statistics units (Finding 3.2.1). COs have opportunities to facilitate coordination among government entities and sectors to improve their capacity to implement integrated policies and programmes aimed at reducing child poverty (Finding 3.2.2). By fostering knowledge-sharing, UNICEF supports its global and national development partners' capabilities to contribute to child poverty reduction (Finding 3.2.3).

Finding 3.2.1

UNICEF COs have contributed effectively to building government capacities for measuring child poverty and strengthening social protection systems. Yet, there are opportunities for improving the depth and consistency of capacity-building for statistics units.

This evaluation examines the capacity-building activities of COs in key domains pertinent to reducing child poverty. It draws on UNDP's capacity development framework and incorporates specific action areas from UNICEF's Social Protection Framework, along with elements from the Global Coalition Guide, as depicted in Figure 12.^{255 256} Table 6 outlines the domains where UNICEF COs have been effective in building government capacities in Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.

Figure 12. Capacity-building for child poverty reduction assessment framework



Most COs made significant efforts to strengthen government capacities to measure child poverty by organizing and financing training programmes for officials in their respective statistics units. Across these countries where COs support child poverty measurement, capacity-building initiatives are generally included among COs' planned activities. Document review and survey insights suggest that in 11 countries in the sample, COs facilitated capacity-building activities for government officials of the statistics units, generally involving training sessions

on the relevant measurement methodology. However, the depth and scope of capacity-building initiatives for statistics units can be improved by conducting capacity needs assessments and consistently embedding capacity-building into the planning of measurement activities. Another highlighted factor hindering the development of national capacities is UNICEF's frequent overreliance on external service providers to measure child poverty and compile reports.

In Rwanda and Sri Lanka, UNICEF made strides in strengthening government capacities for measuring child poverty, while in Cambodia, the CO undertook capacity-building activities with subnational governments and partners, as outlined in Table 6. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF's collaboration with OPHI significantly enhanced the capacity of the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) by providing technical assistance and conducting numerous training sessions, including specialized courses held in Colombo to train DCS statisticians in the MPI methodology. Stakeholder consultations suggest that these capacity-building efforts and ongoing discussions played a vital role in developing leadership within the DCS and fostered commitments to improving internal capacities for measuring child poverty.²⁵⁷ In Rwanda, UNICEF partnered with the National Institute of Statistics (NISR) to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to government officials on the MODA

methodology, contributing to the adoption of MODA measurement in 2018 and 2022.^{258 259} Dialogues with NISR and capacity-building activities facilitated the incorporation of relevant indicators into Rwanda's multi-year integrated household survey, a significant step towards the government's ownership of child poverty measurement.²⁶⁰ In Cambodia, UNICEF and partners organized national and subnational level capacity-building programmes to foster government commitment to regularly measure child poverty and vulnerability. These initiatives aimed to enhance the capacities of the National Poverty Measurement Working Group and other relevant stakeholders to use both monetary and multidimensional measures, including the MODA approach. In Colombia, the government demonstrated the technical expertise needed to define a methodology to measure child poverty; consequently, capacity-building initiatives were considered unnecessary.

Table 6. Effectiveness of UNICEF country office capacity-building activities in in-depth case study countries

<p>Cambodia</p>	<p>Supporting capacities to measure child poverty: Organized national and subnational level capacity-building programmes, including the National Poverty Measurement Working Group, on calculating child poverty measures with the MODA methodology.</p> <p>Strengthening the social welfare workforce: Supported capacity-building programmes for the MoSVY staff and commune workers to lead the implementation of social protection programmes, especially cash transfers for poor and vulnerable households.²⁶¹</p> <p>Supporting intergovernmental coordination: Supported interministerial coordination to enhance subnational budgeting and improve social service delivery. Effectively enhanced the financial management capabilities at the local level.</p> <p>Developing child-sensitive public finance capacity: Supported a capacity-building programme for subnational planning and budgeting in 25 provinces across the country, contributing to improving planning and budgeting and budget accountability for social protection programmes for poor households.²⁶²</p>
<p>Colombia</p>	<p>Improving integrated MISs: Providing financial and technical support to make the social registry more focused on children. Efforts aim to ensure that children are included in the registry and that they are adequately targeted for the social protection programme Renta Ciudadana.²⁶³</p>
<p>Rwanda</p>	<p>Supporting capacities to measure child poverty: Provided technical assistance and capacity-building to government officials on the MODA methodology in partnership with the National Institute of Statistics (NISR), contributing to the adoption of MODA measurement in 2018 and 2022.^{264 265}</p> <p>Strengthening the social welfare workforce: Contributed to training staff on new elements of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP), aimed at accelerating poverty reduction and social protection for the poorest households.²⁶⁶</p>
<p>Sri Lanka</p>	<p>Supporting capacities to measure child poverty: Significantly enhanced the government's capacities to measure child poverty through numerous training sessions on the MPI methodology for DCS statisticians. Training programmes contributed to developing commitment and internal capacity-building on child poverty measurement within the statistics department.²⁶⁷</p>

COs dedicated substantial efforts to developing capacities to strengthen social protection systems across various domains. This involved supporting policy and strategy development, strengthening Management Information Systems (MIS), and enhancing the skills of government officials and social workers. Within the sample, 11 COs supported the formulation or implementation of social protection policies and strategies, fostering an enabling environment for child-sensitive social protection programmes. In seven instances, COs successfully contributed to the establishment of these policies, as highlighted in **Finding 1.4.1**. In five cases in the sample, COs dedicated efforts to train social workers to optimize the delivery of social protection programmes and social services. For example, in partnership with World Relief, the Rwanda CO provided technical assistance and capacity-building to parasocial workers.²⁶⁸ At the organizational level, COs strengthened MISs in 11 countries within the sample. For example, in Guatemala, the CO, in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA, the World Bank and WFP, provided direct assistance to the Ministry of Social Development to pilot a gender-sensitive social household registry in municipalities with the highest poverty rates. The CO also supported the government in refining the management information system (MIS) for the flagship cash transfer programme, *Bono Social*.^{269 270 271}

In seven countries in the sample, UNICEF COs supported capacity-building initiatives to enhance child-sensitive budgeting and improve public financial management. In Cambodia, Georgia, Guatemala and Lesotho, COs also focused on developing subnational budgeting capacities. For instance, as part of the Policy and Public Financing for Children programme in Cambodia,²⁷² the CO partnered with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of the Interior to conduct a capacity-building programme for government officials on subnational planning and budgeting in 25 provinces. The programme helped establish strategies and tools for improved planning and budgeting, and budget accountability for social protection programmes targeting poor and vulnerable households.²⁷³

Finding 3.2.2

COs have opportunities to facilitate coordination among government entities and sectors to improve their capacity to implement integrated policies and programmes aimed at reducing child poverty.

UNICEF has opportunities to strengthen its role in facilitating coordination among government entities to support child poverty reduction initiatives, underpinning Action Area 2 of the Social Protection Framework that informs the framework of this evaluation. The evaluation documents that although government stakeholders consulted for in-depth case studies consistently recognize UNICEF's comparative advantage in facilitating dialogues among government entities and sectors to support the implementation and harmonization of policies, COs have not sufficiently assumed this role. In the country sample, nine COs facilitated interministerial coordination, with this role being most relevant in the cases of Ghana and Cambodia.

In Ghana, the CO convened authorities across sectors and administrative levels to support the implementation of the Integrated Social Services (ISS) initiative, aimed at enhancing integrated decentralized service delivery. The CO supported the development of operational and data-sharing protocols to improve coordination across government levels and sectors. By promoting interoperability between the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) management information system and systems such as the Ghana Health Service, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), and social welfare systems, the CO facilitated referral mechanisms and follow-up for LEAP rights holders by community health workers. UNICEF also supported the NHIS and LEAP authorities in creating an inter-agency workplan to address bottlenecks at national and subnational levels, ensuring access to health insurance for LEAP rights holders.²⁷⁴ In Cambodia, the CO supported interministerial coordination to enhance subnational budgeting and improve social service delivery. The CO facilitated dialogues between the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Interior and social sector line ministries to earmark commune budgets and enhance financial management capabilities at the local level.²⁷⁵ The CO also facilitated interministerial dialogues about establishing a social service budget threshold at the commune level.²⁷⁶

Finding 3.2.3

By fostering knowledge-sharing, UNICEF supports its global and national development partners' capabilities to contribute to child poverty reduction.

At the global level, UNICEF strengthened its global partners' capabilities to enhance child poverty reduction efforts through global evidence generation and knowledge-sharing. In most consultations, global partners highlighted the value of UNICEF's initiatives, particularly evidence generation and dissemination. The calculation and reporting of monetary child poverty rates in collaboration with the World Bank,²⁷⁷ the publication of position papers on policy priorities²⁷⁸ and discussion webinars organized with members of the Coalition proved valuable approaches to guiding and enhancing partners' efforts in child poverty reduction.

Collaborative efforts among UNICEF COs and other development partners at the country level and active engagement with government stakeholders have facilitated the organization of knowledge-sharing and learning events. Egypt is a noteworthy example. Working with partners including the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, J-Pal and the University of Cairo, the CO developed research papers and organized seminars to place children's rights and deprivations at the centre of policy debate and decision-making.²⁷⁹ The CO also initiated new partnerships that resulted in technical seminars with government officials, including with the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and other international partners, to propose policy options that place contributory and non-contributory social protection interventions at the centre of government's responses.

Key Evaluation Question 4. What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction?

Conclusion 4: This evaluation identified collaborative practices within COs (**Good Practice 1**), comprehensive approaches to child poverty advocacy (**Good Practice 2**) and leveraging partnerships to support child poverty measurement (**Good Practice 3**) as good practices of UNICEF COs' work towards the child poverty reduction milestones. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of collaborative work across UNICEF COs' sections for leveraging capacities and supporting intersectoral programming (**Lesson Learned 1**) and the role of political sensitivity as a challenge for UNICEF's work (**Lesson Learned 2**).

4.1. What good practices have emerged from UNICEF's work on reducing child poverty?

Good Practice 1

Effective collaboration, internal coordination, and resource sharing as successful models to enhance work towards multidimensional child poverty reduction.

This evaluation has highlighted the importance of intersectional collaboration in the effort to reduce multidimensional child poverty. Several cases demonstrate the effectiveness of collaborative models in achieving more impactful results. A key factor facilitating effective intersectional work on multidimensional child poverty is the presence of internal coordination mechanisms. Burkina Faso is a notable example. In Burkina Faso, UNICEF has established a robust internal coordination mechanism wherein the Social Policy team convenes monthly meetings involving all sections in the office.²⁸⁰ These meetings discuss ongoing efforts related to multidimensional child poverty, identifying convergence points among interventions, and guiding future priorities. This fosters accountability, raises internal awareness, and promotes a holistic approach to addressing multidimensional child poverty across the entire office. The success of this internal coordination is evident in the creation of an integrated social protection programme known as the 'Child-Friendly Social Protection System', a cash-plus initiative spanning the sectors of WASH, Nutrition and Social Inclusion.

Moving beyond internal coordination mechanisms, Ghana presents a case of more structured collaboration within the organization. In Ghana, the Social Policy team functions as a cross-sector section under the Representative's office rather than the Deputy Representative's office. This structured role as a cross-cutting section has proven highly effective in promoting a holistic approach to tackling child poverty. The Social Policy team collaborates closely with other sections on this issue. This collaborative approach has led to the expansion of the 'LEAP + Integrated Social Services Initiative', which has significantly improved access to multiple social protection, child protection, and health services for vulnerable children, benefiting 180,000 people in 2021.²⁸¹

Egypt is a good example of resource sharing as a means to overcome financial barriers commonly associated with multidimensional child poverty initiatives. Unlike many other countries, Egypt does not face issues related to insufficient financial allocations or under-capacity. This financial capacity is attributed to the Social Policy team's ability to pool resources from cross-sectoral funds within the country office to support multidimensional child poverty initiatives. This resource-sharing mechanism has substantially increased the available resources for an area that is often underfunded, enabling more impactful work to reduce child poverty. The cases of Egypt, Burkina Faso and Ghana emphasize the significance of intersectional collaboration, internal coordination mechanisms, structured roles, and resource pooling as essential best practices in the global effort to reduce multidimensional child poverty.

Good Practice 2

Leveraging political incentives, mobilizing child poverty measurement and amplifying children's voices as comprehensive approaches to child poverty advocacy.

A comprehensive advocacy approach that integrates raising awareness of child poverty among key stakeholders and the public, alongside high-level dialogues to advance specific goals, can significantly bolster UNICEF's work. These approaches effectively leverage democratic and social accountability mechanisms. In Montenegro and Argentina, COs target advocacy not only at bureaucratic officials and technical teams within the government but also at electoral candidates and parliamentarians. Moreover, both countries employed advocacy efforts directed at the public through media and grassroots engagement. These cases illustrate how raising awareness can lay the foundation for effectively achieving specific objectives.

In the context of Argentina's 2023 presidential elections, the CO launched the Vote for Childhood campaign, urging both voters and candidates to prioritize reducing child poverty. The campaign used data on child poverty rates, budget analyses and a rapid survey illustrating deprivations across various dimensions, garnering extensive media coverage.²⁸² ²⁸³ ²⁸⁴ In a prior campaign during the 2019 elections called #LaDeudaEsConLaNiñez, the CO urged presidential and governor candidates to protect public funds for children. This campaign gained substantial traction on social media and received widespread coverage in traditional media, featuring over 240 stories and six opinion columns.²⁸⁵ ²⁸⁶ Beyond electoral advocacy, the CO advocated for more specific objectives. For instance, in 2021, successful advocacy led to expanding the cash transfer programme *Asignación Universal por Hijo* to benefit one million children. Additionally, efforts supported the increase in coverage and benefit size of the Food Allowance.²⁸⁷ In 2022, the CO budget analysis highlighted planned budget cuts for child-focused sectors in 2023. The CO's advocacy efforts influenced the Budget and Finance Commission's decision to approve an 8.9 per cent increase to the original proposed budget.²⁸⁸ A key practice contributing to these achievements is the Social Policy team's monthly sessions with the communications and advocacy team, where objectives are set and discussed.



In 2020, the Montenegro CO collaborated with the parliament to raise awareness of multidimensional child poverty among parliamentarians.²⁸⁹ The CO also mobilized multidimensional poverty measurement and a joint study with the World Bank on policy options to tackle child poverty. Throughout 2021 and 2022, the CO continuously disseminated child poverty messages through the media. These collective efforts contributed significantly to the government's decision to introduce a quasi-universal child allowance in 2021, later transitioning to the Universal Child Allowance.²⁹⁰ In 2023, the #YouthAskingPoliticians campaign engaged young reporters, under the U-Reporters initiative, to question candidates about strategies to reduce child poverty ahead of parliamentary elections. The CO is leveraging these initiatives to advocate for increasing the benefit amount of the child allowance.²⁹¹

Disseminating children's voices and amplifying real-life experiences of lived poverty can prove an effective strategy to raise awareness about child poverty. Consultations with government entities and development partners in Colombia and Rwanda emphasized the value and potential of participatory exercises. In Colombia, the CO collaborated with the University of the Andes to conduct a qualitative exercise as part of a study on the disaggregated MPI.²⁹² Insights showcasing children's voices were presented during technical consultations, informing the definition of poverty dimensions for the child poverty measurement and strategy. Similarly, in Rwanda, UNICEF used qualitative insights gathered from local capacity-building activities for children and adolescents, in partnership with CLADHO, to advocate for increasing children's budgets. Both government and development partners acknowledged the relevance of this approach in mobilizing resources for children.

Good Practice 3

Adapting child poverty measurement methodologies to enhance government ownership

UNICEF Uganda's support for the Consensual approach to measuring child poverty demonstrates good practice in methodological adaptability to strengthen government ownership and institutionalization of measurement processes. While the initially supported Bristol approach provided comprehensive data, it failed to fully resonate with government perspectives, resulting in limited ownership of the measurement process.²⁹³ The Consensual approach, which uniquely incorporates public opinion to define necessities and acceptable living standards within the Ugandan context rather than using pre-determined international standards, proved more effective in capturing locally relevant aspects of child poverty.

The success of this methodological adaptation was demonstrated by both its full integration into Uganda's 2016/2017 national household survey and the subsequent increased government engagement, with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics taking ownership of the measurement process.²⁹⁴ This methodological shift catalyzed government interest, particularly after the inclusion of a dedicated section on multidimensional poverty measurement in the National Household Survey Report. The enhanced alignment with government priorities led to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) independently producing detailed child poverty reports and incorporating small-area estimation techniques for district and sub-county level analysis.²⁹⁵ This transition from UNICEF-supported to government-led measurement demonstrates how methodological adaptation can foster sustainable, nationally-owned poverty assessment systems.

4.2. What lessons can be learned from UNICEF's work on reducing child poverty?

Lesson Learned 1

Increased collaboration and greater integration of child poverty across other goal areas are vital in the pursuit of effective strategies to reduce multidimensional child poverty.

This evaluation has underscored the importance of collaboration across UNICEF sections when addressing multidimensional child poverty, as exemplified by Best Practice 1. The current approach, where child poverty reduction primarily falls under the responsibility of Social Policy sections and there is limited collaboration with other sections, has meant there is insufficient understanding of child poverty across the organization. This has hindered comprehensive cross-sectoral efforts to reduce it. The successful collaborative models (**Good Practice 1**) have illustrated that fostering strong internal cooperation within UNICEF can facilitate integrated solutions for poverty reduction, addressing its various dimensions effectively. The Burkina Faso case provides a valuable lesson in the benefits of regular internal meetings in aligning objectives towards child poverty reduction.

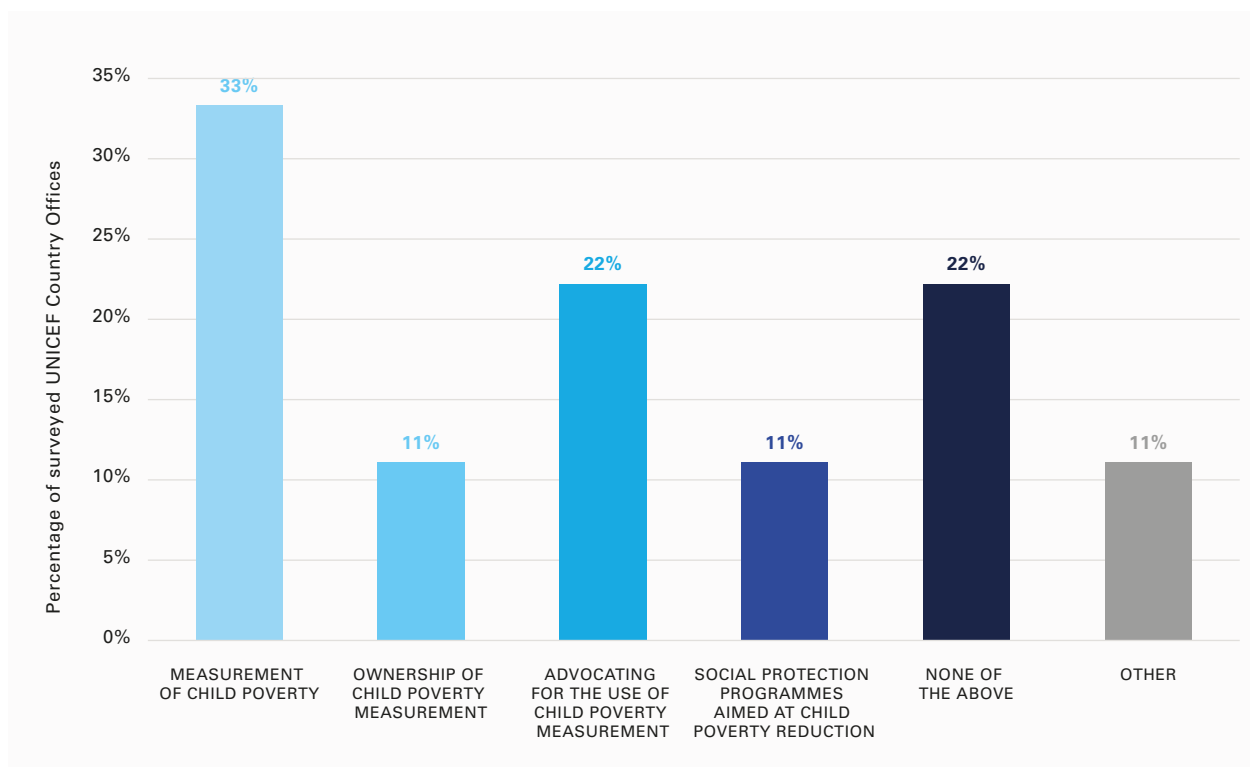
One significant obstacle to the work on multidimensional child poverty is the limited framing of work done across other goal areas within the objectives of reducing multidimensional child poverty and the limited use of child poverty measurement as one of the monitoring tools for COs' overarching outcomes.

Lesson Learned 2

The political sensitivity surrounding child poverty presents challenges for UNICEF's work in the child poverty result area in certain contexts. In these instances, a strategy to collaborate effectively with the government may require adapting the COs' programming to encompass broader objectives of child well-being.

Child poverty is politically sensitive in certain countries, posing a constant challenge to UNICEF's efforts to reduce it. Across the sample, 13 COs identified child poverty or poverty as a politically sensitive issue in their countries, primarily presenting challenges for measuring child poverty, as *Figure 13* indicates. Multidimensional poverty measurements can intensify this sensitivity because they often show higher rates than national monetary rates. Child poverty rates also tend to be higher than adult rates in multidimensional measurement, amplifying challenges for UNICEF and development partners in supporting child poverty reduction initiatives in certain contexts. In Cambodia, despite continued advocacy efforts by UNICEF and other development partners, political sensitivity remains an obstacle to the official adoption of a multidimensional poverty measurement. Similarly, in Bangladesh and Colombia, delays in gaining the government's commitment to an official child poverty measurement after years of UNICEF advocacy reflect this challenge. The following key informant quote illustrates this barrier: "There are sensitivities linked to child poverty measurement or definitions of child poverty. We have more and more pressure to call poverty vulnerability."



Figure 13. Programming domains affected by political sensitivity²⁹⁶

The political sensitivity of child poverty becomes more pronounced during election periods, requiring UNICEF COs to strategically adjust their work across the five milestones. Despite this, development partners working on poverty reduction emphasize the potential of mobilizing poverty measurement among candidates as a relevant advocacy strategy with the potential to drive political commitments to reduce child poverty. This approach has shown considerable effectiveness, notably in the case of Montenegro (**Finding 1.3.2**). Moreover, critical junctures can act as opportunities to reshape the discourse on child poverty. In Uzbekistan, the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and a shift in government administration were turning points in changing the poverty narrative. This shift gave the CO an opening to bolster its efforts to reduce child poverty in partnership with the government.

Recognizing the political sensitivity surrounding child poverty and aligning efforts with government priorities is vital. In situations of high political sensitivity, COs are encouraged to adjust their strategies by framing their work in terms of enhancing child well-being, reducing vulnerability, or aligning with broader poverty reduction government agendas. While maintaining the result area of child poverty reduction, COs can adopt the necessary framing and programming that would enable effective collaboration with the government to address multiple deprivations. In instances where they adopt a broader framework such as well-being or children's rights, COs can still give policy advice on the most appropriate interventions or programme design features to reduce deprivations, such as increasing social protection coverage, promoting integrated services and advising on care, employment and pro-poor macro-economic policies according to each country's child poverty profile.

4

Recommendations



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This section presents the recommendations of the evaluation, developed through a comprehensive process that involved analysing the opportunities and challenges identified in the findings. This process included a workshop where key UNICEF staff members working on child poverty reduction participated in a feedback and discussion session. Following the workshop, these staff members were also involved in the written formulation of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen UNICEF’s role as a policy advisor on comprehensive policy packages (across goal areas) to reduce child poverty and maintain adaptability in the framing of this work, focusing on narratives that are most relevant to the country context.

In response to

UNICEF has opportunities to use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice and support the integration of gender and disability considerations into social protection programming. While COs provide technical and financial assistance to support cash transfer programmes and social protection systems as the main approaches to foster policies and programmes to reduce child poverty, they dedicate less effort to advising the governments on other relevant policies to reduce child poverty or enhance child well-being for which in many contexts the concept resonate better.

Finding 1.4.2: Aside from social protection benefits/cash transfers, country offices have supported other relevant child poverty reduction policies in a limited manner.

Finding 1.4.3: UNICEF has opportunities to use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice on social protection and to integrate child poverty rates into the monitoring of the social protection result area.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen UNICEF's role as a policy advisor on comprehensive policy packages (across goal areas) to reduce child poverty and maintain adaptability in the framing of this work, focusing on narratives that are most relevant to the country context.

Specific recommendations

The Evaluation Office recommends that the **Programme Group Leadership and UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group** work with regional Social Policy Advisers to:

- ▶ Strengthen and consolidate technical guidance on key policy packages, programmes and strategic approaches for reducing child poverty, including social protection and cross-sectoral policies, along with the necessary analytical steps to determine their relevance for each country context.
- ▶ Use child poverty analysis more extensively to inform policy advice. Leverage insights from child poverty profiling²⁹⁷ and relevant analytical approaches to determine the most appropriate policy packages and programme design for reducing child poverty within each country's context.
- ▶ Expand the provision of technical advice to governments on child poverty reduction policy packages, in addition to maintaining advocacy efforts.
- ▶ Adapt the framing of UNICEF's child poverty advocacy and advisory in contexts where the issue is politically sensitive, adopting alternative narratives that fit the context and correspond to national priorities.
- ▶ Foster collaboration among sections to leverage technical expertise and resources for strengthening integrated programming and enhance support for cross-sectoral and sectoral initiatives at the country office level.

The Evaluation Office recommends that the **UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group and UNICEF Division of Global Communications and Advocacy:**

- ▶ Enhance child poverty advocacy, leveraging the policy options and packages proven to address child poverty.

Responsible: UNICEF's Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group, the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, with the relevant divisions/offices

Priority level: Medium-term

Recommendation 2: Leverage child poverty measurement and analysis, in collaboration with government and development partners, to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of UNICEF's country programmes and government programmes and policy.**In response to**

UNICEF has played a significant role in advancing child poverty measurements globally through technical advisories, capacity-building efforts and child-focused surveys. Despite these advancements, challenges persist, including the limited clarity on the appropriate uses of child poverty measurement. Moreover, there is a recognized need for improved collaboration with development partners to harmonize measurement efforts, avoiding duplication. These issues limit the appropriate use of measurements in orienting and monitoring policies and programmes, including UNICEF's own programming. COs' efforts to measure poverty dimensions that are specific to girls and to account for the additional costs of disabilities within poverty measurement can be further strengthened.

Finding 1.2.2: UNICEF effectively adapts and promotes diverse approaches and formula for multidimensional child poverty measurement, considering national stakeholders' preferences. However, limited clarity on best practices for selecting dimensions, indicators and weightings often hinders the accuracy and relevance of measurement. There is a need for improved collaboration with other development partners to harmonize measurement efforts within a given country, avoiding duplication and confusion

Finding 1.2.3: UNICEF has dedicated efforts to foster government ownership of measurement processes through capacity-building and a participatory approach across the country sample. Despite these efforts, the unclear relevance of child-specific poverty measurements for policymaking has hindered ownership and routine measurement of child poverty.

Finding 1.2.4: The evaluation identified a significant gap in COs' efforts to analyse child poverty measures for informing, designing and monitoring child poverty reduction policies and programmes.

Finding 2.2.7: UNICEF COs consistently considered the needs of economically vulnerable girls, children with disabilities and children facing other individual or social vulnerabilities through social protection. However, data constraints and insufficient integration of gender and disability considerations within programming hinder UNICEF's ability to adequately measure and address child poverty among these groups.

Recommendation 2: Leverage child poverty measurement and analysis, in collaboration with government and development partners, to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of UNICEF's country programmes and government programmes and policy.

Specific recommendations

The Evaluation Office recommends that **UNICEF Global Office of Research and Foresight (GoRAF)** and the **Poverty and Gender Unit of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM)**:

- ▶ Enhance the usability, visibility, and regular updating of the existing global repository for accessible child poverty data, in terms of both children in monetarily poor households and children suffering multidimensional material deprivations, related estimation, analytical approaches and key disaggregates.

The Evaluation Office recommends that the **UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group** works with the relevant division/office to:

- ▶ Strengthen capacity-building of UNICEF staff on the appropriate use of child poverty measurement and analysis for considering policies and programmes and how to approach this with government members.
- ▶ Leverage partnerships to harness the diversity of existing methodologies and ensure adaptability to government needs in various contexts. Through these collaborations, leverage existing initiatives led by other partners to promote the measurement of child poverty.
- ▶ Enhance efforts to incorporate child poverty measurement into the monitoring frameworks of national poverty reduction policies and programmes.
- ▶ Ensure that child poverty analyses are complemented by policy briefs, actionable recommendations, and clearly defined pathways to inform comprehensive policy packages for child poverty reduction. These should be developed through a collaborative process involving UNICEF and relevant government agencies, ensuring relevance and facilitating implementation.
- ▶ Strengthen efforts to include indicators that reflect specific deprivations experienced by girls within child poverty measurement. Expand the use of techniques and the inclusion of key disaggregates and indicators to estimate child poverty rates among children with disabilities.

Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group, UNICEF Global Office of Research and Foresight (GoRAF), the Poverty and Gender Unit of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM), and with the relevant divisions/offices.

Priority level:
Medium-term

Recommendation 3: Expand resource mobilization efforts for the child poverty reduction result area by prioritizing the issue within global fundraising efforts and reviewing internal resource allocation for these activities.

In response to

UNICEF faces challenges at the HQ and CO levels to ensure adequate funding for the child poverty reduction result area due to the long-term nature of its outcomes. This has led to significant financial resource gaps. The child poverty result area only accounted for about 16.6 per cent of aggregate country office Goal Area 5 expenditure and 0.74 per cent of total expenditure between 2018 and 2022.

Finding 2.1.1. UNICEF's commitment to child poverty reduction, while strategically prioritized, faces inconsistencies in implementation across organizational levels, highlighting a gap between strategic objectives and programmatic execution.

Finding 2.1.2. Financial constraints and preferences for immediate, visible outcomes over long-term structural solutions hinder UNICEF's capacity to prioritize and finance the child poverty result area at the global and country levels. This results in a skewed allocation of resources towards projects with tangible results, such as measurement, and diminishes the focus on policy and programme support for child poverty reduction.

Finding 3.1.1. UNICEF faces significant challenges in achieving child poverty reduction goals due to limitations in financial and organizational capacities.

Specific recommendations

The Evaluation Office recommends that **the Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group in collaboration with the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division:**

- ▶ Enhance global fundraising initiatives to increase external funding for the child poverty reduction result area.

The Evaluation Office recommends that **the UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group in collaboration with the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division** with the **relevant divisions/offices:**

- ▶ Consider diversifying funding sources for the child poverty result area, including resource pooling with other UNICEF sections where this alternative proves adequate.²⁹⁸

Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group with the relevant divisions/offices, the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division.

Priority level: High

Recommendation 4: Develop strategic guidelines for child poverty reduction programming in humanitarian and fragile settings, highlighting innovative approaches to measure child poverty and strengthening the integration of immediate relief for deprived children with efforts to enhance government capacity and good governance.

In response to

The evaluation highlights UNICEF's ability to adapt its strategies in humanitarian settings, shifting from systems strengthening in stable contexts to direct service delivery in severe crises. However, it notes the lack of formal guidelines on child poverty reduction programming in these situations. While UNICEF has used innovative data techniques to measure child poverty, there are opportunities to expand these methods and enhance disaggregates for geographical and extreme poverty. The evaluation also points out the need to integrate the humanitarian-development-peace nexus principles into humanitarian responses, such as building capacities, engaging with local actors, and promoting demands for good governance, to achieve long-term child poverty reduction. A focus on strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus requires adequate financing.

Finding 2.3.1: Milestone 1 – In humanitarian settings, building a national pathway for child poverty reduction is significantly challenged by weak or absent government structures. While UNICEF has successfully built partnerships with development partners through cash transfer working groups, systematic integration of child poverty reduction objectives and measurements within emergency response frameworks remains limited. Moreover, engagement and capacity-building for local actors are also still limited.

Finding 2.3.2: Milestone 2 – UNICEF has adapted child poverty measurement activities in both localized and complex humanitarian settings using innovative techniques to overcome data limitations. These measurements are vital for informing internal planning and advocacy, and ensuring timely interventions. However, in the absence of strong governance, UNICEF leads these efforts with limited scope for government ownership and routine measurement.

Finding 2.3.4: Milestone 4 – UNICEF shifts its focus from policy support and capacity-building in more stable contexts to direct implementation through parallel programming in areas lacking robust governance structures. Funding constraints hinder the effectiveness of poverty reduction support, underscoring the necessity of a more integrated approach within the humanitarian-development nexus, including adequate financing.

Specific recommendations

This evaluation recommends that **EMOPS** in collaboration with **UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group**, with the relevant sections/offices:

- ▶ Develop strategic guidelines – or adapt existing ones – for child poverty reduction programming in humanitarian and fragile settings, considering crisis severity and levels of governance.
- ▶ Support innovative data-gathering strategies and estimation techniques to ensure the representative measurement of child poverty in humanitarian contexts.
- ▶ Strengthen efforts to disaggregate child poverty measurements by geographic areas and by extreme monetary poverty to identify the most deprived population in humanitarian settings.
- ▶ Utilize available child poverty measurements to pinpoint priority areas for humanitarian assistance interventions in crisis-affected areas.
- ▶ Identify entry points for integrating development programming aimed at integrating a focus on multidimensional child poverty reduction even in high-severity crisis humanitarian responses and allocate adequate funding for such initiatives.

Responsible: UNICEF Social Policy and Social Protection Programme Group with UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes.

Priority level: High



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Country Briefs

Cambodia

UNICEF Country Office Work in Contributing to Child Poverty Reduction

Socio-economic status

Cambodia, with a GDP per capita PPP \$5,355, is classified as a lower-middle income country. Over the past two decades, the country has achieved significant economic growth, leading to a reduction in poverty rates by more than half since 2007.

Population demographics

With a population of 16.6 million, approximately 30% of the population are children under the age of 14.

Multidimensional and monetary child poverty rate

According to the Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey of 2019-2020, approximately 17.8 per cent of Cambodians live below the poverty line. Children are particularly vulnerable, with around 48.7 per cent of those under the age of 17 experiencing multidimensional poverty.



Evaluand Level 1: UNICEF key outcomes

UNICEF work centres around supporting the government in strengthening the national social protection system. UNICEF has prioritised a wide range of activities to support policies tackling child poverty, including poverty measurement aligning with the government's goal of reducing multidimensional poverty rates by half for all vulnerable populations by 2030.

Evaluand Level 2: Government initiatives

The Royal Government of Cambodia consistently prioritised policies and programmes to tackle poverty, with a focus on enhancing social protection programmes across the lifecycle. The government has given special attention to cash transfers aimed at supporting poor and vulnerable individuals, especially children, through child-focused cash transfer programs.

Key Evaluation Question 1. Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results in child poverty reduction?

UNICEF Cambodia CO has been largely effective in supporting social protection policies and programmes to tackle child poverty. This has been achieved through fostering collaborative partnerships and providing support to the government in strengthening the national social protection system, notably through the operationalization of the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF).

UNICEF Cambodia CO has partnered effectively with key stakeholders to advance their work on reducing child poverty. The CO has successfully supported the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning, the National Working Group on Poverty Measurement, and the National Statistics Institute to improve the government's commitment and capacity to routinely measure multidimensional child poverty. UNICEF also partners with other donor agencies and development partners, such as the World Bank and UNDP, to assist the Ministry of Planning in poverty measurement. In this collaboration, each organization – UNICEF, World Bank and UNDP – has distinct roles, with the World Bank leading monetary poverty measurements, UNDP overseeing the development of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), and UNICEF focusing on multidimensional child poverty using the Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA) methodology.²⁹⁹ In 2018, the CO, in partnership with the government, supported a child poverty measurement exercise with the MODA approach.³⁰⁰

Even though there has been increased interest in measuring multidimensional and child poverty in recent years, the use of the MPI and MODA to inform policies and programmes remains limited in Cambodia. In Cambodia, the poverty measurement exercise encounters various challenges, primarily due to government reluctance to take ownership and a lack of available data. The reduced government ownership for poverty measurement stems mainly from the sensitivity surrounding the potential interpretation of poverty rates, which may inadvertently convey a perception of inaction on the part of the government in tackling poverty. The government's reservations over how such statistics might be perceived has contributed to a cautious approach to fully integrating the concept of poverty into policy frameworks and programme design. Despite the challenges related to the high sensitivity over child

poverty, the CO has opportunities to strategically raise awareness of the deprivations children face across different dimensions. The evaluation highlights the importance of framing advocacy messages carefully, using evidence-based approaches, and engaging in technical dialogues with the government to address different deprivations.

UNICEF Cambodia CO has supported the government effectively in bringing about policy and programme change to tackle child poverty, particularly through the operationalization of the NSPPF. UNICEF's efforts have increased government commitment and capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive and equity-focused social protection programmes with increased coverage.³⁰¹ Government stakeholders in Cambodia are increasingly acknowledging the effectiveness of cash transfers and cash-plus programmes in tackling poverty. Consequently, there has been a rise in the implementation of cash transfer initiatives targeting vulnerable populations, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the UNICEF CO supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) in designing and implementing the Cash Transfer Programme for Pregnant Women and Children under Two (CT-PWYC) living in poor and vulnerable households.³⁰² During the pandemic, the CO and other development partners were instrumental in supporting the implementation of the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme and the Lockdown Cash Transfer Programme and the rapid expansion of its coverage. With the introduction of the Family Package of Integrated Social Assistance, the government aims to consolidate the four core cash transfers – CT-PWYC, Cash Transfer for Children from Poor Households in Primary and Secondary Schools, Cash Transfer for Persons with Disabilities and the planned Cash Transfer for Elderly People – and introduce a Cash Transfer for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS.³⁰³ UNICEF's support in designing and implementing the Family Package would help the government deliver comprehensive social protection programmes across the life cycle, focusing on poor and vulnerable families and children, estimated to number around 17.8 per cent of the population.³⁰⁴

UNICEF CO is seen as the lead agency among the UN partners in strengthening national social protection systems and is leading the coordination of national social assistance development partners and the UN Social Protection Accelerator.³⁰⁵ Since 2021, UNICEF CO has worked with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Union (EU) on

the joint programme 'Accelerating Social Protection in Cambodia'. UNICEF CO is also working with the EU on public financial management to increase budgets for social protection programmes.³⁰⁶ The CO is also working with the World Food Programme (WFP) to improve shock-responsiveness of the Family Package.³⁰⁷ As part of this initiative, in 2022, UNICEF Cambodia successfully designed and piloted the Risk and Vulnerability tool to support the identification of multidimensionally poor households and individuals who are rights holders of the cash transfer programme.³⁰⁸

Key Evaluation Question 2. To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones?

UNICEF Cambodia CO's child poverty reduction efforts have proved largely relevant by adopting a multisectoral approach to strengthen national social protection systems, prioritizing the inclusion of poor and vulnerable populations. The CO's efforts closely align with the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) objectives to reduce multidimensional poverty and improve access to social protection programmes for poor and vulnerable households.

UNICEF Cambodia CO's actions have been relevant in supporting RGC to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations, including tackling the issue of child poverty. These efforts align with the RGC's goals of reducing multidimensional poverty by at least half for women, men and children of all ages by 2030.³⁰⁹ The country programme document (CPD) 2019–2023, formulated by UNICEF in partnership with the RGC, clearly outlines the goals and objectives of the CO to tackle multidimensional child poverty by improving access to quality social services, strengthening the implementation of social protection policies, building the capacity of government staff, and increasing public budget allocations towards child-sensitive social protection programmes.³¹⁰ To achieve the goal of reducing multidimensional child poverty, the CO adopted the Policy and Public Finance for Children programme with a special emphasis on vulnerable populations, including children living in urban and rural poor areas, children from ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities. The Policy and Public Finance for Children Programme adopts a multisectoral approach in which social protection programmes are integrated with other interventions

such as water, sanitation and hygiene, education, health, and child protection.³¹¹ UNICEF CO has successfully positioned itself as a key partner for the government in strengthening national social protection systems, thereby supporting the inclusion of vulnerable populations and poverty reduction.³¹²

The CO has been continuously advocating for improved coverage of social protection for vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities (PwD).³¹³ During COVID-19, the CO focused on supporting the RGC in implementing the Cash Transfer Programme for the poor and vulnerable, covering around 700,000 poor households and introducing the Lockdown Cash Transfer Programme for an additional 108,000 households in urban areas.³¹⁴ The programme provided additional benefits for children under the age of five, PwD, elderly persons, and persons living with HIV.³¹⁵ UNICEF Cambodia CO prioritized the inclusion of PwD within national social protection systems and supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) to roll out the national identification programme, which increases access to the national disability allowance programme for poor people with disabilities.³¹⁶ UNICEF CO supported the establishment of data-collection mechanisms and a disability identification management information system, resulting in the collection of data on people and children living with disabilities across 25 cities and provinces and the distribution of Disability ID cards to an estimated 250,000 PwD.³¹⁷ The CO also supports the design of tools to track risk, vulnerability and disability along with future complementary programmes such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for poor and at-risk youth.³¹⁸

In Cambodia, the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) is the guiding strategic framework for the RGC to build an inclusive social protection system, as it is seen as the vital tool necessary to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability in the country.³¹⁹ To achieve the goal of an inclusive social protection system outlined within the NSPPF, UNICEF Cambodia CO supported the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) in designing the Family Package of integrated social assistance programmes.³²⁰ The Family Package aims to provide integrated benefits that address risks through the life cycle for poor and vulnerable families and children.³²¹ Lessons learned and insights gathered from the design and implementation of the COVID-19 cash transfer programme helped inform the design of the Family Package. UNICEF CO's work on the

Family Package is supporting the RGC in expanding the national social protection system to protect the most vulnerable population in the country, including children.³²²

Key Evaluation Question 3. To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty?

Despite organizational constraints and limited resources, UNICEF Cambodia CO has adopted proactive measures in building national government capacities to work on child poverty reduction. The CO has undertaken strategic initiatives such as national and subnational capacity-building programmes on designing, implementing, and budgeting for social protection programmes targeting vulnerable children.

UNICEF Cambodia CO's social policy team has demonstrated adequate capacity to support the government in tackling child poverty by strengthening the social protection system and public financial management. The team has successfully provided technical assistance for designing and implementing social protection programmes, prioritizing partnerships to measure child poverty, advocating for cash-plus interventions and increasing the budget for the social sector. While there is dedication and commitment to child poverty reduction goals within the CO, organizational capacities and resources are limited and stretched, which can affect its ability to achieve its child poverty reduction objectives fully and effectively.³²³ A lack of in-house expertise in poverty measurement hampers the CO's ability to engage effectively in measurement exercises. Despite this limitation, the CO has taken proactive measures by collaborating with external experts and organizations, including the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and international research institutes. These strategic partnerships aim to overcome the capacity gap, enabling the CO to support the government in measuring multidimensional child poverty. To foster government commitment to measure child poverty and vulnerability regularly, UNICEF and partners are organizing national and subnational capacity-building programmes. These initiatives aim to enhance the capacities of the National Poverty Measurement Working Group and other relevant stakeholders to use both monetary and multidimensional measures, including UNICEF's MODA approach.

UNICEF Cambodia CO prioritizes building national capacities for improving budget allocations towards the social sector, increasing government ownership to undertake child poverty measurements and implementing social protection programmes. UNICEF adopts a learning-by-doing approach to build capacity and national ownership to implement social protection programmes. The approach has been successful in building the government's capacity to lead the implementation of social protection programmes, especially cash transfers for poor and vulnerable households. The CO has been working closely with MoSVY to improve the implementation of the social assistance programme and has supported capacity-building programmes for the MoSVY staff and commune workers.³²⁴ To strengthen national evaluation capacity, the CO supported counterparts from the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), and MoSVY to attend the capacity-building programme in Singapore. This initiative led to the development of action plans to implement the recommendations outlined in the process evaluation of the CT-PWYC.³²⁵

Under the CO's public finance and governance work, the capacity-building of line ministries for improved public financial management is a major focus area.³²⁶ UNICEF has also partnered with the MEF and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to improve national and subnational capacities to design, implement, and budget for social protection programmes targeted at vulnerable children.³²⁷ In 2020, UNICEF partnered with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, with the support of MEF and MoI, to conduct a capacity-building programme for subnational planning and budgeting in 25 provinces across the country. The capacity-building programme helped establish approaches and tools for improved planning and budgeting, and budget accountability for social protection programmes targeting poor and vulnerable households.³²⁸

Key Evaluation Question 4. What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction?

The adoption of a multisectoral approach by UNICEF Cambodia CO, which strengthens national social protection systems – particularly through supporting the government in the implementation of integrated social protection programmes – has enabled ongoing progress towards reducing child poverty.

The CO's proactive engagement in policy and programme formulation, evidenced by its contributions to the NSPPF and the design of the Family Package, reflects a strategic approach to building inclusive social protection systems to tackle child poverty. The CO successfully translated the lessons learned and insights gained from the implementation of the COVID-19 cash transfer programme, leveraging them to drive government commitment and launch the Family Package. To address the multidimensional risks faced by children, the CO is working on introducing cash-plus approaches, as well as making the Family Package programme shock-responsive, flexible and adaptive, enabling it to better cope with unforeseen challenges.

Colombia

UNICEF Country Office Work in Contributing to Child Poverty Reduction

Socio-economic status

Colombia, classified as an upper-middle-income country with a GDP per capita of PPP \$20,268, recovered from the COVID-19 shock with monetary poverty rates declining from 42.5 per cent in 2020 to 36.6 per cent in 2022. This positive trend did not extend to rural populations, Afro-Colombians, and indigenous communities, as they did not witness a decline in poverty rates during this period.

Population demographics

With a population of 52 million, approximately 30.8 per cent of the population are children under the age of 19.

Multidimensional and monetary poverty rate

According to the National Administrative Department of Statistics, 36.6 of Colombians were monetarily poor in 2022 and 12.9 per cent were multidimensionally poor.



Evaluand Level 1: UNICEF key outcomes

UNICEF undertook continued advocacy efforts and technical assistance to support the government's commitment to measure multidimensional child poverty. UNICEF provided technical advice to support the government in developing a Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty. The Country Office currently supports the child sensitivity of the targeting mechanism for social protection programmes.

Evaluand Level 2: Government initiatives

The National Development Plan 2018-2022 introduced the commitment to measure multidimensional child poverty, and in 2021, the government endorsed the Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty. The ongoing transition of the social protection system involves consolidating various programmes into *Renta Ciudadana*.

Key Evaluation Question 1. Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results in child poverty reduction?

The CO has been effective in supporting the Government of Colombia's commitment to measure multidimensional child poverty and develop a Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty. However, efforts to support the implementation of both initiatives are yet to yield results.

Before 2018, UNICEF held dialogues with government officials to stress the importance of measuring multidimensional child poverty. Moreover, UNICEF consistently advocated for the official release of estimates of children living in multidimensionally poor households based on existing Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) data.^{329 330} Long-term dialogues with the National Planning Department (DNP) influenced, to a certain extent, the inclusion of child poverty into the National Development Plan 2018–2020, setting the

basis for the adoption of a child poverty measurement and Strategy to reduce child poverty.³³¹ Partly influenced by Panama's experience launching a child poverty measurement initiative in 2018 and UNICEF's evidence mobilization efforts, the Colombian government committed to measuring individual-level multidimensional child poverty.³³²

After this commitment, UNICEF facilitated technical discussions in a working group involving the DNP, the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and the Department of Social Prosperity. UNICEF experts, government representatives, development partners and academics participated in the 2019 Experts Committee, offering technical insights on the child poverty index's methodology, dimensions and indicators. While the Government of Colombia demonstrated sound technical capacity and ownership, the CO played a role in improving the harmonization of the child poverty measurement with the Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty, developed in parallel.^{333 334 335 336} By 2022, DANE and DNP had finalized the methodology to measure child poverty using the Alkire-Foster method with data from the annual National Quality of Life Survey (ENCV). Even though the government is committed to the annual calculation of multidimensional child poverty, as of November 2023, discussions on the relevant dimensions and corresponding indicators were still taking place.

Following the commitments in the Development Plan, the DNP formed an Experts Committee in 2019 to inform the conceptual and technical development of the Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty. UNICEF and academic partners participated in this group.³³⁷ The Strategy consultation process revealed that there were varying understandings of child poverty among government agencies. UNICEF's distinctive contributions involved facilitating information exchange and building consensus, providing valuable inputs to the conceptualization of poverty and convening dialogues among government agencies.^{338 339} During the strategy design phase, the CO facilitated insights from successful child poverty reduction strategies in other countries and knowledge exchanges with international experts, including UNICEF HQ.^{340 341 342} In a context of strong government ownership of the drafting process, UNICEF experts worked alongside the government, providing recommendations.³⁴³ The Social Policy Committee approved the Strategy in 2021; however, it is yet to be effectively implemented due to challenges related to limited awareness

among officials in decision-making positions, coordination challenges among government entities for harmonizing policy packages, and government transitions.^{344 345}

Key Evaluation Question 2. To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones?

The UNICEF Colombia Country Office made relevant efforts to support the government's commitment to child poverty measurement and a national strategy to reduce child poverty. Moreover, the CO supported social protection for children with disabilities.

UNICEF's advocacy efforts and technical assistance to support the government commitments to produce a child poverty measurement and a national strategy to reduce child poverty have adequately responded to the needs and demands of government stakeholders. UNICEF's support for the government in its commitments to measure and reduce child poverty has considered the context of strong ownership and technical capacity within Colombian government agencies, determining the frequency and modality of these efforts. Technical assistance, involving facilitating advice from child poverty experts and knowledge-sharing on global lessons, proved appropriate and technically sound to inform the methodology of the multidimensional child poverty index³⁴⁶ and the development of a Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty.³⁴⁷ Although advocacy activities and technical assistance proved adequate for the government stakeholders' needs and demands, challenges relating to government transition and institutional coordination affected the design and timely launch of these initiatives.

To promote the alignment of the Strategy and measurement to the needs of Colombian children, UNICEF disseminated insights from participatory exercises in the design processes. UNICEF influenced the drawing up of the poverty dimensions to align with children's understanding, showcasing insights from participatory studies in the Experts Committees during the conceptual discussions of the child poverty measurement and the Strategy. Several government stakeholders consulted for this evaluation highlighted a UNICEF study featuring children's voices as a noteworthy input to the conceptualization of child poverty.³⁴⁸

Responding to the needs of vulnerable children, the CO supported initiatives aimed at including children with disabilities and migrant children in the social protection system. The CO commissioned an evaluation to identify barriers for children with disabilities in the *Familias en Acción* cash transfer programme and gave recommendations to the Department of Social Prosperity (DPS) on increased inclusivity. However, capacity gaps limited the implementation of these recommendations.³⁴⁹ UNICEF also supported advocacy with the Office of the Vice-President to prioritize people with disabilities in the *Renta Ciudadana* cash transfer. As a result the Directory of Social Prosperity decided to introduce a transfer for impoverished households with persons with disabilities, including children.³⁵⁰ Additional efforts included communication and social and behavioural change interventions to facilitate the registration of the migrant population in the social protection system.^{351 352}

While the CO's child poverty-related goals involve measuring and developing a strategy to reduce child poverty, CPDs 2015–2019 and 2021–2024 indirectly consider child poverty among their broader priorities,³⁵³ focusing on enhancing well-being across various dimensions with a relevant territorial perspective. Within Social Policy, there are opportunities for UNICEF to better connect the child poverty result area with local governance, public finance and social protection activities.

Key Evaluation Question 3. To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty?

The CO has limited capacity to comprehensively support child poverty reduction initiatives; moreover, child poverty reduction work requires integration within and across sections. The CO is strengthening the Government's information systems by supporting the development of a social registry to improve the inclusion of vulnerable children in the social protection system.

The Social Policy section within the CO has limited human resources to achieve child poverty reduction goals, with one specialist in charge of child poverty, social protection, SDG monitoring and PF4C result areas. Furthermore, programmatic responses to reduce multidimensional child poverty require

greater synergy among various result areas within the Social Policy section and enhanced collaboration with other UNICEF sections, which are currently limited. For instance, other result areas within Social Policy, including local governance and disability inclusion, present relevant opportunities for integrating child poverty reduction objectives.

The Government of Colombia demonstrated the technical expertise needed to define a methodology to measure multidimensional child poverty and design the Strategy. Consequently, given the strong government commitment and potential political sensitivity, capacity-building initiatives to enhance these efforts were considered unnecessary. UNICEF is working to strengthen Colombia's social protection system by providing financial and technical support to enhance the social registry's child sensitivity. Efforts aim to ensure the inclusion of children in the registry and their adequate coverage in the social protection programme *Renta Ciudadana*.³⁵⁴

Key Evaluation Question 4. What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction?

Leveraging technical advocacy and the voices of children for harnessing commitments to advance poverty reduction initiatives in a context of strong government ownership.

Technical advocacy proved relevant for leveraging commitment to child poverty reduction efforts in situations where strong government ownership or political sensitivity might constrain the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy for new initiatives. Ongoing technical dialogues with relevant government agencies, including the DNP and DANE, were vital in positioning the need to measure child poverty among technical teams. Insights from recognized international and regional experts were pivotal in garnering support and commitment for child poverty measurement and strategy development.

Disseminating participatory studies that amplify children's voices during the consultation processes of the child poverty measurement and Strategy proved an effective advocacy initiative. In addition to shaping the concept of child poverty and the definition of dimensions during technical consultations, disseminating children's opinions on how they experience poverty and deprivation bolstered commitments among technical teams to advance both initiatives.

Rwanda

UNICEF Country Office Work in Contributing to Child Poverty Reduction

Socio-economic status

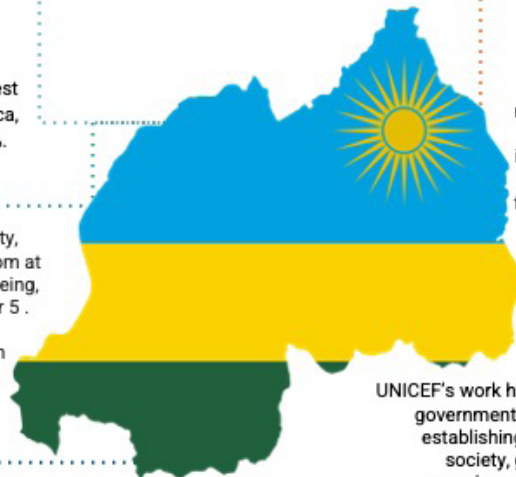
Rwanda, with a GDP per capita of 2,793 PPP USD is a low-income country which has one of the fastest growing economies in central Africa, with an annual growth rate of 5.7%.

Multidimensional and Monetary child poverty rate

In 2022, multidimensional poverty, signifying a child that suffers from at least three deprivations of wellbeing, affected 65.8% of children under 5. Additionally, 44.5% of children experienced monetary poverty in comparison to 39% of the entire population as reported in 2018.

Population demographics

Population of almost 13.5 million of which 45% is under 18 years old with high levels of under-five stunting at 38%.



Evaluand Level 1: Government initiatives

Government initiatives in child poverty reduction encompass the nationally owned and routine measurement and reporting of child poverty by NISR, policies and programmes emphasizing the intersections of child poverty and stunting in social protection, enhancing budgeting for children and the implementation of the sustainable graduation strategy.

Evaluand level 2: UNICEF key outcomes

UNICEF's work has been centered on providing support to government to establish strong internal capacities by establishing collaborative partnerships between civil society, government and development partners in ensuring sustainability of policies and programmes, institutionalisation child poverty measurement, advancing integrated social protection, and supporting sustainable graduation through programmes such as VUP.

Evaluation question 1: Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results on child poverty reduction?

UNICEF's efforts in reducing child poverty in Rwanda³⁵⁵ are marked by effective strategic partnerships, support for integrated social protection, and capacity-building, with a strong emphasis on data-driven insights through the Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA) child poverty measurement. These efforts demonstrate UNICEF's significant role in achieving positive results in child poverty reduction, although challenges remain in integrating these strategies into a broader multisectoral framework.

In evaluating UNICEF's effectiveness in achieving its intended results across the five milestones of child poverty reduction in Rwanda, a comprehensive examination of its strategies and initiatives reveals a multifaceted approach centred on strategic partnerships, data-driven insights, policy advocacy and shaping policies and programmes while maintaining a strong commitment to capacity-building.

UNICEF's efforts in Rwanda are characterized by robust collaborations with the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and the National

Child Development Agency (NCDA), among other stakeholders, with UNICEF positioning itself as a convener between partners in the realm of child poverty reduction. These partnerships, extending from policymaking to programme implementation, are instrumental in mobilizing resources and translating commitments into actionable strategies at the community level.³⁵⁶

Furthermore, UNICEF's role as a coordinator with sister UN agencies reinforces its impact through joint programmes on social protection. This collaboration model emphasizes resource pooling and innovative and integrated solutions, with a multilevel approach intervening at the policy, systems and community levels, amplifying the effectiveness of the social protection programmes to reduce child poverty.³⁵⁷ UNICEF also actively participates in and leads technical working groups, including the development partners' social protection working group, and contributes to the development of operational frameworks, thereby promoting policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration.³⁵⁸

UNICEF has also acted as a bridge connecting government partners with other development partners and civil society, which is essential in advancing the sustainability of the work on child poverty. While UNICEF has successfully fostered partnerships with governments and international development

partners, there remains a noticeable gap in leveraging and engaging local and regional expertise, often overshadowed by the use of international expertise, which is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of their initiative.

A significant aspect of UNICEF's strategy is capacity-building, specifically targeting government officials involved in child poverty reduction. This not only enhances the effectiveness of the programmes but also fosters the government's long-term capability to independently address child poverty. Through its collaboration with NISR, UNICEF has played a pivotal role in enhancing government capacity through the development of a nationally owned and routinely measured child poverty measurement using MODA methodology.

In line with this, UNICEF's commitment to ensuring the sustainable measurement of child poverty and deprivation is evident in its strategic efforts to ensure government ownership of poverty data. This commitment was underscored by UNICEF's partnership with the NISR, facilitating the adoption of the MODA in both 2018 and 2022.^{359 360} This collaboration resulted in the successful integration of the MODA into Rwanda's Integrated Living Condition Survey, marking a significant step towards national ownership of this poverty measurement.³⁶¹ The transition from UNICEF's lead role in publishing the MODA report in 2018 to a government-led publication in 2022 is a testament to the effective collaborative process, which was built on a foundation of technical support, capacity-building, and ongoing communication and advocacy.

The partnership with NISR also extends to technical support for the preparation of thematic reports related to child poverty.³⁶² UNICEF's involvement in enhancing the quality of infographics and providing coaching to university students reflects its commitment to capacity-building and data visualization.³⁶³ These efforts demonstrate UNICEF's dedication to making data user-friendly and accessible to all, including the younger generation.³⁶⁴ Such initiatives can help imbed a culture of data-driven decision-making from an early age. However, UNICEF's work is not without its challenges. Integrating the MODA approach into Rwanda's broader poverty measurement tools, including the Poverty Measurement Tool (PMT), and ensuring that the data collected translate into impactful actions, remains a work in progress. Evidence identifies a need to complement the quantitative data with qualitative insights into children's experiences, providing a more holistic view of child

poverty. This would involve including further disaggregates emphasizing key geographic and demographic characteristics such as the rural-urban divide, and inclusion of disability and gender disaggregates as well as other vulnerable groups. Beyond efforts to improve the availability of child poverty data, UNICEF should further support the translation of child poverty data into policies and programmes tailored to poverty reduction and support their implementation at all levels of governance, specifically the lower levels.

High-level advocacy activities, such as presenting key messages to parliament and advocating for increased budget allocations in social sectors, have yielded positive results.³⁶⁵ These efforts are complemented by partnerships with entities like the MINALOC, the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA) and the World Bank, with the focus on implementing communication strategies to ensure that impoverished families are aware of and can demand quality social protection services.³⁶⁶

In the policy and programme realm, UNICEF's contributions are notable. The successful completion of the Joint Programme (JP) on social protection, involving UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Food Programme (WFP) which was designed to accelerate integrated social protection delivery to end poverty in all its forms, exemplifies UNICEF's role in driving integrated social protection delivery and supporting policy reforms. As part of this programme, UNICEF supported the roll-out of the Village Savings and Loans Associations, a micro-credit model that linked groups to existing social protection services.³⁶⁷ The success of the programme resulted in its adoption by LODA as part of the poverty reduction strategy.³⁶⁸

UNICEF has also contributed to the minimum package for graduation, targeting districts with the highest poverty rates. The results and lessons learned from the nutrition-sensitive social protection programme supported the design and roll-out of a subsequent cash plus programme as part of the new national strategy for sustainable graduation, which has enhanced the impact of the programmes and exemplifies UNICEF's dedication to addressing child poverty multidimensionally.³⁶⁹ In addition to contributing to policies and programmes, UNICEF has collaborated closely with the MINALOC to strengthen the Social Protection Strategy.³⁷⁰ This strategy underscores the expansion of social protection programmes, targeting the most extremely poor and vulnerable, with a special emphasis on addressing

the needs of children in the poorest households. Yet, despite the strategy's dedication to poverty alleviation, it contains few explicit references to child poverty. This approach mirrors Rwanda's comprehensive life-cycle perspective on poverty reduction, which concentrates on supporting the poorest households.

The country office has also been actively involved in the formulation of the National Early Child Development Policy, the new Social Protection Strategy and the National Strategy for sustainable graduation, providing a comprehensive framework for addressing child poverty in Rwanda. Moreover, UNICEF's support for the Graduation Strategy and measurement recommendations, developed in collaboration with MINALOC and BRAC, illustrates its commitment to the development of comprehensive strategies and monitoring tools to reduce poverty in the most vulnerable households.³⁷¹ Through PF4C initiatives, UNICEF has played a crucial role in mobilizing resources and creating the fiscal space for the implementation of these strategies, policies and programmes. The production of annual budget briefs for priority sectors for children (Health, Education, WASH and Social Protection) and investment cases (Community Health Investment case, ECD business case, ECD investment case) ensures the systematic allocation of resources for child poverty reduction programmes.³⁷²

However, to achieve more substantial policy changes and secure increased financial support for child poverty reduction programmes, UNICEF should further support the inclusion of MODA measure within the monitoring and evaluation of interventions. This is vital to assess the impact of initiatives such as the VSLA and ensure they effectively reach and benefit the most vulnerable children. UNICEF's efforts in Rwanda reflect a well-rounded approach, combining strategic partnerships, data-driven insights and policy influence, with a focus on capacity-building – although there are still areas for improvement in integrating these strategies into a broader multisectoral framework.

Evaluation question 2: To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones?

UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions in Rwanda align strongly with national strategies, effectively addressing multidimensional child poverty through comprehensive, adaptable approaches and collaborations with key national partners. This strategic alignment, recognized by government and civil society actors, emphasizes UNICEF's relevance in advancing progress towards the five milestones of child poverty reduction.

UNICEF's commitment to reducing child poverty in Rwanda strongly aligns with the country's strategic priorities under the National Strategy for Transformation 2017–2024. The country programme document (CPD) for 2018–2025 underscores the importance of strengthening the national policy framework and programmes to combat multidimensional child poverty in line with the priority area *promoting resilience and enhancing graduation from poverty and extreme poverty*.^{373 374} This strategic alignment is echoed by most government, development partners and civil society actors who consider UNICEF's work on child poverty reduction as relevant and important to the national context.

One notable aspect of UNICEF Rwanda's relevance is its adaptability and comprehensive approach, which recognizes that effective support for children must extend beyond individual child-focused initiatives. As noted by government partners, UNICEF brings its "strategic position" as a "pivotal undeniable player in all matters children" to the table to complement the government's holistic life-cycle approach to poverty reduction. By partnering with organizations like BRAC and the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and aligning with Rwanda's graduation strategy, UNICEF helps address poverty, focusing on vulnerable households with a continued focus on the child.

In addressing vulnerable populations, UNICEF collaborates with the government to enhance gender equality and disability inclusivity of social protection programmes. This includes UNICEF's ongoing work on an assessment of gender equality and social inclusion of the Government of Rwanda's social protection system.³⁷⁵ Another key initiative, Tubarerere Mu Muryango (TMM), underscores UNICEF's dedication to embedding interventions for children with disabilities. In the second phase of TMM, UNICEF played

a pivotal role in directing the programme's focus towards children with disabilities. This involved not only ensuring that these children are matched with suitable and sustainable families, but also guaranteeing their access to essential services. This strategic approach contributes to the upliftment of children with disabilities from conditions of child poverty.³⁷⁶

Evaluation question 3: To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty?

UNICEF in Rwanda has effectively built national capacities for reducing child poverty, as seen in its strategic collaborations with government bodies and organizations like CLADHO and LODA, Rwanda Management Institute, National Child Development Agencies and Districts focusing on training and empowering child representatives, service delivery, and data analysis, planning and budget direction. However, within UNICEF, there is a recognized resource gap and a need for a unified office strategy to maximize impact, especially in addressing the multidimensional aspects of child poverty and aligning programming with sectoral roles.

In Rwanda, UNICEF has demonstrated a strong commitment to building national capacities for reducing child poverty, evident in its collaborations with various organizations and government bodies. A notable partnership is with the Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (CLADHO), where a training module guide was developed to support the capacity-building of child representatives across 11 districts. This initiative, which also involved baseline data collection for impact monitoring, was crucial in empowering young people and key stakeholders at decentralized levels.³⁷⁷ The focus on child representatives aimed to enhance the capacity and functionality of children's forums at grassroots levels, showing UNICEF's dedication to fostering child participation in decision-making processes.

Capacity-building has been at the basis of UNICEF's partnership with LODA and reflected positively by government partners. The collaboration with LODA extends to training staff on new elements of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP), aimed at accelerating poverty reduction and social protection

for the poorest households.³⁷⁸ In collaboration with NISR, UNICEF has contributed to training university students in trend analysis and data visualization, focusing on socioeconomic indicators.³⁷⁹ This initiative not only gives students practical skills but also contributes to the national capacity for data analysis and interpretation. The involvement of trained students in NISR's workforce is a testament to the effectiveness of this capacity-building initiative.

This evaluation underscores the important contributions of UNICEF in capacity-building initiatives. However, it also indicates a potential saturation point in such efforts. Government partners suggest that, once these capacities are adequately established, a strategic reallocation of resources towards direct financial assistance could be more beneficial than continuing potentially redundant capacity-building efforts.

Within UNICEF, there is a recognition of the capacity of staff within the Social Policy team in child poverty measurement and social protection; however, there is also an emphasis on the need for additional resources to maximize the impact of staff. The multidimensional nature of child poverty underscores the importance of strong collaboration between UNICEF sections on multisectoral interventions that address the overlapping dimensions of deprivation. The emphasis on a multisectoral approach highlights a possible role for upper management in the country office in facilitating cross-office collaboration towards multidimensional child poverty reduction.

Evaluation question 4: What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction?

A good practice includes the CO's role as a convener bringing government and development partners together in supporting child-sensitive budgeting. Lessons include harnessing partnerships in local expertise as a relevant approach to create lasting solutions that are owned and upheld by the communities and governments.

The Rwandan case stands as a good practice in UNICEF's child poverty reduction efforts. UNICEF has played a pivotal role as a convener, uniting government partners, development agencies and civil society, including CLADHO, and championing participatory and child-sensitive budgeting processes. As part of this initiative, more than 14,000 children

and youth were reached and took part in the decision-making process on planning and budgeting in community dialogues. Consultative sessions were later organized with the districts to monitor how the priorities highlighted by the children and youth were considered in district-level budget allocation. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and MINALOC, national stakeholders, were also included in this process, ensuring that these community-level priorities were reflected at the national level. The collaboration with university students on child poverty measurement and NISR is another example of UNICEF's good practices as a convener, demonstrating the added value of local academic involvement in shaping demand for data-driven decision-making and governance and ensuring the sustainability of child poverty measurements.

Building on this practice, a lesson learned is the vital need for integrated efforts that bring together diverse stakeholders. The success of such initiatives in Rwanda has shown that when different stakeholders

work in tandem rather than in isolation, the outcomes are more sustainable and have a greater impact on reducing child poverty. Furthermore, the emphasis on using local and regional expertise is a key take-away. Despite its recognized value, the full potential of this resource remains largely untapped. The Rwanda case emphasized that incorporating local knowledge and skills is essential, not only for the appropriateness and cultural sensitivity of the programmes but also for ensuring their durability and effectiveness.

Thus, the lesson learned is twofold: first, cohesive, multi-stakeholder partnerships are foundational to successful child poverty initiatives, and second, grounding these partnerships in local expertise is imperative to create lasting solutions that are owned and upheld by the communities and governments. This approach ensures that UNICEF's interventions are enduring and become a sustainable part of the societal framework they aim to strengthen.

Sri Lanka

UNICEF Country Office Work in Contributing to Child Poverty Reduction

Socio-economic status

Sri Lanka, classified as a lower-middle-income country with a GDP per capita of PPP \$14,410, experienced an acute economic downturn in 2019. With prices surging by 46 per cent, poverty rates rose more than twofold between 2019 and 2022.

Population demographics

With a population of 22.1 million, approximately one-third of the population are children under the age of 18.

Multidimensional and monetary child poverty rate

According to World Bank data, 25 per cent of people in Sri Lanka are monetarily poor. Approximately 16 per cent are multidimensionally poor, with around 42.2 per cent of children under the age of five experiencing multidimensional poverty.



Evaluand Level 1: UNICEF key outcomes

UNICEF's work focused on supporting the Department of Census and Statistics in calculating multidimensional child poverty measurement, a key achievement in 2019. UNICEF generated fiscal space analyses to advocate for increasing resource allocations for social protection. In 2022, responding to the financial shock, UNICEF introduced a short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer.

Evaluand Level 2: Government initiatives

The Department of Census and Statistics calculated multidimensional child poverty rates with data from 2019. The National Planning Department is drafting a Social Protection Strategy. Social protection programmes include the Pregnancy Voucher Programme covering six months of pregnancy and four months of lactation.

Key Evaluation Question 1. Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results in child poverty reduction?

The country office has achieved certain child poverty reduction objectives, notably supporting the government in measuring multidimensional child poverty. While the country office contributed to addressing the immediate needs of vulnerable children in the short term, efforts to enhance the social protection system have yielded limited results.

In collaboration with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), UNICEF offered technical assistance to the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), making a contribution to the measurement of multidimensional child poverty in Sri Lanka. In collaboration with OPHI and the think tank Centre for Poverty Analysis, UNICEF assisted the DCS in producing a child multidimensional poverty index (MPI) for children from 0 to 4 years old in 2019. This effort led to the inclusion of a child module in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) and DCS's commitment to formalize the child MPI as an official measure. In collaboration with UNICEF and OPHI, the DCS reported the results in 2023, with ongoing commitments to routinely measuring child poverty and counting children up to 17 years old.³⁸⁰ ³⁸¹ However, there are challenges for the routinization of the child MPI, including the three-year periodicity of the HIES. Despite UNICEF's efforts to disseminate results and promote their potential application through events such as an official launch and forums with the Parliamentary Caucus for Children, government stakeholder consultations indicate that the use of the MPI for policy decision-making and monitoring purposes remains limited.³⁸²

Although the CO's Social Policy programming prioritizes strengthening the social protection system,³⁸³ evidence and advocacy efforts for this purpose, mainly for increasing fiscal allocations, are yet to yield results. In partnership with the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF has produced social sector spending analyses to improve allocations for the social sector; and generated evidence to build the case for a life-cycle social protection system as a viable policy.³⁸⁴ UNICEF also contributed technical expertise in discussions on the progressive realization of universal social protection for children. With major social protection reforms ongoing in Sri Lanka, UNICEF sought strategic partnerships to analyse related

risks and opportunities, convene policy discussions, and advocate for using the momentum to progressively build a comprehensive and child-sensitive social protection system. Strategies used to this end included technical and high-level meetings with representatives from relevant government authorities and international financial institutions (IFIs) and the facilitation of policy dialogue among these stakeholders, both unilaterally and jointly with other UN agencies, notably UNDP. UNICEF also chairs Outcome 1 of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) related to access for all to quality social services, as well as the output group on social protection. One of the priorities of this group is supporting a quality national comprehensive policy framework, and UNICEF facilitated the consolidation of technical comments on the draft National Social Protection Policy. UNICEF also continued sectoral budget analyses and used these analytical insights to raise awareness of the current risks of reduced social sector spending among government partners, Members of Parliament, international financial institutions (IFIs) and development partners.^{385 386 387} In mid-2023, UNICEF and UNDP produced an analytical note considering the implications and opportunities of ongoing social protection reforms, emphasizing the importance of allocating more than 0.6 per cent of GDP to social protection spending – the spending floor established by the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Extended Fund Facility – and the implications of establishing this low threshold.^{388 389 390} The effectiveness of these advocacy efforts has been challenged by competing social spending priorities and the government's fiscal constraints within the financial crisis context. The 2023–2027 programme includes a significant component to strengthen the social protection system through awareness-raising, evidence generation, and enhancing institutional coordination among government departments. While evidence-generation activities have been relevant to the fiscally constrained context, UNICEF has opportunities to disseminate and leverage results for targeted advocacy efforts.³⁹¹

The CO consistently advocated for establishing universal child benefits, including through an investment case.³⁹² However, facing resistance due to acute fiscal constraints and a limited understanding of universal social protection among government officials, advocacy for a new universal programme was unsuccessful. Consequently, UNICEF adjusted its strategy to advocate for the age-expansion of the existing Pregnancy Voucher Programme.³⁹³ Although ongoing advocacy efforts have had limited success,

and there are recognized gaps in the social protection system's ability to effectively protect vulnerable children from economic shocks, UNICEF, with financial support from USAID, introduced a short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer from September 2022 to October 2023.³⁹⁴

Key Evaluation Question 2. To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones?

The Sri Lanka Country Office's support for the short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer proved a relevant social protection intervention in the economic and financial crisis context.

In 2022, the CO introduced a short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer programme that proved a relevant response to the need for temporary income support for young children and their families during the economic and financial crisis. Considering the challenges of the social protection system, UNICEF introduced a cash-plus programme complementing the government's Pregnancy Voucher Programme (PVP). The programme effectively addressed the needs of the most vulnerable children through its inclusion of a nutrition component and its geographical targeting toward districts with higher rates of severe child wasting. Beyond the cash element, the programme incorporated nutrition and health information. Its design was well suited to the needs of caregivers, incorporating gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive features. Although the programme was a short-term initiative complementing the PVP, it was institutionally appropriate. The CO developed the programme in close consultation with the National Planning Department (NPD) and the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment (MoWCASE). UNICEF worked closely with front-line workers at the district level to identify and register eligible families.³⁹⁵ Partnering with Sarvodaya, a recognized community-based organization, enhanced the programme's responsiveness to needs by ensuring accountability to affected populations through adequate complaints and feedback mechanisms.³⁹⁶

In the acute macroeconomic context, safeguarding and improving social sector spending is the CO's main priority, aligning with Social Policy's evidence and advocacy work on improving fiscal space for social protection.³⁹⁷ Amid the crisis context, the CO

produced and disseminated a fiscal space analysis aiming to expand allocations for social protection programmes, as well as sectoral budget analyses to advocate for safeguarding social sector spending.

Key Evaluation Question 3. To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty?

The UNICEF Social Policy section faces limited capacities to work on child poverty reduction; however, the relative integration across result areas maximizes efforts. While UNICEF has effectively enhanced government capacities for measuring child poverty, its effectiveness in strengthening the social protection system and developing officials' capacities in this field has been somewhat limited.

Although the Social Policy section demonstrates adequate human and technical skills to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction, human resources in the section were limited to two staff members at the time of this evaluation. However, the integration within the Child Poverty, Public Finance and Social Protection result areas promoted the harmonization of efforts. Strong linkages with PF4C work enhance support for social protection, and collaboration with other sections improves capabilities for integrated responses to multidimensional poverty, including the collaboration with the Health section on the short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer.³⁹⁸

In partnership with OPHI, UNICEF enhanced the capacity of the Department of Census and Statistics to measure multidimensional child poverty through technical assistance and several training sessions for statisticians, including OPHI-led training organized in Colombo. UNICEF's continuous dialogues and collaborations with DCS officials also supported leadership capable of advancing the agenda within the Department. Stakeholder consultations underscored the DCS's commitment to enhancing internal capacities through a 'trainer-of-trainers' approach to continually calculate and improve the child MPI.³⁹⁹ However, despite the DCS's capabilities to produce the measurement, financial constraints hinder sustainability without external funding.

The short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer for pregnant and lactating women included relevant considerations to further strengthen the existing PVP system. For instance, UNICEF agreed with the National Planning Department and MoWCASE to hand over the rights holder database to the Ministry. UNICEF trained front-line workers who served as enumerators across districts and developed a digital data-collection tool. UNICEF also designed monitoring data collection plan to provide insights to improve the PVP. Insights included the advantages of using cash instead of vouchers to promote the empowerment of rights holders, digitizing registries and using financial service providers to improve efficiency. However, discussions with MoWCASE have not concluded plans for enabling the government's use of data and integrating lessons to enhance the PVP. In light of the widespread need for capacity development among government officials on child-sensitive social protection and UNICEF's programme emphasis on this area, there are opportunities to enhance and broaden capacity-building activities.^{400 401}

Key Evaluation Question 4. What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction?

Good practices include building partnerships to leverage evidence and documenting design features of the short-term nutrition cash transfer programme to enhance the social protection system.

Establishing and strengthening partnerships to achieve common objectives with the EU and UNDP have greatly supported evidence generation to improve fiscal allocations for social protection, a vital effort towards reducing child poverty. A good practice involves leveraging convening powers to mobilize fiscal analyses based on a common understanding of social protection. The CO established strong partnerships with the EU through the UNICEF-EU Public Finance Facility aimed at protecting social sector spending and with UNDP under the UNICEF-UNDP Finance Flagship initiative;⁴⁰² these partnerships have enabled funding and technical cooperation on fiscal space analyses, strengthening the case for comprehensive social protection in the context of shrinking fiscal space. The leading roles played by UNICEF and UNDP in the UN Country Team Results Groups on Social Protection and SDG Planning, Financing, and Data Results strengthen the coherence of this collaboration.⁴⁰³

Food practices include designing UNICEF's short-term nutrition cash transfer to address the needs of vulnerable children and caregivers, and documenting lessons to improve the adequacy of the PVP. Besides providing nutrition and health information, the cash transfer programme is gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive, with design features to potentially improve the PVP. Opting for cash instead of vouchers and using bank accounts for disbursement enhanced responsiveness to rights holders' needs and preferences by reducing time costs, expanding consumption choices and promoting women's financial inclusion. Accessibility for caregivers with disabilities was ensured through house visits and registration points within a five-kilometre radius. UNICEF is undertaking a comprehensive plan to monitor data collection, including focus group discussions where up to 277 female rights holders participated. The discussions were designed to effectively document preliminary outcomes of the programme and provide the MoWCASE with lessons learned. The monitoring exercise also aimed to demonstrate the programme's positive effects on aspects of women's empowerment and the use of the transfer for productive activities that benefit children.^{404 405}

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Evaluation matrix

Table 7. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct		UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
Prioritization 1(a) To what extent is UNICEF's child poverty work prioritized at HQ, RO and CO levels? (Overarching)	Financial	Planning	CO Level	Qualitative Review Sample	Country Programme Documents	Analysis of country programme documents to determine which countries have assigned indicative resources to child poverty reduction as part of their Country Programme Document. This will allow the evaluation team to determine whether country offices have explicitly budgeted child poverty reduction into their plans.	Descriptive statistics Bivariant analysis with proportion of budget allocated and with financial capacity
		Utilization	CO, RO and HQ Level	Qualitative Review Sample	Insight (Results overview in Programme Data explorer)	The financial data for Goal 35.1, focusing on Goal Area 5 (Equitable Chance at Life) under Objective 1 (Child Poverty Reduction), will be used at the Country, Regional, and HQ levels. At the Country Office (CO) level, it will be compared to the planned resources in the CPD (Country Programme Document) to assess actual utilization. At the Regional Office (RO) and Headquarters (HQ) levels, it will help understand the proportion of the total budget for Goal Area 5 allocated to Child Poverty Reduction. This analysis will enable the evaluation team to determine how closely the use of the funds compares to the budgeted commitments in the CPD and how this compares to child poverty funds' utilization at the HQ and RO levels.	Descriptive statistics Bivariant analysis with proportion of budget allocated and with financial capacity

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
	Continuity	HQ and RO Level	N/A	Insight (Results overview in Programme Data explorer)	The past five years' financial data for Goal 35 and Goal 35.1 will be analysed at the Regional and HQ levels. The objective is to compare the growth in funding for Goal Area 5 as a whole to the growth in funding specifically allocated to Goal 5 Objective 1 at the HQ and RO levels. This analysis will help the evaluation team understand the changes in funding prioritization within Goal Area 5, particularly regarding child poverty, over the past five years.	Descriptive statistics Bivariant analysis with proportion of budget allocated and with financial capacity
	Strategic	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	Country Programme Documents and workplans	Identification of child poverty as a work area in CPDs and workplans. The number of outcomes related to the five milestones of child poverty reduction will be indicative of the extent to which child poverty is prioritized by the CO. KIIs will validate or nuance the assessment emerging from the document review.	Comparative Analysis
In-depth country sample			KII	Assessment of prioritization of child poverty within GA5 result areas and identification of change strategies and approaches in Strategic Plans. KIIs with the Regional Heads of Social Policy and HQ staff working on GA5 validate and nuance propositions from documents review and help to identify potential challenges for strategic prioritization.	Comparative Analysis	
RO and HQ level		N/A	Strategic Plans, Strategic Plan TOC			
N/A		KII				

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
<p>Programmatic appropriateness 1(b) To what extent has UNICEF's work in child poverty been relevant to address national needs (including the needs of the most vulnerable children)? (Overarching)</p>	<p>Alignment to national needs</p>	<p>CO Level</p>	<p>Qualitative review sample</p>	<p>Government strategy documents, Country Programme Documents and Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs)</p>	<p>Identification of the main policy priorities and needs on poverty reduction in national plans and strategies or other relevant government documents. Assessment of the alignment of identified national priorities and needs with COs' strategic programming in CPDs and in PCAs; KIIs in in-depth countries will validate, nuance and provide additional details to this assessment.</p>	<p>Comparative Analysis</p>
			<p>In-depth country sample</p>	<p>KII</p>		<p>Comparative Analysis</p>
			<p>Quantitative review sample</p>	<p>Core standard indicator (CSI)</p>		<p>Strategic Plan Indicator 5.1.3: DP0000016 Establishment and functioning of participatory mechanism at the local level Other relevant data will be incorporated into a larger quantitative sample to understand the work UNICEF has done to ensure their efforts in child poverty reduction are aligned with national needs. This approach allows for triangulation of findings, leveraging both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support and strengthen the results.</p>

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
Humanitarian settings 1(c) How has UNICEF adapted its work on child poverty in humanitarian and fragile contexts and which of the identified approaches and strategies prove relevant in these contexts?	Potentially relevant approaches and strategies for UNICEF's child poverty work in humanitarian settings.	CO level	Humanitarian sample	Survey	Which of the following best encompasses the humanitarian situation of the country of your UNICEF office?	Descriptive Statistics
					Please select the type of humanitarian situation that best describes your country:	Descriptive Statistics
					Does your country office have specific efforts dedicated to the child poverty workstream within the humanitarian context?	Descriptive Statistics
					How do you perceive the relevance of having a dedicated workstream focused on poverty reduction within the Social Policy programme in humanitarian settings?	Descriptive Statistics
					Does the CO experience any of the following obstacles to working towards child poverty reduction?	Descriptive Statistics
		COARs	Map the activities and approaches to reduce child poverty by milestone that COs have undertaken in humanitarian and fragile settings.	Qualitative comparative analysis		
		KII	KIIs will investigate the approaches to child poverty reduction that would make sense in humanitarian and fragile settings and identify the appropriate elements of the current framework in these settings.	Qualitative comparative analysis		
HQ and RO Level	N/A	KII	KIIs will gauge the potential support or strategic guidance that HQ can develop to further integrate humanitarian and fragility components in. KIIs with ROs will identify the main challenges faced at regional levels and potential approaches.	Qualitative analysis		
CO Level	Quantitative review sample	CSI	SP indicator 5.2.4: Ability of the social protection system, including cash transfer capacities, to effectively respond to humanitarian crises	Descriptive Statistics		

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
<p>Partnerships and consensus-building</p> <p>2(a) To what extent has UNICEF partnered with relevant stakeholders to identify a national pathway to end child poverty? (Milestone 1)</p>	Engagement with partners	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to engaging and establishing relevant partnerships for child poverty reduction. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 1
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative review sample	CSI and Insight databases		
	Collaboration in mapping the current situation	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	Child Poverty Profiles	Conducting an analysis of child poverty profiles published in collaboration with UNICEF and mapping the associated partnerships for these reports.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 1
			In-depth country sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to collaboration with relevant partners to map the current situation of child poverty. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	
				KII		
Quantitative Review sample	CSI and Insight databases	Relevant data will be incorporated into a larger quantitative sample to achieve a comprehensive global understanding of partnerships. This approach allows for triangulation of findings, leveraging both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support and strengthen the results.	Descriptive Statistics			

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
	Collaborated agreement on a pathway to poverty reduction		Qualitative Review sample	C CPD, COARs, RAM, other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to establishing a collaborative agreement on poverty reduction pathways. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions and identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 1
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative Review sample	Insight Standard indicators		
	UNICEF's leadership in supporting the child poverty reduction agenda	RO and HQ level	N/A	KII	KIIs with ROs, COs and HQ staff will gauge perceptions of UNICEF's leadership in the agenda, which will be validated or nuanced against insights from KIIs with global development partners and national Government and civil society stakeholders.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 1
		CO Level	In-depth country sample			
Measurement 2(b) To what extent has UNICEF's work contributed to the adequate and consistent measurement of child poverty? (Milestone 2)	Calculation of child poverty rates	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	C CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to the calculation of monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 2
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative sample	CSI		

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
	Publication/accessibility of data		Qualitative review sample	C CPD, COARS, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to the publication of consistent, accessible and disaggregated child poverty measurements in collaboration with key partners. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis of milestone 3
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative review Sample	CSI, UNICEF Data Bank, SDG data, and VNR	Conducting data collection on data availability from the most relevant databases owned or supported by UNICEF to assess the ease and availability of public and internal measurements.	Triangulation from different sources
	National ownership of measurement		Qualitative review sample	C CPD, COARS, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's support for national ownership of measurements. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis within milestone 2
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative review Sample	CSI	SP Indicator 5.1.1 DP0000003 and DP0000006 Monetary poverty and multidimensional poverty rate is reported by the Government.	Triangulation from different sources Descriptive statistics
				Insight Standard indicators	IND0000999 and IND0001568: National government measurement of child poverty using monetary and Multidimensional	Triangulation from different sources

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
	Routinization of measurement		Qualitative review sample	C CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's support of the routinization of child poverty measurements. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis within milestone 2
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative review sample	Insight Standard indicators	IND0001579 and IND0001580 Monetary/ Multidimensional child poverty is routinely measured and reported by the Government	Triangulation from different sources
				Secondary data review (UNICEF data bank, SDG, VNR)	N/A	Triangulation of qualitative results
	Use of multidimensional child poverty rates in supporting advocacy, policy and accountability	CO Level	Qualitative review Sample	C CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to the use of multidimensional child poverty rates to support the other milestones. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis within milestone 2
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative review sample	CSI/ SMQ-25-01-5.a.3-9	SP indicator 5.1.1 Use of child poverty measures	Descriptive statistics
	Barriers		In-depth country sample	KII	KIIs will provide insights on the challenges for supporting child poverty measurement and potential solutions to address these barriers.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 2

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
<p>Advocacy 2(c) To what extent have UNICEF's advocacy efforts contributed to increase awareness of child poverty among relevant stakeholders or in the public agenda? (Milestone 3)</p>	Advocacy planning	CO level	Qualitative review sample	C CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to advocacy planning. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis within Milestone 3
			In-depth country sample	KII		
	Clear Advocacy Messages	CO level	Quantitative review sample	Insight Standard indicators	IND0001569 Advocacy is shaped by child poverty analysis	Descriptive statistics
			Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to the development of clear advocacy messages informed by child poverty profiles and measurements. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 3
	Engagement in Policy Discussions	CO level	In-depth country sample	KII		
			Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to engagement in policy discussions to advocate for milestones 4 and 5. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 3
	In-depth country sample	KII				
	Quantitative review sample	CSI and Insight indicators	Relevant data will be incorporated into a larger quantitative sample to obtain an understanding of UNICEF's work in engaging in policy discussions globally. This approach allows for triangulation of findings, leveraging both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support and strengthen the results.	Descriptive statistics		

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis	
	Results in putting child poverty on the map		Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to putting child poverty on the map through advocacy efforts. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome-level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis within milestone 3	
			In-depth country sample	KII			
			Quantitative review sample	Insight Standard indicators	IND0001570 Policies and programmes are influenced by analysis and advocacy to reduce child poverty		Descriptive statistics
				CSI	SP Indicator 5.1.3 DP0000013 advocacy and engagement has led to Child-responsive national policies (and local DP0000014), programmes and plans.		Descriptive statistics

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis	
<p>Policy and programme change</p> <p>2(d).1 To what extent has UNICEF's child poverty work supported sectoral policies and programmes?</p> <p>2(d).2 To what extent has UNICEF's child poverty work supported social protection policies and programmes? (Milestone 4)</p>	Overarching approaches to address both	CO level	Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs and RAM	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's support for policies and programmes to address all types of child poverty. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 4	
			In-depth country sample	KII			
			Quantitative review sample	CSI			SP Indicator 5.1.2 Proportion of countries where UNICEF helped strengthen social sector budgets (health, education, and/or social protection) for greater and better investments in children.
	Sectoral policies and programmes (Multidimensional)			Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's support for sector policies and programmes to address multidimensional child poverty. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions and identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative comparative analysis within milestone 4
				In-depth country sample	KII		
	Social Protection policies and programmes (Monetary)	Second level Evaluand – Government		Quantitative Review Sample	CSI	SP Indicator 5.2.1 DP0000033 areas that the social protection system that UNICEF supports	Bivariant analysis with monetary child poverty rates
						SP Indicator 5.2.1 Level of the strength of the social protection system	Descriptive statistics
					Insight Standard indicators	IND0000506 Share of public spending on health, education and/or social protection benefiting children living in the poorest regions and/or the poorest quintile	Descriptive statistics

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
<p>National plans and commitment 2(e) To what extent have UNICEF activities supported the enshrinement of strategies to reduce child poverty in national plans? (milestone 5)</p>	<p>Establishment of national commitment Second level Evaluand – Government</p>	<p>CO Level</p>	<p>Qualitative review sample</p>	<p>CPD, COARs, RAM, and other</p>	<p>Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's support for the establishment of national commitments for child poverty reduction. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome-level (RAMs). Additionally, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions and identify barriers and enablers to the process.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis within milestone 5</p>
	<p>In-depth country sample</p>		<p>KII</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics</p>		
	<p>Implementation of interventions</p>	<p>CO Level</p>	<p>Qualitative review sample</p>	<p>CPD, COARs, RAM, and other</p>	<p>Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's support for the implementation of interventions related to child poverty reduction. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis within milestone 5</p>
	<p>In-depth country sample</p>		<p>KII</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics</p>		
	<p>Quantitative review sample</p>		<p>CSI</p>	<p>5.1.4 Extent to which international and private sector resources for children have been mobilized with UNICEF support</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics</p>	

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
	Monitoring and evaluation	CO level	Qualitative review sample	CPD, COARs, RAM, and other	Comprehensive mapping of activities and accomplishments related to UNICEF's work in monitoring and evaluating the work on child poverty reduction. This analysis will cover the planning stage (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARS), and outcome level (RAMs). KIIs will also be used to assess the extent of UNICEF's contributions, as well as identify barriers and enablers to the process.	Qualitative analysis within milestone 5
			In-depth country sample	KII		
			Quantitative review sample	Insight Standard indicators	IND2001122 National budget and social sector investments are routinely monitored	Descriptive statistics
			Qualitative review sample	Document review and database review	Mapping of activities dedicated to supporting the monitoring of progress of commitments to reduce child poverty and programmes' impacts at the planning (CPDs and workplans), implementation (COARs) and outcome levels (RAMs).	Qualitative analysis within milestone 5
Adequacy of organizational capacity and resources 3(a) Are UNICEF's organizational capacities (at HQ, RO and CO levels) adequate and sufficient to achieve its child poverty reduction goals? (Overarching)	Financial capacity	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	KII	KIIs will provide insights into the sufficiency of financial, technical and time management resources, in addition to the main resource constraints and needs. KII insights will complement secondary data on financial prioritization.	Descriptive statistics
		RO and HQ level	N/A	KII		
	Technical capacity	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	KII		Comparative analysis
		RO and HQ level	N/A	KII		
	Capacity and resource constraints	CO level	In-depth country sample	KII		
		RO and HQ level	N/A	KII		

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
<p>Capacity-building for national partners 3(b) To what extent has UNICEF's work contributed to increasing its national partners' capacities to reduce child poverty? (Overarching)</p>	<p>Strategies to develop capacities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Competencies, knowledge and learning ▶ Institutional coordination ▶ Management information systems 	CO Level	Qualitative review sample	PCAs, COARs, RAMs	<p>Identification of capacity areas the CO planned to support in PCAs, and the outcomes achieved in RAMs, related to competencies, knowledge and learning, institutional coordination and supporting MISs. Mapping undertook activities in COARs. KIIs with government stakeholders will validate and nuance desk review findings.</p>	Comparative analysis
			In-depth country sample	KII		<p>Descriptive statistics Bivariant analysis with milestone indicators</p>
			Quantitative review sample	CSI	<p>5.1.3 proportion of countries, including in humanitarian and fragile contexts, in which UNICEF has enhanced national and local governance capacities for poverty reduction at the local level.</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics Bivariant analysis with milestone indicators</p>
<p>Lessons Learned 4(a) Based on the country office's experience, which lesson learned from past child poverty reduction initiatives do you believe could significantly benefit UNICEF's efforts going forward? (Overarching)</p>	Lessons learned	CO Level	In-depth country sample	KII	<p>Identification of valuable and replicable lessons in work towards the five milestones. Identification of main challenges and structural barriers for COs' work on child poverty reduction and the strategies undertaken to overcome them.</p>	Qualitative analysis
			Quantitative review sample	Survey	<p>Based on the country office's experience, which lesson learned from past child poverty reduction initiatives do you believe could significantly benefit UNICEF's efforts going forward?</p>	Qualitative analysis and descriptive statistics

Evaluation subcriteria	Construct	UNICEF Level	CO Sample	Data source	Design Strategy	Analysis
<p>Good Practices 4(b) Building on the country office's experience, which specific good practices or successful approaches should UNICEF consider adopting to enhance its effectiveness in reducing child poverty? (Overarching)</p>	<p>Good practices</p>	<p>CO Level</p>	<p>In-depth country sample</p>	<p>KII</p>	<p>KIIs will identify good practices and approaches in COs' work towards the five milestones that have led to the achievement of objectives and can be replicated in other contexts.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis</p>
			<p>Quantitative review sample</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<p>Building on the country office's experience, which specific good practices or successful approaches should UNICEF consider adopting to enhance its effectiveness in reducing child poverty?</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis</p>

A3

Evaluation methodology and sampling strategy

Sampling strategy

Sampling approach for qualitative and in-depth analysis

Using a purposeful sampling approach, EPRI selected **20 countries** for analysis, of which **four countries** were selected for in-depth analysis based on thematic and programmatic relevance, the potential for lessons learned and progress towards the five milestones. The country selection was based on a careful analysis of the country offices' work on the milestones, with a focus on countries shortlisted in the scoping study and recommended by the evaluation's Reference Group.



Table 8. Country sample and criteria for selection

Sampling groups	Countries	Sampling criteria and source
Group 1: In-depth analysis countries	Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka	Purposive strategy based on the relevance of work according to recommendations from the scoping study and the Reference Group, the balance of work across the five milestones and regional balance.
Group 2: Qualitative review sample	Argentina, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Georgia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malaysia, Montenegro, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Tanzania, Uganda, Uzbekistan,	These countries were suggested by an expert group in the scoping analysis and the reference group. Their selection was determined based on desk review (especially from the Goal Area 5 Annual Report and the Review of the use of multidimensional poverty measures) and confirmed through interviews with key informants in UNICEF's regional offices and HQ. The selection considered countries' potential to provide different lessons learned related to different milestones. The selection also sought to ensure regional and income group balance. Papua New Guinea was included to ensure the representation of Pacific Islands.
Group 3: Countries in humanitarian context	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen	Top 20 countries with the highest funding required in 2022 according to the UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 Overview, document review and recommendations from the Regional Chief of Social Policy. ⁴⁰⁶

The countries selected for in-depth analysis were **Rwanda, Colombia, Sri Lanka** and **Cambodia**. This country selection builds on the country options proposed in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation, and the scoping report analysis, shortlisted according to the following criteria during the scoping phase: i) region, ii) income status, iii) general population and percentage of child population; iv) the reporting of child poverty measurements; v) percentage of GDP dedicated by the government to social assistance programmes; vi) other relevant sources; vii) insights from RO consultations during scoping phase; viii) a score of key 'quantifiable' questions from the Strategic Monitoring Questions 2020 selected for each of the milestones constructed for the scoping report.⁴⁰⁷ Based on these criteria, the results of the scoping study and Terms of Reference recommended a set of nine countries. EPRI initially identified seven options and subsequently shortlisted four countries for in-depth analysis, which were subsequently complemented with recommendations from the Reference Group. The countries proposed by EPRI for in-depth analysis were validated in consultation with UNICEF HQ prior to the acceptance of the Inception Report. Since the initial set of country options provided in the Terms of Reference was already shortlisted according to the criteria mentioned above, including extensive

desk analysis and consultations, EPRI's selection of these options followed an enhanced purposive logic. Countries were selected for their relevance in terms of thematic and programmatic interest, progress towards the five milestones according to CSI data and geographic balance. The selection also aimed to provide a degree of balance in income groups, particularly low and middle-income countries, and relevance in child poverty rates.

Table 9 outlines key features of the proposed countries for in-depth analysis that informed the selection and provided insights for choosing an option, particularly the qualitative assessments regarding Ros' basis for recommendation, work on child poverty and progress towards milestones in the SMQ scorecard of the scoping report. ROs' basis for recommendation outlines elements highlighted as reasons for inclusion in the study in consultations with ROs during the scoping phase. The row regarding work on child poverty outlines the main areas of child poverty work identified in COARs, CPDs and COs website. A more detailed discussion of work areas is provided in *Table 8*. The final rows showing progress towards milestones according to the SMQ assessment for the scoping report provide an estimate of the progress achieved towards the five milestones.

Table 9. Comparison of recommended countries for qualitative analysis sample

	Sri-Lanka	Cambodia	Colombia	Rwanda
Region	South Asia	East Asia and the Pacific	Latin America and Caribbean	Eastern and Southern Africa
Income	Lower middle income	Lower middle Income	Upper middle income	Low income
Population				
Total Population	22,156,000	16,718,971	11,287,640	12,952,209
% child population	23.68	30.9	22.18	39.5
% monetary child poverty	Monetary child poverty rate not reported	16% (2018. Reported by government)	Monetary child poverty rate not reported	44.5% (2018. Reported by government)
Country reports Monetary Child Poverty in SDG VNR	No	No	No	Yes. 2019
% Multidimensional child poverty	N/A	49% (2018. Reported by government)	24%	25.3% MODA (2018. Reported by government)
Country reports Multidimensional Child Poverty in SDG VNR	No	No	No	Yes. 2019
% of GDP dedicated by government to social assistance programmes	Between 1.0% and 1.75%.	Between 0.25% and 1.0%.	N/A	Greater than 1.75%
GA5 programme components ⁴⁰⁸	Milestone 1, 2 and 4	Policy and public financing for children	Social inclusion	Social Policy
Main RO basis for recommendation	Partnerships for effective child poverty measurement and advocacy.	-	Persistent child poverty advocacy by the office spanning a decade, including on the measurement and including child poverty in national plans and strategies.	Good practice in measurement and reporting in SDG's VNR. Low income and high fragility and dynamic country office.
Work on child poverty ⁴⁰⁹	Work in measurement and policy and programme support	Social protection, budget engagement, monetary and multidimensional measurement	Multidimensional measurement, advocacy, social protection	Multidimensional measurement, social protection

Table 10 shows the rationale for selecting each country for in-depth analysis. Considerations for selecting an option can include relevant programme aspects or areas of work in COs, implications for geographical balance, the potential for lessons learned (positive

or negative), progress according to the SMQ assessment and cross-cutting issues. Following the table, we discuss specific considerations for country selection, particularly regarding the proposed country options initially outlined in the ToR.

Table 10. Basis for selection of countries for in-depth analysis

Country option	Basis for country selection
<p>(I) Rwanda</p>	<p>ESAR includes countries with some of the highest child poverty rates in the world.⁴¹⁰ Rwanda is a low-income country representing a critical constituency for child poverty work. Additionally, Rwanda faces shock vulnerability, presenting a vulnerability index of 0.586.⁴¹¹ Rwanda represents a country where UNICEF's extensive work has been largely successful. This is reflected in the SMQ scorecard. Rwanda can provide insights into how UNICEF is supporting various integrated social protection programmes⁴¹² and undertaking initiatives to tackle stigma among children with disabilities. Selecting Rwanda for in-depth analysis will enable the evaluation team to identify positive lessons from the COs' successful work towards the five milestones among low-income and fragile contexts.</p>
<p>(II) Colombia</p>	<p>Colombia provides regional representativity for LACR and relevant insights on UNICEF's support for including child poverty in national plans and strategies (milestone 5). Relevance in milestone 5 is underrepresented among the 20 countries selected as data points for document review; thus, choosing Colombia for in-depth analysis ensures the evaluation provides sufficient insights on work towards milestone 5. The Colombia CO, with support from the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) and HQ, has contributed to the design of the National Strategy for Overcoming Child Poverty launched in 2021 through technical assistance and strengthening the child poverty measurement methodology.⁴¹³ ⁴¹⁴ In 2019, through policy advocacy and technical assistance, the CO supported the government's commitment to reduce child poverty in the National Development Plan, including commitments to multidimensional child poverty measurement and policies to reduce child poverty. The CO collaborated with the National Planning Department and Social Prosperity to advocate for appropriate social protection and poverty reduction policies within the national policy for childhood and adolescence. Collaboration with HQ and LACRO contributed to evidence generation to support the multidimensional child poverty measurement.⁴¹⁵ Colombia has good potential for good practices on the humanitarian-development nexus with possible linkages to child poverty, given the cross-cutting peace and reconciliation component of UNICEF's programming in the country.</p>
<p>(III) Sri Lanka</p>	<p>The 2023 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report indicates that the South Asia Region (SAR) is home to a third of all people living in poverty and to 31% of all poor children.⁴¹⁶ The Reference Group's recommendations and EPRI's mapping exercise identified Sri Lanka as a relevant case for milestone 1, given the successful partnerships the CO developed to support poverty measurement. Sri Lanka also provides relevant insights into the linkages between advocacy and policy support. Partnerships among UNICEF, the Department of Census and Statistics and OPHI contributed to the publication of the national MPI and child MPI.⁴¹⁷ In partnership with the National Planning Department, UNICEF produced a Situation Analysis of Children and Women. UNICEF has supported the government's commitment to institutionalize the routinization of these evidence initiatives. Through advocacy efforts, UNICEF supported the scale-up of a nutrition-sensitive cash transfer, providing additional insights on the COs' support for integrated policies to address multidimensional poverty. The scale-up of the supported programme was planned to commence in 2023.^{418 419 420} In 2019, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Economic Reform and Public Distribution to include child poverty in the national policy agenda. UNICEF also undertook advocacy efforts to increase awareness of child poverty, including advocacy with candidates for establishing a child benefit.⁴²¹ Through leading the UN Social Protection Results Group in 2022, UNICEF facilitated collaboration among government partners and CSOs on the National Social Protection Strategy.⁴²²</p>

Country option	Basis for country selection
(IV) Cambodia	Cambodia improves regional balance by providing representativity of the East Asian and Pacific Region (EAPR). Cambodia's case is particular in that its GA5 programme component focuses on public financing for children, which is reflected in its significant involvement in the budget process to expand social sector funds. UNICEF's support for advocacy and social protection for women and children with disabilities would provide valuable insights into these cross-cutting components. ⁴²³ Selecting Cambodia would improve the sample's relevance in terms of income status, as it would expand the number of low and middle income countries (LMICs) to three – the overwhelming majority of the multidimensionally poor children in the world live in LMICs and low income countries (LICs). According to the SMQ scorecard, Cambodia has made significant progress in poverty measurement, which makes it another potential case for lessons learned.

The country sample framework mapped in the Terms of Reference required balancing multiple criteria and managing a number of trade-offs. One excluded option (Montenegro) represents a region with relatively low child poverty rates on average compared to the included regions. While rising child poverty rates in some countries in Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR) make this region a possible priority for evaluation, this phenomenon is mainly in regions more directly and concretely affected by conflict, making Montenegro less relevant for selection. Recent political changes have also disrupted the momentum of UNICEF's work in Montenegro. The scoping study identified "good practices in advocacy" as the main insight resulting from including Montenegro in the sample, but this is well covered by the recommended sample of countries (Colombia and Cambodia). When considering not including Montenegro in the suggested country sample for in-depth analysis, EPRI determined that it would be better to prioritize relevance over regional balance. However, ECA is well represented in the survey sample, including Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Armenia, in addition to Montenegro. The options in the Terms of Reference skewed towards middle-income countries, particularly towards upper middle income countries (UMICs). Thus, if Montenegro were included, two UMIC countries would be part of the sample, limiting the representation of LIC and LMIC countries, where child poverty work is likely to be more intensive and relatively more critical. On a similar note, Montenegro's child poverty headcount rate is lower than the ECAR average (1.9% and 5.9%, respectively, using the 1.90 poverty line);⁴²⁴ this reduces its likelihood of being a representative case of this region in terms of child poverty.

Even though the Terms of Reference included Egypt within the option group of Nigeria and Bangladesh – the latter changed for Sri Lanka in response to the Reference Group's recommendations – EPRI decided not to recommend it as a country for in-depth

analysis due to lower relevance regarding regional child poverty rates. By prioritizing Sri Lanka over Egypt, the proposed sample considers the higher levels of child poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia according to World Bank and UNICEF estimates – 18% of all extremely poor children live in the latter region. These regions are also the most affected in terms of non-extreme poverty, at 25.2 and 31.2% of poor children, respectively.⁴²⁵ Accordingly, the proposed countries for in-depth analysis will not represent the MENA region. However, this could be balanced to an extent by the representation of MENA countries in the survey and document review sample and the group informing the evaluation's humanitarian dimension. Additionally, insights into the relevant programme activities that Egypt could offer in terms of multidimensional child poverty measurement and social protection policy support can be gathered by examining UNICEF's work in other countries. Egypt's SMQ assessment of outcomes related to the five milestones reveals potential for drawing good lessons; however, examining cases with similar positive results in other countries, such as Rwanda, could aid in compensating for any exclusion of a relevant case.

Sampling approach for countries with humanitarian and fragile settings

The second group consisted of countries in humanitarian settings, as identified by the UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 publication.⁴²⁶ This group included the top 20 countries requiring the highest funding for humanitarian action for children in 2022, from which a random sample of ten countries was drawn. This approach aimed to capture the unique characteristics of countries facing humanitarian crises, with random sampling ensuring an unbiased representation. Countries that were sampled in the document review sample and also part of the humanitarian sample were kept in both groups to

enable a deeper investigation (Nigeria and Lebanon). To account for the fact that one of the initially sampled countries could not be included because its poverty programming had not been in place for long enough, Nigeria was purposively included to consider the the localized humanitarian setting alongside the evaluation of the development programming done through the document review sample.

Evaluation approach

This evaluation employed thematic and comparative analysis as the primary analytical approaches. The combination of thematic analysis and global synthesis utilizing comparative analysis proves a relevant research design to answer both overarching evaluation questions and questions specific to the five milestones.

The thematic analysis focused on the five milestones, and comparative analysis among the 20-country qualitative sample informed each evaluation criterion in an overarching manner, focusing on all the milestones. **Thematic analysis by milestone** centred on evaluation question 2 and 3 focused on **effectiveness** and **relevance**, addressing subquestions and constructs relevant to each

milestone. Thematic analysis provided insights into the varied strategies COs employ to achieve a given milestone and the factors that influence success or pose challenges. Moreover, this approach assessed the extent to which UNICEF's activities have supported governments effectively in achieving each milestone across multiple contexts. Through thematic analysis by milestone, the evaluation team identified strategies, contextual factors, and needs that might prove more relevant to one milestone than another, providing valuable insights to inform UNICEF's strategic direction.

Moreover, through a **global synthesis** approach, comparative analysis across the 20 data points provided insights to answer overarching questions related to the relevance, sustainability, best practices and lessons learned (questions 1, 3 and 4). The answers to these questions examined COs' comprehensive work on child poverty reduction, enabling the team to map interactions among milestones rather than adopting a narrower focus per milestone; it also assessed the COs' capacities to deliver on child poverty reduction as an integrated result area. Figure 14 outlines the analytical approaches the evaluation team employed to answer each evaluation question.

Figure 14. Analytical approaches by evaluation question

<p>EFFECTIVENESS 1. Is UNICEF's work achieving its intended results on child poverty reduction? (Each of the milestones)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic analysis for the five milestones. • Comparative analysis within milestones among the 20 data-point countries.
<p>RELEVANCE 2.To what extent have UNICEF's poverty reduction interventions been relevant for advancing progress towards the strategic milestones? (Overarching and per milestone)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic analysis for the five milestones (4 in-depth countries) • Global synthesis. Comparative analysis among the 20 data-point countries. • Comparative analysis among countries in the humanitarian sample.
<p>SUSTAINABILITY 3.To what extent does UNICEF have adequate capacities to work towards the five milestones of poverty reduction, and has built national government capacities to reduce child poverty? (Overarching)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global synthesis. Comparative analysis among the 20 data-point countries.
<p>LEARNING 4. What are the lessons learned and good practices that can better enable UNICEF to achieve its objectives in child poverty reduction? (Overarching)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global synthesis. Comparative analysis among the 20 data-point countries and survey insights.

Evaluation Methodology: Data-collection and analysis methods

The evaluation methodology for assessing UNICEF's work in child poverty reduction took a comprehensive mixed-methods approach. It involved primary qualitative data collection and secondary data analysis.

Structured desk research

To gain an initial understanding of UNICEF's efforts in addressing child poverty and to complement the primary data collected during the evaluation process, a thorough review of secondary data was conducted. The evaluation team collected data from various key UNICEF strategic documents for the **20-country qualitative analysis sample**, including Country Office Annual Reports (COARs), Country Programme Documents (CPDs), Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), Results Assessment Modules (RAMs), Core Standard Indicators (CSI) and other internal monitoring, financial and strategy documents. Additionally, the desk review involved the analysis of reports, policy briefs, evaluations, research and other materials produced by UNICEF related

to poverty reduction efforts, as well as documents providing insights into national child poverty profiles, such as Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports and strategic plans. These findings were used in conjunction with the analysis of primary data to triangulate the evaluation results.

Key informant interviews

A mix of remote and in-person KIIs were conducted in the four countries selected for in-depth analysis to collect comprehensive and detailed information on UNICEF's progress and challenges in their work on child poverty. Additionally, the evaluation team conducted up to 20 validation remote KIIs with COs for the remaining 16 data-point countries. The interviews were typically loosely structured, relying on a list of issues to be discussed.

EPRI conducted **137 KIIs** with a variety of in-person interviews during field visits and remote interviews, and additional validation consultations and feedback sessions with UNICEF staff members at the HQ level. Table 11 summarizes the KIIs conducted for this evaluation by stakeholder group and modality.

Table 11. Number of conducted KIIs across stakeholder groups and levels

Location	Stakeholders engaged	# of KIIs
UNICEF Headquarters	Evaluation Office, Social Policy Programme Division, Data and Monitoring Division, Office of Emergency Programmes	12
UNICEF Regional Offices	Social Policy units in regions covered by the evaluation	8
Global partners	Development partners, NGOs, Global Coalition to End Child Poverty	7
In-country national level	In-depth qualitative analysis countries	
	KIIs conducted in Cambodia	27
	KIIs conducted in Colombia	23
	KIIs conducted in Rwanda	13
	KIIs conducted in Sri Lanka	21

<p>UNICEF Country Office</p> <p>Social Policy Specialist Social Policy Officer Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Communications and Advocacy Officer Officers of relevant sections (Gender, Health, Education)</p> <p>Ministry of Social Development Ministry of Finance Parliament representatives Donors and International organizations Social protection administrative agency National statistics unit Civil society members</p> <p>Civil society organizations Media Academia and think tanks Private sector stakeholders</p> <p>Development partners</p> <p>UN Agencies Donor agencies Multilateral organizations International financial institutions (IFIs)</p>	
Qualitative analysis sample: 16 countries	18
KIIs (UNICEF Social Policy Chief or relevant CO staff leading child poverty work)	
Humanitarian and fragile-settings sample: 10 countries	9
KIIs (UNICEF Social Policy Chief or relevant CO staff leading child poverty work)	
Total of activities	138

Field visits took place during the field research phase from September to November 2023. These visits included four in-depth missions (of 3 to 5 days) in the selected countries for detailed analysis: **(1) Rwanda, (2) Colombia, (3) Sri Lanka, and (4) Cambodia.** Interviews with government stakeholders and agencies, civil society organizations and development partners were the primary focus of the field visits. All four field visits and remote data collection were conducted without challenges.

To contact stakeholders, EPRI employed an expert sampling technique, which involves purposively selecting individuals with specific expertise on the subject matter. For KIIs with staff at UNICEF Headquarters, UNICEF ROs, and COs, EPRI will select personnel involved in social policy and engaged in poverty reduction activities for interviews. The same technique was applied to KIIs with stakeholders in

government and non-governmental organizations at the national level. In each country selected for in-depth analysis, the sample of experts and key informants involved in poverty reduction efforts was chosen in consultation with UNICEF COs. EPRI adopted a chain referral approach, encouraging identified stakeholders to refer other individuals who should also be consulted, further enhancing the diversity and depth of the sample.

Online validation survey

During the analysis phase, EPRI implemented an online survey across the 20-country sample selected for qualitative review to validate emerging findings and to cover identified data and information gaps. This validation survey also served to complement data obtained through the desk review necessary to conduct the qualitative comparative analysis (QCA)

technique, described in Annex 5. The survey was administered to social policy chiefs in relevant country offices using Sogolytics, a sophisticated and reliable tool for survey administration.

The validation survey represents an adjustment from the original data-collection methods plan proposed in the inception report. The originally proposed method included an online survey for a sample of 60 countries to gather insights during the data-collection phase; however, in consultations with the Evaluation Office, it was determined that a validation survey would prove the most appropriate method for complementing and strengthening information from KIIs and desk research. Therefore, the implementation of a validation survey instead of a global survey was agreed upon.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis and pattern matching were the main means of analysing qualitative data. The key themes related to each of the evaluation questions and each of the milestones were identified, guided by the evaluation matrix. The first level of analysis assessed the degree of UNICEF's contribution to the achievements of outcomes, particularly from KIIs with external stakeholders. In a second level of analysis, the evaluation team mapped the contextual factors that enable or hinder UNICEF activities in reducing child poverty in each country (these factors can include government commitment, bureaucratic capacity and civil society support, among others). KIIs also enabled the evaluation team to request more details on the activities mapped during desk research and patterns emerging from secondary data analysis. The initial propositions included in the evaluation matrix served to guide the thematic analysis of KIIs. In the context of this evaluation, pattern matching helped identify and confirm patterns contributing to outcomes across countries and enable the comparison of mutually exclusive rival patterns with the observed pattern in each country.^{427 428}

Additionally, the evaluation employed **qualitative comparative analysis** to further examine evaluation subquestions 1.2 and 1.4 on child poverty measurement and child poverty reduction policies and programmes, respectively. The decision to use QCA in addressing specific subquestions was responded to the availability and quality of data on all the conditions identified. Annex 5 describes the QCA methodology used in this evaluation.

The quantitative data collected, including CSIs and other data sources and survey responses, were analysed through **descriptive statistics**. Descriptive quantitative analysis was employed to describe and summarize UNICEF's work on each milestone across countries and regional groupings and to analyse financial information. This analysis involved calculating measures of frequencies, means, and standard deviation, providing a comprehensive overview of the state of UNICEF's work and highlighting specific similarities and differences across countries. Data visualizations were utilized to communicate key findings effectively. Throughout the quantitative analysis process, rigorous data quality checks were conducted to ensure the accuracy, completeness and consistency of the data.



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A4

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Complementary Tables

The qualitative data analysis strategies used in this evaluation included Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), which complemented other analytical approaches, such as comparative case studies, pattern matching, and thematic analysis. To analyse the causal contribution of different categorical attributes to certain outcomes of interest, the evaluation team employed QCA to document the different configurations of categorical attributes associated with each case of an observed outcome. These are then subject to a minimization procedure that identifies the simplest set of attributes that can account for all the observed outcomes, as well as their absence. QCA is a theory-driven approach in that the choice of attributes being examined needs to be driven by a prior theory about what matters.

This section documents the steps taken to conduct the QCA and the extent to which this technique informed the evaluation findings.

1. Potential areas of inquiry across the evaluation questions that could be assessed through QCA were identified. Informed by the desk review and emerging insights from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and field visits, the team identified potential conditions contributing to an expected outcome. Government ownership of child poverty measurement as part of Milestone 2 (Sub-Evaluation Question 1.2) and UNICEF's support for social protection policies as part of Milestone 4 (Sub-Evaluation Question 1.4) were identified as suitable components to be analysed through QCA.
2. The evaluation adopted a 'crisp sets' approach, recording the presence (1) or absence (0) of a given condition across the 20-country sample within the *truth tables*. The absence or presence of conditions was initially identified through desk review data. However, some data gaps and inconsistencies made it necessary to complement secondary data further. For this purpose and to validate certain findings, the evaluation team launched a validation survey for UNICEF country office staff members in the 20 countries in the sample.
3. Having minimized data gaps, the team analysed the data sets corresponding to the selected outcomes. The specialized 'Fuzzy' package in Stata facilitated the QCA analytical process. This analysis provided a numerical value indicating the necessity and sufficiency of each condition, as presented in Tables 12 and 13. It must be noted that while data gaps were minimized, the information for all the identified conditions across the 20

countries was not fully completed, constituting a limitation to the use of QCA in this evaluation. The missing data points can be identified in the truth tables (Tables 14 and 15).

4. Based on the analysis of these values, the team identified the necessary and sufficient conditions

contributing to government ownership of child poverty measurement (Finding 1.2.3) and to social protection improvement or expansion (Finding 1.4.1). It is important to note that the evaluation team used additional qualitative analysis techniques alongside QCA to reach their conclusions.

Table 12. Milestone 2 (child poverty measurement) necessity and sufficiency table

	National Consultation for Child Poverty Methodology	Capacity-Building for Measurement Process	Predefined Use of Measurement Outcomes	Pre-existing institutionalized poverty measurement	Poverty is politically sensitive
Necessity	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.8
Sufficiency	0.46	0.46	0.4	0.44	0.5

Table 13. Milestone 4 (child poverty reduction policy and programme change) necessity and sufficiency table

	Advocacy for programme expansion	Technical assistance for social protection	COs have conducted poverty profiling, regression analysis or problem tree analysis	Use of poverty measurement in advocacy or technical assistance	Use of poverty measurement in advocacy or technical assistance
Necessity	1.0	1.0	0.75	0.88	0.88
Sufficiency	0.8	0.89	0.67	0.7	0.7

Table 14. Milestone 2 truth table

Combination/ country	National Consultation for Child Poverty Methodology	Capacity- Building for Measurement Process	Predefined Use of Measurement Outcomes	Pre-existing institutional- ized poverty measurement	Poverty is politically sensitive	Institutionalization of poverty measurement
Colombia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sri Lanka	1	1	0	1	1	1
Cambodia	1	1	0	0	1	0
Rwanda	1	1	0	1	0	1
Peru					1	
Lesotho	1	1	0	0	1	1
Argentina					0	
Malaysia					1	
Lebanon	0	0	0	0		1
Bangladesh	1	1	1	1	1	0 (in progress)
Egypt	1	1	0	1	1	0 - (paused due to election)
Nigeria	1	1	1	0	1	0
Georgia	N/A measurement = 0	N/A measurement = 0	N/A measurement = 0	N/A UNICEF not involved in gov measure - EUROSTAT	1	
Montenegro					1	
Uganda	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tanzania	1	1	1	1	0	0
Uzbekistan	1	1	0	1	1	0

Table 15. Milestone 4 truth table

Combination/ country	Advocacy for programme expansion	Technical assistance for social protection	COs have conducted poverty profiling, regression analysis or problem tree analysis	Use of poverty measurement in advocacy or technical assistance	UNICEF belongs to a cash or social protection working group	Expansion or improvement of social protection
Colombia	1	0	1	1	0	0
Sri Lanka	0	0		1	1	0
Cambodia	1	1				1
Rwanda	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peru	1	1	1	0	1	0
Lesotho	1	1	1	1	1	
Argentina	1	1	1	1	1	1
Malaysia	0	0	1	1	1	0
Lebanon	1					1
Bangladesh	1	1	0	0	1	1
Egypt	1	1	1	0	1	1
Nigeria	1	1	1	1	1	1
Georgia	1	1	1	1	0	1
Montenegro	1	1	1	1	1	1
Uganda	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tanzania	1		1	0	1	
Uzbekistan	1		1	1	0	1

Table 16. Synthesis of UNICEF's contributions to child poverty measurement

Country	Supported child poverty measurement	Supported measurement institutionalization	Capacity-building on child poverty measurement	Policy use of child poverty measurement
Cambodia	Yes	-	Yes	-
Colombia	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Rwanda	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sri Lanka	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Argentina	Yes	-	-	-
Bangladesh	Yes	-	Yes	-

Egypt	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Georgia	Yes	-	-	-
Ghana	Yes	-	-	-
Guatemala	-	-	-	-
Lebanon	Yes	Yes	-	-
Lesotho	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malaysia	-	-	-	-
Montenegro	Yes	-	-	-
Nigeria	Yes	-	Yes	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	-
Peru	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	Yes	-	Yes	-
Uganda	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uzbekistan	Yes	-	Yes	-

Table 17. Synthesis of the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy efforts

Country	Advocated for improvements in social protection design/ coverage/ expenditure	Advocated for child poverty measurement	Raised awareness of child poverty in the public agenda
Cambodia	Yes	-	-
Colombia	-	Yes	-
Rwanda	Yes	Yes	-
Sri Lanka	Yes	Yes	-
Argentina	Yes	-	Yes
Bangladesh	-	Yes	Yes
Egypt	-	Yes	-
Georgia	Yes	Yes	-
Ghana	Yes	-	Yes
Guatemala	-	-	-
Lebanon	Yes	-	Yes
Lesotho	Yes	Yes	-
Malaysia	-	-	Yes

Montenegro	Yes	-	Yes
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-
Peru	Yes	Yes	-
Tanzania	-	-	-
Uganda	Yes	Yes	-
Uzbekistan	Yes	Yes	-

Table 18. Synthesis of UNICEF's support for social protection policy and programme change

Country	Improved social protection coverage	Improved programme design	Supported cash plus programme	Supported social protection policies or strategies	Supported universal child benefits (UCBs)	Supported care policies
Cambodia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
Colombia	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Rwanda	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-	-	yes
Argentina	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
Bangladesh	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	yes
Egypt	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Georgia	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes
Ghana	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Guatemala	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lebanon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
Lesotho	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Malaysia	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Montenegro	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peru	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Tanzania	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Uganda	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Uzbekistan	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-

Table 19. Synthesis of UNICEF's effectiveness in supporting national commitments to end child poverty

Country	Supported inclusion of child poverty in national development frameworks and priorities	Supported a national child poverty reduction strategy	Supported child poverty considerations into budgeting processes
Cambodia	-	-	Yes
Colombia	-	Yes	-
Rwanda	Yes	-	Yes
Sri Lanka	-	-	-
Argentina	-	-	
Bangladesh	Yes	-	
Egypt	-	-	
Georgia	-	-	
Ghana	Yes	-	Yes
Guatemala	-	-	
Lebanon	-	-	
Lesotho	-	-	
Malaysia	Yes	-	
Montenegro	-	-	
Nigeria	-	-	
Papua New Guinea	-	-	
Peru	-	-	
Tanzania	-	-	
Uganda	-	-	Yes
Uzbekistan	-	-	

Table 20. UNICEF's relevant approaches towards the five milestones in Cambodia, Colombia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka (Extended)

	Milestone 1: Partnerships	Milestone 2: Measurement	Milestone 3: Advocacy	Milestone 4: Policies and Programmes	Milestone 5: National Commitments
Cambodia	<p>UNICEF led relevant collaborative efforts on social protection by partnering with the ILO and EU on the joint programme 'Accelerating Social Protection in Cambodia', collaborating with the EU on public financial management to increase budgets for social protection programmes⁴²⁹ and with the WFP to improve the shock-responsiveness of the Family Package.⁴³⁰ Partnerships with key ministries, the World Bank and UNDP prove relevant efforts to improve the government's commitment to measure multidimensional child poverty.⁴³¹</p>	<p>Organized national and subnational level capacity-building programmes on the MODA measurement methodology as an adequate entry point to foster government commitments to regularly measure child poverty and include the MODA measurement among official poverty measures.</p>	<p>Advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, key social ministries, and subnational authorities have proved relevant to increasing budget allocations for social services, social assistance programmes, and interventions targeting poor and vulnerable children.⁴³²</p>	<p>Aligning with the NSDP 2019–2023 priorities of improving children's welfare and social assistance for vulnerable populations and achieving the goal of an inclusive social protection system outlined within the NSPPF, UNICEF Cambodia CO supported the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) in designing the Family Package of integrated social assistance programmes.⁴³³ The Family Package aims to provide integrated benefits that address risks through the lifecycle for poor and vulnerable families and children.⁴³⁴ Responding to the low number of identified children with disabilities,⁴³⁵ the CO supported MoSVY in developing a disability identification mechanism.</p>	<p>Aligning with the Public Financial Management Reform Programme 2004–2025,⁴³⁶ the CO established relevant linkages of social protection work with public finance, strengthening subnational child-sensitive budgeting. The SDG Fund for Social Protection, the subregional Public Financial Management Facility, and an initiative funded by the European Union also contributed to linking social protection with public financial management.⁴³⁷</p>

	Milestone 1: Partnerships	Milestone 2: Measurement	Milestone 3: Advocacy	Milestone 4: Policies and Programmes	Milestone 5: National Commitments
<p>Colombia</p>	<p>UNICEF has established relevant partnerships with key government entities, including DNP, DPS, ICBF, and DANE. The CO's role as a convener among these entities proved vital during the planning processes for measuring child poverty and developing the National Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty.^{438 439}</p>	<p>UNICEF's technical assistance, involving advice from child poverty experts and knowledge-sharing on global lessons, proved appropriate and technically sound to inform the methodology and definition of the multidimensional child poverty index.⁴⁴⁰ To ensure the relevance of dimensions of children's needs, UNICEF showcased insights from participatory studies during technical discussions.⁴⁴¹</p>	<p>Technical advocacy proved relevant for leveraging commitment to child poverty reduction efforts in situations where strong government ownership or political sensitivity might constrain the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy for new initiatives.</p>	<p>UNICEF is providing relevant technical advice and financial support to enhance the child sensitivity of the social registry. In the context of a transition in the social protection system, UNICEF's efforts aim to ensure the inclusion of children in the registry and their adequate targeting for the social protection programme Renta Ciudadana.⁴⁴²</p> <p><i>Opportunities: Strengthening policy advice on the optimal policy packages to reduce child poverty and supporting the harmonization of the social protection system with the Strategy.</i></p>	<p>UNICEF contributed technical expertise to Colombia's Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty by participating in the Experts Committee in 2019, adequately informing conceptual and technical aspects.⁴⁴³ UNICEF also assisted in conceptualizing child poverty and offered recommendations during the drafting phase.^{444 445}</p> <p>^{446 447}</p> <p><i>Opportunities: Strengthening the dissemination of the Strategy among government officials in decision-making positions.</i></p>

	Milestone 1: Partnerships	Milestone 2: Measurement	Milestone 3: Advocacy	Milestone 4: Policies and Programmes	Milestone 5: National Commitments
Rwanda	<p>By leading collaborations on the UN Joint Programme for Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection⁴⁴⁸ and the development partners' social protection working group, UNICEF promotes policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaborations.⁴⁴⁹</p>	<p>UNICEF's partnership with the NISR and involvement in technical discussions during the measurement planning stages proved relevant to facilitate the government's ownership of the MODA in both 2018 and 2022.^{450 451}</p> <p><i>Opportunities: Disseminating the uses of measurement for policy decision-making, monitoring and evaluation.</i></p>	<p>High-level advocacy activities, such as presenting key messages to parliament and advocating for increased budget allocations in social sectors, have proved relevant and yielded positive results.⁴⁵²</p> <p><i>Opportunities: balancing quantitative evidence with qualitative insights into children's experiences, providing a more holistic view of child poverty.</i></p>	<p>Through the UN Joint Programme on Social Protection, UNICEF supported the rollout of the Village Savings and Loans Associations, a micro-credit model that linked groups to existing social protection services,⁴⁵³ which was incorporated into the poverty reduction strategy.⁴⁵⁴ Responding to high stunting rates, the CO supported a targeted nutrition-focused cash-plus programme in districts with high poverty rates, contributing to the national strategy for sustainable graduation.⁴⁵⁵</p>	<p>Support in formulating the National Child Development Policy and the Graduation Strategy provided a comprehensive framework and monitoring tools to address child poverty.</p> <p><i>Opportunities: Strengthening monitoring and evaluation of interventions to ensure they effectively reach and benefit the most vulnerable children.</i></p>

	Milestone 1: Partnerships	Milestone 2: Measurement	Milestone 3: Advocacy	Milestone 4: Policies and Programmes	Milestone 5: National Commitments
<p>Sri Lanka</p>	<p>Established relevant partnerships around common objectives with the EU and UNDP through the Public Finance Facility and the Finance Flagship Initiative, respectively, supporting evidence generation to improve fiscal allocations for social protection.⁴⁵⁶ UNICEF's and UNDP's leading roles in the UN Country Team Results Groups on Social Protection and SDG Planning, Financing, and Data Results strengthen the coherence of this collaboration.⁴⁵⁷</p>	<p>Capacity-building activities were relevant for enhancing the Department of Census and Statistics' capacities and commitments to measure child poverty based on existing plans to calculate the MPI.⁴⁵⁸</p> <p><i>Opportunities: Disseminating the uses of measurement for policy decision-making, monitoring and evaluation.</i></p>	<p>Consistent advocacy efforts for a universal child benefit were unsuccessful due to acute fiscal constraints the government faces. Consequently, UNICEF took a flexible approach and adjusted its strategy to advocate for the age expansion of the existing Pregnancy Voucher Programme.⁴⁵⁹</p>	<p>In 2022, the CO introduced a short-term nutrition-sensitive cash transfer programme that proved a relevant response to the need for temporary income support for children and caregivers during the financial crisis. The programme addressed the needs of the most vulnerable children through its inclusion of a nutrition component, responding to the country's issue of malnutrition among children under 5 years old, with stunting rates at 17.3 per cent and wasting rates at 15.1 per cent.⁴⁶⁰</p> <p>Close consultations with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Social Empowerment ensured the programme's institutional appropriateness.</p> <p><i>Opportunities: strengthening technical advice on child-sensitive social protection with a life-cycle approach and ensuring mechanisms are in place to improve the PVP based on lessons from the nutrition-sensitive short-term cash transfer programme.</i></p>	<p>Evidence generation on fiscal space for social protection addressed the imperative to safeguard and enhance budgets for social protection amid an acute economic crisis, responding to key challenges for enhancing the social protection system.⁴⁶¹</p> <p><i>Opportunities: Strengthening the dissemination of fiscal space evidence and recommendations among key officials.</i></p>

A5

Relevance assessment framework of UNICEF's work in child poverty reduction in humanitarian and fragile settings

Rating Scale:

Highly relevant: The milestone or indicator is directly applicable and essential in humanitarian settings. It provides significant benefits and can be implemented without major adaptations.

Relevant: The milestone or indicator is applicable and useful in humanitarian settings with some adaptations. It contributes positively to the overall goals but may require modification to fit the specific context.

Adaptive relevance: The milestone or indicator can be relevant if adapted to the specific humanitarian context. It may not be immediately applicable but can be modified to provide value.

Limited relevance: The milestone or indicator has limited applicability in humanitarian settings. It may provide some benefits but is not a priority or easily implementable in crisis situations.

Not relevant: The milestone or indicator is not applicable in humanitarian settings. It provides little to no benefit and may be impractical or impossible to implement in crisis contexts.

MILESTONES	MILESTONE INDICATORS AS PER COALITION GUIDE	OBSERVED RELEVANCE AND ADAPTATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS	EVIDENCE SOURCE
<p>Milestone 1: Building a national pathway</p>	<p>Relationships built with key stakeholders</p>	<p>Adapted relevance: Often in humanitarian settings where government is either weak or absent, UNICEF has established or strengthened partnerships with development partners through working groups focused on cash transfers. However, there is limited scope for building partnerships dedicated to child poverty reduction.</p>	<p>Afghanistan COAR 2021 and 2022, KII with Afghanistan Social Policy team, Burkina Faso RAM 2019, Haiti HAC 2020, Haiti Evaluation of the CPD, KII with Haiti Social Policy team, Lebanon COAR 2019–2021, KII with Lebanon Social Policy team, Myanmar COAR 2020, Myanmar RAM 2022, Nigeria CPD 2018–2022, Nigeria COAR 2020, Nigeria RAM 2021, South Sudan COAR 2020 and 2022, Evaluation of UNICEF Response to South Sudan Humanitarian Crisis (2016–2019), South Sudan National Social Protection Policy Framework, KII with Yemen Social Policy team, Yemen CPD 2022–2023</p>
	<p>Clear understanding of the role poverty measurement and analysis plays in national decision-making</p>	<p>Limited relevance: In humanitarian settings, the primary frameworks guiding initiatives are the Core Commitments for Children and other emergency response and planning protocols. These frameworks generally have limited scope for integrating systematic activities aimed at reducing child poverty due to a focus on immediate relief rather than long-term developmental strategies. However, there are opportunities for enhancement by embedding child poverty reduction strategies within a unified plan that integrates both humanitarian response and developmental programming.</p>	
	<p>Clear understanding on the situation of child poverty measurement and analysis, and agreement on whether increased action is needed</p>		
<p>As appropriate, agreement on key milestones and activities to measure and address child poverty</p>			

MILESTONES	MILESTONE INDICATORS AS PER COALITION GUIDE	OBSERVED RELEVANCE AND ADAPTATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS	EVIDENCE SOURCE
Milestone 2: Measuring Child Poverty	Agreement on national approach to measuring child poverty, including for SDG reporting	Adapted relevance: In settings with stable government infrastructure and localized crises, child poverty measurement typically follows the milestone guide. However, these processes can face challenges related to data availability in crisis-affected areas. This situation highlights an opportunity for UNICEF to enhance its approach by applying innovative measurement techniques used effectively in severe humanitarian contexts. Implementing these methods in localized humanitarian contexts can ensure national poverty measurements are truly representative of all regions, including those facing crises. Geographic disaggregation of data is crucial for understanding child poverty dynamics in crisis-affected areas. Conversely, in regions with absent or weak government infrastructure, the process of measuring child poverty faces several challenges. The lack of strong statistical systems and clear governmental partnerships complicates data collection and analysis. In these contexts, UNICEF often leads initiatives and relies on innovative measurement and estimation techniques to understand child poverty levels despite unstable government structures.	Afghanistan RAM 2020, Afghanistan KII, Burkina Faso 2021 Workplan, Burkina Faso RAM 2020, Burkina Faso KII, Haiti 2020, KII with Haiti Social Policy team, Multidimensional Child Poverty in Lebanon: A Qualitative Review, Myanmar Workplan 2020–2021, Myanmar 2022, KII with Myanmar Social Policy team, Nigeria RAM 2021, KII with South Sudan Social Policy team, KII with Yemen Social Policy team
	Child poverty rate and key disaggregates calculated	Limited relevance: In localized humanitarian settings or settings with strong government structures, child poverty measurement ownership and routinization are often unaffected. However, in settings with absent or weak governments, child poverty measurement is often owned by UNICEF and partner organizations with limited plans for routine measurement due to unstable contexts.	
	Key actors engaged, and national ownership and publication of data		
	Agreement to routinize measurement as relevant surveys are produced		

MILESTONES	MILESTONE INDICATORS AS PER COALITION GUIDE	OBSERVED RELEVANCE AND ADAPTATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS	EVIDENCE SOURCE
<p>Milestone 3: Putting child poverty on the map: child poverty advocacy</p>	<p>Child poverty appears regularly in media/social media</p> <hr/> <p>Child poverty becomes part of engagement with actors such as Ministries of Finance and World Bank</p> <hr/> <p>Stakeholders other than core child poverty advocates are stressing the importance of child poverty</p> <hr/> <p>Child poverty measures and concepts become part of discourse in major policy discussions (such as budget framework papers and the State of the Nation)</p>	<p>Adaptive relevance: In humanitarian settings, the relevance of child poverty advocacy depends on the governance context. In regions with weak or absent governmental structures, advocacy focuses on securing support from international donors and development partners to integrate child-sensitive responses within broader humanitarian frameworks. However, child poverty reduction often remains marginal in major policy discussions, overshadowed by immediate humanitarian needs. The challenge lies in ensuring that child poverty is consistently addressed as both a long-term developmental strategy and an immediate concern, advocating for a holistic approach across varied humanitarian scenarios.</p>	<p>Evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations: Afghanistan, KII with Afghanistan Social policy team, Burkina Faso RAM 2019, Haiti COAR 2021, Haiti RAM 2021, KII with Lebanon Social Policy, Lebanon COAR 2022, Lebanon COAR 2021, Lebanon CPD 2023–2025, Myanmar Workplan 2020–2021, South Sudan COAR 2022, KII with Social Policy team in South Sudan, KII with Social Policy team in Yemen</p>
<p>Milestone 4: Reducing child poverty through policy and programme change</p>	<p>Clear understanding of the child poverty profile – which children are living in poverty, where and why</p>	<p>Limited relevance: In humanitarian settings, achieving a clear understanding of the child poverty profile is typically of limited relevance. The focus often shifts to assessments of humanitarian assistance and protection needs rather than detailed poverty profiling. The dynamic nature of complex emergencies complicates the collection of comprehensive data that could illuminate child poverty specifics. Consequently, deeper insights into the poverty profile are frequently sidelined in favour of immediate humanitarian responses.</p>	<p>Afghanistan Humanitarian Action for Children 2021, 2022, and 2023, Afghanistan COAR 2020–2022, Summative Evaluation of the programme on improving adolescents lives in Afghanistan 2017–2020, KII with Afghanistan Social Policy Team, Burkina Faso Social Policy Workplan 2019–2020, Burkina Faso RAM 2019 and 2021, KII with Burkina Faso Social Policy team, Haiti RAM 2019–2021, Haiti Country Programme Evaluation 2019–2021, KII with Haiti Social Policy Team, Lebanon UNICEF in Action 2020–2021, Lebanon COAR 2019–2022, Lebanon CPD 2023–2025, Lebanon Evaluation of Integrated approach, KII with Social Policy Section Lebanon, Myanmar Social Policy Workplan 2020–2021, Myanmar COAR 2019–2022, Myanmar HAC 2023,</p>

MILESTONES	MILESTONE INDICATORS AS PER COALITION GUIDE	OBSERVED RELEVANCE AND ADAPTATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS	EVIDENCE SOURCE
	<p>Clear understanding of policy environment and where engaging makes sense</p>	<p>Relevant: Humanitarian settings often shift the policy environment and change the scope of engagement; it is therefore important to gain a renewed understanding of the policy environment and the changes that a localized and /or complex humanitarian situation may have caused and identify the entry points in which child poverty reduction work makes sense within the context. There is room for greater systemization of review of policy environment and inclusion of multidimensional child poverty as an element of multisectoral and integrated programming in all phases of programme response cycle, specifically within the phases of needs assessments and planning as outlined in the CCC.</p>	<p>KII with Myanmar Social Policy team, Nigeria CPD 2018–2022, Nigeria RAM 2021–2022, Nigeria COAR 2021–2022, KII with Nigeria Social Policy team, South Sudan Social Policy Workplan 2019–2021, South Sudan HAC 2020–2022, Evaluation of UNICEF Response to South Sudan Humanitarian Crisis (2015–20219), South Sudan COAR 2019–2022, South Sudan National Social Protection Policy Framework, KII with South Sudan Social Policy team, Yemen RAM 2019–2022, Yemen CPD 2022–2023, Yemen KII with Social Policy team</p>
	<p>Policy and programme analysis to support and influence policymakers on approaches to reduce child poverty</p> <p>A change in a programme or policy, and a reduction in child poverty</p>	<p>Adaptive relevance: The relevance of the following indicators depends on the humanitarian context and specifically the stability and existence of governance structures. In contexts where government structures are relatively stable with more localized crises, UNICEF utilizes local planning processes to support and implement inclusive, evidence-based social protection programmes and policies, focusing on risk management, resilience building, and shock-responsive social protection, aligning with Milestone 4 guidelines. In contrast, in the absence of a stable governance structure, UNICEF's role pivots from collaborative policy advocacy and support to direct implementation through parallel programming. This shift is characterized by scaling up humanitarian cash transfer programmes and taking over social services previously provided by governments to meet immediate needs, with less emphasis on influencing policymakers and more on direct implementation. Notably, even in non-humanitarian programming, efforts to support policies and programmes reducing child poverty are often not framed or monitored within the context of reducing child poverty. This is heightened in humanitarian settings, where priorities and measures of success are framed more in terms of reaching vulnerable groups to ensure access to financial support for essential needs.</p>	

MILESTONES	MILESTONE INDICATORS AS PER COALITION GUIDE	OBSERVED RELEVANCE AND ADAPTATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS	EVIDENCE SOURCE
		<p>In fragile contexts, UNICEF rarely nurtures opportunities to reframe child poverty initiatives with a civil society focus, supporting civic institutions to take on localized responsibility for social protection and service delivery. This approach can address the structural drivers of conflict while building a sustainable model for tackling child poverty and embedding it within a developmental process.</p>	
<p>Milestone 5: Achieving the SDGs: ending extreme child poverty and halving it by national definitions</p>	<p>Child poverty targets aligned to the SDGs included in national plans with a clear time frame</p> <hr/> <p>A funded national strategy or plan to achieve the targets, which includes a package of interventions to reduce child poverty and achieve the goals</p> <hr/> <p>Consistent monitoring, evaluation and advocacy to assess progress and hold decision-makers accountable</p> <hr/> <p>Being on track to achieve the SDGs, and a world in 2030 where extreme child poverty is ended and child poverty, as defined nationally, is at least halved</p>	<p>Not relevant: In humanitarian settings, developing national pathways and plans for child poverty reduction is often challenging due to the fluctuating nature of crises and the urgent need for immediate action. However, integrating preparedness for humanitarian contexts by embedding crisis adaptation plans within national child poverty reduction strategies can ensure clear pathways for action, even in the face of shocks and crises. This area remains underdeveloped, with limited efforts across both humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts to create comprehensive national plans and strategies for child poverty reduction.</p> <p>NOTE: While the milestone itself might be highly relevant, the first two indicators in the guide are irrelevant, particularly when the crisis stems from government instability. Adopting a civil society focus can enhance the relevance of the first two indicators and improve the relevance of the latter two indicators.</p>	<p>KII with Social Policy teams in South Sudan, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Yemen, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Lebanon and Nigeria,</p> <p>Nigeria RAM 2022, Burkina Faso RAM 2021–2022, Yemen CPD 2022–2023</p>



A6

Ethical principles and considerations and evaluation principles

Ethical Principles and Considerations

This section focuses on the ethical issues most relevant for this evaluation — the general guidelines for ethics in data collection.

EPRI conducted this evaluation guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles in line with the *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (2016), developed by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), as well as the UNICEF Procedures for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis,⁴⁶² ensuring the highest ethical standards in all stages.

The evaluation ensured that the team fulfilled the evaluators' obligations of independence, impartiality, credibility, accountability and clearing from conflict of interest by:

- ▶ Being independent in its judgement; all evaluation findings and recommendations were presented independently.
- ▶ Being impartial; producing a comprehensive report on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and taking due account of the views of stakeholders based on unbiased findings.

- ▶ Illustrating evidence on verified findings and lessons learned.
- ▶ Exercising honesty, integrity and respect for dignity and diversity.
- ▶ Producing the early impact evaluation report based on fair representation of knowledge, vulnerable groups, gender, and ethnic groups.
- ▶ Being willing to disclose in writing any experience, of themselves or their immediate family, which may have given rise to a potential conflict of interest, and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest which may have arisen.
- ▶ Working only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments which they did not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.

Ethics in data collection

This section provides additional specific information about EPRI's guidelines for research and evaluation, including ethics in data analysis and reporting. Given the scope and focus of the evaluation in institutional programming, EPRI did not include children as research subjects in this evaluation or collect data from child subjects.

Prior to conducting KIIs, EPRI gathered the informed consent of all interviewees and thoroughly explained to them the purpose of the evaluation, their role within the evaluation, and what information would be asked from them. Informed consent was obtained verbally from all research participants. A consent script was read out prior to the commencement of research, and potential participants were asked to provide their consent to join in the research. In gathering informed consent, EPRI assured all interviewees of the confidentiality and voluntariness of their answers; if at any point a participant felt uncomfortable, he or she was not obliged to provide the requested information without stating his or her reasons for doing so. While the objective of the study was to evaluate UNICEF's work towards reducing child poverty in each country, EPRI clearly communicated to interviewees what they could reasonably anticipate from the evaluation as part of efforts to manage expectations. By providing participants with elaborate and transparent information prior to the interview, their engagement and preparedness were optimized.

At the outset of data collection, all participants were informed that their answers would be kept confidential. Responses and comments were summarized in the research report, but respondents were not identified by name or any other identifying characteristics. All information collected during the study was recorded in audio and video, kept strictly confidential, and not shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the study's findings.

Ethics in data analysis and reporting

Reporting data collected from vulnerable groups, particularly children, warranted the following considerations, which were also applicable to data collected from all respondents:

1. Respecting the dignity and rights of every child/individual in every circumstance, keeping them anonymous.

2. ii) EPRI and its team respected people's right to provide information in confidence while ensuring that sensitive information could not be traced to its source. Therefore, when reporting any information emerging from this study, the team took care to ensure that the respondent or source of information could not be traced. All the information shared was kept in a secure and confidential database that was only accessed by researchers working on the project. All electronic documents and data were stored securely in a Dropbox/OneDrive folder. These applications were compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the most widely accepted security and privacy standards and regulations. In the event that any confidential documents or data were saved on a portable storage device such as a flash drive/hard drive, only authorized and trained project members had access to the device, and the device was stored securely in a locked file cabinet when it was not in use. When sharing the data with clients, the data files were shared via either OneDrive or Dropbox.

Integration of human rights-based frameworks and UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicators into evaluation design

Rights-based framework integration

The evaluation design incorporated key principles from the Rights-Based Framework, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and other relevant rights-related benchmarks. This integration ensured that the evaluation not only measured outcomes effectively but also promoted and protected the rights of individuals and communities involved.

The Rights-Based Framework for evaluation is an approach that integrates human rights principles and standards into the evaluation process. This framework is grounded in international human rights laws and conventions for the application of a human rights perspective to international cooperation activities, including evidence generation. The table below outlines the key principles of a human-rights approach and how they were incorporated in this evaluation.

Rights-Based Approach Principles	Evaluation Application
<p>Participation: Ensuring all stakeholders, especially marginalized groups, are involved in the evaluation process.</p>	<p>Diverse stakeholder participation was ensured, especially those with direct influence on UNICEF's work contributing to the realization of rights (Social Policy staff at country, regional, and HQ levels); participatory evaluation methods were employed to ensure the voices of diverse individuals involved in programming were included.</p>
<p>Non-discrimination: Evaluating how programmes affect different groups, particularly those at risk of discrimination.</p>	<p>Data were collected disaggregated by age, gender, disability, and other relevant factors to identify disparities. The evaluation focused particularly on the extent to which UNICEF considered the needs of vulnerable children, particularly vulnerable girls and children with disabilities, in its child poverty programming.</p>
<p>Accountability: Assessing how duty bearers meet their obligations to rights holders.</p>	<p>The evaluation assessed UNICEF's effectiveness in delivering child poverty programming, assessing responsibility, answerability, enforceability, transparency, and effectiveness, and examined UNICEF's capacities to deliver results to rights holders, the ultimate rights holders of poverty reduction interventions. The thorough stakeholder mapping and chain-referral method employed to map relevant stakeholders for consultations helped the evaluation team in assessing accountability. This dimension was primarily assessed through Evaluation Question 2.1.</p>
<p>Empowerment: Examining how programmes strengthen people's capacity to claim their rights.</p>	<p>Given the evaluation design and nature (a formative institutional programming evaluation), the actual effect of programme inputs in amplifying individuals' abilities to claim their rights was not directly assessed. However, this dimension was addressed indirectly by examining the overall effectiveness of UNICEF's work in achieving child poverty reduction objectives across specific policy areas.</p>
<p>Linkage to human rights standards: Aligning evaluation criteria, approaches and questions with international human rights norms.</p>	<p>Child-Centric Approach (CRC): Evaluation Subquestion 2.2 Assessed the relevance of UNICEF programming for addressing the rights and needs of children. Given the scope of the evaluation, the methodology did not imply consultations with children.</p> <p>Gender Equality Focus (CEDAW): As part of Evaluation Subquestion 2.2, gender analysis was conducted to understand the relevance of UNICEF's considerations in addressing gender-related vulnerabilities within its child poverty reduction work. Gender-sensitive constructs and indicators were assessed as part of this component, such as the disaggregation of child poverty data by gender and the inclusion of poverty dimensions specific to girls within child poverty measurement.</p>

These principles were incorporated at all the stages of the evaluation, guiding the formulation of evaluation questions, the selection of indicators, constructs, data collection methods and the interpretation of findings through a human rights lens. Moreover, thematically, the evaluation addressed the effectiveness of UNICEF programming in **realizing children's right to live free of poverty across multiple dimensions**.

UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicators integration

The evaluation design also aligned with the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.⁴⁶³ The following table outlines how Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) considerations were integrated throughout the evaluation process to meet UN-SWAP evaluation performance indicators.

UN-SWAP Principles	Evaluation Application
<p>Inclusiveness: Evaluations consider diverse perspectives, particularly those of women and marginalized groups.</p>	<p>Stakeholders from diverse gender backgrounds were involved in the evaluation process, and a balance of female and male stakeholders consulted was ensured.</p>
<p>Relevance: Integrating gender equality concerns into the core of the evaluation, explicitly addressing GEEW issues and including them in the evaluation criteria and scope.</p>	<p>Gender issues were explicitly integrated into the evaluation matrix, particularly in the constructs pertaining to Evaluation Subquestion 2.2, assessing the relevance of UNICEF's programming to the needs of children particularly for girl children and children with disabilities.</p>
<p>Effectiveness: Assessment of how well interventions achieve gender equality objectives, analysing factors that contributed to or hindered gender equality results</p>	<p>Through Evaluation Subquestion 2.2, the effectiveness of interventions in promoting gender equality within poverty reduction efforts was assessed. Issues on social protection for girls and the inclusion of girl-specific dimensions in poverty measurement are addressed in Finding 2.2.2. Data collection methods were designed to capture gender-differentiated interventions and progress.</p>
<p>Use of sex-disaggregated data: focus on the collection and analysis of gender-specific information, including using this data to identify gender disparities and trends.</p>	<p>Data disaggregated by sex and other relevant variables were collected, analysed, and reported, particularly by analysing the gender disaggregation in child poverty measurement reports and the inclusion of indicators relevant to girls. Finding 2.2.7 elaborates on these results. The evaluation also analysed programme monitoring data (Core Standard Indicators) on the degree of gender-responsiveness of UNICEF's social protection work.</p>



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A8

Data-collection tools

- [Link to validation survey questionnaire](#)
- [Link to key informant interview protocols](#)

Terms of Reference



TERMS OF REFERENCE – Evaluation Office

Assignment:	Evaluation of UNICEF work in contributing to poverty reduction, including in humanitarian and fragile settings
Location:	Home-based with travel and/or reporting to UNICEF New York (UNICEF House, 3 UN Plaza – (44th Street between 1st Ave and 2nd Ave). Travel to selected countries for data collection is expected.
Duration:	01 February 2023 – 30 September, 2023
Reporting to:	Senior Evaluation Specialist

Introduction

The Evaluation Office (EO) in UNICEF (New York) provides global leadership and oversight for the evaluation function and is responsible for developing an agenda and workplan to evaluate UNICEF's programmes and processes. EO conducts and/or manages independent, corporate evaluations and evaluation syntheses, provides technical assistance and quality assurance for evaluations commissioned at the decentralized level (country and regional offices), as well as other divisions in HQ offices. EO is also responsible for publishing a global evaluation plan that accompanies respective corporate strategies.⁴⁶⁴

As part of the Plan for Global Evaluations, the Evaluation Office (EO) has committed to assess UNICEF's work in child poverty reduction, with evaluation findings and recommendations to be submitted to the Executive Board in 2024. The Evaluation Office is now recruiting an evaluation team to develop this important evaluation. The timeline for execution of the evaluation is Month 01 February 2023 – 30 September 2023.

Child Poverty Background and UNICEF Interventions

The Sustainable Development Goals established child poverty reduction targets for 2030: Eradicate extreme poverty (1.1) and reduce by at least half the proportion of children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions (1.2). The child poverty debate has evolved to incorporate targets addressing dimensions that relate specifically to children and focused on reducing inequalities and indicators that allows us to monitor equity gaps. Recognizing child-specific poverty (SDG 1.2) is a significant step forward, the targeting makes two key points:

It calls for poverty reduction in all its dimensions, thus considering non-monetary measures that go beyond income; 2) It recognizes the importance of measuring targets according to national indicators.

Despite commitments and efforts made, progress on child poverty reduction is slow, with extreme poverty among children falling from 19.5 per cent in 2013 to 17.5 per cent in 2017, a slower rate than among adults. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a strong socioeconomic impact, pushing 150 million more children into multidimensional poverty, and striking harder where systems are most fragile or in crisis, communities poorest, and discrimination and exclusion compounded⁴⁶⁵.

UNICEF gives support to countries in measuring monetary and multidimensional child poverty and works to reduce child poverty by influencing fiscal policies and mechanisms; enhance coverage and adequacy of child sensitive social protection systems; address discrimination, including on the grounds of age, gender identity and disability; increase the participation, voice and agency of children, adolescents, and young people in civic life; and amplify child rights in human rights mechanisms. In 2020, UNICEF supported 156 countries and invested over US\$533 million in Goal Area 5 to provide children with an equitable chance in life. This includes humanitarian action in 112 countries, with related expenses of US\$255 million⁴⁶⁶.

UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 emphasized its contribution to achieve the 2030 SDGs throughout five goal areas and stressed the relevance of Goal Area 5 (GA5): "Every child, including adolescents have access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty"⁴⁶⁷. The UNICEF High-level Theory of Change (ToC) gave centrality of GA5 and emphasized that "Eliminating child poverty and ensuring access to

social protection have been recognized as critical priorities of the 2030 Agenda"⁴⁶⁸.

The specific GA5 ToC describes the underlying logic and results claims. Indeed, one key result is related to upstream work of child poverty and social protection: "Increased commitment to eliminating child poverty as part of national poverty, socioeconomic and sectoral strategies, and policies. And the second specific key result is related to social protection, and more downstream: Expanded coverage and strengthened inclusive, gender-transformative and shock-responsive social-protection systems, including in humanitarian and fragile contexts"⁴⁶⁹.

The evaluation will focus on UNICEF programmes in GA5 that supports countries' efforts to address child poverty, promoting monetary and multidimensional child poverty measurement, and supporting government policies, programmes, and public budgets to ensure child friendly inclusive social protection coverage. Also, on framework made in 2017 with the Global Coalition *A world free from child poverty: A guide to the tasks to achieve the vision*,⁴⁷⁰ that includes five indicative milestones on the pathway to address child poverty:

1. Building a national pathway to end child poverty
2. Measuring child poverty
3. Putting child poverty on the map: child poverty advocacy
4. Reducing child poverty through policy and programme change
5. Achieving the SDGs: ending extreme poverty and halving it by national definitions

The milestones were selected as they imply a Theory of Change with different steps that are often undertaken in sequence but need each other, and that will ensure UNICEF is working in the right pathway. This is relevant for the thematic scope of the forthcoming evaluation as it will help to determine what UNICEF actions are considered to directly contribute to child poverty reduction. As reducing child poverty is reached by actions in other UNICEF areas, the milestones give a framework of what specific social policy actions to evaluate UNICEF's contribution to child poverty reduction.

Programmes in the child poverty area of work will be the centre of the evaluation's scope. However, it will be necessary to explore the linkages with public finance for children, social protection and gender equality. Finally, it is important to look at what change

strategies are being implemented by UNICEF to reduce child poverty specially during the COVID-19 interventions and how they are related with the ones in the official Theory of Change.

No comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF work in this area has yet been conducted, and little is known about the impacts, quality of the organization's approach and processes, and the effect it has had on reducing child poverty. In light of this need, the UNICEF Evaluation Office in Headquarters is looking for a service provider to conduct an evaluation of UNICEF's work on child poverty reduction at the global and country level.

Purpose of the Evaluation, Key Questions, Scope and Intended Use

Purpose: The Evaluation plan is anchored in the 2022-2025 corporate evaluation plan and aimed at generating information to improve UNICEF performance in contributing in a meaningful way to child poverty reduction. The plan is also aimed at ensuring that UNICEF's results on child poverty reduction are visible and/or traceable in the respective country offices to achieve Goal Area 5. Moreover, the findings of the evaluation give clarity on what capacities should be improved. Finally, the evaluation will fill a knowledge gap, given the little available evidence of UNICEF work in this area.

The evaluation results should have summative and formative components. It will be summative when documenting results achieved, especially the extent to which capacities were built, and analyzing the processes through which this happened; and formative when identifying key lessons learned from UNICEF work, with the design and implementations

factors, including operational ones, and making recommendations on how UNICEF can improve. The formative character of the evaluation also involves case studies that cover the entire thematic issue across several country programmes components on child poverty areas to enhance the usefulness of the evaluation, especially for national partners, and to foster cross-country learning.

Objectives: The main objectives of this evaluation are multi-fold and are informed by the five milestones:

- ▶ To gauge the **role, prioritization, and relevance** of UNICEF child poverty reduction work among all other UNICEF and external stakeholder sector work.
- ▶ To understand the **breadth and depth of UNICEF work and its tangible results** in child poverty reduction and its linkages to social protection coverage, identifying the specific interventions that led to those results.
- ▶ To assess whether UNICEF **has the capacities** to achieve child poverty objectives by building national government capacities and systems in a sustainable manner.
- ▶ To identify and incorporate **lessons learned and better practices** from UNICEF child poverty reduction work and make recommendations on incorporating those to ensure that future decisions and programming have maximum impact.

Key questions: These are elaborated in relation with the objectives mentioned and evaluation criteria's⁴⁷¹ upon in *Table 1* below; to be further refined – and prioritized- during the inception phase.

Table 21. Proposed evaluation questions

Evaluation Objectives	Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
1) To gauge the role, prioritization, and relevance of UNICEF child poverty reduction work among all other UNICEF and external stakeholder sector work	Relevance To what extent UNICEF interventions are moving in the right direction?	To what extent are UNICEF's efforts to reduce child poverty and expand social protection consistent with priorities identified in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025?
		How relevant is UNICEF's work in bringing together partners to end child poverty in support of SDG1? (<i>Milestone 1</i>)
		To what extent are the results in milestone 1 a requirement for the other milestones? (<i>Milestone 1</i>)

		<p>How can the work done in milestone 1 better contribute to UNICEF's work on measurement, advocacy, policy change and the creation of national? <i>(Milestone 1)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is UNICEF taking the appropriate measurement strategy? (Prioritizing monetary, multidimensional or both measurements; directly measuring or supporting NGOs or governments) <i>(Milestone 2)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent child poverty measures are necessary for advocacy? <i>(Milestone 2)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent child poverty advocacy generates conflicts with the advocacy of different UNICEF areas? <i>(Milestone 3)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is UNICEF directing the child poverty advocacy to the appropriate stakeholder and audience? <i>(Milestone 3)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent UNICEF's advice of policy changes has been used by the governments? <i>(Milestone 4)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent the regional and global divisional offices support has been useful for Country Offices to generate analysis and propositions on child poverty reduction policies? <i>(Milestone 4)</i></p> <hr/> <p>How can measurement and advocacy better contribute to the generation of policy change? <i>(Milestone 4)</i></p> <hr/> <p>What is the trade off in the effort done to support the development of child poverty plans instead of making changes in policies? <i>(Milestone 5)</i></p> <hr/> <p>How can UNICEF better contribute to the integration of child poverty policies other than through national development plans? <i>(Milestone 5)</i></p>
<p>2) To understand the breadth and depth of UNICEF work and its tangible results in child poverty reduction and social protection coverage, identifying the specific effective methodologies that led to those results</p>	<p>Effectiveness Is UNICEF's work achieving its objectives on child poverty reduction?</p>	<p>What are the specific factors that drive or hinder realization of success?</p> <hr/> <p>To what extent does UNICEF have clarity on the global and national pathway to end child poverty? <i>(Milestone 1)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is UNICEF assuring the use of child poverty measurements for analysis, advocacy, and policy change? <i>(Milestone 2)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent did UNICEF work in poverty measurement lead to policy uptake? <i>(Milestone 2)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is UNICEF creating awareness on the importance of addressing child poverty? <i>(Milestone 3)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is UNICEF contributing to policy and programme change that reduce child poverty more effective and sustainable? <i>(Milestone 4)</i></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is UNICEF supporting countries to develop national plans to end child poverty? <i>(Milestone 5)</i></p>

	<p>To what extent UNICEF contribute to expand social protection programmes for the most vulnerable boys, girls, and women?</p>
	<p>To what extent did the policy uptake led to change in national plans, increases social protection coverage and/or services for children, especially the most deprived and in humanitarian context? <i>(Milestone 5)</i></p>
<p>3) To assess UNICEF institutional capacities to achieve child poverty objectives by building national government systems in a sustainable manner</p>	<p>Sustainability To what extent UNICEF is working in its institutional capacities and building national government systems?</p> <p>What is UNICEF doing to address bottlenecks in child poverty reduction programming such as supply availability and accessibility, reporting, resource mobilization, and staff capacity?</p> <p>What capacities were built as the result of COVID-19 that are replicable beyond the pandemic?</p> <p>How much and where did capacity-building address girls and most vulnerable groups?</p> <p>To what extent has UNICEF, where feasible, worked actively to maximize the sustainability of the results stemming from its inputs?</p> <p>How can UNICEF better bridge the child poverty actions with other goal areas to deliver more sustainable results?</p> <p>To what extent UNICEF contributed to increase partners capacities? <i>(Milestone 1)</i></p> <p>What lessons can be learned from UNICEF work in strengthening national capacities? <i>(Milestone 4)</i></p> <p>To what extent UNICEF capacities were adequate and sufficient?</p>
<p>4) To identify and incorporate lessons learned and better practices from UNICEF child poverty reduction work and make recommendations on incorporating those to ensure that future decisions and programming have maximum impact</p>	<p>Impact What is the impact of the different pathways to reduce child poverty followed in the selected countries?</p> <p>What are the main lessons learned in UNICEF child poverty reduction work up to now?</p> <p>What lessons learned have come from the myriad adaptations necessary to constructively work through the pandemic?</p> <p>How UNICEF was able to engage in partnership to mobilize national agenda, and defining a pathway? <i>(Milestone 1)</i></p> <p>How much of UNICEF's advocacy efforts to disseminate and mobilize awareness from child poverty evidence translate into government policies? <i>(Milestone 3)</i></p> <p>How much of UNICEF's advocacy strategy on child poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic influence policies, plans and budgets? <i>(Milestone 3)</i></p> <p>What entry points and effective strategies have influenced governments to adopt child poverty measurement and goals? <i>(Milestone 4)</i></p> <p>Do the increased commitments to eliminate child poverty translated into an expansion of coverage in inclusive social protection for children? <i>(Milestone 5)</i></p>

Scope of the evaluation

Temporal Scope: The evaluation covers the period of 2019 to present, using UNICEF's current Strategic Plan (2022-2025) and its Theory of Change as framework, in responding to the main objectives of the evaluation.

Thematic Scope: UNICEF work on child poverty reduction, focusing on the five indicative milestones on the pathway to address child poverty made with the Global Coalition and UNICEF and on UNICEF programmes in GA5 5 that supports countries' efforts to address child poverty, promoting monetary and multidimensional child poverty measurement, and supporting government policies, programmes, and public budgets. Evaluation themes may be further developed in the inception phase.

Figure n° 1 summarizes the generic ToC implied in the milestone's framework. It is important to point out that this generic ToC will take different characteristics in each country depending on the specific context, the political opportunities, and the range of engagement approaches. However, as it is said in the guide, countries that have made progress on child poverty have "an often small but dedicated group driving the issue forward; a clear sense of intention and direction to child poverty work (but that is flexible to changing circumstances); and a sustained long-term commitment to change".

Geographical Scope: is not limited to a region, though primary data collection and secondary data analysis is limited to a maximum of four countries to be chosen from the following groupings: (1) Malaysia/Perú, (2) Uganda/Rwanda, (3) Guatemala, (4) Montenegro, (5) Nigeria/Egypt/Bangladesh⁴⁷².

Table 2 shows an overview of main country indicators considering for the selection: i) region; ii) income (based on the World Bank classification⁴⁷³); iii) general population and percentage of child population; iv) the reporting of child poverty measurements; v) percentage of GDP dedicated by government to social assistance programmes; vi) fragility context according to their Humanitarian Action status; vii) recommended component programmes on social policy to be evaluated.

Figure 15. Theory of Change implied in milestone's framework

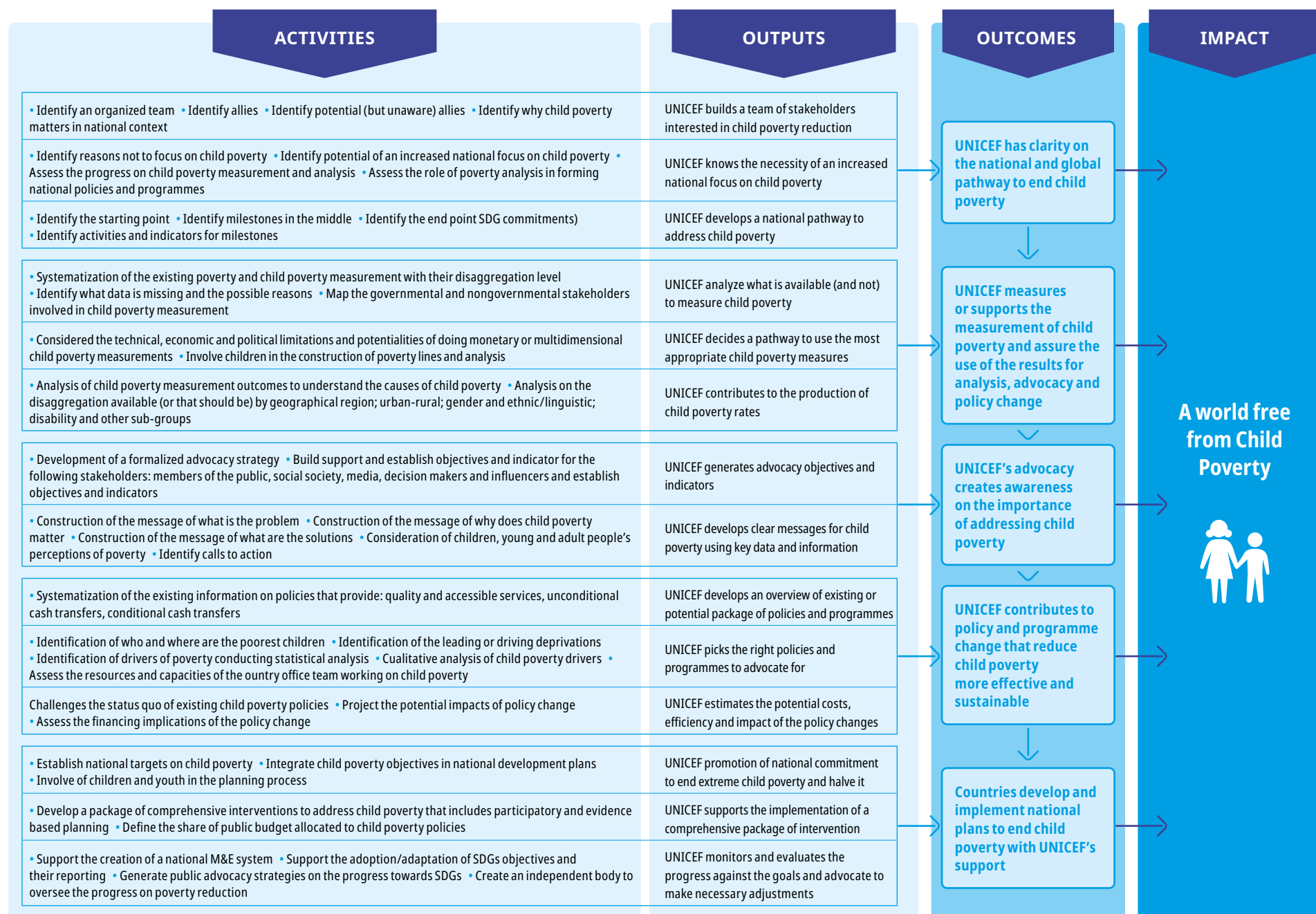


Table 22. Country selection for case studies approach

	Bangladesh	Egypt	Guatemala	Malaysia	Montenegro	Nigeria	Peru	Rwanda	Uganda
Region	South Asia	Middle East and North Africa	Latin America and Caribbean	East Asia and The Pacific	Europe and Central Asia	West Central Africa	Latin America and Caribbean	Eastern and Southern Africa	Eastern and Southern Africa
Income	Lower-middle	Lower-middle	Upper-middle	Upper-middle	Upper-middle	Lower-middle	Upper-middle	Low	Low
Total Population	164.689.383	102.334.403	16.858.333	32.365.998	621.306	206.139.587	32.971.846	12.952.209	45.741.000
% child population	26.8%	33.9%	33.3%	23.4%	18%	43.5%	24.7%	39.5%	46%
Report of child poverty measures (monetary in SDG VNR)	No	No	Yes (2019)	No	No	No	No	Yes (2019)	No
Report of child poverty measures (multidimensional in SDG VNR)	Yes (2020)	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (2019)	No
% monetary child poverty measurement	46% (2019. Not reported by government)	37.7% (2015. Not reported by government)	68.2% (2014. Reported by government)	Not reported	33.7% (2019. Reported by government)	47.4% (2020. Reported by government)	Not reported	44.5% (2018. Reported by government)	23.1% (2017. Reported by government)
% multidimensional child poverty measurement	57% (2020. Reported by government)	29.5% MODA (2017. Reported by government)	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	53.9% MODA (2020. Reported by government)	Not reported	25.3% MODA (2018. Reported by government)	56% (2017. Reported by government)
Percentage of GDP dedicated by government to social assistance programmes	Between 0.25% to 1.0%.	Greater than 1.75%	Between 1.0% to 1.75%	Between 1.0% to 1.75%	Between 1.0% to 1.75%	Less than 0.25%	Between 0.25% to 1.0%	Greater than 1.75%	Weak: Between 0.25% to 1.0%
UNICEF Situation reports Humanitarian Action for Children	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
GA5. Selected Programme Component	Social inclusion and increased awareness on child rights	Social inclusion	Social inclusion	Social inclusion and disparity reduction	Social and Child Protection	Social policy and gender equality	Recognizing and prioritizing the rights of children	Social Policy	Social Policy

Intended Users: The primary users of the evaluation will be UNICEF Social Policy section of the Programme Division at Headquarters, UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, Regional Offices, Country Offices, as well as UNICEF's Executive Board. The evaluation will also be providing helpful guidance to governments, other UN agencies and development partners associated in the Global coalition to End Child Poverty.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

(To be further refined during the inception phase under guidance and supervision of the Senior Evaluation Specialist, who, along with the Evaluation Team Leader, will manage the Evaluation)

The proposed methodology shall be suitable to address the Evaluation questions and should seek to include a mixed method approach based on review of existing evaluations, programme documents, surveys and interviews with key stakeholders, and field visits including community engagement in the evaluation, from which the evaluation team will be expected to reconstruct a Theory of Change of selected programme components on child poverty reduction. This information should then be captured in an evaluation matrix, which will also identify the indicators, data sources and analytical methods to be used to address the evaluation questions. Potential methodological approaches, to be refined during the inception phase and before the data collection phase are theory based evaluation including realist approaches, comparative case study and contribution analysis and/or a mix of thereof.

Consideration of the methodological approaches to be utilized in this evaluation include quantitative and qualitative mixed methods to answer the evaluation questions through the following connected steps:

1. Extended on-line survey to provide a global perspective. Evaluators will develop and gather information through a brief quantitative survey to be answered by social policy and child poverty UNICEF staff from all ROs and COs, as well as selected HQ staff.
2. A comparative case studies approach, with cases from the countries selected to be studied in-depth. This should consist primarily of qualitative primary data collection in the form of Key Informant Interviews including primary and secondary stakeholders.

3. A validation survey to pre-approved regional, country offices and some secondary stakeholders. The survey will follow a quasi-experimental quantitative approach and will cover the group of pre-selected countries that were not included in the qualitative study. The survey will cover primary and external stakeholders.

These will be the evaluation building blocks, with each step yielding analytic information and informing the next step. This methodological approach should complement the countries' case study qualitative information with quantitative support, using triangulation to provide consistent, analytical results.

Within the comparative case studies approach, the evaluation team should explore options to employ a realistic impact evaluation methodology, a theory-based approach that not only explains what works in what contexts, but also investigates 'How and why this works or does not work, for whom, to what extent, in what circumstances and for how long?'. To facilitate this, the team may consider developing hypotheses to be tested under the CMO approach (Context-Mechanism- Outcomes). These hypotheses, which specify the mechanisms that are expected to make programmes achieve outcomes in certain directions, can be tested by gathering qualitative and quantitative data.

The evaluation will be conducted under several phases:

Phase 1 - Inception: The inception phase will entail conceptualization of the approach and methodology, along with a workplan and timeline. This shall involve a literature and document review, and key informant interviews. The Inception report should include key components of a detailed methodological plan, data analysis plan (which data is analysed, by whom and how), and quality assurance mechanisms. Evaluation questions may also be further refined during the inception phase, in agreement with the Senior Evaluation Specialist, the evaluation manager.

Phase 2 - Data Collection: Essentially, methods used should include country case studies covering a select number of countries from which field country case studies will be conducted. Other evidence sources should include a comprehensive programme document review, and key stakeholder's interviews at UNICEF and among regional and country partners, including local government, as well as with comparable international organizations. In the field case study countries, data collection should encompass in-depth review of country-specific documents, key informant

interviews, focus group discussions, engagement with the targeted population, and site visits. Finally, the evaluation should consider an on-line survey of key stakeholders globally.

Phase 3 - Data Analysis: Before entering the last phase - reporting - it is important that the team consolidate all data collected during the previous phase and start analysis and implement the data analytical plan in search of findings, to reach conclusions in line with each line of enquiry (EQ). This phase is important and includes operationalization of the quality assurance method highlighted in the inception report, describing how triangulation will be operationalized, and related issues. Usually, outputs from this phase are of an analytical nature, such as graphics, charts, and statistics outputs (descriptive or inferential).

Phase 4 - Reporting: The reporting phase comprises producing several ongoing reports, including regular reports (weekly or bi-weekly as agreed with the Evaluation office and specialist) from consultants. Report content will be light, and meant to inform on ongoing evaluation implementation progress, identify challenges and bottlenecks, provide adequate support to the consultants, and take appropriate decisions. Progress toward key evaluation plan milestones, emerging challenges, and need for support from the SES are also reported.

Phase 5 - Recommendations and Findings: A workshop might be considered to discuss findings and recommendations with the client and key stakeholders for clearance and agreement on proper management response.

Evaluation Guidance and Standards: The evaluation methodology should be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4, Geros and the UNEG ethical guidance to evaluation as guiding principle to ensure quality of evaluation process. <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ETHICAL+GUIDELINES>. Furthermore, the evaluation should incorporate the human rights-based and gender perspective and be based on Results Based Management principles and logical framework analysis. The main deliverables will be reviewed by the EO for Quality Assurance while ensuring compliance with all Evaluation standards including Geros.

Towards the end of the evaluation, during which a draft final report is delivered, aligned with UNEG (United Nations Evaluation Group) standards and Geros, for comments and approval. This report is considered as internal to the team. If deemed not ready to be shared with the Reference Group, the draft report will be sent back to the team with constructive comments that are expected to be addressed. This is considered the internal draft report. Then once EO agrees that it is ready for the Reference group consultations, it will then be shared for comments. The team will then address the comments and send a revised version to the Evaluation Office for its review which will then consist of a payable deliverable; it may (or may not be shared again) with the reference group.

Risk Management

Availability of information: While there is systematic information on global initiatives and UNICEF priorities and programmes focused on UNICEF work on child poverty reduction from a global perspective, from a Country Office the most critical risk is that programming elements may still be incomplete and not available in the Annual Reports (COARs), or that implementation of activities associated with Strategic Plan 2022-2025 may not have generated enough information to undertake a meaningful assessment and/or critique at the country level. An effort should be made by UNICEF (Evaluation Office and Reference group) to ensure that the Evaluation team gets as complete a picture as possible about the implementation status of activities that contribute to the UNICEF work on child poverty reduction.

Evaluations with no actionable recommendations: One risk indicated by the KII during the scoping phase is that the evaluation results give general recommendations that are difficult to take at country level. The evaluation recommendation must provide practical orientations to ROs and COs to implement the pathways to child poverty reduction. Because of the heterogeneity of situations this will be a challenging task that must be addressed by the evaluation team.

Difficulties to fully understand the complete mapping of the organization: Complexity and diversity of areas supported by UNICEF may result in methodological and logistical challenges in capturing the full scope of UNICEF work. Be constantly willing to adjust the evaluation methodology in light of evolving findings, challenges and opportunities. Clearly define key deliverables and acceptance processes at the outset of the evaluation.

Changes in context of emergency limiting ability to conduct fieldwork: Prioritize KIIs with community leaders upon start of fieldwork as other activities can be conducted remotely; work primarily with local field researchers familiar with local contexts and threat levels; identify alternative data collection strategies relying on innovative methods in case fieldwork nevertheless remains impossible.

Delay experienced due to ethical approval processes: Ethical approval processes should be started right upon the draft acceptance of the inception report, however, delay in granting approval may still be experienced. In such an event, more fieldworkers may be hired to expedite data collection further down the line, while interim analysis and development of findings should start, and be updated with the findings from delayed programmes later on.

Unavailability of or insufficient time with key informants (staff turnover, travels, etc.): Map the key informants and organize, in cooperation with UNICEF Country Office, interviews with people that left the respective institutional stakeholder, if information obtained from the existing staff would be insufficient; interviews could be face-to-face, by Microsoft Teams or by phone. The same could be applied in the case of key informants who would not be in the office due to travel/personal matters/etc.

Sensitivity of stakeholders to questions and limited willingness to conduct frank and open dialogue: As part of this, UNICEF staff may have concerns about the intent of the evaluation, or the expected direction of the findings: Evaluations benefit from strong involvement of UNICEF's Evaluation Office, to protect the independence of the evaluation and isolate it from intro-organizational dynamics; be transparent regarding the scope and purpose of the evaluation and the potential impacts.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics: The evaluation should be guided by ethical and moral principles in line with the Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), developed by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), as well as the UNICEF Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. Strict adherence to a high set of ethical standards is of the utmost importance, given the subject matter of the study and its focus on vulnerable populations. As such, the participatory data gathering approach will need to be designed to avoid stigmatization, discrimination, and any form of harm to participants, including

an emphasis on beneficiaries having to relive past trauma. The evaluation is expected to have to go through an ethical approval process in all countries selected for data collection.

Qualifications, Roles of the Evaluation Team, Management and Governance Arrangements

The evaluation will be carried out by a firm/institution with relevant expertise and capacities to manage a global evaluation effort. The team composition should include at a minimum 1) an evaluation expert, 2) a child poverty expert, 3) an evaluation team (quantitative and qualitative researchers). The team leader will be tasked to guide and manage the evaluation exercise, and thus should have expertise in leading evaluations. The profiles of the team members are summarized below:

1) Evaluation expert

- ▶ Advanced University degree in public policy, social sciences, economics or other related fields. Additional qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the university degree
- ▶ A minimum of ten (10) years of relevant professional experience in leading and managing evaluation teams and practical experience conducting evaluations.
- ▶ Familiarity about child poverty issues, obtained through research, programming, and/or academic endeavors, is an asset.
- ▶ Skills and experience in developing results frameworks, tools or guides for monitoring and evaluation.
- ▶ Familiarity with results-based management orientation and practices and preparing products in the UN style; familiarity with UNICEF's programming and management systems will be an added advantage.
- ▶ Familiarity with UNEG evaluation standards, including the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, is an asset.
- ▶ Excellent analytical and writing skills in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish) is an asset.

2) Child Poverty Expert

- ▶ Advanced University degree in public policy, social sciences, economics or other related fields. Additional qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the university degree.
- ▶ A minimum of ten (10) years of relevant professional work on child poverty fieldwork and with UNICEF (highly desirable).
- ▶ Up-to date knowledge, skills, comprehensive practice and/or experience in the field of child poverty, obtained through research, programming, and/or academic endeavors.
- ▶ Evaluative expertise will be an added advantage.
- ▶ Familiarity with results-based management orientation and practices and preparing products in the UN style; familiarity with UNICEF's programming and management systems will be an added advantage.
- ▶ Familiarity with UNEG evaluation standards, including the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, is an asset.

Excellent analytical and writing skills in English are required. Knowledge of another official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish) is an asset.

3) Evaluation Team (quantitative and qualitative researchers)

- ▶ Advanced University degree in public policy, social sciences, economics or other related fields. Additional qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the university degree.
- ▶ A minimum of five (5) years of relevant professional experience working in impact evaluation. Understanding of technical aspects of child poverty is strongly favored
- ▶ Strong quantitative and qualitative research skills and knowledge of and experience with impact evaluation methodologies
- ▶ Experience working with analytical software (R, STATA, SPSS)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Any conflict of interest in this evaluation should be declared earlier on in the process during the bidding and contracting stage. A declaration form shall also be signed by the parties.

Role of Evaluation Office

- ▶ The Evaluation will be managed from UNICEF's Evaluation Office, by the Senior Evaluation Specialist (SES) and assisted by an Assistant Evaluation Manager. The Senior Evaluation Specialist will supervise and guide the conceptual aspects of the Evaluation in close collaboration with the team leader (approach and methodology) which will be ultimately approved by the SES as he/she will contribute to the development of the GEROS compliant Final Evaluation and the generation and validation of the recommendations. He/she will also have responsibility to:
 - ▶ Co-ordinate, direct and supervise all activities of the Team leader and Evaluation and its execution.
 - ▶ Be the liaison between the Team leader, Evaluation team and with the reference group and provide periodical updates on the execution of the Evaluation, as well as internal review processes.
 - ▶ Prepare publishing-ready versions of the reports for issuing by the Director, Evaluation Office.
 - ▶ Provide oversight and guidance to the evaluation team on UNICEF requirements and standards for evaluative work.
 - ▶ Provide quality assurance and approve all deliverables.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Consultants

Evaluation Expert/Evaluation Team Leader

- ▶ Lead the evaluation team; she/he will provide direction to the team member(s) as required.
- ▶ Develop the inception report, and relevant tools, methods and approaches for the overall evaluation.
- ▶ Responsible for the overall delivery of the evaluation according to the TORs and approved Inception Report and she/he is primarily accountable for the quality of all deliverables.
- ▶ Write and present the draft final report, as per the UNEG/GEROS standards.

Child Poverty Expert

- ▶ Child poverty expert, under the direction of the team leader, is jointly accountable for the deliverables.
- ▶ Provide support and accomplish necessary tasks as approved in the inception report and agreed by the team leader, such as the development of relevant tools, method and approaches for the overall evaluation and contribute to the data analysis, focusing on quantitative data as necessary.
- ▶ Brings social policy experience to the team, safeguarding sensitivity of forthcoming recommendations to characteristics and concerns of the sector.
- ▶ Works together with the humanitarian cash transfer specialist to identify opportunities to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus.

Evaluation Team

- ▶ Quantitative and qualitative researchers, under the direction of the team leader, are jointly accountable for the deliverables.
- ▶ Provide support and accomplish necessary tasks as approved in the inception report and agreed by the team leader, such as the development of relevant quantitative tools, method, and approaches for the overall evaluation
- ▶ Develops analysis plan and scopes and analyzes relevant micro-level datasets available in selected countries.

Role of the Reference Group

To be appointed by the Director, Evaluation Office, the reference group will provide expert advice during the evaluation. The reference group will have the following responsibilities:

- ▶ Provide inputs in the inception phase to influence the approach of the evaluation, and, where necessary, provide information, relevant documentations and institutional knowledge as key informants.
- ▶ Review selected evaluation products (inception report, and final/penultimate report) and providing written comments to the review team through the evaluation manager.
- ▶ Contribute to the post-evaluation management response, action plan and dissemination strategy.

Key Deliverables and Timeframe

The Evaluation should be completed within 7 months (01 February 2023 – 30 September 2023) with a final report formatted for submission to the board. Expected deliverables are as follows:

1. An **inception report** (first payable deliverable) which outlines the evaluation methodology and approaches; proposed analytical framework; key desk review; finalized evaluation questions; instruments for interviews and survey with stakeholders, and an outline of the final report, including proposed annexes.

A draft inception report should be shared with the reference group, after which the evaluation team should incorporate the received feedback and finalize it. Following its finalization, the evaluation team should field-test the data collection instruments and incorporate feedback in the final instruments. Excluding annexes, the report should not be longer than 25 pages.

2. A **first draft evaluation report** (second payable deliverable) that includes the on progress set of findings, and initial conclusions on the overall assessments of UNICEF-supported interventions on child poverty reduction, draft recommendations and annexes. This report will also include; draft country case study reports of UNICEF's work on child poverty reduction. This version will be reviewed mainly by EO and comments fully addressed at satisfaction of EO before payment.
3. A **second draft evaluation report** (not payable deliverable) of the evaluation report, will include EO early comments (step b. above, and considered the internal draft) and the executive summary. This version will have been shared and reviewed by the reference group.
4. **Validation workshop** (third payable deliverable) for clearing findings and recommendations. Prior to finalization of the evaluation report, the evaluation team needs to conduct a validation workshop to collect views on the findings from the Evaluation Office and the Reference Group. In addition, staff from UNICEF offices not visited during the assignment may be invited to participate in some sessions of the workshop, serving to corroborate the findings with experiences from other countries, further triangulating the conclusions and recommendations. The workshop is to be organized after submission of the second draft evaluation report. Brief 2-page session proceedings

should be submitted for each session organized.

5. Final synthesis evaluation report and country cases reports (last payable deliverable) which will take on the comments from the workshop to finalize and complete the assignment with a final evaluation report. This is the main deliverable of the evaluation, and should synthesize findings, conclusions and recommendations on the overall assessments of UNICEF-supported interventions on child poverty reduction, recommendations and all annexes made during the evaluation process. It also includes country cases reports that should provide a high-level overview of each programme component evaluated, the scope of fieldwork, focus on the findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of each particular case. Excluding annexes and the executive

summary, the synthesis evaluation report should not be longer than 60 pages and each country's case study report should not be longer than 15 pages. The final evaluation report, duly reviewed for quality, and conforming to the UNICEF publishing/GEROS⁴⁷⁴ standards.

Datasets (qualitative and quantitative) will be submitted to the Evaluation Office as part of the evaluation deliverables, in soft and hard copies.

As reflected in *Table 3*, the evaluation has a timeline of approximately 28 weeks (7 months) from the beginning of the inception period to the submission of the final report. The table also provides an overview of the composition of the level of effort is estimated for each component of the team.

Table 23. Proposed Timeline

Description of Milestone / Process ^{475 476}	# Days Child poverty specialist	# Days Evaluation specialist	# Days Evaluation Team	Timeline
1. Inception and initial data collection phase: Desk review, HQ interview, CO Interview (Skype)	15	15	20	Week 1-4
2. Draft Inception Report (IR), with key data collection tools and methods submitted to EO	5	5	5	Week 5
3. TRG reviews and provides feedback on IR	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Week 5-7
4. TL/Team to address the comments and submit a revised Global IR (payable deliverable)	3	3	5	Week 8
5. Mission to 4 Country Cases (team split into two teams covering each two countries simultaneously)	25	25	25	Week 9-13
6. Analysis and delivery of case reports and draft synthesis report to HQ for Review (payable deliverable)	25	25	25	Week 14-18
7. TRG review and EO provides feedback on case reports and draft synthesis reports to the team lead (TL)/HQ	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Week 19-20
8. TL/Team address comments, and submits first case reports and draft synthesis reports to EO	3	3	5	Week 21
9. TL/Team Prepare and develop recommendations workshop	8	8	5	Week 22-23
10. TL/Team address Recommendations workshop session briefs (payable deliverable)	3	3	5	Week 24

11. TL/Team address comments, and submits Final case reports and draft synthesis report to EO (payable deliverable)	5	5	5	Week 25
12. Delivery of Final Evaluation Report (FER) to HQ	5	5	5	Week 28
Total of expected days	97	97	105	299

Schedule of payments

Payments will be made as per the schedule below:

Table 24. Schedule of payments

Deliverables	Percentage
Final inception report (step 4): payable after the Evaluation Office and Reference Group have reviewed the report and their comments have been successfully addressed by the team.	25%
First draft Evaluation Report (with related country cases study reports) (step 6): payable after the Evaluation Office and Reference Group have reviewed the report and their comments have been successfully addressed by the team.	30%
Validation workshop (step 10): Payable on submission of the session briefs.	15%
Final Evaluation Report and country cases report (step 11): Payable after the Evaluation Office, Reference Group and stakeholders have reviewed the draft report and comments are successfully addressed by the team. Includes datasets.	30%

The fees are exclusive of all expenses such as travel, accommodation, and incidental expenses. Failure to submit the deliverables in accordance with the TORs and the required evaluation standards, will result in payments being withheld.

How to Apply

Interested institutions/firms should submit a letter of interest, resume(s), technical and financial proposal, as well as examples of relevant evaluation reports and or study reports, clarifying their role and contribution to the evaluation as they relate to child poverty.

The technical proposal (of up to 15 pages) should demonstrate institution's experience and candidate's knowledge on evaluation methods and approaches, child poverty reduction approaches –specially on UNICEF work– and how they propose to deliver the above TORs with quality evaluation services¹⁴. A list of relevant past and on-going assignments carried out by the institution in the past 7 years should be submitted along with two sample reports that exemplify the quality of the proposers' works. UNICEF may

contact reference persons for feedback on services provided by the proposers. Financial proposal should indicate daily fees.

Any conflict of interest in this evaluation should be declared earlier on in the process during the bidding and contracting stage. A declaration form shall also be signed by the parties.

Remarks

Only institutions shortlisted will be contacted and advance to the next stage of the selection process. Reference persons may be contacted as well.

Endnotes

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473 [World Bank Income Classification](#)

474 11 UNICEF has instituted the Global Evaluation Report Oversight System (GEROS), a system where final evaluation reports are quality-assessed by an external independent company against UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports. The Evaluation team is expected reflect on and conform to these standards.

475 Please note that if a step can have concluded sooner or later, then it will affect the entire time frame.

476 It is assumed it is not full time, some days are off or for other purpose or Christmas break



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