



## Inception Report – Volume I

Summative Evaluation of UNICEF Uzbekistan's Child  
Protection  
Programme from 2021 to 2024

*18 August 2024*

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## List of Acronyms

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTA	Guardianship and Trusteeship Authority
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOELR	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOMFA	Ministry of Mahalla and Family Affairs
MOIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MPPC	Medical Psychological Pedagogy Commission
MPSE	Ministry of Preschool and School Education
NASP	National Agency for Social Protection
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PSN	Programme Strategy Note
SBC	Social behavioural change
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
SOPs	Standard operating procedures
SSW	Social service workforce
TOC	Theory of change
TOR	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USD	US Dollars

## 1 Introduction

This inception report was written by independent evaluators, Coram International, as part of the summative evaluation of UNICEF Uzbekistan's Child Protection Programme (the 'Programme'). The Programme covers the period from 2021 to 2025. However, as it is being carried out just before the conclusion of the Programme (in order to inform the next child protection programme), it will only evaluate the interventions and results from 2021 to August 2024.

The **purpose** of this inception report is to outline the evaluation design, methodology, tools and workplan, as agreed with UNICEF Uzbekistan and an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) established for this purpose.

The preparation of this inception report forms part of the **first phase** of the evaluation (the 'inception phase') and involved the following **key activities**:

- a kick-off call between Coram International and UNICEF Uzbekistan to ensure a shared understanding of the evaluation objectives, process, division of roles and responsibilities and dates for the deliverables;
- a preliminary desk review by Coram International of Programme documentation and other relevant literature;
- an online consultation with the UNICEF Uzbekistan child protection team on 10 July 2024 to strengthen the evaluators' contextual knowledge of recent institutional reforms affecting the governance framework for the child protection system;
- an online consultation with the UNICEF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and child protection teams on 19 July 2024 to agree the research sites and interviews to be undertaken in each location;
- two rounds of comments (written and oral) from UNICEF Uzbekistan;
- oral comments from the ERG provided at an online consultation held on 16 August 2024; and
- review and clearance by (i) UNICEF's Quality Assurance Mechanism and (ii) Ethical Review Board, the comments from which were incorporated into the final version of this report.

The **inception report provides**:

- an overview of the context (**Part 2**);
- a description of the object of the evaluation, its theory of change (TOC), and the key duty-bearers, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Programme (**Part 3**);
- the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation (**Part 4**);
- the evaluation framework including the evaluation criteria and questions (**Part 5**);
- the methodology including the overall approach, data collection sources and methods, site selection and sampling, data analysis methods, ethics, risks, limitations and mitigation strategies (**Part 6**); and
- an overview of the evaluation workplan and phases, team members and their roles, and quality assurance mechanisms (**Part 7**).

Supplementary information is provided in Annexes including the terms of reference (TOR) for the evaluation, additional details about the Programme design and TOC, the evaluation matrix, bibliography, data collection tools, information and consent forms, list of stakeholders to be interviewed, the ethical protocol and ethical approval.

**No emerging issues** were identified which would impact the development of this inception report.

This evaluation takes place following a regional evaluation of child care and deinstitutionalisation reforms in Europe and Central Asia covering eight countries (Armenia; Bulgaria; Georgia; Moldova; Montenegro; North Macedonia; Serbia; Tajikistan). This evaluation will complement the learning from those evaluations.

## 2 Context

### 2.1. Geographical and demographic context

Uzbekistan is a double landlocked country in Central Asia, bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, Kyrgyzstan to the northeast, Tajikistan to the southeast, Afghanistan to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southwest. Uzbekistan has the largest population in Central Asia with 36.9 million people in 2024, out of which over 50 per cent are persons under the age of 30 and 32 per cent are children under the age of 16.<sup>1</sup> Of the total population, 31 per cent are girls under the age of 16, and 33 per cent are boys.<sup>2</sup> Fifty one (51) per cent of the population lives in urban areas while 49 per cent resides in rural areas, highlighting the continuing significance of rural life for nearly half of the population.<sup>3</sup> The ethnic composition of the population is: Uzbek (83.8 per cent); Tajik (4.8 per cent); Russian (2.3 per cent); Kazakh (2.3 per cent); and Karakalpak (2.2 per cent).<sup>4</sup> Approximately three per cent of children have some form of disability, while 1.3 per cent of children have a severe disability.<sup>5</sup> Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups, experiencing multiple deprivations and discrimination, as detailed in the following sections.

### 2.2. Socio-economic, political and administrative context

Uzbekistan is classified as a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of approximately US\$90.9 billion and a GDP per capita of US\$2,496.<sup>6</sup> At the outset of the evaluation period, investment in social protection in Uzbekistan was low, with the coverage of child-specific allowances having decreased over time.<sup>7</sup> In 2020, UNICEF reported that 17 per cent of children lived in households which received some kind of child allowances, though 75 per cent of eligible families did not receive any.<sup>8</sup> The criteria for cash assistance was also narrowly defined, and the targeting methods excluded some intended beneficiaries.<sup>9</sup> However, Uzbekistan has been taking important steps to address these challenges, including the establishment of a National Agency for Social Protection (NASP) and significant legal and policy reforms to develop the social protection system, outlined further below. In addition, in 2022, the CRC Committee welcomed Uzbekistan's efforts to extend its social assistance schemes to cover children between 14 and 18 years of age, though it noted that 24 per cent of children were living in poverty, making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.<sup>10</sup> The CRC Committee also expressed concern about socioeconomic hardship (as well as divorce, abandonment and disability) as drivers of institutionalisation of children and recommended that Uzbekistan ensures that *"poverty, disability or divorce are never the sole justification for family separation and that children are*

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<sup>1</sup> Website of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, Demographic Situation, retrieved from: [https://stat.uz/en/?preview=1&option=com\\_dropfiles&format=&task=frontfile.download&catid=438&id=3374&Itemid=1000000000000](https://stat.uz/en/?preview=1&option=com_dropfiles&format=&task=frontfile.download&catid=438&id=3374&Itemid=1000000000000)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 30.

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Building A Better Future A child-sensitive social protection system for Uzbekistan, January 2019, page 9, retrieved from: [https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SP\\_Brief\\_ENGLISH\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SP_Brief_ENGLISH_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, The World Bank in Uzbekistan: Country Snapshot, April 2018, p 1; World Bank, Data for Uzbekistan, Lower Middle Income, retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=UZ-XN> on 02 July 2024.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Programme Document 2021-2025, 14 December 2020, available at: [https://unicef.org/executiveboard/media/3111/file/2021-PL8-Uzbekistan\\_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf](https://unicef.org/executiveboard/media/3111/file/2021-PL8-Uzbekistan_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf), paragraph 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee), Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, para. 41.

*separated from their family only if it is in their best interests after a comprehensive assessment of their situation.”<sup>11</sup>*

The succession of a new president in 2016 brought about a significant shift in government policy and opportunities for the reform of the child protection system and social sector. The new government initiated ambitious economic and social reforms, reflected in the adoption of two National Development Strategies (one for 2017-2021 and the other for 2022-2026), which focused among other on economic liberalisation and improvements to the social protection system.<sup>12</sup>

In 2023, Uzbekistan held a constitutional referendum, which endorsed a new Constitution that emphasizes a socially-oriented state. It also adopted a third National Development Strategy for the years 2023-2030.<sup>13</sup> Its goals are directly relevant to the Programme and include providing opportunities for every person to realize their potential, fostering a healthy and educated generation, building a robust economy, and ensuring justice, the rule of law and security. One of the overarching goals of the Strategy is to achieve upper-middle-income status by 2030 and to halve poverty by 2026.<sup>14</sup>

Uzbekistan is administratively divided into twelve regions, the capital city of Tashkent, and the autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan. Local governments are established at the regional, district, city and town levels, each of which is governed by local *Khokimiyats* (administrative offices).<sup>15</sup> Khokimiyats have normally been responsible for local governance and delivery of public services such as education, healthcare and social welfare for residents in their administrative area. In addition, neighbourhoods (*mahallas*) are self-governed by Mahalla Committees, which are elected by local residents. As detailed in [part 2.4](#), recent legal and policy reforms have led to significant changes in the governance structure, shifting the responsibility for funding and delivering child protection and social services to the central level, acting through its sub-national branches.

### **2.3. External factors**

Uzbekistan has faced economic, humanitarian and geopolitical challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Ukraine war, the Afghanistan crisis, and environmental threats such as the Aral Sea disaster.<sup>16</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated economic challenges and impacted the most vulnerable in Uzbekistan, including children.<sup>17</sup> In response, the government swiftly introduced financial measures to mitigate the pandemic's effects, and the economy has shown resilience.<sup>18</sup> However, the crises exposed challenges in Uzbekistan's social protection system, including the lack of a unified body responsible for social protection,<sup>19</sup> though as mentioned, recent reforms have sought to address this (see [part 2.4](#)). Additionally, Uzbekistan has maintained a robust diplomatic agenda, actively engaging to support Afghanistan's humanitarian needs and addressing the urgent needs of stranded Afghan citizens.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, paras. 31(c) and 32(d).

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Programme Review Report, 23 November 2023, page 3.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Office Annual Report 2023, page 1.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Office Annual Report 2023, page 1.

<sup>15</sup> Constitution of Uzbekistan, Article 120-125, available at: <https://lex.uz/en/docs/6451070>.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Programme Review Report, 23 November 2023, page 3.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Programme Document 2021-2025, 14 December 2020, available at: [https://unicef.org/executiveboard/media/3111/file/2021-PL8-Uzbekistan\\_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf](https://unicef.org/executiveboard/media/3111/file/2021-PL8-Uzbekistan_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf), paragraph 4.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Office Annual Report 2022, page 1.

<sup>19</sup> International Labour Organization, Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan: income, labour market and access to social protection, September 2020, available at: [file:///C:/Users/Sihana.Bina/Downloads/wcms\\_759842%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Sihana.Bina/Downloads/wcms_759842%20(1).pdf), page 34.

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Office Annual Report 2023, page 1.

## 2.4. Legal, policy and institutional context

Uzbekistan has taken important steps to develop its policy and legislative framework for the child protection system. Uzbekistan acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1994 and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2021. Following ratification of the CRPD, UNICEF supported several reforms in this area, including, the development of a joint programme and National Plan of Action on CRPD, which was carried out in partnership with other UN agencies and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>21</sup>

The rights of children in Uzbekistan are protected by the Constitution, particularly Article 78, which ensures that all children are equal before the law and mandates the State to protect their rights and development.<sup>22</sup> In addition to their constitutional rights, the rights of children in need of care and protection are guaranteed by a range of domestic laws, most notably, the Family Code and the Law on the Guarantee of the Rights of the Child 2008 (Child Rights Law 2008), including protection from violations of the child's rights and legal interests and the right to be raised in a family environment.

Until 2023, the Child Rights Law 2008, Family Code 1998, Law on Guardianship and Trusteeship 2014, Law on the Prevention of Neglect and Delinquency Among Minors 2010 and Law on Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence 2019 (which includes provisions for girls under 18), were the key laws establishing the framework for the child protection system and a continuum of services to prevent and respond to child protection issues. Under this framework, child protection gate-keeping and case management functions were fragmented between Guardianship and Trusteeship Authorities (GTAs), Commissions on Children's Issues (formerly the Commissions on Minors' Affairs), Medical Psychological Pedagogy Commissions (MPPCs) (for children with disabilities), among others. Before the establishment of NASP, GTAs normally consisted of one person (an inspector) from the district/city Department of Education who was moved in 2021 to sit within the district/city khokimiyat as part of a "child protection unit," together with the secretary of the district/city Commissions on Children's Affairs). Cases involving children at risk of neglect or children with so-called "delinquent" behaviour were handled by bodies of internal affairs via the Department for the Prevention of Child Neglect and Offending (district-level Departments of Internal Affairs) and the District/City Commissions on Children's Issues, rather than through a social welfare approach based on the needs of the child and their family. Para-professionals working within Mahallas reported to various different authorities, such as the Mahalla Committee and the Khokimiyat, creating a degree of incoherence in the system and leading to issues with double reporting.<sup>23</sup>

Uzbekistan is in the process of undertaking a series of significant legal and policy reforms, which aim to address the fragmentation in the governance framework and centralise responsibility for the funding delivery of social services, including child protection services. In June 2023, the Government established the National Agency for Social Protection (NASP) under the President of Uzbekistan, which aims to deliver child protection services through newly-established district-level, Inson Social Service Centres.<sup>24</sup> The Inson Centres aim to consolidate the fragmentation between the GTAs and Commission on Children's Issues and bring the para-professionals working within Mahallas under their authority. The NASP, acting through the Inson Centres, are responsible for key child protection functions, including acting as the GTA, undertaking assessments and management of child protection cases, delivering social welfare services to children and families, and otherwise delivering specialized services for vulnerable children.<sup>25</sup> NASP also has regional branches.

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<sup>21</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Country Office Annual Report 2021, page 3, retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/media/116486/file/Uzbekistan-2021-COAR.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Constitution of Uzbekistan, Article 78, available at <https://lex.uz/en/docs/6451070>:

<sup>23</sup> Information provided by UNICEF Uzbekistan through an online meeting held on 9 July 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On a set of measures to provide high-quality social services and assistance to the population, as well as to establish a system of their effective control" 01 June 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid,

Uzbekistan is also taking steps to strengthen the legal framework relating to the protection of children from violence. In accordance with a recommendation from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee)<sup>26</sup>, in 2023, Uzbekistan drafted a new law aimed at protecting children from all forms of violence, with the support of UNICEF.<sup>27</sup> This law outlines intersectoral responsibilities and preventive measures and responses to address violence against children.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, in 2023, the government of Uzbekistan amended the Criminal Code, introducing Article 126, which specifies criminal penalties for various forms of domestic (family) violence.<sup>29</sup>

Various laws and policies have been adopted specifically to reduce the numbers of children in residential care institutions (RCIs), such as the Law on Guardianship and Trusteeship 2014,<sup>30</sup> Presidential Decree “On additional measures to improve the activities of family-type children’s homes”<sup>31</sup>, and Presidential Decree “On measures to introduce a radically updated system of education for orphans and children left without parental care”.<sup>32</sup> Uzbekistan has also adopted the Strategy on Deinstitutionalization of the Childcare System for 2023-2030, aiming to reduce the number of children in institutional care by 80 percent. With the establishment of NASP, all RCIs previously under the Ministry of Preschool and School Education (MPSE) (namely, *mehribonlik* homes, muruvvat homes, specialized boarding schools for children with disabilities and Republican educational correctional facilities, have been transferred to NASP.<sup>33</sup> The process of deinstitutionalisation was led by the National Guard which reported the creation of 139 ‘family children’s homes’ for 780 children and the closure of 14 *mehribonlik* homes, four children’s towns, and five baby homes.<sup>34</sup> At the time of writing, it is understood that five RCIs for children with disabilities and two *mehribonlik* homes remain open.<sup>35</sup> Other forms of RCIs remain under the authority of other stakeholders. These include eight baby homes under the Ministry of Health (MoH) (five have been closed), and 14 Centres for Social and Legal Support to Minors under the MOI.<sup>36</sup>

Places of detention for children in the child justice system also remain. These include temporary isolators and investigation isolators (for police custody and pre-trial detention) and a colony for boys. Girls who are convicted of a crime are placed in the women’s prison due to their low numbers. Both the colony and women’s prison are based in Tashkent region. One of the biggest issues is that children are placed with adults in pre-trial detention and girls with women in the women’s prison, although it is understood that they are held in separate cells.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.5. Child protection needs, barriers and bottlenecks

There have been challenges in measuring the true scale of violence against children in Uzbekistan due to the lack of data and underreporting.<sup>38</sup> The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by

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<sup>26</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 6, paragraph 28.

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF End Year 2023 Outcome 4 Child Protection.

<sup>28</sup> Draft Law on Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence.

<sup>29</sup> Article 126 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan criminalizes non-physical and physical abuse, with penalties that escalate based on the severity of the offense, and imposes stricter punishments for aggravated circumstances.

<sup>30</sup> Law no. LRU-364 on Guardianship and Trusteeship, 2 January 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Presidential Decree no. PP-345 on additional measures to improve the activities of family-type children's homes, 08 April 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Presidential Decree no. 5215 on measures to introduce a radically updated system of education for orphans and children left without parental care, 09 August 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Information provided by UNICEF Uzbekistan through an online meeting held on 9 July 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by UNICEF on 13 August 2024 in written comments to the Inception Report.

<sup>35</sup> Information provided by UNICEF Uzbekistan through an online meeting held on 9 July 2024.

<sup>36</sup> Information provided by UNICEF Uzbekistan through an online meeting held on 9 July 2024.

<sup>37</sup> Information provided by UNICEF Uzbekistan through an online meeting held on 9 July 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, para. 27(a).

UNICEF in 2021-2022 revealed that 62 per cent of children aged 1-14 experienced some form of violent discipline (physical punishment and/or psychological aggression) in the month preceding the survey.<sup>39</sup> UNICEF is in the process of negotiating another MICS with the government with preparation for data collection expected to take place in 2025.<sup>40</sup>

The CRC Committee's 2022 concluding observations highlighted the near-universal acceptance of corporal punishment in Uzbekistan, in the absence of a clear legal prohibition, as well as the lack of legislative and institutional frameworks to prevent and combat violence against children,<sup>41</sup> though as noted further above, significant strides are being taken in Uzbekistan to address this.

The separation of children from families and their institutionalisation are historic challenges in Uzbekistan. At the end of 2020 (i.e. at the outset of the Programme, noted here as baseline data for the evaluation), there were 31,402 children in residential care (see [Figure 1](#)), just under two thirds of whom were boys (63 per cent) compared to 37 per cent girls.<sup>42</sup> Children with disabilities made up the majority of children in residential care at 74 per cent in 2020 ([Figure 1](#)).<sup>43</sup> In contrast, in 2020, 38,665 children were in formal family-based care ([Figure 1](#)) (51 per cent girls, 49 per cent boys), six of whom were children with disabilities.<sup>44</sup>

By the end of 2022, numbers of children in residential care had reduced marginally to 30,183 ([Figure 1](#)), though boys continued to make up 63 per cent of total numbers (18,916 boys compared to 11,267 girls).<sup>45</sup> Children with disabilities comprised a larger proportion of the numbers of children in residential care at 79 per cent of the total ([Figure 1](#)).<sup>46</sup> Further, numbers of children in formal family-based care decreased to 28,889 (54 per cent boys and 46 per cent girls), 62 of whom were children with disabilities (TransMonEE data). The literature highlights multiple reasons for these results including delays in implementing deinstitutionalisation policies<sup>47</sup> and the absence of a formal foster-care system and a mechanism to select, prepare, support and monitor guardianship or patronage care providers.<sup>48</sup>

*Figure 1: Numbers of children in alternative care between 2020 and 2022 as at the end of the year (TransMonEE)*

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<sup>39</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and UNICEF, "2021-2022 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Uzbekistan, Statistical Snapshot Report", October 2022, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 29.

<sup>40</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, written comments on draft inception report, July 2024.

<sup>41</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 6, paragraph 27 (b).

<sup>42</sup> TransMonEE, Database Explorer, retrieved on 03 July 2024 from <https://www.unicef.org/transmonee/>.

<sup>43</sup> TransMonEE, Database Explorer, retrieved on 03 July 2024 from <https://www.unicef.org/transmonee/>.

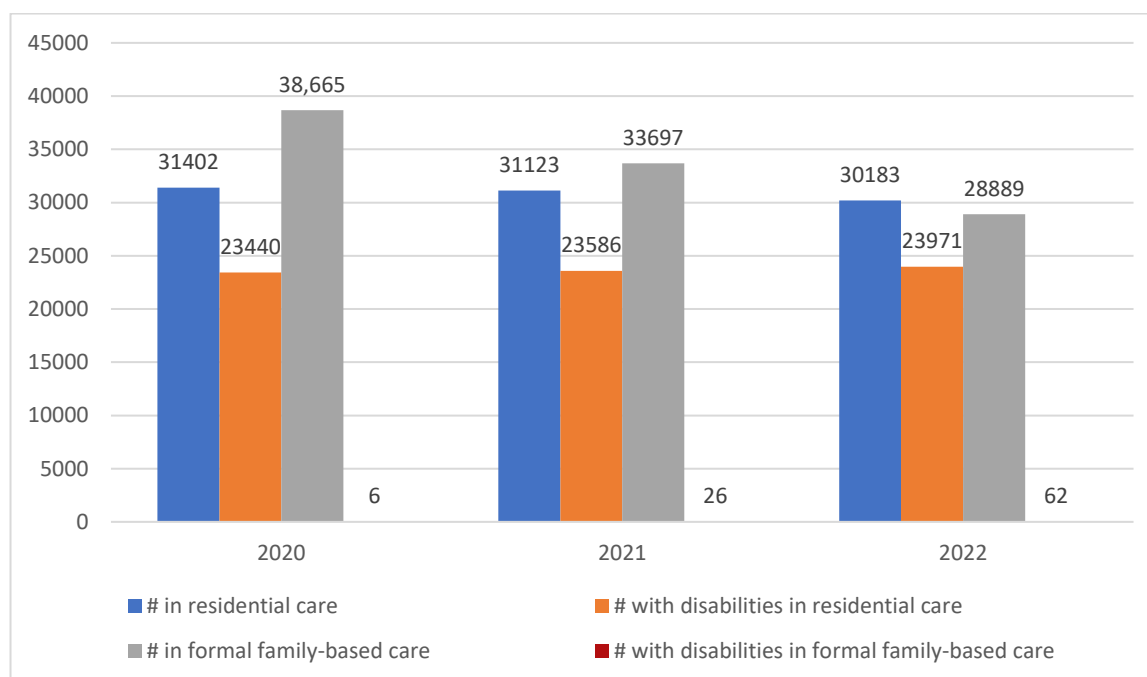
<sup>44</sup> TransMonEE, Database Explorer, retrieved on 03 July 2024 from <https://www.unicef.org/transmonee/>.

<sup>45</sup> TransMonEE, Database Explorer, retrieved on 03 July 2024 from <https://www.unicef.org/transmonee/>.

<sup>46</sup> TransMonEE, Database Explorer, retrieved on 03 July 2024 from <https://www.unicef.org/transmonee/>.

<sup>47</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 7, paragraph 31 (a).

<sup>48</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 7, paragraph 31 (d).



As noted above, a key challenge in Uzbekistan has been the fragmentation of child protection responsibilities among various stakeholders. Children entered the childcare system via different routes depending on their situation (for example, children may be placed in Social and Legal Assistance Centres by law enforcement bodies or the director/deputy of the centre, subject to judicial approval; children with disabilities were placed in RCIs through the MPPC etc.).<sup>49</sup>

The shortage of a trained social service workforce (SSW) for child protection and the lack of implementation of case management have been recognised as key barriers in the child protection system.<sup>50</sup> Historically, Mahalla Committees have provided social support through para-professionals who often lack specialist knowledge and skills in child protection. Further, once children were placed in residential institutions, there was no monitoring of outcomes, such as the implementation of individual care plans.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, maintaining contact with biological families was not a standard practice, which further isolated these children from potential support networks.<sup>52</sup>

The inconsistent availability of quality social services to prevent family separation and support family reintegration, particularly outside of Tashkent City, have been key challenges, with the state-funded system primarily focused on residential care.<sup>53</sup> Previous studies have highlighted that essential services, such as rehabilitation, counselling, and parenting programmes, required significant strengthening to adequately address the needs of children and families at risk of separation.<sup>54</sup>

There have been various barriers and bottlenecks to developing a specialized and comprehensive child justice system in Uzbekistan. In 2022, the CRC Committee identified a lack of capacity to identify victims and a child-sensitive approach to victim protection, including the lack of designated specialized judges and prosecutors for children.<sup>55</sup> The CRC Committee noted the absence of a mechanism for non-judicial

<sup>49</sup> Law on the Prevention of Neglect and Delinquency by among Minors 2010, Article 12.

<sup>50</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 7, paragraph 31 (c).

<sup>51</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 80.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 83.

<sup>54</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 83.

<sup>55</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 14, paras. 27(d) and 48.

measures, such as diversion, mediation, and counselling for children accused of criminal offenses.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the CRC Committee recommended that Uzbekistan should use non-custodial sentences, such as probation and community-based services, and ensure that deprivation of liberty should be consistently employed as a measure of last resort.<sup>57</sup>

## 2.6. Cultural context

Uzbekistan's culture is rooted in collectivism, where traditional values and social norms hold considerable value. Mahallas have traditionally played an important role in community life and have been integral to community cohesion and preservation of cultural heritage,<sup>58</sup> thus playing an influential role in shaping societal norms and practices in Uzbekistan.

Reports indicate that customary practices in Uzbekistan may favour patriarchal and traditional gender norms.<sup>59</sup> These norms include prescribing specific roles for women and men within the family and society, which may contribute to limiting girls' access to education, especially higher education, and employment opportunities, as well as poverty rates.<sup>60</sup> Gender-specific expectations regarding women's behaviour and social roles contribute to higher 'NEET' (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates among young women, limiting their opportunities and perpetuating gender inequality.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, gender stereotypes increase women's dependence on men and affect the poverty levels of children, particularly in cases of divorce.<sup>62</sup>

Domestic violence, specifically corporal punishment of children, is often viewed as a private family matter, thereby hindering reporting and 'external' intervention.<sup>63</sup> MICS data shows that children aged one to 14 years from the poorest households experience a higher prevalence of violent discipline compared to those in the wealthiest households.<sup>64</sup>

In Uzbekistan, like many other countries, children with disabilities face stigma and marginalization. The general public often approaches disability issues from a charity perspective, focusing on assistance and sympathy rather than inclusion, agency and empowerment.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, people with disabilities, including children, lack visibility in the public sphere, reinforcing their marginalisation and limiting their opportunities for social inclusion and participation. These attitudes and norms are historic drivers of institutionalisation of children with disabilities. Other key drivers include the lack of social and financial support available to families, especially single mothers, to care for children with disabilities.<sup>66</sup> A study conducted by the UN providing a Situation Analysis of People with Disabilities in Uzbekistan revealed that nearly 70 per cent of respondents believe that specialized schools are the best way to educate children with disabilities, further perpetuating their segregation from mainstream society.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 15, paragraph 48.

<sup>57</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 27 October 2022, page 15, paragraph 48.

<sup>58</sup> UNICEF, ILO, and World Bank, "An assessment of the social protection system in Uzbekistan", 2020, page 38.

<sup>59</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 106.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 107.

<sup>61</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 107.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 107.

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 108.

<sup>64</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and UNICEF, "2021-2022 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Uzbekistan, Statistical Snapshot Report", October 2022, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 29.

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis on Children and Adults with Disabilities in Uzbekistan 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, page 60.

<sup>66</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan Website "Prevention of family separation and childcare reform", retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/en/prevention-family-separation-and-childcare-reform>, and UNICEF ECARO, UNICEF Uzbekistan: Gender Programmatic Review, November 2020, page 19.

<sup>67</sup> United Nations Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis on Children and Adults with Disabilities in Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2019, page 10.

## 2.7. Relevant SDGs targets and indicators

The Programme (and hence the evaluation) aims to contribute towards Uzbekistan’s international development targets, most notably Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and the following targets:

- 16.1 on significantly reducing all forms of violence and deaths;
- 16.2 on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children;
- 16.3 on promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensuring equal access to justice for all; and
- 16.a on strengthening national institutions for building capacity at all levels to prevent violence.

More broadly, noting the drivers of family separation, violence against children and institutionalisation, and the barriers and bottlenecks to child protection system-strengthening, the following SDGs and their targets are also relevant: 1 (no poverty); 3 (good health and wellbeing); 4 (quality education); 5 (gender equality and empowerment of women and girls); 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all); and 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries) and 16 (promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies).

## 3 Object of the Evaluation

The Programme comprises Outcome 4 of UNICEF’s Country Programme Document (CPD) 2021-2025 and is described in this Part 3.

The Programme (and hence Outcome 4 of the CPD) aims to contribute towards the following **impact**: *‘by 2025, all people and groups in Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from enhanced accountable, transparent, inclusive and gender responsive governance systems and rule of law institutions for a life free from discrimination and violence.’* This impact is based on Outcome 1 of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

The **beneficiaries** of the Programme are all children (under 18s) in Uzbekistan including girls, boys, children with disabilities and other groups of children who are particularly vulnerable to or at risk of exclusion, violence or discrimination. The child protection **needs** of these children, and the barriers and bottlenecks to addressing these, are elaborated in the Context section (see in particular [part 2.5](#)).

The Programme aims to address these needs in the following way, which is the **outcome** of the Programme (i.e. Outcome 4 of the CPD): *‘By 2025, the most vulnerable children benefit from a gender-responsive and functional child protection system that prevents and responds to separation, deprivation, violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.’* Outcome 4 is measured according to the indicators in [Table 1](#).

*Table 1: Programme Outcome Indicators*

Outcome Indicator	Data Source	Baseline	Target
Rate of children in residential care institutions <sup>68</sup> (annually)	TransMonEE; MPSE; General Prosecutor’s Office	255/100,000 child population (2019) (48% are girls)	200/100,000 child population (2025)

<sup>68</sup> These are defined to include: Children’s Homes (RCIs under the MOH for orphans and children aged between 3-7 years old, left without parental care and children with problems in psycho-physical development); *Mehrubonlik* Homes (RCIs under the MPSE for orphans and children without parental care aged 3-16); and Children’s Towns (RCIs under the MPSE for children aged 0-16 left without parental care); UNICEF PSN 2020.

Percentage of children aged 1-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past one month	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 6	TBC by MICS6 (2021)	Reduction by $\geq 10\%$ (2025)
Percentage of girls and boys in conflict with the law who are subject to a diversion order or alternative measure as opposed to a custodial sentence in priority regions	Supreme Court, General Prosecutor's Office and MOIA	0 (2020)	20 per cent (2025)

Consultations with UNICEF during the inception phase indicate that priority regions for outcome indicator 3 have not been defined as interventions have focused on generating the necessary government buy-in to using diversion and alternatives to deprivation of liberty.<sup>69</sup>

According to the original **TOC**, Outcome 4 would be achieved through **three outputs** (see first column in **Table 2** below). However, in 2023, UNICEF carried out a programme review, which concluded that the establishment of NASP in 2023 was a '*major game-changer*', providing '*unique opportunity for system-wide transformation*' while also requiring '*some re-alignment of programmatic approaches and key interventions.*' The review led to the following changes:

- refining the wording of two of the three outputs;
- updating the indicators to reflect UNICEF's core strategic indicators;
- refining and updating key interventions under each output to make them more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART);
- corresponding amendments to the TOC to identify the bottlenecks to change, UNICEF's contribution, the role of key duty-bearers and other key stakeholders and the intended contribution to systemic change.

The changes to the outputs and indicators are outlined in the second column of **Table 2**. UNICEF's amended TOC following the Programme Review is also enclosed in **Annex B** and is available in two different formats.

**Table 2: Amendments to the outputs and indicators following the 2023 Programme review**

Original Output and Indicators	Changes following the 2023 Programme review
4.1. The Government has improved multisectoral prevention and response measures to prevent unnecessary family separation and foster a shift from large institutions to family/community-based care for boys and girls.	The government has improved multisectoral prevention and response measures to address violence against children and to reduce the reliance of the childcare system on institutional care.
Indicator: Country has a national, multi-sectoral plan or strategy for coordinated action to prevent and respond to violence against children that meets key quality criteria (Baseline: No; Target: Yes (2023)).	No change.
Indicator: Availability of costed government plans for transitioning from residential to family and community-based care (Baseline: No; Target: Yes (2023)).	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator added: phase of maturity of the child protection system. <sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

<sup>70</sup> This refers to the phases of child protection system strengthening outlined in UNICEF, *Child Protection Systems Strengthening: Approach; Benchmarks; Interventions*, 2021. The phases are: system-building; system-enhancement; system integration; and system maturity. Each of these phases is measured according to indicators across seven outcome areas: legal and policy framework; governance and coordination structures; continuum of services; minimum standards and oversight mechanisms; human, financial and infrastructure resources; mechanisms for child participation and community engagement; and data collection and monitoring systems.

Indicator: Number of regions in which functional gatekeeping for entry and exit into family-based alternative care is established (Baseline: 0; Target: 5 out of 14 (2024)). <sup>71</sup>	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator added: Extent to which policies, programmes and mechanisms for prevention of family separation and promotion of family-based alternative care are in line with the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children 2009.
4.2. The social service workforce has the capacity to apply an integrated case management system and practice social work functions to prevent and respond to separation, violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.	Social work professionals, paraprofessionals and other professionals with a mandate in child protection have the capacity to prevent and respond to separation, violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.
Indicator: A policy providing a definition of the social service workforce and minimum standards of social work is in place (Baseline: No; Target: 2022).	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator added: Level of development of quality assurance system for SSW.
Indicator: Number of para-professionals with responsibility for child protection certified in applying a case management approach and dealing with vulnerable families and children (Baseline: 0; Target: 5000 (80% are female) (2025))	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator added: Number of UNICEF-targeted children, adolescents, parents and caregivers provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services <sup>72</sup>
Indicator: Percentage of girls and boys who have experienced violence assisted by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services in four priority regions (Baseline: 0; Target: 50 per cent of identified cases in four regions (2025)) <sup>73</sup>	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator added: Number of children who have experienced violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services through UNICEF-supported programmes <sup>74</sup>
4.3. Justice professionals have increased capacity to apply child-friendly and gender-sensitive procedures, diversion and alternatives to deprivation of liberty for children.	No change.
Indicator: Existence of child-friendly and gender-sensitive procedures for children in contact with the law that are applied and delivered in line with international norms (Baseline: No; Target Yes (2025)).	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator added: Extent of development of specialized 'justice for children' system, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum age of criminal responsibility in the country is set at 14 years and above</li> <li>• Children have access to justice and legal aid in by law and in practice</li> <li>• Country provides child-friendly investigation, police and court procedures</li> <li>• Country has specialized, trained professionals, including for interviewing</li> </ul>

<sup>71</sup> The target regions were not defined in Programme documentation and kept as 'TBC' as interventions focused on generating support for this reform; Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

<sup>72</sup> Originally, these services targeted children returning from armed conflict zones but, following the establishment of NASP, UNICEF has selected two target regions, Andijan and Tashkent regions, based on the needs of NASP and its transformation of RCIs and development of community-based services; Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

<sup>73</sup> The target regions were not defined as interventions focused mainly on system-level interventions to generate buy-in and support legal reforms to eliminate violence against children; Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

<sup>74</sup> At the time of writing, these programmes were not yet established as the operational space to develop these programmes had only just started to open up; up until this point, UNICEF interventions focused on system level reforms, mainly through advocacy and supporting the development of the legal framework to eliminate violence against children; Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country has a multidisciplinary approach</li> <li>Country has special measures for children who are victims and witnesses of crime</li> </ul>
Indicator: Percentage of boys and girls released from closed institutions who continue to receive support in line with their individual reintegration and rehabilitation plans (Baseline: 30 per cent (15 percent are girls); Target: 70 per cent (30 per cent are girls) (2025))	Original indicator discontinued; new indicator is the same as the new indicator above.
Indicator: Percentage of justice professionals that have been certified in and dealing with: (a) child offenders; and (b) child victims (Baseline: 0; Target: 20 per cent (2025))	No change.

The **estimated budget** for the Programme, as outlined in the CPD, is USD 5,740,000, made up of USD 3 million from regular resources and USD 2,740,000 from other resources. **Table 3** provides a breakdown of the budget by output.

*Table 3: Estimated resources for the Programme by output (source: Programme Strategy Note 2020)*

Expected Results	Regular Resources	Other Resources	Total
	(in USD)	(in USD)	(in USD)
<b>Output 3.1:</b> Childcare system reform	1,700,000	1,00,000	2,700,000
<b>Output 3.2:</b> Social service workforce development	500,000	740,000	1,240,000
<b>Output 3.3:</b> Justice for children system strengthening	800,000	1,000,000	1,800,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>2,740,000</b>	<b>5,740,000</b>

**UNICEF's planned contributions** (in terms of inputs/activities) to the Programme before and after the 2023 Programme review are summarised in **Annex C**. These broadly involve: advocacy; the provision of technical advice and drafting for the development of laws, policies, standard operating procedures (SOPs), training and education curricula; financial support and technical expertise to model gate-keeping and services; training delivery; and social behavioural change (SBC) programmes.

The Programme is **nation-wide**, involving stakeholders at the national, regional, district and community levels, and beneficiaries throughout Uzbekistan. However, certain outputs relating to modelling services and service delivery were planned solely in target regions or districts, as noted in **Table 2**.

**Table 4** summaries the **planned contributions of key duty-bearers** and other key stakeholders to the Programme according to the Programme documentation.

*Table 4: Contributions of key duty-bearers and other key stakeholder to the Programme*

Key duty-bearers/ stakeholders	Summary of contribution
UNICEF	UNICEF's child protection team and its consultants are implementing the Programme, which is planned and monitored in collaboration with UNICEF's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team. The child protection programme also links with programming implemented by teams/specialists in health, education, social policy, child rights monitoring, communications, SBC, gender and inclusion.
UN Agencies	The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been working in the area of access to justice, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) on combating gender-based violence and violence against children, International Organization for Migration (IOM) on migrant

	children, particularly from Afghanistan, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on issues relating to displaced, refugee or stateless children, particularly from Afghanistan.
Donors and development partners	The main development partners include the World Bank (in relation to children in alternative care, social welfare services, case management, gender-based violence, and the establishment and operationalisation of NASP); EU Delegation in Uzbekistan (on providing reintegration support to children returned from armed conflict zones).
NASP, acting through its branches at the regional level and through the Inson Social Service Centres at the district and Mahalla levels	Key UNICEF partner since its establishment in June 2023, involved in all outputs. Its planned contribution includes: participating in legal and policy development at the national level; developing its regulatory framework, referral pathway, standards and SOPs for case management and service delivery; modelling, testing and scaling up gate-keeping mechanisms, and child protection and social support services; enhancing its data monitoring mechanisms relating to violence against girls and boys; delivering SBC interventions; delivering training to its SSW; leading efforts to transform/close RCIs.
Republican Centre for Rehabilitation and Adaptation of Women Suffered from Violence under NASP	The Centre is mandated to provide support and rehabilitation services (medical, psychological, legal and social assistance) to women who have experienced violence, including domestic violence, to help them recover and reintegrate into society. The Centre was to under the State Committee for Family and Women's Affairs in 2022, but then moved to under NASP in 2023. <sup>75</sup>
Commission on Children's Issues at national, regional and district levels	According to the legal framework, this is a key stakeholder involved in coordination and monitoring of children's rights at the national level and decision-making in child protection cases at the regional and district levels. Its planned contributions related to all outputs and includes: participating in legal and policy development at the national level and in developing standards for NASP; implementing a social welfare approach to preventing child offending; participating in modelling and testing of gate-keeping, referral and case management of child protection cases; delivering SBC interventions targeting professionals and practitioners on addressing harmful social and gender norms and preventing and responding to child protection issues. However, since the establishment of NASP, these Commissions are not operational and their role is unclear. <sup>76</sup>
MOIA and the Departments of Internal Affairs at the regional and district levels	Key child protection and child justice stakeholder involved in all outputs but particularly Output 4.3. Its planned contributions include: participating in legal and policy development at the national level; implementing reforms to transform the approach to preventing child offending including transformation of Social and Legal Support Centres; participating in modelling and testing of gate-keeping, referral and case management of child protection cases and diversion; training law enforcement professionals on implementing child-friendly justice; delivering SBC interventions including raising awareness of how to report and seek help in cases of violence.
MPSE and equivalent departments within regional, district, city level Khokimiyats	Participating in legal and policy development at the national level; participating in modelling, testing and scaling up of gate-keeping mechanisms, and child protection and social support services, through departments of education (pre-2023); participate in strengthening monitoring of child protection issues; participating implementing reforms to transform the approach to preventing child offending; delivering SBC interventions targeting professionals and practitioners as well as children and teachers; transform/close RCIs (MPSE was responsible for children's towns (now all closed), the Republican educational correctional institutions and <i>mehribonlik</i> homes/orphanages, two of which remain and are located in Tashkent ).
MOH and equivalent departments within regional, district, city level government authorities	Participating in legal and policy development at the national level; participating in modelling, testing and scaling up of community-based services to prevent family separation and promote family reintegration, including community care and support for children with disabilities and their families and MHPSS services; participate in strengthening monitoring of child protection issues; implementing reforms to transform the approach to preventing child offending; delivering SBC interventions targeting

<sup>75</sup> NASP, <https://ihma.uz/en/agency-category/subordinate-organizations/>, accessed 16 July 2024.

<sup>76</sup> Consultation with UNICEF Uzbekistan child protection team on 19 July 2024.

	professionals and practitioners as well as children and families; implementing the deinstitutionalisation strategy (it is understood that the MOH remains responsible for the baby homes following the establishment of NASP; eight baby homes remain at the time of writing). <sup>77</sup>
Senate	The Senate has played a key role in overseeing the development of MHPSS services and aspects of deinstitutionalisation reforms.
Republican Center for Professional Orientation and Psycho-Pedagogical Diagnostics of Pupils ('Tashxis')	The centre provides psycho-pedagogical diagnostics for school-aged children including assessing students' educational needs and psychological well-being and providing guidance for their academic and personal development. The Centre has been involved in providing support to repatriated children from armed conflict zones and providing distance learning on psychological first aid.
MOJ	Involved in all outputs but particularly output 4.3. Planned contributions: participating in legal and policy development at the national level, particularly a strategy on children's access to justice and law concerning the provision of legal aid; participate in strengthening monitoring of child protection issues; implementing SBC strategies for boys and girls on how to access justice (including the Know Your Rights platform). The TOC indicates that the MOJ would be involved in supporting modelling, testing and scaling up of diversion and training of professionals and practitioners on child-friendly justice though this has not taken place at the time of writing. <sup>78</sup>
Ministry of Finance	The Ministry of Finance is a key stakeholder involved in ensuring that sufficient funds are allocated towards developing the CP system and that funds are redirected from closed/transformed RCIs to developing a continuum of services to prevent and respond to child protection issues.
Prosecutor General's Office at the national, regional and district levels	Involved in all outputs but particularly 4.3 including: participating in developing the legal and policy framework at the national level, particularly a strategy on children's access to justice; developing and implementing reforms to transform the approach to preventing child offending; participate in strengthening monitoring of child protection issues; participating in modelling, testing and scaling up community-based services including diversion and alternatives to deprivation of liberty; implementing measures to introduce child-friendly justice proceedings including delivering training and developing specialism of prosecutors.
Children's Ombudsperson	Planned contribution relates to all outputs but mainly in relation to participating in legal and policy development at the national level; and SBC strategies for children on their rights and access to justice. In practice, the Children's Ombudsperson is reported to have been actively been involved in childcare reforms, efforts to eliminate violence against children and monitoring of children's rights, including in RCIs and places of detention. <sup>79</sup>
Supreme Court and other courts	Planned contribution mainly relates to output 4.3 including: participating in legal and policy development at the national level especially a strategy on access to justice; participating in strengthening monitoring of child protection and child justice cases; modelling diversion and alternatives to deprivation of liberty; implementing child-friendly justice proceedings; delivering training on child-friendly justice and developing specialism of judges.
Training and academia stakeholders	The main training and academia bodies involved in the capacity-building components of the Programme are the Centre for Training Social Protection Workers, Lawyer's Training Centre, the Law Enforcement Academy of the Prosecutor General's Office, the Uzbekistan-Columbia Centre, National University of Uzbekistan and the Legal Clinic at the University of the World Economy and Diplomacy.

<sup>77</sup> Written and oral comments from UNICEF during the inception phase.

<sup>78</sup> Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

<sup>79</sup> Written comments from UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Office on the draft inception report, submitted to Coram International on 31 July 2024.

	<p>According to the revised TOC, the Centre for Training Social Protection Workers is involved particularly in outputs 4.1 and 4.2 including: developing regulatory framework and standards for NASP service delivery; delivering training social service workers on implementing the new models of gate-keeping and service provision and on preventing and responding to violence against children; delivering training and SBC interventions for professionals and practitioners to prevent institutionalisation and promote family reintegration and social inclusion of children with disabilities; delivering training to the SSW to recruit, educate and support foster carers and on the detrimental impact of institutionalisation on children and the right to grow up in a family environment.</p> <p>Similarly, the Lawyer’s Training Centre and Law Enforcement Academy are particularly involved in output 4.3 including delivering knowledge and skills-based training for lawyers and prosecutors on child-friendly justice.</p> <p>The contributions in practice of these training and academia stakeholders will be explored during the data collection.</p>
NGOs	<p>Key NGOs include national NGOs, Madad and Istiqbolli Avlod, which are involved in programmes to deliver child-friendly legal aid under output 4.3 and ‘Soglom Avlod Uchun’ involved in delivering community-based services for children with disabilities, and international NGO, Caritas, who were involved in developing social work competencies and delivering community-based services for children with disabilities. The Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children is a key stakeholder involved in output 4.2, focusing mainly on supporting the reintegration of children returning from armed conflict zones.</p>

Additional details about UNICEF’s contribution, the contribution of other duty-bearers and stakeholders, the contribution to systematic change under the revised TOC, and underpinning risks and assumptions, are set out in **Annex B** (TOCs), particularly, the format which presents the Pathway of Change – Programme Assessment Tool. The risks and assumptions in the Pathway of Change reiterate those in the original TOC set out in UNICEF’s Programme Strategy Note (PSN) 2020 and CPD 2021-2025.

## 4 Purpose, Objectives and Scope

### 4.1. Purpose, objectives and rationale

The overall **purpose** of the evaluation is to provide a learning tool for UNICEF Uzbekistan, duty-bearers and key stakeholders in the child protection system by documenting the successes, barriers and bottlenecks in the design and implementation of UNICEF’s programming in these areas for the period from 2021 to August 2024.

**Rationale:** This summative evaluation is taking place towards the end of UNICEF's CPD 2021-2025 and aims to provide critical insights into what has worked well, where improvements are needed, and how UNICEF can better support key duty-bearers, stakeholders and beneficiaries moving forward. These insights will not only inform future strategic planning and programming but also serve as a basis for dialogue and collaboration with key duty-bearers, other stakeholders at international, national and sub-national levels, and with beneficiaries. Ultimately, the evaluation plays a pivotal role in shaping the direction and priorities of UNICEF's child protection interventions in the upcoming CPD 2026-2030, ensuring that children in Uzbekistan enjoy their rights to protection as enshrined in the CRC and other international standards.

The **objectives of the evaluation** are to:

1. Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, coherence and, to the extent possible, impact of the Programme;
2. Provide guidance for policy-level decision-making by relevant stakeholders concerning reforms in the child protection sector;
3. Identify and document successes, challenges and lessons learnt;

4. *Where relevant*, provide recommendations to more effectively integrate considerations of gender equality, *equality for children with disabilities*, and other equity issues into child protection programming.

These objectives are the same as those set out in the TOR (Annex A), except for the additions in italics to objective 4, which the evaluators added in order to strengthen the focus on children with disabilities and to clarify that such recommendations would be made where needed, depending on the findings of the evaluation.

#### 4.2. Primary intended users

In light of the purpose, rationale and objectives of the evaluation, the **primary users** of the evaluation are as follows:

- UNICEF Uzbekistan, particularly senior management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and child protection teams;
- The Government of Uzbekistan at the national level, including NASP and its subsidiary agencies, line Ministries (particularly the MOJ, MOH, MOIA, MPSE, Ministry of Finance), the Senate, as well as the Supreme Court, Prosecutor General's Office and National Commission on Children's Issues (if it exists);
- Academic and training bodies in the area of child protection and the SSW, particularly the National University of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan-Colombia Centre for Advancing Community Strengths and Social Wellbeing, the Centre for Training Social Protection Workers and Lawyer's Training Centre;
- At the sub-national level –staff, including frontline workers, within NASP offices at the territorial level, the 'Inson' Social Service Centres at the district level, regional, district and city administration (particularly police, education and health departments), prosecutor's offices, courts, regional and district-level Commissions on Children's Issues (where they exist), and Mahalla Councils;
- Ombudsperson for Children's Rights;
- Civil society organisations involved in the child protection sector including their frontline workers;
- Donors and international organisations involved in the child protection sector; and
- Children and parents/legal guardians.

Primary users of the evaluation are the duty-bearers and other key stakeholders involved in the Programme and child protection system more generally. These users **stand to gain** an important learning tool which aims to inform their approach to child protection programming in future and contribute towards fulfilling their responsibilities in upholding children's rights. These users do not **stand to lose** from the evaluation; challenges or areas for improvement should form part of the 'learning' approach to this evaluation and help to strengthen programming, rather than to cast blame or censure.

Although there are no plans to tailor the evaluation report towards children and their parents/legal guardians, it is intended that the results of the evaluation are shared with and used by these groups as part of strengthening duty-bearer accountability towards the beneficiaries of child protection reforms.

The **secondary users** of the evaluation include other UNICEF teams, UN agencies, international organisations and donors working in sectors linked to the child protection sector in order to identify potential synergies and avoid overlaps in the planning and implementation of interventions.

#### 4.3. Scope

In terms of **scope**, the evaluation will assess the results of the Programme at the output and outcome levels and, to the extent possible, impact level, as set out in the TOCs described in **part 3**, for the period from 2021 to August 2024. As the Programme is nation-wide in scope, the evaluation will assess the Programme's results at national level and, where relevant, the regional, district and community level. In terms of primary data collection, as stated in the TOR, there will be a "*heightened focus on the Surkhandarya region where most of the sub-national interventions were implemented.*" Due to logistical challenges and limited resources for conducting data collection, primary data collection will not be

carried out in the north west of Uzbekistan (i.e. in Karakalpakstan). See [part 6](#) on Methodology for details.

## 5 Evaluation Framework

### 5.4. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation will apply standard Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) **criteria** of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability. Insufficient time has passed to be able to evaluate the full impact of the Programme; however, to the extent possible, the evaluation will consider the likely impact that the Programme will have to the overall change envisaged in the TOC.

### 5.5. Evaluation questions

The TOR provides a set of evaluation questions, which were amended during the inception phase with UNICEF Uzbekistan and the ERG. The changes aim to:

- a. make the questions clearer and capable of being evaluated;
- b. remove assumptions in the framing of the question / remove leading questions;
- c. frame certain questions as a sub-question of another broader question;
- d. add key questions which were missing; and
- e. strengthen integration of human rights, gender, disability and other equity issues.

Table 5 outlines the changes made to the evaluation questions.

*Table 5: Changes to the evaluation questions in the TOR*

Questions in the TOR	Amended Questions (key changes in italics)
<b>Relevance</b>	
1. To what extent was the programme aligned with global, regional, and national priorities in child protection, inclusive of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups?	To what extent was the Programme relevant to <i>Uzbekistan’s</i> global, regional and national priorities in child protection, including the SDGs, <i>particularly as they relate to gender, children with disabilities and other vulnerable or marginalised groups of children?</i> (Amended so that this relates more to relevance than coherence/alignment and strengthening of inclusion of gender, disability and other equity considerations.)
2. How closely did the programme adhere to UNICEF's global and regional child protection priorities?  In instances where the programme diverged from these UNICEF priorities, what were the underlying reasons for such deviations?	To what extent was Programme relevant to UNICEF’s global and regional child protection priorities, <i>particularly with regard to gender, children with disabilities and other groups of vulnerable or marginalised children?</i>  In instances where the Programme diverged from UNICEF’s priorities, what were the underlying reasons for such deviations?  (Amended to emphasise relevant, rather than coherence/alignment and clarity and strengthening of inclusion of gender, disability and other equity considerations.)
3. Did the programme maintain its relevance amidst the political, social, and economic transformations within the country?  In what manner was the programme modified to remain pertinent?	<i>To what extent</i> did the Programme maintain its relevance amidst the political, social and economic transformations in the country?  <i>What modifications were made to the Programme and how did these affect its relevance?</i>

	(Amended for clarity and to obtain nuanced analysis to meet the criteria and objectives of the evaluation.)
None.	4. <i>To what extent was the Programme relevant to the needs of boys, girls, children with disabilities and other particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups of children?</i> <i>a. To what extent were gender, disability and other equity issues mainstreamed in the programme design?</i> (A key question in terms of evaluating relevance of the Programme as a whole.)
<b>Effectiveness</b>	
5. To what degree were the envisaged results of the programme realised?  What factors served to either facilitate or impede the implementation of the programme?	<i>To what extent did the Programme achieve its intended results (output and outcome levels), including with regard to gender, children with disabilities and other vulnerable or marginalised groups of children?</i>  (Amended for clarity, evaluability purposes and strengthening of inclusion of gender, disability and equity considerations.)  What factors served to facilitate or impede <i>the achievement of the intended results?</i> (Evaluability and clarity.)
6. To what extent were gender and equity aspects effectively mainstreamed and delivered in the programme?	<i>How effective were the gender, disability and other equity aspects of the Programme in achieving the intended results for girls, boys, children with disabilities and other vulnerable or marginalised groups of children?</i>  (The original question appeared to focus more on relevance whereas the new question focuses more clearly on evaluating effectiveness of gender, disability and other equity aspects.)
7. Which implementation strategies proved to be successful or unsuccessful?  What were the reasons behind their effectiveness or lack thereof?	No change.
8. Were there any unintended negative or positive outcomes and, if so, were they appropriately managed?	No change.
None.	9. <i>How was the programme monitored and how effective was this monitoring system in informing decision-making relating to the Programme?</i> (New question to address a key area required from UNICEF's Quality Assurance Review mechanism.)
<b>Efficiency</b>	
10. Were the financial, material, and human resources at hand sufficient to meet the objectives of the programme?	Were the financial, material and human resources <i>allocated to the Programme</i> sufficient to meet <i>its intended results (output and outcome levels)</i> ? (Amended for clarity and evaluability.)
11. How cost-efficient was the Programme in practice? Are there opportunities for further efficiency improvements that could be realised?	How cost-efficient was the Programme in practice ( <i>i.e. could the same outputs have been achieved at a lower cost</i> )? Were there any opportunities for <i>cost savings</i> and were <i>these opportunities taken</i> ? (Changed to past tense as this is a summative evaluation and clarity for evaluability purposes.)

<b>Sustainability</b>	
None.	<p>12. <i>How sustainable is the Programme and why?</i></p> <p>What are the potential opportunities for and risks to the sustainability of the Programme over the next year? Over the next five years (2026-2030)?</p> <p>(New question, incorporating part of a former question outlined in the TOR for which see below, which has been Amended for clarity and evaluability and to coincide with the next CPD period.)</p>
13. To what extent has the programme supported the long-term buy-in, leadership and ownership by the Government and other relevant stakeholders in the prioritized areas of the programme? Did the programme instigate and/or contribute to enhancements in the allocation and utilisation of resources for the prioritised areas of the programme? Were these improvements sustainable in the long term?	<p>To what extent has the Programme supported the buy-in, leadership and ownership by the government and other relevant stakeholders in <i>child protection sector reforms</i>? (Refinement for evaluability purposes and second part moved to a standalone question, below.)</p>
Second part of question above.	<p>14. <i>To what extent did the Programme led to any sustained improvements in the efficient allocation and/or utilisation of resources by government and/or other key stakeholders in the child protection sector?</i> (Amended for clarity and evaluability.)</p>
To what extent did the programme's interventions lead to and/or assist in the advancement of legislative and policy frameworks within the child protection sector?	Removed as this question will be covered by effectiveness in terms of leading to legal and policy changes. The sustainability of these results will be covered in new question 12, above.
What are the potential opportunities and risks associated with the sustainability of the programme in both the short and long term?	Moved to sub-question of new qu 12.
<b>Coherence</b>	
15. How effectively did UNICEF collaborate with development partners and other UN agencies to prevent duplication, maximise contributions, and stimulate collaborative efforts?	No change.
16. To what extent did the child protection programme contribute to cross-sectoral synergies with other sectoral programmes within UNICEF?	<i>To what extent did the Programme synergise with UNICEF's cross-sectoral and other sector programming priorities?</i>
<b>Impact</b>	
17. To what extent can the programme be deemed to have contributed to the observed advancements in the area of child protection?  How have girls and boys benefited (directly and indirectly) from the Programme?	<p>To what extent <i>has the Programme contributed to, or is likely to contribute to, achieving its intended impact, particularly with regard to gender, children with disabilities and other vulnerable or marginalised groups of children?</i> (Amended for clarity and evaluability purposes.)</p>

An **evaluation matrix** is enclosed in **Annex D** which outlines, for each evaluation question, SMART indicators, relevant targets/benchmarks, data collection methods and data sources. The matrix was developed based on the Programme TOCs (for which see **part 3**), the CRC, UN Disability Inclusion

Strategy, Leave No One Behind agenda, as well as the other treaties and standards outlined further in [part 6](#) (Methodology).

## 6 Methodology

### 6.1. Evaluation approaches

#### 6.1.1. Overall approach

The evaluation will apply standard OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and, to the extent possible, likely impact. As the TOR requires an evaluation of the TOC for the Programme, the approach will be **theory-based and non-experimental** but will consider the likely contribution of the Programme to change via a **contribution analysis**. The evaluation will be highly **participatory** and involve **mixed-methods**.

The methodology is based on the UN Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) and UNICEF Evaluation Policy (2023), and consequently adopts an **equity-informed and human rights-based** approach. The methodology is also rooted in the CRC, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the CRPD, the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children and other key international child rights standards, including the general principles of the CRC (best interests of the child as a primary consideration; right to life, survival and development, non-discrimination including on the grounds of gender and disability, and the right to be heard). Further, the methodology is framed around UNICEF's broader strategic priorities, including the '**Leave No One Behind**' agenda (the approach to ensure that every child is protected, healthy and educated, focusing on children left behind by wider economic and social progress)<sup>80</sup> and the **UN Disability Inclusion Strategy**.<sup>81</sup>

These standards are integrated into the methodology, including the evaluation questions, matrix indicators, data collection tools and research processes (e.g. the ethical protocol and sampling strategy), as detailed in subsequent sections. These standards also form the bedrock of the conceptual framework which will be used for the analysis of evaluation findings and development of recommendations and lessons learned. Further, based on these standards, special attention is paid to vulnerable or 'at risk' groups of boys and girls, to ensure that their specific needs are identified, represented and addressed through data collection and sampling techniques, analysis and recommendations. These children include: children with disabilities; boys and girls; children left behind by migrating parents; children returning from armed conflict zones; children from ethnic minorities; children living in poverty; and children with intersecting needs and circumstances.

The methodology **does not involve any changes** to the general approach outlined in the TOR.

#### 6.1.2. Theory-based, non-experimental approach

The evaluation will follow a **theory-based and non-experimental approach** but will incorporate a **contribution analysis**. This approach is appropriate, given the need, as set out in the TOR, to assess the Programme against the strategic intent laid out in the CPD through its TOC, the need to gather evidence to determine whether and how the Programme has led to the changes set out at each results level (output, outcome and likely impact), and why this may (or may not be) the case. This approach will also enable the evaluation team to **examine causal links** between the Programme interventions and consequent outputs, outcomes and impacts, interrogate the mechanisms, assumptions, risks, external

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<sup>80</sup> UNICEF ECARO, *Our mandate: no child left behind*, accessed from <https://www.unicef.org/eca/our-mandate-no-child-left-behind> on 18 October 2023.

<sup>81</sup> UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, accessed from [https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_Strategy\\_english.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf) on 18 October 2023.

factors and (changes in) context that may have supported or hindered progress, providing a learning tool for the users of the evaluation. This approach is particularly appropriate, given the need to assess the complexity and multi-component nature of the Programme, including the multiple partners involved in reforms and the recognition of other relevant sectors (including education, healthcare and social protection).

As noted in [part 3](#), the original TOC was revised following the 2023 Programme review, though the overall structure of the outcomes and outputs of the Programme were unchanged. Nevertheless, the original and revised TOC and its updates will be considered throughout the evaluation, particularly in relation to questions relating to the ability of the Programme to respond to the changing political, economic and social context.

#### 6.1.3. Equity-informed and rights-based

The evaluation will employ an **equity-informed** and **rights-based approach** to the development of the methodology, the conceptual framework for the analysis of the Programme's results (output, outcome and likely impact), and to the development of lessons and recommendations arising from the evaluation. The methodological approach, sampling strategies, matrix, data collection tools, procedures, ethical protocol and framework for data analysis, incorporate the general principles of the CRC and other fundamental human rights standards and UNEG and UN principles concerning gender equality, equity, dignity and disability inclusion outlined in [part 6.1.1](#).

The evaluation will pay particular attention to evaluating the Programme and TOC design and results as they relate to gender, the rights of children with disabilities, and children who are particularly vulnerable or at risk of marginalisation to ensure that no child is 'left behind.' The purposive sampling strategies employed (see [part 6.4](#)) aim to maximise gender and disability diversity among participants so far as possible as well as ensuring that communities and groups of children who are particularly vulnerable to marginalisation are heard in the data collection. Disaggregated data will be collected so far as possible by gender, age, disabilities, and other relevant factors to identify and address disparities in the realisation of children's rights in the child protection system, ensuring that the findings and recommendations promote gender equality and are equity-informed.

The data collection tools are designed to be participatory, interactive, and age-appropriate to gather rich and authentic data from stakeholders and beneficiaries, especially children (tools and information and consent forms are enclosed in [Annex E](#)). This approach ensures that data collection is engaging, non-intimidating, and complies with the ethical principles developed for the evaluation. For stakeholders and beneficiaries with specific communication needs and preferences, such as children with disabilities (to be identified during the planning of the data collection visit), or child victims or witnesses of violence, tailored approaches and tools will be employed to address these in the best interests of the child. Only evaluators who have been specifically trained in interviewing children and vulnerable adults will undertake interviews/FGD with these participants (see [part 6.6](#)).

#### 6.1.4. Consultative and participatory

The evaluation will adopt a **consultative and participatory approach** involving UNICEF, key duty-bearers, other stakeholders, and rights-holders/Programme beneficiaries. Participatory techniques will include close consultation with UNICEF and the ERG at all stages of the evaluation, participatory data collection through interviews and FGDs, a debrief meeting after the data collection and a consultation and validation conference.

The ERG, consisting of key stakeholders, will serve as a critical oversight and advisory function throughout the evaluation process. It will oversee and advise on the evaluation process, facilitate communication between the evaluator(s) and the involved partners/stakeholders, validate and ensure the quality of the reports, and play a significant role in formulating the 'management response' to the evaluation findings and recommendations. The ERG consists of a representative from the following key stakeholder entities: Office of the Children's Ombudsperson; NASP; Prosecutor's General Office; Ministry

of Justice; Republican Centre of Social Adaptation of Children; Republican Center for Professional Orientation and Psycho-Pedagogical Diagnostics of Pupils; Ministry of Interior; and Supreme Court.

Attention will be paid to engaging **primary users** of the evaluation (listed in **part 4.2.** including UNICEF Uzbekistan, national government and state agencies, sub-national level stakeholders, civil society, international organisations and donors involved in the child protection sector (i.e. the duty-bearers and other key stakeholders involved in the Programme). This approach will ensure that the evaluation recommendations, lessons, findings and conclusions are context-appropriate, accurate and practical. This approach will also reinforce stakeholder ownership of the process and outputs of the evaluation. This, in turn, aims to promote the future implementation and sustainability of the lessons and recommendations arising from the study, and the use of the evaluation as a learning tool, particularly in relation to the development of the next CPD.

Given that the ultimate **beneficiaries** of the Programme are children, the evaluators will collect primary data from children to ensure that their voices are heard in the evaluation process. Primary data from children will provide important perspectives on the relevance of the Programme to their needs, the effectiveness of the Programme in meeting these, and data on the likely impact of the Programme on children. Questions raised during the primary data collection will also explore participants' experiences within the child protection and child justice systems, to contribute to building an understanding of how these systems function in practice, as well as their effectiveness and indication of likely impact. Questions will also explore knowledge, attitudes and perceptions relating to violence against children, disability inclusion and access to justice, in order to help evaluate SBC interventions.

The evaluators recognise the importance of facilitating the **participation of children and other Programme beneficiaries in developing the recommendations and lessons arising from the evaluation**, ensuring that their voices are heard at all stages of the evaluation process. This approach is important for ensuring that the outputs are accurate and practical, and for reinforcing accountability of duty-bearers towards Programme beneficiaries. However, due to logistical and bureaucratic challenges in the evaluators accessing beneficiaries, it will not be possible for the evaluators to undertake separate consultation and validation workshops with children during the report-writing and validation stages of the evaluation. For this reason, the evaluators will pay particular attention to asking children for the views on recommendations for further reforms during the primary data collection. As detailed in **part 6.4.** by undertaking a gender and equity-based approach to sampling, particular attention will be paid to listening to the views and experiences of girls and boys and particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups of children.

#### 6.1.5. Mixed methods approach

The evaluation will employ a **mixed-method approach** to data collection, involving the collection of primarily qualitative data, but also secondary quantitative data (administrative and UNICEF monitoring data). A mixed methodology will draw from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, to gather data that is rich, accurate and measurable and, to improve the validity of results through triangulation. A mixed-methods approach will enable the evaluation team to collect high quality data that is both in-depth and comprehensive, conduct meaningful analysis, and ultimately, render the evaluation of greater use for learning and informing future programming.

**Qualitative data collection**, known for its interpretative and explanatory depth, is the most appropriate method for this evaluation and in responding to the evaluation questions. Qualitative methods are suitable for this evaluation as it allows for a thorough exploration of how and why specific interventions and have led to producing certain results. This approach is crucial for critically reflecting on and learning about the relevance, effectiveness, likely impact, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of the Programme. The qualitative data collection will include:

- Collection of qualitative data from the desk review;

- Key informant interviews (KIIs) with a range of stakeholders, including UNICEF staff, government and NGO stakeholders at the national level, UN organisations, international agencies and donors;
- Semi-structured individual or group interviews with key stakeholders at the regional and district levels;
- Semi-structured individual or group interviews with frontline professionals and practitioners (particularly social service workers, lawyers, police and judges); and
- Semi-structured individual interviews with children and parents/legal guardians.

These methods will allow for a nuanced understanding of the Programmes' successes and challenges in the local context.

**Quantitative data** will be used to provide an overall description and numerical measure of Programme results and of the context in which the Programme operates. This data will complement, and where possible, quantify the findings from qualitative data collection methods and will be particularly useful for evaluating the Programme's effectiveness, likely impact and efficiency. Quantitative data sources are set out in [part 6.2.3](#). Primary data collection through quantitative methods **will not be** conducted as this is not considered to be appropriate – or even necessary - for meeting the purpose and objectives of the evaluation in light of the resources available for the study and the availability of quantitative or monitoring data which relates to the quantitative indicators in the matrix.

## **6.2. Data sources and collection methods**

### 6.2.1. Overview

The evaluation will draw upon a range of data sources and data collection methods to ensure the reliability of results, promote impartiality, reduce bias, and ensure that the evaluation is based on the most comprehensive and relevant information possible within the resources available for the evaluation. The data collection methods set out below have been developed to gather data required to answer the evaluation questions, and measure particular indicators set out in the evaluation matrix relating to the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, sustainability and likely impact of the Programme. Methods will also be adopted to collect data to explain how and why the Programme may have contributed to results, responded to emerging challenges and promoted change in accordance with envisaged TOC. Methods will seek to establish an understanding of the explanatory factors underpinning the outcome(s), including unintended outcomes and likely causal relationships. As noted above, methods have been selected in order to facilitate the participation of key stakeholders and rights holders associated with the Programme and ensure that their perspectives, experiences and views are captured in an authentic manner.

### 6.2.2. Desk review

The evaluation team will undertake a desk review of all relevant literature relating to the Programme. The desk review will collect secondary qualitative and quantitative data relating to all Programme components in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the context and design of the Programme, its results and the factors which have facilitated or impeded the reforms as envisaged in the TOC.

Documents to be reviewed include:

- UNICEF programme and monitoring documentation including the CPD, PSN, end-of-year reports, child protection work plans, gender action plans, mid-year and end-year reviews, annual reports, evaluations, situation analysis reports, gender programmatic review, research and study reports, and the 2023 Programme review report;
- documents relating to UNICEF's broader frameworks and priorities including the UNICEF Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS) 2022-2030 and UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021-2030;
- Uzbekistan's reports to and the outcome of international human rights monitoring mechanisms, particularly State reports to the CRC Committee (2010, 2019), CRC Committee concluding

observations to Uzbekistan (2013, 2022), the State party report to the CRPD Committee (2023), similar documents in relation to the CEDAW Committee and Human Rights Committee, as well as shadow reports and other related documentation from UN organisations, national human rights monitoring bodies and NGOs;

- key government documents, including laws, policies, and action plans relevant to the Programme, such as the Uzbekistan National Development Strategy 2017-2021, 2022-2026, the Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020, and the Strategy and Roadmap on the Deinstitutionalization of the Child Care System 2023-2030, alongside key sectoral and thematic action plans concerning child protection;
- Existing research reports and studies on violence against children and child protection sector reforms in Uzbekistan;
- existing administrative and survey data (MICS and TransMonee data), studies and reports, relating to child protection in Uzbekistan.

A preliminary desk review will take place during the inception phase to inform the development of the methodology, while an in-depth desk review will be completed during the data collection and analysis phases of the project. Additional desk review resources will be identified during the in-country data collection visit.

A list of desk review documents used for the development of this inception report is enclosed in **Annex F** (Bibliography).

### 6.2.3. Collation and analysis of existing quantitative data

The evaluators will identify all existing quantitative data sources / databases which contain data on the indicators in the matrix. These sources will be identified from the desk review and KIIs. Data will be mapped against the TOC, with regards to whether the data relates to an input, output, outcome or likely impact. As outlined above, analysis of this data will provide an overall description and numerical measure of Programme results (output, outcome and likely impact) and of the context in which the Programme operates.

#### **Quantitative data sources / databases are likely to include:**

- Existing (published) collated administrative data to examine the Programme context and results, such as MICS and TransMonee data;
- Data requested from stakeholders to fill in data gaps, particularly from the Prosecutor General's Office, MOIA and Supreme Court on diversion and alternative sentences; and
- UNICEF monitoring data including the numbers of children receiving UNICEF-supported services.

So far as possible (noting that administrative data is likely to contain some gaps), disaggregation by age, gender, disability, age and geographical location will be analysed, as part of the equity-informed and rights-based approach of the evaluation. Any gaps identified in the administrative data is in itself an important finding and will contribute to the evaluation, particularly in relation to output 4.1.5 (post 2023 review) and related key interventions, which involves enhancing the capacity of NASP in collecting administrative data on violence against girls, boys and women, and children in alternative care.

### 6.2.4. Key informant interviews

Most of the data collection will be conducted through KIIs with stakeholders at the national level (see data collection tools 1-5). The KIIs aim to obtain detailed and specific information from experts or focal points from key stakeholder entities who have in-depth knowledge or involvement in the Programme. The purpose of KIIs is to gain an overarching view of the reforms undertaken as part of the Programme, an understanding of the contribution of different duty-bearers and stakeholders, particularly UNICEF, and the factors which supported or impeded the attainment of the intended results. The KIIs will enable the evaluators to interrogate the logic, assumptions and risks underlying the TOCs and explore the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies used in the reforms. The KIIs will explore successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the Programme, as well as identifying areas for future

development. KIIs will help fill gaps and triangulate data obtained from the desk review and other data sources.

The evaluators will conduct KIIs either in person during an in-country data collection visit or online. KIIs with UNICEF sector teams, consultants and international development partners/donors will be carried out online on Zoom or Teams, as participants are likely to be based in other jurisdictions and are unlikely to involve technical discussion of procedures, referral pathways and service delivery, which may more easily be discussed in person. Other KIIs will be conducted in person.

KIIs are most appropriate for key stakeholders at the national level as they will enable the collection of in-depth data on the components of the Programme that are most relevant to the participant. Most KIIs will be carried out with one participant, in order to make them feel more comfortable sharing their views and experiences on the Programme, which they may be reluctant to do in a group setting. However, in some cases, it may be appropriate for KIIs to be conducted in a group, particularly where participants' responses are likely to complement and build on each other or where it is useful to explore the nature of multi-sectoral working. However, please refer to [part 6.7](#) on risks and mitigation measures that will be taken in relation to group interviews.

#### 6.2.5. Semi-structured individual or group interviews with regional or district level key stakeholders

The evaluators will conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders at the regional and district levels (see data collection tool 6). Some of these stakeholders will have been involved in the Programme directly; others indirectly. All of these stakeholders are also key stakeholders in the child protection system and may be involved in handling individual cases. The interviews will therefore serve two purposes: (i) to understand the stakeholder's role in the child protection system and, where relevant, how specific cases are handled in practice; and (ii) to explore the stakeholder's involvement and views on the Programme. These interviews will therefore aim to collect data on:

- Child protection and child justice issues in the region/district and ability of the system to prevent and respond to these;
- participants' views on the relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and likely impact of any Programme interventions in which they were involved, including capacity-building and SBC interventions;
- more broadly, participants' views on good practices, challenges, gaps and recommendations for further reform.

Together, these questions will provide valuable qualitative data to respond to the questions across all six evaluation criteria.

These interviews will normally be carried out with one participant, in order to make them feel more comfortable sharing their views and experiences on the Programme and functioning of the child protection system, which they may be reluctant to do in a group setting. However, as for KIIs, in some cases, it may be appropriate for the interviews to be conducted in a group, particularly where participants' responses are likely to complement and build on each other or are important for understanding inter-sectoral / multi-disciplinary practices and procedures.

#### 6.2.6. Semi-structured group interviews with frontline workers

The evaluators will conduct semi-structured interviews with front line workers who provide services to/ work directly with children and their families (see data collection tools 7-8). The interviews will include questions on the types of child protection and child justice cases that they handle in practice and the standards and procedures applied. These questions aim to collect data on:

- the reforms made to child protection and child justice practices and procedures for handling individual cases, including referral, gate-keeping and case management procedures;

- participants' understanding and implementation of child-friendly processes and practices, including gender responsiveness, disability inclusion, and an equity-informed and rights-based approach;
- participants' views on the relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and likely impact of the interventions which they were involved in, for example, participating as beneficiaries in any trainings or SBC interventions;
- more broadly, participants' views on good practices, challenges, capacity needs and recommendations for further reform.

Together, these questions will provide valuable qualitative data to respond to the questions across all six evaluation criteria.

These interviews will normally be carried out with one to three participants from each relevant stakeholder entity, as participants' responses are likely to complement and build on each other and are important for gaining a broader range of views and perspectives on the handling of individual cases and Programme interventions.

#### 6.2.7. In-depth individual interviews with children and their parents/legal guardians

In-depth individual interviews will be conducted with child beneficiaries of the Programme - i.e. those who have received services or been involved in child protection or justice cases, and their parent/legal guardian (see data collection tools 9-12). Interviews will only be held with children from the age of 12 given the sensitive nature of the subject matter of the research.

The aim of the interviews with children and their parents/legal guardians is to collect data on the participant's experiences and views of the services received and/or their contact with the child protection or child justice system, and their recommendations for further reform. The data will contribute to the evidence base for evaluating the Programme across all six criteria but mainly, relevance (was the intervention relevant to the needs of the child and family?), effectiveness (how did the intervention meet these needs, including with regard to gender specificities, disability and other equity issues?), the likely impact of the intervention (what was the outcome of the matter for the child and parent/caregiver and how do they feel about it?), coherence (in terms of the way in which the case was handled by different stakeholders) and sustainability.

Individual interviews are more appropriate than group interviews or FGDs in this context, as the questions relate to the child's or parent's/legal guardian's individual experiences, which he/she may be reluctant to speak about openly in front of others.

For interviews with children, child-friendly interviewing techniques will be employed. For all interviews with beneficiaries, interviewing techniques will also be 'MHPSS-informed'. Further, tools and interview techniques will be adapted for persons with disabilities according to their communication needs and preferences, and with the inclusion of necessary intermediaries (e.g. signer). See part 6.6. on ethics and part 6.7. for risks and mitigation strategies.

Interviews will only be held with children from the age of 12 and provided that both the child and parent/legal guardian have provided their prior written informed consent (in line with UNICEF protocols and general practice for conducting research with children in Uzbekistan).

Interviews will be held with the child either individually (with the evaluator and interpreter), in the presence of a trusted support person of the child's choice (if the child so wishes). The trusted adult may or may not be the parent/legal guardian. Flexibility will be retained over whether the child is interviewed in the presence of the parent/legal guardian; the child will be asked for his/her views / preference regarding this in the first instance. In addition, where it appears to the evaluator that there may be a conflict of interest between the child and parent/legal guardian or where the parent/legal guardian is hindering or dominating the discussion, the evaluator will not proceed with any questions which may place the child in a conflicting situation and will instead inquire into the possibility of undertaking the interview with the child without the presence of a parent/legal guardian.

Parents/ legal guardians will also have the option of inviting a trusted adult to the interview, though not a service provider whose services form part of the object of the evaluation.

### 6.3. Site sampling

Primary data collection will be carried out at the national level in Tashkent City and in three research sites, as outlined in [Table 6](#).

*Table 6: Research sites for primary data collection*

	Regional level	District 1	District 2
Region 1 (pilot)	Tashkent City	Olmazar district	-
Region 2 (intervention site)	Surkhandarya	Termez City (urban)	Termez district (rural)
Region 3 (comparator)	Kashkadarya	Karshi City	-

These research sites were selected in consultation with UNICEF and the ERG and was informed by data collected from the preliminary desk review and administrative data (particularly Programme monitoring data). The sites were selected based on programming presence, need to pilot the tools, geographical diversity and socio-economic diversity.

**Programming presence:** Surkhandarya is the focus of the primary data collection as it is the main target location for UNICEF’s sub-national interventions. For this reason, data will be collected in two districts in this region, one urban district (Termez City) and a more rural location (Termez district). Kashkadarya is equivalent to Surkhandarya in terms of its demographics, geography and socio-economic situation but is not a target location of the sub-national interventions, hence it has been selected as the comparator.

**Need to pilot the tools:** It is necessary for the researchers to pilot the key data collection tools to ensure that they are clear and fit for purpose. An Inson Social Service Centre in Olmazar district has been selected for this purpose. This district was selected based to strengthen geographical and socio-economic diversity of the research sites (for which see below) and logistical efficiency. The researchers will start data collection in Tashkent City, such that it will be efficient to the pilot there. Further, a KII will be carried out with a key informant in Olmazar district, reinforcing its suitability as a pilot location.

**Geographical diversity:** To the extent possible, sites were selected based on geographical diversity (Tashkent as the capital in the north east, and Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya in the south).

**Socio-economic diversity:** Tashkent City has the lowest percentage of multidimensionally-deprived children at 6.7 per cent, Surkhandarya the highest at 65.92 per cent (and Kashkadarya region in a similar situation to Surkhandarya as it is the region with the third lowest percentage of multidimensionally-deprived children at 57.31 per cent).<sup>82</sup>

In light of the logistical challenges of accessing Karakalpakstan and limited resources, no primary data collection will be undertaken in the east of in-country. Please refer to [part 6.7](#). on limitations and mitigation strategies.

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<sup>82</sup> UNICEF Uzbekistan, Multidimensional Child Poverty Report 2023, pg. 42, <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/en/media/5766/file/Uzbekistan%20Multidimensional%20Child%20Poverty%20Report%202023%20.pdf>, accessed 22 July 2024.

## 6.4. Stakeholder sampling for primary data collection

### 6.4.1. KIIs

The evaluators will adopt a non-random, purposive sampling strategy to identify stakeholders and participants who will be invited to participate in KIIs. Pursuant to this approach, stakeholders and individual participants will be selected primarily based on the relevance of their experience and/or involvement in the Programme and child protection system.

Within the framework of this sampling strategy, to the extent possible, individual participants will be selected based on gender and disability status to ensure a diversity of experiences and perspectives. However, there is unlikely to be much scope for doing so in practice as there is normally only one or two focal points for the Programme from each of the key informant stakeholder entities.

Participant selection will be undertaken by UNICEF in consultation with the stakeholder in question, rather than the evaluators. This approach is due to official protocols for conducting primary data collection in Uzbekistan, which require going through official government channels. See risks and mitigation strategies in [part 6.7](#).

KIIs at the **national level** will be conducted with the following stakeholders, as identified by the desk review and consultations with UNICEF and the ERG:

- UNICEF sector teams (child protection, education, health, social policy, child rights monitoring, communications, SBC, gender and inclusion);
- UN agencies (UNODC; UNFPA; IOM; UNHCR; UN Women);
- Development partners and donors (World Bank; EU Delegation in Uzbekistan; EU Border Management Programme in Central Asia);
- Government or State entities including NASP, MOIA, MPSE, MOH, MOJ, Senate, Prosecutor General's Office, Supreme Court, Republican Center for Rehabilitation and Adaptation of Women Suffered from Violence, Republican Centre for Professional Orientation and Psycho-Pedagogical Diagnostics of Pupils;
- Children's Ombudsperson (and former Children's Ombudsperson);
- NGOs involved in child protection and child justice; and
- Training and academia stakeholders.

At the **regional level**, KIIs will be held with participants from the following stakeholders:

- Territorial/regional Department of NASP;
- Regional Khokimiyat;
- Department of Internal Affairs;
- Prosecutor General's Office.

A detailed list of stakeholders invited for primary data collection is enclosed in [Annex G](#).

### 6.4.2. Semi-structured individual or group interviews with key stakeholders at the regional and district levels

A similar purposive sampling strategy to that used for the KIIs will be adopted for the semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders at the regional and district levels. Individual participants will be selected purposively depending on the relevance of their role to the child protection system and/or Programme as identified from the preliminary desk review and consultations with UNICEF and the ERG.

In each **region**, interviews will be held with the following stakeholders, with some variation depending on programming presence and the need to prioritise stakeholders involved in key sub-national interventions: NASP; regional Khokimiyat; investigation department of the Department of Internal Affairs; directors of NGOs delivering services to children in the child protection or child justice system in the region; and director and staff (psychologists) of a Social and Legal Assistance Centre.

In each **district**, interviews will be held with directors of Inson Social Service Centres.

#### 6.4.3. Semi-structured individual or group interviews with frontline workers

Semi-structured interviews will be held with workers, professionals and practitioners involved in delivering services to children in the child protection and child justice systems as relevant to the Programme interventions. A similar purposive sampling strategy to that used for the KIIs will also be adopted for the selection of these participants. Individual participants will be selected from service providers, depending on the relevance of their role to the child protection system and/or Programme as identified from the preliminary desk review and consultations with UNICEF and the ERG.

**In each district**, interviews will be held with the following stakeholders, with some variation depending on programming presence and the need to prioritise stakeholders involved in key sub-national interventions:

- Inson Social Service Centre
  - Social protection unit social service workers (former secretary of Commission of Children's Issues and former GTA inspector);
  - Community workers including social workers, youth leader, Mahalla activities, Mahalla leader;
- Inspectors for the Prevention of Child Offending and Neglect from district Department of Internal Affairs;
- Police investigators from district Department of Internal Affairs;
- Judge(s) in the district court handling criminal and civil cases involving children;
- Lawyers representing children in child protection or child justice cases;
- Social workers working with the Social and Legal Assistance Centre.

To the extent possible, individual participants will be selected based on gender and disability status to ensure a diversity of experiences and perspectives.

'Typical case' and 'critical case' sampling is not considered to be appropriate for conducting these interviews as the desk review and consultations indicate that in a given district, there are unlikely to be many professionals/practitioners and that the same individuals are likely to be involved in most cases dealt with by a particular stakeholder entity (e.g. the Inson Centre).

#### 6.4.4. In-depth individual interviews with children and parents/carers

Children will be accessed through the Inson centres and NGO service providers. For ethical reasons, it is not considered appropriate to select beneficiaries through the courts, departments of internal affairs of General Prosecutor's Office (for children in conflict or in contact with the law). Child participants will be selected using 'typical case' and 'critical case' sampling strategies.

**Typical case sampling** involves selecting 'typical' or 'average' members of a population (e.g. child protection cases handled by the Inson Centre). Within this framework, cases will be selected with a view to achieving diversity in terms of demographics characteristics, such as gender and age, as well as the type of child protection case and the type of service or intervention received.

**Critical case sampling** involves selecting a number of particularly important or revealing case studies – i.e. those that are likely to yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge in relation to the research questions. These might include cases which were handled exceptionally well, or where there was a particularly positive outcome for the child, as well as cases that were handled poorly or resulted in a negative outcome for the child. This will allow the evaluators to reflect on the factors that are critical in determining the effectiveness (and ineffectiveness) of particular child protection interventions and approaches.

Interviews will subsequently be held with the child's parent/guardian to obtain a broader understanding of the case, perspectives of the beneficiaries and the outcomes.

Using this approach, **in each district**, the evaluators will undertake the following interviews:

- Two child beneficiaries accessed through the Inson Social Service Centres and their parents/legal guardians;
- Six children who have been involved in justice proceedings if possible depending on availability of such cases and willingness of participants to be interviewed (one girl and one boy in conflict with the law, one girl and one boy who is a victim or witness of a crime, and one girl and one boy involved in a civil case), accessed through the NGO Istiqbolli Avlod, and their parents/legal guardians.

As outlined in more detail in the Ethical Protocol in Annex H, the evaluators will not interview children who have returned from armed conflict zones or children residing in the Legal and Social Assistance Centres given the risks of harm to these children and challenges in obtaining official authorisation to interview these beneficiaries.

### 6.5. Data analysis

The evaluators will **systematically review and analyse all data**, identifying key themes, patterns, discourses, relationships and explanations relevant to the research questions and indicators set out in the matrix. For qualitative data, this will be carried out through the software MAXQDA involving a thorough review of desk review documents, interview and FGD transcripts and any other qualitative materials. The evaluation matrix will be used as a framework to organise data and guide analysis.

The analysis will involve a **thematic analysis**<sup>83</sup> with a focus on understanding how the child protection system functions to protect children and different population groups and the role of the Programme within that. This will incorporate, so far as data allows, a **contribution analysis**<sup>84</sup> involving the identification of evidence of results at each level (output, outcome and likely impact) and the relative contribution of external factors, in order to evaluate the TOCs. To this end, the evaluators will seek to identify both anticipated and unanticipated results of the Programme, good practices, challenges and areas where improvements can be made.

The evaluators will conduct a **secondary analysis of the administrative and monitoring data** to gain comprehensive, descriptive and objective information regarding the Programme results, particularly against the quantitative indicators outlined in Programme documentation (see **part 3** and the matrix).

Qualitative and quantitative data will be **triangulated** in light of one another in order to identify any inconsistencies in information. Triangulation will help ensure the accuracy of findings, analysis and interpretation; drawing on different methods and theories will help evaluators overcome any biases or weaknesses associated with a particular method. Where findings appear to be incompatible or inconsistent, this may indicate either a bias or inaccuracy in (interpretations of) data, or a complexity that requires further exploration, which will be reported on in the final evaluation report.

### 6.6. Ethics

In all of Coram International's research, strict ethical protocols are in place and are followed at all times. The evaluators have developed a **tailored ethical protocol** for this evaluation (enclosed in **Annex H**), in line with UNEG Ethical Guidelines, Coram International's own ethical guidelines and **UNICEF's Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis 2021** and the compendium on conducting **Ethical Research involving Children** developed by UNICEF and others.<sup>85</sup> The evaluation is therefore governed by key child rights and ethical standards, particularly the principles of 'do no harm,' the guiding principles of the CRC (best interests of the child; right to be heard; non-discrimination; and

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<sup>83</sup> Informed by the six-stage process outline by Braun and Clarke.

<sup>84</sup> As developed by John Mayne.

<sup>85</sup> <https://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf>, accessed 22 July 2024.

right to life, survival and development), dignity, voluntary consent, keeping the identity of participants confidential and their responses anonymous, managing expectations and responding effectively to any child protection concerns.

As outlined in detail in the ethical protocol, participants’ responses will be confidential in that any personal details that may potentially reveal the identity of the participant will be protected and known only to the evaluators. Interview transcripts will be typed up by the evaluation team member who conducted the interview and will not include the participant’s name or contact details. However, the transcript will include the gender of the participant, the stakeholder entity, location and the participant’s professional title, from which it may be possible to identify the participant. Confidentiality will be ensured in the process of data collection, storage and destruction. During the evaluation contract, transcripts will be saved on a password-protected server (Dropbox) that only the evaluators have access to. Hard copies of written notes from the interviews will similarly be kept in a secure or locked cabinet that only the evaluators have access to and destroyed as soon as transcripts have been written up. Due attention will be paid to ensuring that any quotes used in the evaluation report do not allow identification of the participant. In the event that contextual information may reveal the identity of a participant, the statement will be redacted or not used in the report if it is not possible to redact the identifying parts. At the end of the evaluation contract, transcripts will be saved on the evaluator’s hard drive and destroyed from all other places. The transcripts will be held on the secure hard drive for up to seven years, following which they will be destroyed or held only in fully-anonymised form.

The evaluators recognise and will uphold their duties to act **independently and impartially** throughout the evaluation by declaring and addressing any **conflicts of interest** (of which there were none at the time of writing), following the ethical protocol, and promoting participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the ways outlined in this inception report. The evaluators recognise that these steps are necessary for reinforcing the **credibility** of the evaluation and **reinforce accountability** of the evaluators, as well as of duty-bearers in relation to rights-holders and other beneficiaries of the Programme.

This inception report (including its Annexes) will be submitted to UNICEF’s Ethical Review Board for review. Comments from the **Ethical Review Board** will be addressed in the final version of this report and ethical approval obtained before commencing data collection. Ethical approval is enclosed in **Annex J**.

### 6.7. Risks, limitations and mitigation measures

Table 7 sets out the risks and limitations of the evaluation alongside corresponding mitigation strategies.

Table 7: Risks, limitations and mitigation strategies

Risks and limitations	Mitigation strategies
<p><b>Reporting bias</b> - Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter of the evaluation (child protection, violence against children and access to justice), there is a risk of reporting bias; participating children and parent/guardians may be reluctant or unwilling to share sensitive and personal information about their personal experiences which may potentially be distressing for them to recount. Further, professionals and practitioners may be reluctant to speak critically about the child protection system or their professional experiences, in case this reflects badly on them, government agencies,</p>	<p>To mitigate against reporting bias, evaluators will take care to explain carefully to all participants that the evaluation is learning-oriented and does not aim to cast blame or censure. Evaluators will also emphasize that the research team will keep the identity of participants confidential and that interview responses will be anonymous, in order to mitigate the risk of any negative personal or professional consequences from sharing open and honest information. Questions during primary data collection will be asked sensitively and interactions will be flexible and participatory to allow for the most authentic, spontaneous and participant-led exchange. Participants in group interview will have</p>

<p>UNICEF or other partners/stakeholders.</p>	<p>the option of an individual interview if they prefer. Also, to the extent possible, government and NGO participants will not be interviewed with their line manager/supervisor to mitigate any risks of negative repercussions if the participant expresses any criticism about their services and to help place the participant at ease, facilitating open and authentic discussion. For this reason, separate interviews have been scheduled for directors and staff of service providers.</p>
<p><b>Limited data</b> – It is anticipated that there will be gaps in administrative and financial data, particularly disaggregated administrative data on the grounds of gender, disability and other characteristics or equity grounds. These limitations may restrict the extent to which an equity-informed approach can be taken in analysing quantitative data. In addition, the TOC and results framework for the Programme indicates that outcome indicator 2 (percentage of children aged 1-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past one month) will be measured by MICS, data collection for which is estimated to take place in 2025, after the completion of the evaluation. A comprehensive analysis of the achievement of outcome 2 of the Programme will therefore not be possible.</p>	<p>The evaluators will triangulate data from several sources during the data analysis phase, in order to fill and/or verify any data gaps as best as possible. Gaps in administrative and financial data will also be factored into the findings, and inform the development of the conclusions, lessons and recommendations of the evaluation.</p>
<p><b>Broad scope of the Programme and limited resources for data collection</b> – the Programme is vast covering multiple interventions and stakeholders. In light of the resources available for the evaluation, it will not be feasible to undertake primary data collection in all Programme intervention sites, conduct research with all child protection stakeholders in all locations or select two research districts in each research region. There is a risk that this will not capture the diversity of Programme interventions or the participation of all child protection stakeholders. This may also limit comparisons between urban v. rural Programme and non-Programme intervention sites.</p>	<p>In developing the methodology and field plan, a balance has been struck in selecting the main Programme intervention site (Surkhandarya region) and a comparator to strengthen the ability to undertake a theory-based and contribution analysis, as well as to maximise diversity in terms of geography and socio-economic situation of the research sites. Priority has been given to interviewing participants in the Programme intervention site (rural and urban district selected in Surkhandarya, whereas one district is selected in the other two research regions) to understand the interventions and their results in these locations. Prioritisation has also been given to interviewing key stakeholders in the child protection system (e.g. Inson Centres). Particular attention will be paid to triangulating desk review and administrative data, and feedback from national level stakeholders, with sub-national level data, to build an accurate and rich understanding of the Programme results and context across Uzbekistan, which</p>

	together will mitigate these limitations.
<p><b>Evaluating SBCs:</b> Consideration was made to conducting FGDs with children, parents/caregivers, teachers and community members (adults and children separately), to collect data on their views, attitudes and perceptions of issues concerning violence against children, disability inclusion, gender-based violence, access to justice and the child protection and child justice systems. The purpose of the FGDs is to collect data to evaluate the SBC interventions and, more broadly, to identify good practices and challenges in the child protection and child justice systems, and recommendations for future reform. FGDs were considered to be preferable to individual interviews for these types of questions as FGDs facilitate exploration of attitudes, perceptions and recommendations within communities and the inclusion of a broader range of stakeholders, including parents/caregivers, teachers and community members. However, during consultations, it was decided not to conduct these FGDs as it is understood that only one SBC intervention has been implemented and was small in scale (involving the development of awareness-raising materials with the MOJ which should have been distributed in schools). For this reason, given the limited resources available for data collection and broad scope of the Programme (as outlined above), priority was given to the main interventions implemented during the Programme.</p>	<p>Therefore questions on SBC interventions and knowledge and attitudes towards violence against children, disability inclusion, gender-based violence and access to justice will be incorporated into the other tools as relevant. This data will be triangulated with desk review and administrative data, to build an accurate and rich understanding of socio-cultural norms towards violence against children, disability inclusion, gender-based violence and VAC.</p>
<p><b>Selection of research participants through government, NGOs and service providers</b> – due to official protocols in Uzbekistan, the names of focal points from government stakeholders will need to be shared with the government in order to request the participation of those persons in the evaluation. Further, due to the nature of the Programme interventions, child beneficiaries and their parents/legal guardians will need to be accessed through service providers. The government and selecting stakeholders will therefore be aware of the identity of the evaluation participants, which may lead to the risk of negative repercussions for the</p>	<p>To mitigate these risks, children and parents/legal guardians will only be accessed through NGOs or NASP/Inson Centres, which have duties of confidentiality towards service recipients and therefore are under an obligation not to disclose their identities or involvement in the research. Further, interviews with children involved in justice processes (and their parents/legal guardians) will only be carried out if proceedings have been completed (i.e. resolved, diverted, discharged or a judgment has been issued by the court of first instance), in order to mitigate any risk of jeopardising the child’s case. Interviews will not be carried out with children in closed in institutions (Legal and Social Support Centres) or children who have returned from armed</p>

<p>participant if any evaluation findings are perceived to present the stakeholder in a negative light or if the participants reveal information which goes against dominant socio-cultural norms, values and beliefs.</p>	<p>conflict zones, given the sensitivities of the nature of the interview and the risks of negative repercussions for the child. In any event, it is unlikely that government approval will be provided to interview these children.</p> <p>The ethical protocol also incorporates safeguards to mitigate this risk by protecting the confidentiality of evaluation responses. These include the research team not disclosing the identities of participants or transcripts to anyone outside of the research team and protocols for processing and destroying the data safely. Participants’ names will not be written on interview transcripts and references which may reveal the identity of the individual participant will not be included in the evaluation report. Particular care will be taken to ensure that participants are not identifiable from information provided in, or any references for, any quotes used in the evaluation report, particularly where a certain category of participant is few in number and quotes can be attributed to only a few people. The learning function of the evaluation will be emphasised. Government / NGO/ service providers assisting in setting up the interviews as well as participants in group interviews and FGDs, will be requested to keep the identities of research participants confidential. Participants in group interviews and FGDs will also be asked not to share what was discussed during the interview/FGD with others.</p>
<p><b>Selection bias</b> – given that participants, particularly beneficiaries, will be identified and selected by stakeholders/service providers, there is a risk that individuals with positive views and experiences with the child protection and child justice systems will be selected.</p>	<p>To mitigate this risk, the stakeholders/ service providers will be reminded of the learning-oriented purpose of the evaluation and informed about the sampling strategy, including that regarding critical and typical case sampling for child protection cases, which should be done in consultation with UNICEF which is responsible for arranging the data collection.</p>
<p><b>Group interviews –</b></p>	<p>Not interviewed with supervisor;</p>

## 7 Evaluation Work plan and Management

### 7.1. Team members and responsibilities

The evaluation team consists of the following members:

- **Ms Awaz Raouf, as team leader**, who has overall responsibility for managing the evaluation team, assuring the quality and timely delivery of all evaluation products, overseeing compliance with the ethical protocol including appropriateness of interviews with children and vulnerable adults, providing expertise on child protection sector reforms, and leading the development of this inception report, the in-country data collection, data analysis and report-writing phases.

- **Professor Dame Carolyn Hamilton**, who is Coram International’s director, with whom the team leader will consult regarding the development of recommendations on child protection sector reforms, and any safeguarding issues to determine whether the criteria for mandatory reporting to UNICEF have been met.
- **Ms Ramyah Harrichandiran, as international evaluator**, who is responsible for participating in the development of this inception report, conducting the in-country data collection alongside the team leader and national evaluator including interviews with children, undertaking data analysis and report-writing.
- **Ms Sihana Bina, as international evaluator**, who is responsible for participating in the development of this inception report, conducting remote KIIs, undertaking data analysis and report-writing.
- **Ms Regina Safarova, as national evaluator**, who is responsible for participating in the in-country data collection alongside the team leader and international evaluator and in data analysis and report-writing.
- **Mr Adam Cunliffe, as project manager**, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, working alongside the team leader and evaluators.

Only Ms Raof and Ms Harrichandiran will undertake interviews with children as they are the only evaluators out of the in-country data collection team who are trained and experienced in this area.

The following sections explain the **roles** of the team members at each phase of the evaluation.

## **7.2. Evaluation phases and logistics**

### **7.2.1. Inception phase**

The purpose of the inception phase is to ensure a shared understanding of the objectives, purpose and scope of the evaluation between the evaluators, UNICEF and ERG, develop the methodology and data collection tools, plan the data collection, obtain ethical clearance, and reinforce ownership of the evaluation by national stakeholders. The inception phase involved the activities listed in **part 1** and have led to the finalisation of this inception report.

The team leader will lead the activities during the inception phase, supported by the international evaluators and project manager. The project manager will arrange the translation of the data collection tools into Uzbek, which will be reviewed by UNICEF to ensure accuracy. UNICEF is responsible for arranging the logistics of the primary data collection including inviting participants, as per official protocols in Uzbekistan.

### **7.2.2. Data collection phase**

The data collection phase will involve (i) an orientation for the research team, (ii) primary data collection, (iii) completion of the collection of secondary quantitative data and any new desk review materials identified during the primary data collection and (iv) an online meeting with UNICEF and ERG to debrief following the data collection visit and share preliminary insights based on the primary data collection.

The **orientation** will be carried out online and involve the team leader, international evaluators and national evaluator. The purpose of the orientation will be to:

- ensure a shared understanding of the purpose and objectives of the evaluation;
- strengthen knowledge and understanding of key concepts involved in the evaluation, including child protection system-strengthening, child-friendly justice, diversion, alternative measures, child protection case management, the importance of developing a continuum of services and deinstitutionalisation;
- key international child rights standards which underpin the evaluation and concepts above;
- ensure a shared understanding of the general context, methodology and tools, field plan, division of roles and responsibilities;

- ensure shared knowledge and understanding of the ethical protocol including data protection standards for the evaluation and how to implement this in practice, particularly the procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns;
- ensuring shared understanding of the procedure for taking notes, transcribing interviews, sharing and destroying data;
- discussing ways of addressing common challenges (including ethical challenges) in data collection through practical examples and sharing of experiences; and
- provide an opportunity for the national evaluator to double check that the data collection tools have been translated accurately, at least in Russian.

While there will not be a formal piloting of the tools, the team leader, international evaluator and national evaluator will spend a day in Tashkent undertaking data collection together to **test the key tools**, particularly with children, parents and legal guardians, ensuring that they are fit for purpose, clear and that the translation is accurate.

Following the testing, the team leader, international evaluators and national evaluator will carry out **data collection in line with the methodology** set out in this inception report. The field plan is set out in **Annex I**.

The team leader will then **debrief** and present their preliminary insights following the data collection visit with UNICEF and the ERG during an online meeting.

#### 7.2.3. Data processing and analysis phase

The third phase will involve a **systematic review and analysis of all data** by the team leader all evaluators following the approach outlined in **part 6.5**. To do this, the evaluators will transcribe their audio-recorded interviews (which will only be carried out for online interviews with UNICEF, international organisations and donors with their prior informed consent) or type up their detailed notes taken during the interviews/ FGD, before uploading them onto a password-protected file on Dropbox which only the evaluators have access to. The project manager will arrange for the translation of any transcripts in Russian or Uzbek into English, either via a translator contracted for this purpose or using translation software. Translators will have to contractually agree to keeping the data confidential and follow the ethical protocol, as a term of their consultancy agreement. Similarly, any translation software used will be confidential and will have been approved by Coram International as compliant with Coram's data privacy policy before use. The team leader will then lead the analysis process with support of the international and national evaluators.

#### 7.2.4. Report-writing and consultation

The team leader and international evaluators will produce a **comprehensive draft report** containing findings in relation to all of the research questions and the indicators contained in the evaluation matrix. The draft report will be developed according to an outline agreed with UNICEF; however, it is likely to include the following elements: Title page; Table of Contents; Acknowledgements; List of abbreviations; List of Diagrams and Tables; Glossary of terms; Executive summary; Introduction; Evaluation context; Methodology; Key findings and preliminary conclusions; Conclusions; Lessons learned; Recommendations; and Appendices. The national evaluator will review the report and provide technical input, drawing upon her expertise of the national context.

#### 7.2.5. Consultation, validation and finalisation

UNICEF will provide two rounds of written comments on the draft report and submit the second draft of the report to the Quality Assurance Mechanism. The team leader and international evaluators will amend the report taking into account the written comments, followed by a consultation and validation workshop on the report with the ERG. The team leader will take into account the oral and written comments received from the ERG and any final comments from UNICEF in order to finalise the report.

### 7.3. Evaluation workplan

Table 8 outlines the evaluation workplan including timeline for each activity, number of days per team member, locations and deliverables.

Table 8: Evaluation workplan

Task	Deliverable	Days and location	Timeline
<b>Inception phase</b>			
Initial meeting and follow-on meetings by Teams or Zoom (four follow on meetings - dates to be established with UNICEF)		6 days (remote) <i>Team Leader: 2 days</i> <i>International consultants: 4 days</i>	W/C 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
In-depth document review	<b>Deliverable 1: Inception Report (after incorporation of feedback from the ERG) including methodology, final evaluation matrix, and evaluation instruments/tools</b>	19 days (remote) <i>Team Leader: 4 days</i> <i>International consultants: 15 days</i>	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
<b>Data collection phase</b>			
Orientation		4 days (in-person) <i>International consultants: 2 days</i> <i>National specialist: 2 days</i>	W/C 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
Field-based data collection (including piloting and tweaking of tools)		23 days (in-person) <i>International consultants: 15 days</i> <i>National specialist: 6 days + 2 days for compilation of notes</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
Debrief and preliminary reflections on data collection	<b>Deliverable 2: PowerPoint presentation: debrief and preliminary reflections</b>	2 days (remote) <i>International consultants: 2 days</i>	W/C 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024
<b>Analysis and Reporting Phase</b>			
Analysis of data		15 days (remote) <i>Team Leader: 3 days</i> <i>International consultants: 10 days</i> <i>National specialist: 2 days</i>	Sept-October 2024

Development of draft report	<b>Deliverable 3: Draft Evaluation Report</b>	16 days (remote) <i>Team Leader: 5 days</i> <i>International consultants: 10 days</i> <i>National specialist: 1 days</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
Consultation and validation workshop; Presentation of Evaluation Summary; Revision rounds	<b>Deliverable 4: Consultation and Validation; Draft Evaluation Summary</b>	5 days (remote) <i>Team Leader: 5 days</i>	15 <sup>th</sup> November: UNICEF provide round 1 comments  29 <sup>th</sup> November: Coram to respond to comments by + provide draft executive summary  6 <sup>th</sup> December: UNICEF to provide round 2 comments
Final draft Evaluation Report and Executive Summary	<b>Deliverable 5: Final evaluation report and executive summary/brief</b>	7 days (remote) <i>Team Leader: 3 days</i> <i>International consultants: 4 days</i>	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Total number of days</b>	Total: 97 days <i>Team leader: 22 days</i> <i>International consultants: 62 days</i> <i>National specialist: 13</i>		

#### 7.4. Quality assurance

The evaluators will adopt the following strategies to ensure quality assurance throughout the evaluation.

**Training and technical expertise:** The evaluators have up-to-date and competitive knowledge in their particular fields of expertise. As part of Coram International’s internal quality assurance, team members regularly attend trainings, courses, workshops and conferences to keep abreast of latest developments in their areas of expertise.

**Client contact:** The evaluators will ensure close ‘client contact’ as part of the participatory approach to the evaluation. Through this contact, the evaluators and UNICEF can agree on a common understanding of the required work products, deliverables, time-frame and approach. More broadly, this approach is extremely important for establishing a productive working relationship, shared vision for the evaluation and the engagement of stakeholder and beneficiaries in the evaluation process.

**Oversight and review:** In terms of internal oversight and review, all of the evaluators’ products and deliverables are reviewed thoroughly by the team leader as well as members of the team with relevant expertise, to ensure their quality before delivery.

Externally, the inception report and final report will also be subject to UNICEF’s Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System. Prior to undertaking any data collection, this inception report will be reviewed and approved by UNICEF’s ethical review board. Comments from these review mechanisms will be incorporated in this inception report and final report as relevant.

Similarly, and **ERG** has been established to consult upon and oversee the evaluation at all stages. The ERG is made up of key stakeholders: Office of the Children’s Ombudsperson; NASP; Prosecutor’s General Office; Ministry of Justice; Republican Centre of Social Adaptation of Children; Republican Center for Professional Orientation and Psycho-Pedagogical Diagnostics of Pupils; Ministry of Interior; and Supreme Court. Consultations and validation with the ERG have been incorporated into the methodology, as outlined in this report.

**Management:** Management support is provided by the project manager who keeps track of and provides support in relation to deliverables and time frames through effective communication techniques, including regular emails, project management software, and face to face communications.

## **8 List of Annexes**

- A. Terms of References
- B. Theory of Change
- C. Planned contributions before and after the 2023 Programme Review
- D. Evaluation matrix
- E. Data collection tools and information and consent forms
- F. Bibliography
- G. List of planned interviews and FGDs
- H. Ethical protocol
- I. Field plan
- J. Ethical approval