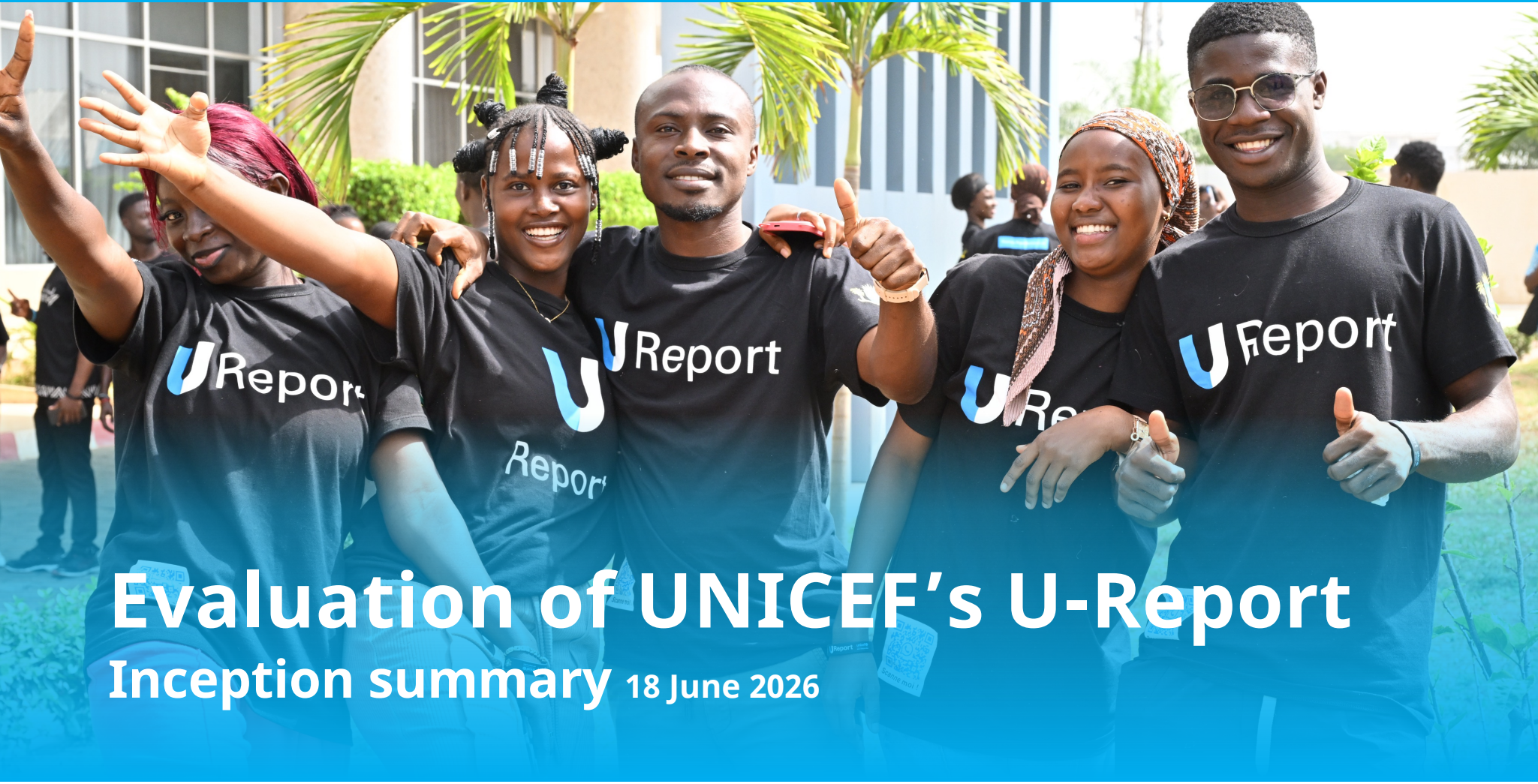


EVALUATION

unicef  for every child



Evaluation of UNICEF's U-Report

Inception summary 18 June 2026

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As UNICEF enters the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and advances the Future Focus Initiative, U-Report is at an inflection point. **What has been the impact and lessons learnt and how can U-Report be best positioned to advance the mission and mandate of UNICEF?**

To answer this, the UNICEF Evaluation Office (EO) is conducting an **independent evaluation of U-Report** at the request of the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (DGCA), which hosts the platform. U-Report is UNICEF's global digital platform for youth engagement, reaching more than 38 million users across over 95 countries.

Commissioned by the Evaluation Office and implemented by an external team (Rain Barrel and PPOL Studio), **this global evaluation will assess U-Report's relevance, performance, efficiency, governance and sustainability**, in line with the UNICEF Evaluation Policy (2023).

This summary presents the evaluation inception outcomes, **informed by key informant interviews** between January and June 2026. A draft of the inception summary was reviewed by the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG) and Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for feedback and quality assurance by the EO. This final version of the summary addresses feedback received. Details of how can be found [here](#).

01. Context and content of the evaluation



Context and content

- ✓ **U-Report is UNICEF's global digital platform for youth engagement**, enabling young people (13–24) to share views, access trusted information, and influence programmes, advocacy, and decision-making.
- ✓ Since 2011, it has grown to 38+ million users in 95+ countries, **combining digital communication with community-based engagement** under common global standards for ethics and safeguarding.
- ✓ **U-Report has also been examined through several UNICEF evaluations and learning exercises.** Most notably, it featured as a case study in the 2019 evaluation of organisational innovation, contributed evidence to the evaluation of youth participation under the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan, and was included in more recent assessments of innovation across UNICEF in 2025. Together, these exercises generated recommendations and learning that have helped shape the platform's evolution and UNICEF's broader approach to youth engagement and innovation.
- ✓ Now a core mechanism for participation and accountability, **U-Report is transitioning from an innovation to an institutionalised system within UNICEF.**
- ✓ This evaluation will generate **evidence-based recommendations to inform U-Report's future strategic direction, configuration, and resourcing** under the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and the Future Focus Initiative.
- ✓ **Findings will support decision-making and learning** across the DGCA, Digital Impact Division (DID), the Global Programme Division (GPD), Office of Strategy and Evidence (OSE), regional and country offices, senior management, and partners on how digital and hybrid engagement can strengthen youth participation and accountability.

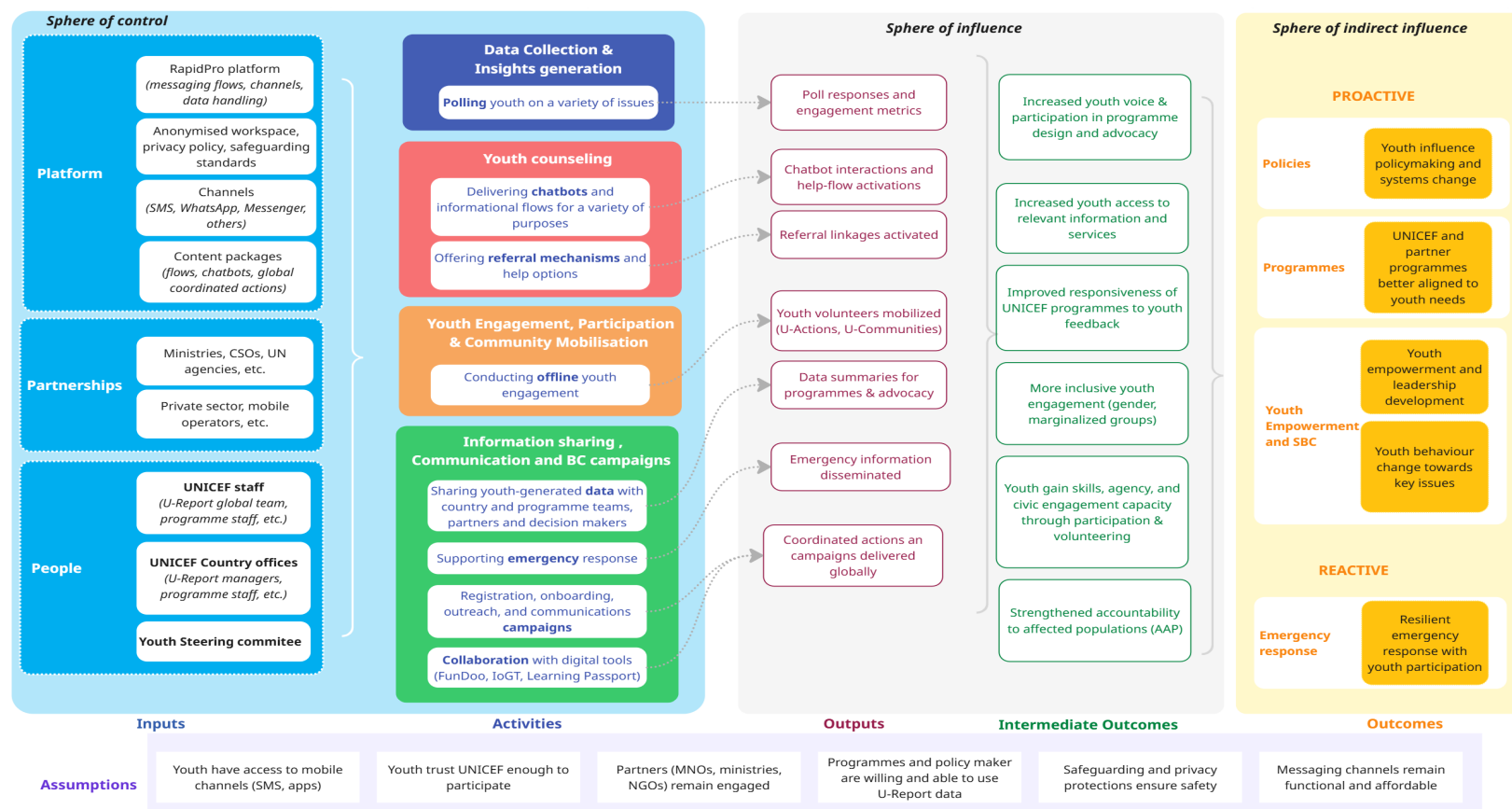
02. Rationale, purpose and objectives of the evaluation



Evaluation rationale

1. U-Report is a **core UNICEF tool for youth participation and accountability**, linking children's voices directly to programmes, advocacy and communications.
2. It aligns with UNICEF's strategic frameworks (2022–2025, 2023–2026, and upcoming 2026–2029), which emphasise inclusion, youth engagement, and children as agents of change.
3. Serves as a **key digital platform** for engaging young people and strengthening feedback systems.
4. Currently at a **transition point**, from innovation to institutionalisation within UNICEF's evolving engagement architecture.
5. The rationale for the evaluation is to assess its relevance, performance, governance, and sustainability to inform its future role, operating model, and contribution to inclusive and accountable systems.

U-Report evaluation: Theory of Change



Theory of Change assumptions*

Key assumption	Description
1. Youth have access to mobile channels (such as SMS and social media)	U-Report relies on digital channels such as SMS, WhatsApp, and social media to reach and engage young people. This assumes that a sufficient proportion of the target youth population has access to mobile devices, connectivity, and digital literacy to participate meaningfully. Without this, participation will be skewed or limited, affecting representativeness and scale.
2. Youth trust UNICEF enough to participate	Effective engagement depends on young people perceiving U-Report as a safe, credible, and worthwhile platform. This assumes that UNICEF (and implementing partners) are trusted actors, and that youth feel comfortable sharing opinions, including on sensitive topics. Lack of trust would reduce response rates and honesty of feedback.
3. Partners (such as ministries and NGOs) remain engaged	U-Report implementation often depends on collaboration with government bodies, NGOs, and other stakeholders for outreach, integration into programmes, and use of data. This assumes sustained partner commitment, alignment of incentives, and operational support to maintain and scale activities.
4. Programmes and policy makers are willing and able to use U-report data	The value of U-Report depends on whether collected data informs decisions. This assumes that policymakers and programme teams not only value youth input but also have the capacity, systems, and willingness to analyse and act on U-Report insights. Without uptake, U-Report risks generating data without impact.
5. Safeguarding and privacy protections ensure safety	Given that U-Report engages adolescents and may collect sensitive information, it assumes robust safeguarding, data protection, and ethical protocols are in place. These are necessary to protect users from harm, ensure compliance with standards, and maintain trust and legitimacy of the platform.
6. Messaging channels remain functional and affordable	U-Report depends on external platforms (e.g., telecom networks, WhatsApp, SMS gateways). This assumes these channels remain operational, accessible, and financially viable. Changes in platform policies, costs, or availability (e.g., removal of free messaging services) can directly affect scalability and sustainability.

* In a Theory of Change context, assumptions are the underlying conditions and enabling factors that must hold true for the causal pathways in the Theory of Change to work as intended.

Intended evaluation stakeholders and users

Stakeholder / users	Role in evaluation	Participation in evaluation	Use of findings
UNICEF Evaluation Office (EO)	Manages and oversees the evaluation, ensuring that processes, outputs, findings, and recommendations meet quality standards.	• Data collection – Support data collection process • Validation and co-creation – Support validation and co-creation processes.	Does not directly use findings programmatically, but ensures credibility, independence, and quality of the evaluation for institutional use.
Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (DGCA)	Primary user and key strategic stakeholder, given its leadership role in U-Report.	• Data collection – Participate in KIIs and support processes (data availability, relationships, etc.) • Validation and co-creation – Participation in workshops and ERG.	Main user of findings for strategic decision-making, including shaping the next phase of U-Report, informing direction, and guiding ongoing planning, implementation, and adaptation. Senior leadership uses findings for high-level strategic positioning and related outputs.
Digital Impact Division (DID)	Secondary user with a strong interest in digital systems and innovation.		Uses findings to identify lessons learned, understand what has worked and not worked in U-Report, and inform adaptation and scaling across other digital initiatives. Also uses findings to support integration and streamlining of digital tools across UNICEF.
Global Programme Division (GPD) and Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS)	Secondary user focused on programmatic integration and outcomes.	• Data collection - Participates in interviews with the evaluation team. • Validation and co-creation – Participation in ERG.	Uses findings to improve design, planning, and implementation of programmes that utilise U-Report or similar digital engagement tools, including strengthening linkages between data and programme decisions.
Office of Strategy and Evidence (OSE)	Internal strategic and evidence-focused stakeholder supporting organisational decision-making and learning.		Likely to use findings to inform institutional learning, strategic planning, and evidence generation, including positioning U-Report within broader UNICEF evidence and data ecosystems.
Regional and Country Offices (ROs/COs)	Operational stakeholders responsible for implementation and contextual adaptation of U-Report.	• Data collection - Participate in data collection in interviews and supporting case studies preparation and development.	Use findings to improve implementation practices, adapt U-Report to country contexts, strengthen partnerships, and enhance the use of data in programming and advocacy.
External Partners (Ministries, NGOs, Implementing Partners)	Key collaborators in implementation, outreach, and use of U-Report data.	• Data collection - Participate in interviews and case studies where relevant.	Use findings to strengthen collaboration with UNICEF, improve integration of youth feedback into policy and programmes, and refine their role in U-Report-related initiatives.

Evaluation scope

Temporal	Analytical	Comparator Studies	Case Studies
• Covers the period 2020–2025. • Focuses on recent trajectories and transition dynamics, rather than a full retrospective analysis. • Special focus on period since 2020 as U-Report transitioned towards scale and leadership shifted to DGCA from the Office of Innovation.	• Focuses on strategic relevance, operating models, sustainability, governance, and data use, rather than technical audits or causal impact attribution • Does not assess sectoral outcomes directly, examines how U-Report enables programme and advocacy results	• Includes light-touch comparator analysis • 2-3 comparator initiatives • Focuses on strategic dimensions: governance, funding models, operational architecture, and sustainability	• In-depth case studies in three countries: Ecuador, Serbia and Nigeria, subject to final confirmation. Light case study from Afghanistan. • In-depth case studies combine in-person and remote fieldwork, of approximately five days each. • A light quantitative survey will be deployed to UNICEF country offices, subject to agreement with the Evaluation Office.

Purpose

1. Provide an **independent assessment** of U-Report's relevance, performance, efficiency and sustainability.
2. Examine how effectively U-Report **fulfils its mandate to enable** safe, trusted and influential youth participation in policies and programmes.
3. Assess U-Report's **operational performance** and **institutional integration** within UNICEF's structures, partnerships and digital ecosystem.
4. Capture how **young people experience** and benefit from participation through U-Report.
5. **Inform strategic options** for U-Report's future configuration and role, including alignment with the Future Focus Initiative and the Strategic Plan 2026–2029.

Objectives

1. **Relevance:** Alignment with UNICEF's mandate, CRC, and Strategic Plan 2026–2029.
2. **Performance:** Reach, engagement quality, inclusion and influence on programmes and advocacy.
3. **Efficiency:** Cost-effective use of governance, coordination and resources.
4. **Governance:** Ethical, safe, and scalable systems and partnerships.
5. **Sustainability:** Funding models and future readiness across diverse country contexts.

03. The inception phase



Overview of the inception phase

Objective

To clarify what U-Report is and is not, its core components, stakeholder expectations, and key evaluation priorities, and to define how the evaluation should be designed and approached.

Timeframe

End of January to June 2026. Covers the full inception phase of the evaluation.

Activities

- **Document review** of 50+ documents reviewed, including:
 - In-depth review: dashboards, strategies, guidance documents, foundational materials, previous evaluations, existing case studies
 - Light-touch review: UNICEF strategies, studies, and evaluations linked to or relevant for U-Report.
- **15 inception interviews** conducted, including:
 - U-Report global team members
 - UNICEF programme staff working on U-Report, including 6 men and 8 women across multiple units (e.g. Social and Behaviour Change, Immunization, OSE, and other UNICEF divisions).
 - Country-level UNICEF staff involved in U-Report implementation.
- **Development of a Theory of Change** to:
 - Clarify U-Report components and intended changes
 - Articulate assumptions and pathways of contribution
 - Inform evaluation questions and analytical focus.
- **Validation and governance** - Establishment and engagement of evaluation groups:
 - Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) – Key UNICEF stakeholders supporting the evaluation.
 - Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG) – Selected external experts providing technical advice.
 - Youth Advisory Group (YAG) – Members of the U-Report Youth Steering Group contributing youth perspectives to the evaluation.
- **Case study approach** - Development of case study methodology. Pre-selection of country cases for in-depth fieldwork.
- **Comparator study approach** - Development of approach to comparator studies. Pre-selection of comparator initiatives for light-touch analysis

Key insights from the inception stage (i)

Theme	Insights from inception	Implications for the evaluation
What the evaluation should really respond to	- Strong expectation to revalidate U-Report's purpose ("the why") in today's digital, organisational and financial context - Clear demand to examine business model and sustainability (funding mix, role/size of global team, value proposition to countries and partners) - Strong shift from scale/output metrics toward outcomes, influence, and added value within UNICEF's youth engagement ecosystem	- Frame evaluation around strategic relevance and future role, not institutional continuity - Explicitly assess alternative sustainability and operating scenarios - Focus analysis on contribution and use, not only reach
How the evaluation should be approached	- Stakeholders want a decision-oriented evaluation, not a descriptive report - High appetite for honest discussion of trade-offs (ambition vs resources, global vs country roles) - Strong preference for forward-looking learning over revisiting the full 10-year history	- Structure findings around clear options and choices - Make trade-offs explicit and evidence-based - Balance retrospective evidence with future-fitness analysis
Core areas to be covered	Strategic positioning within UNICEF Governance arrangements Operational model Funding model and sustainability Results and data use	- Use an integrated lens: assess how governance, operations, funding, and results reinforce or undermine each other - Anchor analysis in strategic positioning
Out-of-scope areas	Technical assessment of RapidPro - Scientific or causal impact attribution Audit/compliance reviews	- Avoid over-engineering methods - Focus on plausible contribution, not attribution or technical performance

Key insights from the inception stage (ii)

Theme	Insights from inception	Implications for the evaluation
Institutional context: FFI	• Major changes: Reduced institutional (IB) funding; 25–30%, HQ downsizing and sharper institutional prioritisation • Youth engagement remains a priority, but increasingly cross-cutting, spanning Child & Youth Engagement, GenU, SBC, and other programmes	• Treat FFI as a central framing condition, not background context • Examine how U-Report's cross-cutting nature affects ownership, resourcing, and risk
FFI risks and opportunities for U-Report	• Risks: hollowing out of global enabling functions, strategic marginalisation, fragmentation across countries • Opportunities: forcing clarity on value proposition and minimum viable core, breaking silos, exploring new funding and partnership models	• Explicitly assess minimum viable global role • Test whether U-Report is better positioned as a standalone platform or an enabling service
Funding model (global and country)	• Funding is hybrid and decentralised, but increasingly fragile at global level • Global core previously IB-funded, now reliant on short-term earmarked funding • Country funding varies widely, sustainability strongest where U-Report is embedded in programmes or operator partnerships	• Analyse funding as a system, not isolated levels • Identify viable funding scenarios aligned to different ambition levels
Operational and governance tensions	• Country autonomy is high, while global functions are critical but under-resourced	• Explicitly assess the balance between global coherence and country autonomy under reduced global resourcing
Intended results	• Global: enabling results (platform stewardship, safeguarding, coherence, positioning) • Country: varied use cases (voice, programme adaptation, advocacy, service uptake)	• Differentiate enabling vs programmatic results • Avoid a single global results narrative

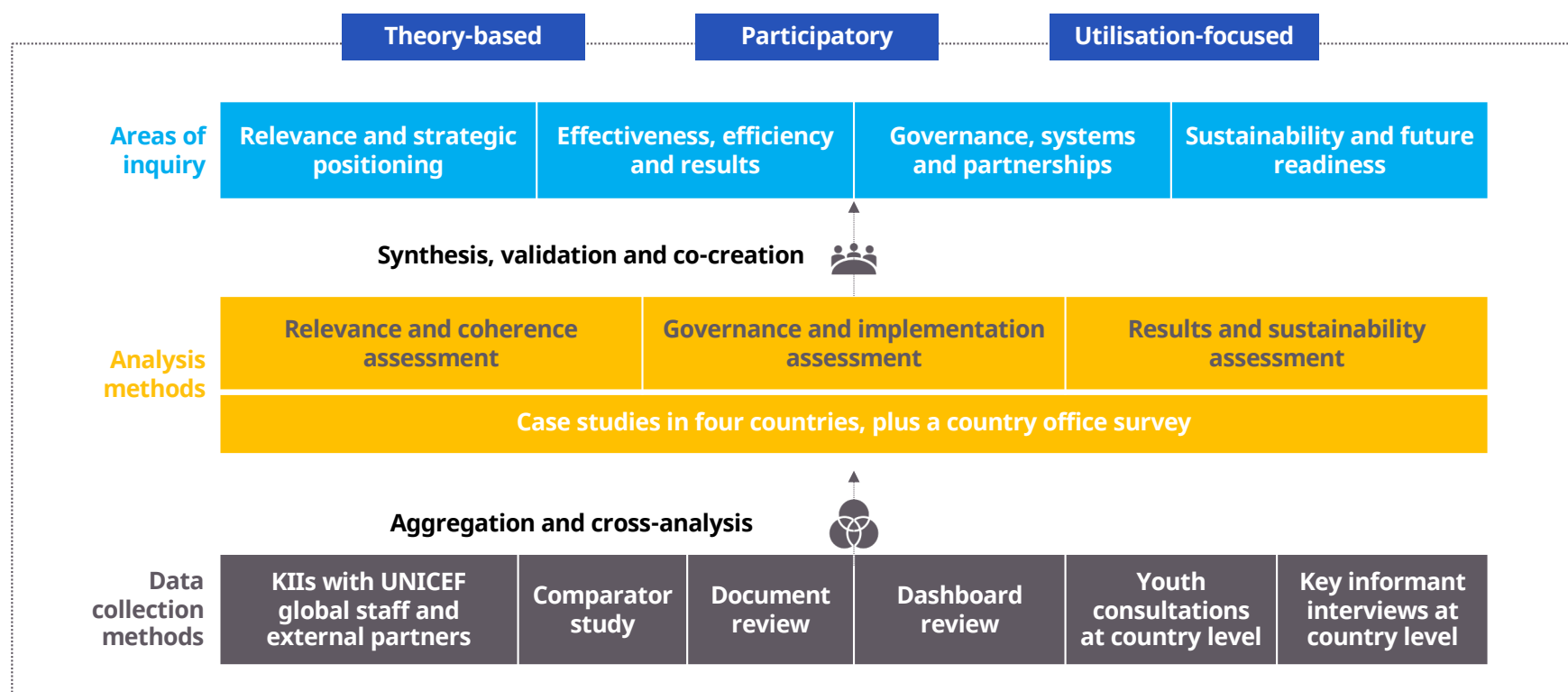
Key insights from the inception stage (iii)

Theme	Insights from inception	Implications for the evaluation
Indicators and data gaps	• Strong tracking of reach and engagement • Weak, inconsistent evidence on outcomes, influence, and equity • Fragmented systems (dashboards, country reports, RAM) and inconsistent definitions	• Focus evaluation on how data is used, not just produced • Identify realistic improvements to outcome evidence without over-claiming
Case studies: purpose	• Case studies expected to support model comparison, learning extraction, governance variation, and concrete examples of data use • Countries want clarity on what the findings mean for them	• Use purposefully selected case studies as primary learning vehicles • Translate findings into practical, country-level guidance on when U-Report is worth investing in, what support can be expected, and what success looks like in different contexts
Existing U-Report case studies (2023–2025)	• Case studies produced by the global U-Report team are use-case focused, light-touch, and predominantly highlight success stories • They generally lack systematic comparison, critical analysis, or examination of failure and drop-off	• Use existing case studies to identify and categorise use-cases and to extract illustrative lessons • Do not treat them as representative evidence of overall U-Report performance or results • Complement with analytically driven case studies designed for comparison and learning
Comparator studies	• No true comparator, value lies in contrast, not benchmarking • Preference for light-touch studies focusing on governance, funding, operating model, and sustainability	• Use comparator studies to stimulate strategic thinking, not performance comparison

04. Evaluation approach and evaluation matrix



Approach and framework



Evaluation questions

Evaluation area 1: Relevance and strategic positioning

EQ 1.1. Alignment with UNICEF's evolving vision for youth engagement

EQ 1.2. Responsiveness to diverse youth needs, including marginalised groups

EQ 1.3. Comparative positioning vs. other youth engagement platforms

EQ 1.4. Contribution to participation, accountability, and digital transformation

Evaluation area 2: Effectiveness, efficiency and results

EQ 2.1. Reach, engagement, and retention of young people (online/offline)

EQ 2.2. Quality and usefulness of insights generated for UNICEF and partners

EQ 2.3. Use of youth voices in programming, advocacy, and accountability

EQ 2.4. Value generated and efficiency of resource use

EQ 2.5. Use of human, financial and technological resources

EQ 2.6. Equity of access across connectivity, gender, age, disability, and location

Evaluation area 3: Governance, systems and partnerships

EQ 3.1. Clarity of roles, coordination, and accountability (global-national)

EQ 3.2. Application of ethics, safeguarding, and data protection standards

EQ 3.3. Contribution to partnerships and performance across operating models

Evaluation area 4: Sustainability and future readiness

EQ 4.1. Financial, technical, and institutional sustainability

EQ 4.2. Adaptability to funding shifts and technological change (e.g. AI)

EQ 4.3. Models for shared resourcing, local ownership, and long-term viability

EQ 4.4. Strategic trade-offs for relevance and impact beyond 2026-2029

U-Report evaluation matrix (1 of 5)



Relevance and strategic positioning			
Evaluation question	Key indicators to be assessed	Data sources	ToC element
1.1 To what extent does U-Report's current role and operating model reflect UNICEF's evolving vision for youth engagement and communication?	- Alignment of U-Report objectives and operating model with UNICEF youth engagement, communication, participation and digital strategies - Perceived strategic fit at global and country levels - Identified gaps or areas for strategic adjustment	- Document review - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Country-level key informant interviews	Inputs (platform, people, partnerships) - strategic positioning across activities
1.2 How responsive is U-Report to the priorities, interests and needs of children and young people, including girls and marginalised groups?	- Degree to which U-Report content reflects youth priorities - Inclusion of girls and marginalized groups in engagement - Youth perceptions of relevance and responsiveness	- U-Reporters focus groups - Platform dashboard (demographics, engagement) - Country-level interviews - Country evaluation case studies	- Activities (polling, chatbots, offline engagement) - Intermediate outcomes (inclusive youth engagement)
1.3 How does U-Report compare with other youth engagement initiatives within and beyond UNICEF?	- Comparative strengths and weaknesses of U-Report - Distinctive value proposition compared to similar platforms - Lessons learned from comparator initiatives	- Comparator study - Document review - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - U-Reporters focus groups	- Inputs (platform, partnerships) - Outcomes (youth empowerment, programme alignment)
1.4 To what extent does U-Report's positioning support participation, accountability and digital transformation?	- Contribution of U-Report to participation and AAP commitments - Use of digital tools to support organisational transformation - Perceived added value at organisational level	- Document review - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - U-Report case studies already conducted	- Intermediate outcomes (youth voice, AAP) - Outcomes (programmes aligned to youth needs)

U-Report evaluation matrix (2 of 5)



Effectiveness, efficiency and results			
Evaluation question	Key indicators to be assessed	Data sources	ToC element
2.1 How effectively does U-Report reach, engage and retain young people in meaningful participation?	• Reach and registration trends by country and demographic group • Depth and consistency of engagement • Youth perceptions of meaningful participation (online and offline)	• Platform dashboard & analytics • U-Reporters focus groups • Country evaluation case studies	• Outputs (engagement metrics) • Intermediate outcomes (youth voice & participation)
2.2 To what extent do U-Report mechanisms produce timely, credible and actionable insights?	• Timeliness and relevance of data produced • Perceived credibility of insights by programmes and partners • Examples of insights informing decisions	• Platform dashboard & analytics • Country-level interviews • U-Report case studies already conducted • Country evaluation case studies	• Outputs (poll responses, data summaries) • Activities (polling, data sharing)
2.3 How are U-Report insights used to inform programmes, advocacy and accountability?	• Evidence of U-Report data influencing programmes, advocacy or AAP • Examples of feedback loops to youth • Strength of link between data and action	• Country-level interviews • Document review • Country evaluation case studies • U-Report case studies already conducted	• Intermediate outcomes (programme responsiveness, AAP) • Outcomes (programmes aligned to youth needs)

U-Report evaluation matrix (3 of 5)



Effectiveness, efficiency and results			
Evaluation question	Key indicators to be assessed	Data sources	ToC element
2.4 What value does U-Report generate for youth, UNICEF and partners?	- Perceived benefits for youth (skills, agency, access to information) - Organisational value for UNICEF and partners - Enabling and constraining factors	- U-Reporters - Country-level interviews - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Country evaluation case studies	- Intermediate outcomes (skills, agency) - Outcomes (youth empowerment)
2.5 How efficiently are human, financial and technological resources used?	- Coordination between global and country levels - Perceived efficiency of resource use - Duplication or gaps in systems and processes	- Country-level interviews - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Document review	- Inputs (people, platform) - Activities (campaigns, coordination)
2.6 How equitable is access and participation across different groups?	- Participation of youth with limited connectivity (e.g. SMS users) - Inclusion across gender, age, disability, location and language - Perceived barriers to access	- Platform dashboard (where available) - U-Reporters focus groups - Country evaluation case studies	- Intermediate outcomes (inclusive engagement) - Assumptions (access to mobile channels)

U-Report evaluation matrix (4 of 5)



Governance, Systems and Partnerships			
Evaluation question	Key indicators to be assessed	Data sources	ToC element
3.1 How clear and effective are roles, accountabilities and coordination mechanisms?	- Clarity of roles across global, regional and country levels - Effectiveness of coordination mechanisms - Perceived governance gaps	- Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Country-level interviews - Country-level case studies - Document review	Inputs (people, partnerships)
3.2 How well are ethical, safeguarding and data protection standards applied?	- Compliance with privacy, safeguarding and ethical standards - Monitoring and accountability mechanisms - Staff and partner awareness - Ethical considerations in AI-assisted engagement, including youth privacy and informed consent	- Document review - Country-level interviews - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews	- Inputs (platform, standards) - Assumptions (safeguarding ensures safety)
3.3 How effectively does U-Report contribute to partnerships?	- Role of U-Report in enabling partnerships - Value added for governments, CSOs, MNOs and UN partners - Contribution to reach and sustainability	- Country-level case studies - Document review	- Inputs (partnerships) - Activities (collaboration, campaigns)
3.4 What factors influence performance across operating and funding models?	- Organisational, system and contextual enablers/constraints - Differences across funding and operating models	- Country-level case studies - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Document review	Inputs and activities across contexts



U-Report evaluation matrix (5 of 5)

Sustainability and Future Readiness			
Evaluation question	Key indicators to be assessed	Data sources	ToC element
4.1 What factors influence sustainability at global and national levels?	- Financial, technical and institutional sustainability factors - Country ownership and capacities - Reliance on external funding	- Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Document review - Country-level case studies - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews	- Inputs (people, partnerships) - Outcomes (long-term viability)
4.2 How well is U-Report positioned to adapt to future priorities and technologies?	- Adaptability to funding and organisational changes - Readiness for emerging technologies (e.g. AI, analytics) - Innovation capacity	- Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Document review - Comparator study	- Inputs (platform) - Outcomes (future readiness)
4.3 What models could strengthen shared resourcing and local ownership?	- Existing or potential ownership and resourcing models - Feasibility of decentralised or hybrid models	- Country-level case studies - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews - Comparator study	Inputs and activities (governance and partnerships)
4.4 What strategic trade-offs should UNICEF consider going forward?	- Identified strategic choices regarding scope, scale and focus - Risks and opportunities for continued relevance and impact	- Synthesis of all data sources - Global-level UNICEF staff interviews	Outcomes and assumptions

05. Evaluation design, methods and sources



Overall approaches

The evaluation uses the **Theory of Change as its framework**, examining how and why U-Report is expected to produce results by testing key assumptions and causal pathways.

This means collecting and analysing evidence across the different ToC elements to assess whether and how they function in practice.

Theory-based

The evaluation **engages key stakeholders throughout** the process to ensure their perspectives are reflected.

This means involving stakeholders, such as those outlined above, across all stages, from inception and data collection to validation and co-creation of findings.

Participatory

The evaluation is designed to produce findings that are **directly useful for decision-making**.

This means aligning the focus, timeline, and outputs with stakeholder priorities to generate practical, actionable recommendations.

Utilisation-focused

Data sources (1 of 2)

Data source	Data points	Data gaps / limitations
Platform dashboard and analytics	- Registration metrics by country - Demographic data (age, gender, location, where available) - Engagement metrics (poll responses, chatbot interactions) - User activity metrics (frequency and intensity of interaction)	- Limited ability to distinguish active users from registered users - Inconsistent age formats and categorisation across countries - Incomplete or outdated demographic data in some contexts - Limited insight into qualitative drivers of engagement
U-Report global case studies	19 case studies produced by the U-Report team between 2023 and 2025 - Documentation of successful country-level use cases and achievements - Country office survey (new)	- Bias towards success stories rather than evaluative evidence - Limited depth on causal pathways (“how” and “why” change occurred) - Limited triangulation with independent data sources - Self-reported, dependent on response rate across country offices
Country-level key informant interviews	- U-Report managers - UNICEF programme staff - UNICEF management staff - Operational partners (e.g. mobile network operators) - Government counterparts (ministries) - Other partners (CSOs, UN agencies)	- Incomplete access to all key stakeholders in each country - Limited time for fieldwork (approximately five days per country) - Potential institutional or confirmation bias
U-Reporters (young people)	First-hand user perspectives on participation, engagement, and perceived value of U-Report	- Small number of participants limits representativeness - Likely bias towards more engaged or accessible users - Limited coverage of marginalized or less-connected groups

Data sources (2 of 2)

Data source	Data points	Data gaps / limitations
UNICEF staff – global level	Perspectives from global and regional programme staff using U-Report (e.g. SBC, mental health, climate change, emergencies)	- Perspectives may be strategic rather than operational - Potential emphasis on organisational value over user-level outcomes
Document review	- UNICEF programme documentation (evaluations, studies, reports) - UNICEF global and country strategies and policies - Country-level policies - Partner documentation (strategies, evaluations, reports)	- Large volume and fragmented nature of documentation - Uneven availability across countries and partners - Time constraints limit comprehensive coverage
Country-level evaluation case studies	- In-depth qualitative analysis of selected country experiences - Triangulation of interviews, dashboard data, and documentation	- Limited number of cases reduces representativeness - Findings are illustrative rather than generalisable
Comparator study	- Comparative analysis of U-Report with similar youth engagement initiatives within and beyond UNICEF - Identification of comparative strengths and gaps	- Limited depth due to data access constraints - Challenges in ensuring comparability across different models and contexts

Data collection methods

Document review Review of UNICEF global and divisional strategies, U-Report guidance and foundational documents, safeguarding and data policies, prior evaluations, investment cases, and case studies. Used to assess strategic alignment, governance, operating model, sustainability, and ethical standards.	Platform data and analytics review Analysis of U-Report dashboards and administrative data (where available), including reach, engagement, demographics, and channel use. Used to assess reach, engagement patterns, equity of access, and trends over time, without causal attribution.
Key informant interviews – global level Semi-structured interviews with UNICEF global and HQ-level staff (U-Report team, programme divisions, youth engagement, data, communications). Used to assess strategic positioning, governance, coordination, efficiency, sustainability, and future readiness.	Key informant interviews and survey – country level Key informant interviews and survey, country level. Interviews with country-level UNICEF staff involved in U-Report implementation and use, and a separate light quantitative survey of UNICEF country offices. Used to examine operating models, resource use, data use for programmes and advocacy, partnerships and contextual enablers or barriers.
Youth engagement (U-Reporters) Interviews and/or focus group discussions with young U-Report participants. Used to assess relevance, inclusiveness, perceived responsiveness, meaningful participation, and perceived value, including perspectives of girls and marginalised groups.	Country case studies In-depth mixed-method case studies in selected countries, combining interviews, document review, platform data, and observation. Used to analyse variation across operating and funding models, governance, sustainability, data-to-action pathways, and reasons for success or drop-off.
Comparator studies (light-touch) Targeted review of selected UNICEF and non-UNICEF youth engagement platforms. Used for learning by contrast on governance, funding models, operational architecture, and sustainability—not for benchmarking or technical comparison.	Thematic case studies Cross-cutting thematic analyses drawing on multiple countries and data sources around priority themes (e.g. data use for advocacy, accountability to affected populations, equity of access, partnerships, sustainability models). Used to identify patterns, enabling factors, and common constraints beyond individual country cases.

A. Country case studies



Country case studies

Objectives

Discussions between the Evaluation Team and the Evaluation Office have led to the **prioritisation of two objectives**.

Objective 1

To examine how U-Report is used across different programmatic use cases and thematic areas (e.g., advocacy, service delivery, civic engagement; health, climate, education) and to identify patterns in how these uses contribute to intended outcomes.

Evaluation Questions

1.2, 1.4 - EQ 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5

Objective 2

To assess how U-Report operates as a country-level system, including its governance, institutional positioning, youth engagement and relevance, data and insight generation processes, equity of reach and sustainability.

Evaluation Questions

1.1, 1.2, 1.3 - EQ 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 - EQ 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 - EQ 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Country case studies

Approach

Approach	Purpose / focus	Unit of analysis	Key considerations	Feasibility and relevance
A. Thematic spotlights Cross-country (Objective 1)	To compare how the same type of U-Report use (e.g. accountability mechanisms, policy influence) or thematic area (climate, education, health) operates across 3 countries, and to identify patterns of contribution to outcomes across contexts.	Theme	- Requires identifying themes or use cases that are implemented in multiple countries with sufficient depth and documentation. - To enable meaningful comparison across 2–3 countries, each selected country should contribute at least one solid, well-evidenced example of the same use case (ideally 3–4 examples in total across countries). - Emphasis is on comparative learning and pattern identification, rather than detailed system analysis within any one country.	Feasibility depends on availability of comparable use cases across countries High relevance for understanding relevance, engagement, and patterns of results across themes.
B. Country-level deep dives Systems lens (Objective 2)	To understand how U-Report functions as a country-level system , including governance and institutional positioning, youth engagement and relevance, data and insight generation, equity of reach, partnerships and sustainability.	Country	- Focuses on U-Report as a platform and institutional model, rather than on the effectiveness of individual use cases. - Captures the full ecosystem: management and governance arrangements, decision-making, resourcing, partner roles, and integration with national systems. - Individual use cases are referenced illustratively but not examined in depth. - Particularly useful for comparing maturity, scale, and sustainability across different country contexts.	Well suited for light fieldwork and system-level analysis. High relevance for governance, partnerships, equity, sustainability and future readiness.

Country case studies

Country selection

Country selection criteria	Layer 1: UNICEF country typology One country will be selected from each of UNICEF's categories to ensure representation across different contexts: • High-income • Middle-income • Low-income • Humanitarian context	Layer 2: Additional selection criteria Within each category, countries will be assessed against the following criteria: • Number and relevance of U-Report use cases • Variation in U-Report maturity, scale, and performance • Diversity of geographic and operational contexts • Strength of evidence and data availability • Potential for learning and transferability of findings
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Potential Selection of countries

High-income/upper-income	Middle-income	Low-income	Humanitarian
Best option – Serbia: Emerging but scaling and collaboration with government on air pollution. Not yet confirmed. Alternative option – Italy: Mature U-Report and strong thematic focus on On the Move (OTM) supporting migrants and refugees.	Best option – Ecuador: Mature and good cases focusing on migrant youth engagement and mental health chatbots. Confirmed. Alternative – Dominican Republic: Mature and strong government engagement (policy input, cyclone preparedness, prior hurricane response).	Best option – Afghanistan: Light case study. Nascent and good case of partnership with mobile networks and youth networks. Confirmed.	Best option – Nigeria: U-Reporters mobilised for polio vaccination campaigns at scale. Not yet confirmed. Alternative – Cameroon: U-Responder volunteer network and recognised (INSPIRE Awards nomination).

Country case studies

Analytical approach

Country deep dives apply a **structured analytical framework** to assess U-Report as a system across **five key dimensions**

Dimension	Focus of Analysis	EQs
1. Strategic positioning and relevance	- Alignment with UNICEF priorities (youth engagement, participation, digital) - Responsiveness to youth needs (incl. marginalized groups) - Positioning relative to other platforms	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
2. System performance (effectiveness and equity)	- Reach, engagement, and retention - Quality and use of insights - Value for youth, UNICEF, and partners efficiency - Equity of access and participation	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6
3. Governance and operating model	- Clarity of roles and coordination - Decision-making processes - Institutional embedding - Safeguarding, ethics, and data protection	3.1, 3.2, 3.4
4. Partnerships and ecosystem	- Strength and diversity of partnerships - Contribution to scale, influence, and sustainability - Role within the broader youth engagement landscape	3.3, 3.4
5. Sustainability and future readiness	- Financial and institutional sustainability - Local ownership - Adaptability to technological and strategic shifts - Future strategic choices	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Cross-cutting lens	Maturity, scale, and contextual factors shaping performance across countries	Applies across all questions

B. Thematic case studies



Thematic case studies

Theme selection

Theme selection criteria

Selection of themes based on:

- Themes with clear and successful U-Report use
- Feasible to explore through country-level fieldwork
- Supported by strong and readily available evidence

Potential themes

Proposed theme	Explanation
Youth agency, policy influence and participatory governance	Explores how U-Report is used to generate youth insights that influence policies, laws, and public debates, drawing on evidence from countries, and enabling comparison across high- and middle-income governance contexts.
Health behaviour change and service uptake	Examines U-Report's role in supporting SBC, vaccination, and outbreak response through polls, chatbots, and youth mobilisation, with comparable cases from countries.
Humanitarian accountability and youth-led action in crises	Focuses on how U-Report supports accountability, protection, and youth engagement in acute and protracted crises.
Youth engagement for climate action and environmental change	Analyses how U-Report enables youth participation and behaviour change on climate and environmental issues

Thematic case studies

Analytical approach

Thematic case studies apply a structured analytical framework to compare a single use case or theme across countries, across five dimensions.

Analytical dimension	Focus for thematic case studies	Relevant evaluation questions
1. Strategic relevance of the theme	Alignment of the thematic U-Report use case with UNICEF priorities and responsiveness to youth needs, including marginalized groups, across contexts	1.1, 1.2, 1.4
2. Design and use of U-Report mechanisms	How are specific U-Report mechanisms (polls, chatbots, communities, offline actions) applied within the theme and adapted across countries	2.2, 2.3
3. Effectiveness and contribution to results	Extent to which the thematic use generates actionable insights and contributes to programme change, policy influence, accountability or behaviour change	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
4. Engagement and equity within the theme	Reach, engagement, and inclusiveness of the thematic use among different groups of young people (gender, age, connectivity, location)	2.1, 2.6
5. Comparative patterns and added value	Cross-country patterns in how the thematic use contributes to results and the distinct added value of U-Report compared to other approaches	1.3, 2.4

C. Comparator Study



Comparator study

Objectives

Objective

The comparative study aims to compare and analyse U-Report with a small number of comparable youth engagement platforms operating within and beyond the UN system. The comparison will focus on the platforms' overall design, governance arrangements, operating models and funding structures.

The analysis aims to inform the evaluation question 1.3:

How does U-Report compare with, and what lessons can it draw from, other youth engagement initiatives within and beyond UNICEF, including digital platforms?

It also contributes to the following EQs:

- EQ 3.1. Clarity of roles, coordination, and accountability (global-national)
- EQ 3.2. Application of ethics, safeguarding and data protection standards
- EQ 4.1. Financial, technical, and institutional sustainability
- EQ 4.2. Adaptability to funding shifts and technological change (e.g. AI)
- EQ 4.3. Models for shared resourcing, local ownership, and long-term viability
- EQ 4.4. Strategic trade-offs for relevance and impact beyond 2026–2029

Comparator study

Selection criteria

Criteria	A. Thematic relevance	B. Geographic scope	C. Digital modality	D. Maturity and track record	E. Institutional diversity	F. Data and information availability
Description	Platforms focused on youth engagement, participation, or consultation	Platforms operating across multiple countries or regions	Platforms that primarily operate through online or digital channels	Well-established platforms that have been operating for several years	The selection will aim to include platforms both within and outside the UN system	Platforms with clear, up-to-date public information
What is in (✓) and what is out (✗)	✓ Youth engagement, participation, consultation (ages ~13–30) ✗ No youth focus / other target groups only	✓ Multi-country / regional / global platforms ✗ Single-country or highly local initiatives	✓ Primarily digital (apps, messaging, social media and web) ✓ Hybrid (digital + offline) ✗ Fully offline platforms	✓ Established platforms (~5+ years) with evidence ✗ Early-stage / pilot initiatives	✓ Mix of UN, NGOs, foundations, partnerships ✗ Only single-country government initiatives	✓ Platforms with clear, up-to-date public information and identifiable contacts ✗ Platforms with limited, outdated, or no accessible information

Comparator study

UN system initiatives

Platform	Overall suitability	Main reason	A. Thematic relevance	B. Geographic scope	C. Digital modality	D. Maturity and track record	E. Institutional diversity	F. Data and information availability
1. YOMA (Youth Agency Marketplace)	High	Strong example of action-oriented participation, linking engagement to opportunities and outcomes	High (youth agency, employment, participation)	Multi-country (Africa focus, expanding globally)	Platform marketplace (tasks, challenges, credentials)	Moderate-high (rapid scale-up)	High (UNICEF + GEN U+GIZ+ Private sector)	High – UNICEF owned/participated
2. Laaha	Medium - high	Relevant as a regional engagement model, closer to U-Report in combining content and participation	High (youth engagement, participation, content)	Multi-country	Digital platform (content + engagement hybrid)	Moderate (regional initiative)	Moderate (UNICEF + regional partners)	High – UNICEF owned/participated
3. Oky	Medium	Strong for individual empowerment, but limited relevance for civic participation and policy influence	Medium (SRH, adolescent empowerment)	Multi-country (Asia, Africa, LATAM expansion)	Mobile app (personal, self-use)	Moderate (growing adoption)	Moderate (UNICEF + NGOs + governments)	High – UNICEF owned/participated
4. Fundoo	Medium	Valuable for skills-building layer, but does not directly enable participation or decision-making processes	Medium (life skills, empowerment, learning)	Multi-country (India, Africa, others)	Chat-based (WhatsApp/SMS learning journeys)	Moderate (recent but scaling)	Moderate (UNICEF + Gen-U India+ Udhyam Learning Foundation)	High – UNICEF owned/participated
5. Giga	Medium	Critical for enabling access, but lacks direct youth engagement or participatory mechanisms	Medium (digital inclusion, connectivity, equity)	Global (100+ countries)	Data platform + infrastructure mapping	High (well-established, globally recognized)	Very high (UNICEF + ITU + governments + private sector)	High – UNICEF owned/participated

Comparator study

Non-UN system initiatives (1 of 2)

Platform	Overall suitability	Main reason	A. Thematic relevance	B. Geographic scope	C. Digital modality	D. Maturity and track record	E. Institutional diversity	F. Data and information availability
1. Go Vocal	High	Strong structured participation and direct policy linkage	Medium	Global	Web-based participation platform (SaaS)	High (widely used by governments)	High (public sector clients globally)	High – strong analytics, but client-only access
2. Decidim	High	Deep participatory architecture and direct democratic impact	Medium	Global (origin EU)	Open-source participation platform	High (proven in multiple cities/countries)	Very high (public + community ecosystem)	Very High – open-source, transparent, often public data
3. Shujaz Inc	High	Behaviour change model+research	Very high	Regional (Africa, large scale)	Hybrid (SMS + media + social)	High (millions of users, long track record)	Medium (enterprise + partners)	Medium-High – strong insights, limited open data
4. Engagement HQ	High	Robust engagement toolkit and policy-oriented design	Medium	Global	Web-based engagement platform (SaaS)	High (established global client base)	High (public sector clients)	High – strong analytics, not publicly open
5. Global Youth Mobilization	High	Combines digital engagement with action (funding + mobilisation)	High	Global	Hybrid (digital + funding + campaigns)	Medium-High (recent but scaled quickly)	Very high (Big Six + WHO + partners)	Medium – high-level impact data, limited granularity
6. Pol.is	High	Unique strength in insight generation and consensus mapping	Medium	Global	AI-powered deliberation platform	Medium-High (used in policy pilots globally)	Medium (gov + research + civic tech)	Very High – transparent datasets & real-time visuals but client-only access

Comparator study

Non-UN system initiatives (2 of 2)

Platform	Overall suitability	Main reason	A. Thematic relevance	B. Geographic scope	C. Digital modality	D. Maturity and track record	E. Institutional diversity	F. Data and information availability
7. European Youth Portal	Medium	Strong institutional platform but limited active engagement depth	High	Regional (EU)	Web portal (information + consultations)	High (long-standing EU platform)	High (EU institutions + youth orgs)	Medium – clear public info and reports, limited datasets
8. Girls Out Loud (Plan International)	Medium	Valuable for safe-space engagement but limited structure	High	Multi-country (Global South focus)	Social media-based engagement	Medium (project-based)	Medium (NGO + youth)	Low-Medium – mostly qualitative reports
9. Yena2030 (Speak Up Africa)	Medium	Strong advocacy but limited platform structure	Medium	Regional (Africa)	Social media + campaign platform	Medium	Medium (NGO + partners)	Low-Medium – campaign-level insights only
10. Youth Co:Lab (UNDP)	Medium	Innovation ecosystem, not a participation platform	High	Regional (Asia-Pacific)	Hybrid (events + digital + incubators)	High (multi-year UNDP programme)	High (UNDP + private sector)	Medium – programme reports, limited structured data
11. YouthLead	Low-Medium	More a network than a structured participation platform	High	Global	Web community / network	Medium	Medium (USAID + partners)	Low-Medium – mostly descriptive info
12. Restless Youth Power	Low-Medium	Advocacy initiative, not a digital platform	High	Global	Hybrid (campaigns + mobilisation)	Medium	Medium (NGOs + youth networks)	Low-Medium – reports but limited structured data
13. Amnesty Youth Collective	Low-Medium	Advisory/activism structure, not platform-based	High	Global	Digital + offline activism network	Medium-High	Medium (NGO-led)	Low-Medium – mainly qualitative, limited structured data

Comparator initiatives

Selection rationale

Key trade-offs identified

No direct equivalent to U-Report exists

Structural trade-off observed:

- High thematic relevance (youth participation)
- Not digital platforms / not comparable in format
- High technical comparability (digital civic tech platforms)
- Lower alignment with adolescent/youth focus

Key trade-offs identified

Balanced set of 2-3 platforms

- 1-2 UNICEF platforms → Strong institutional and thematic alignment
- 1-2 non-UN platforms → Stronger technical comparability (platform/SaaS logic, engagement models)

Suggested selection

Platform	Overall suitability	Main reason	A. Thematic relevance	B. Geographic scope	C. Digital modality	D. Maturity and track record	E. Institutional diversity	F. Data and information availability
1. YOMA (Youth Agency Marketplace)	High	Strong example of action-oriented participation, linking engagement to opportunities and outcomes	High (youth agency, employment, participation)	Multi-country (Africa focus, expanding globally)	Platform marketplace (tasks, challenges, credentials)	Moderate-high (rapid scale-up)	High (UNICEF + GEN U+GIZ+ Private sector)	High – UNICEF owned/participated
2. Decidim	High	Deep participatory architecture and direct democratic impact	Medium	Global (origin EU)	Open-source participation platform	High (proven in multiple cities/countries)	Very high (public + community ecosystem)	Very High – open-source, transparent, often public data
3. Shujaz Inc	High	Behaviour change model+research	Very high	Regional (Africa, large scale)	Hybrid (SMS + media + social)	High (millions of users, long track record)	Medium (enterprise + partners)	Medium-High – strong insights, limited open data

D. Analysis



Analytical approaches

Consultations with key stakeholders: Analyse stakeholder perspectives to assess perceptions of relevance, performance, governance, and strategic positioning, identifying areas of convergence, divergence, and underlying assumptions.

Country case studies: Apply comparative, theory-guided analysis across country contexts to examine how variations in operating models, governance, and context influence performance and results.

The comparative study: Perform structured comparative analysis to assess U-Report's relative strengths, weaknesses, and positioning against analogous initiatives, generating strategic insights through contrast.

Theory of change development: Use the Theory of Change as an analytical lens to test assumptions, interrogate causal pathways, and assess the plausibility of U-Report's contribution to intended outcomes.

In-depth document review: Conduct systematic content and gap analysis of key documents to evaluate strategic alignment, internal coherence, and the strength and limitations of the existing evidence base.

Thematic case studies: Undertake cross-case synthesis to identify patterns of contribution, causal mechanisms, and common enabling and constraining factors across thematic areas.

Data review and analysis: Analyse quantitative platform data to identify trends, patterns, and inequities in reach and engagement, while critically assessing data quality, consistency, and limitations.

Youth consultations and focus group discussions: Analyse qualitative insights from youth participants to assess perceived relevance, inclusiveness, and the extent to which participation is meaningful and influential.

Synthesis analysis and triangulation

Integrate and triangulate findings across methods and data sources to strengthen validity, resolve inconsistencies, and generate robust, evidence-based conclusions.

Co-creative workshops

Facilitate structured sense-making processes to critically interpret findings, validate emerging insights, and refine strategic options and recommendations.

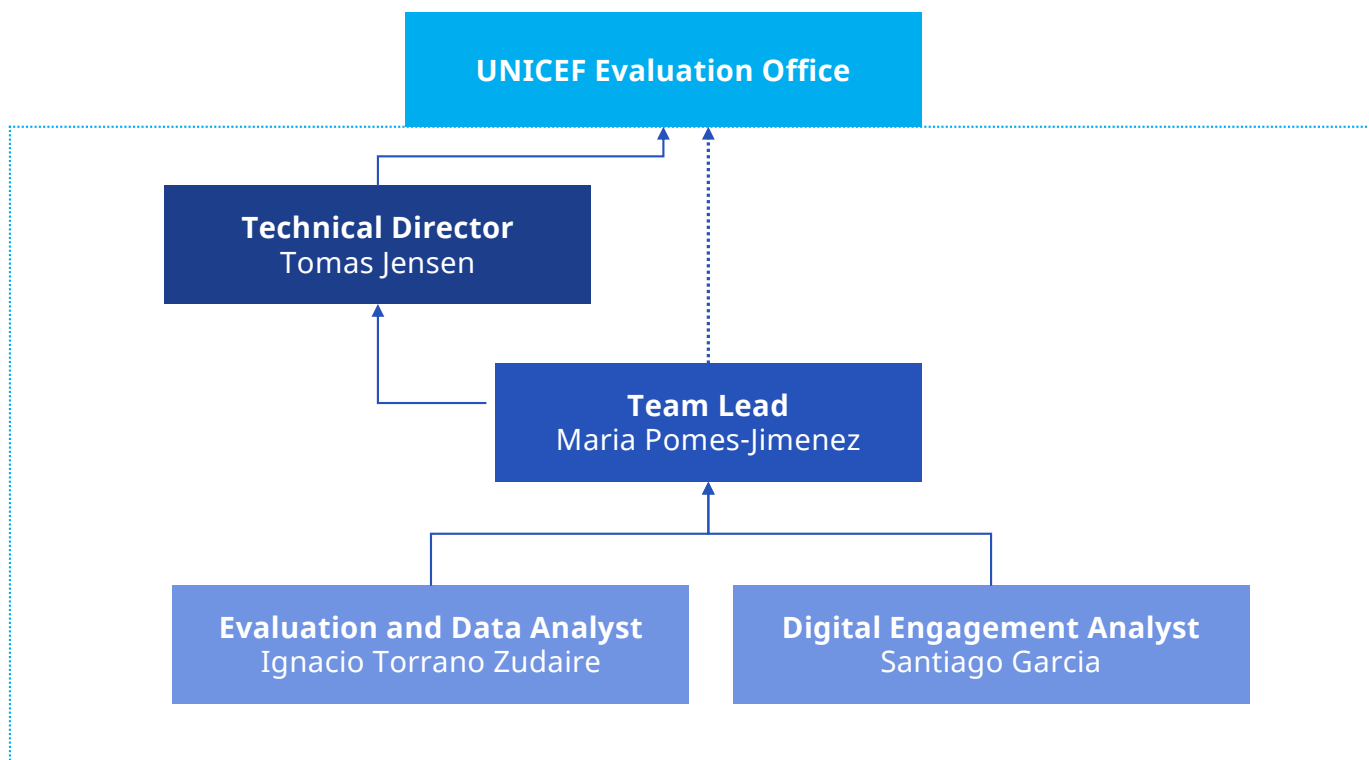
Risks, limitations and mitigation plans

Potential risk/limitation	Where it arises in the evaluation	Mitigation strategy
Reliance on perceptions and self-reported evidence	Strategic positioning, value, governance, sustainability, data use (EQs 1.1, 1.4, 2.2–2.4, 3.1, 4.1–4.4) rely heavily on staff and partner interviews	• Triangulate perceptions across multiple respondent groups (global, country, youth) • Cross-check against documents, platform data, and case studies • Explicitly distinguish perceptions from documented evidence
Limited ability to assess causal impact on sectoral outcomes	Effectiveness and results questions involving programme influence and outcomes (EQs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)	• Clearly frame findings around contribution, use, and plausibility, not attribution • Focus on data-to-decision pathways, examples of use, and feedback loops • Be explicit about what the evaluation does not claim
Uneven availability and quality of platform data across countries	Reach, engagement, equity, and inclusion analysis (EQs 2.1, 2.6)	• Use platform analytics where available, with clear caveats. Complement quantitative trends with qualitative insights from case studies and youth discussions • Avoid cross-country comparisons where data is not comparable
Bias toward more active or better-resourced country offices	Country interviews and case studies may over-represent high-capacity contexts (across all criteria)	• Purposeful selection of case studies across income and context categories, including fragile and drop-off case • Explicitly analyse constraints and failure modes, not only successes
Limited comparability across different operating and funding models	Governance, efficiency, partnerships, and sustainability questions (EQs 2.5, 3.4, 4.1, 4.3)	• Use case study and typology-based analysis rather than averaging • Frame findings around patterns and conditions, not performance rankings
Limited availability of key stakeholders within tight timelines	Global and country-level interviews (across all EQs), particularly for senior stakeholders and partners	• Engage stakeholders early and schedule interviews in advance • Use multiple respondents per function where possible • Complement interviews with document review and secondary data
Time and resource intensity of case studies within a tight evaluation timeline	Case study design, data collection, and analysis phases (across all EQs), which require coordination across countries and stakeholders	• Prioritise and scope case studies carefully, focusing on strategic depth rather than breadth • Sequence data collection and analysis iteratively to avoid bottlenecks • Streamline tools and use remote methods where needed
Low or skewed response to the country office survey	Country office survey, used for cross-country coverage and triangulation (across several EQs, particularly 2.1, 2.5, 3.4, 4.1)	• Keep the survey short and simple to encourage completion. Follow up with country offices to improve response. Report response rates transparently. Treat findings as indicative and triangulate with case studies and interviews.

06. Evaluation team, management, and governance



Evaluation Team



Management and governance

Key roles

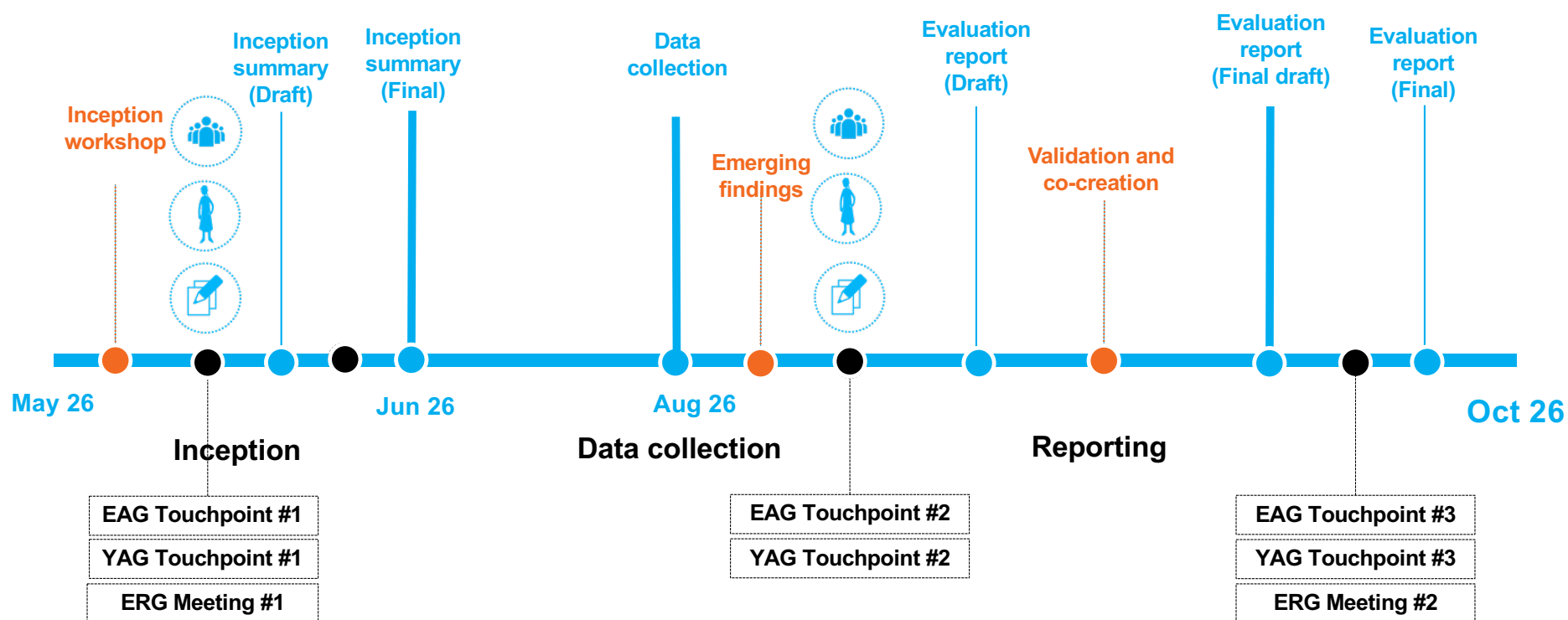
Role	Team	Name	Responsibilities
Evaluation Manager	UNICEF Evaluation Office	Adrian Shikwe	Day-to-day management and coordination of the evaluation; supervises the external team; ensures quality assurance, methodological rigour, and alignment with UNICEF standards and processes; supports stakeholder engagement and contributes to analysis where needed.
Senior Evaluation Manager	UNICEF Evaluation Office	Erica Mattellone	Provides senior oversight and strategic guidance; ensures independence, credibility, and quality of the evaluation; reviews and endorses key deliverables prior to final approval.
Evaluation Analyst	UNICEF Evaluation Office	Yi Huang	Provides technical and analytical support to the evaluation process, including document review, data synthesis, coordination, and support to quality assurance processes.
Technical Director	Rain Barrel/PPOL Evaluation Team	Tomas Jensen	Overall technical guidance and quality assurance
Team Leader and Evaluation Specialist	Rain Barrel/PPOL Evaluation Team	Maria Pomes-Jimenez	Overall team leadership, overseer of all technical aspects and quality assurance of the evaluation, main evaluation report author, and data collection
Evaluation and Data Analyst	Rain Barrel/PPOL Evaluation Team	Ignacio Torrano Zudaire	Technical support, data collection, and overseer of all data analysis, under the supervision of the Team Leader
Digital Engagement Specialist	Rain Barrel/PPOL Evaluation Team	Santiago Garcia	Technical support and provider of technical insights related to digital engagement and youth participation, and data collection under the supervision of the Team Leader

Evaluation governance

Key groups

Group	Description	Members	Responsibilities
Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)	Internal UNICEF stakeholder advisory body	Representatives from GCA, ICTD, GPD, selected Regional Offices and Country Offices involved in U-Report, and other relevant UNICEF divisions/partners	• Review inception materials and provide input on scope, design, and approach • Review draft deliverables for quality, soundness, and actionability • Facilitate access to information, documentation, and key stakeholders • Support uptake, dissemination, and management response- Provide strategic input at key milestones (inception, sensemaking, draft report)
Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG)	External independent expert group	3–5 independent experts (non-UN) with expertise in areas such as digital participation, youth engagement, governance, safeguarding, data protection, and digital public goods	• Provide independent advice and thought leadership- Review evaluation design, emerging findings, and draft products- Challenge assumptions and offer external perspectives- Facilitate access to external research and experts- Contribute to dissemination of findings
Youth Advisory Group (YAG)	Youth advisory body (linked to Youth Steering Committee)	Young people aged 18–25 with interest in development, equity, and evaluation, able to engage in English, Spanish, or French	• Provide youth perspectives on evaluation questions, design, and findings • Review and validate methodology and approach • Sense-check and interpret emerging findings and recommendations • Ensure outputs are youth-friendly and accessible • Provide input into communication products (briefs, infographics, presentations)

Timeline and stakeholder engagement plan



Ethics and data collection protocols

- ✓ **The evaluation and all team members will abide by and uphold internationally recognised ethical practices and codes of conduct for evaluations.** This includes the OECD-DAC Evaluation Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, the UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System, ALNAP's Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide, and the Sphere Handbook and Standards for Monitoring and Evaluation. These three norms will apply across the board: towards stakeholders: Including but not limited to ensuring cultural and linguistic sensitivity; respecting autonomy of participants; seeking the free, prior and informed consent of all respondents, including age-appropriate assent and parental or guardian consent for participants under 18; and ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the data they share and their identity; and ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the data they share and their identity.
- ✓ **Inclusivity:** Ensuring the participation of a wide diversity of stakeholders, that includes women, persons with disabilities, and children and youth, and whose input will be sought and integrated into the analysis and report.
- ✓ **Team members' ethics:** The evaluation will ensure that its team members impartially conduct their work, and do not have any potential or perceived conflicts of interest. All team members will abide by UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. During the inception phase, the team members will sign a Confidentiality Statement and a commitment to ethical conduct.
- ✓ **The evaluation team will support UNICEF to prepare and submit necessary documentation for ethical review of the evaluation framework and related protocols, using UNICEF's standard procedures.**

Quality assurance

- ✓ All evaluation stages and deliverables will adhere to UNEG norms and standards, UNICEF's GEROS quality criteria, and UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards.
- ✓ Formats and presentation will follow the UNICEF Style Book and digital accessibility guidelines and templates, ensuring alignment with UNICEF's global evaluation architecture.
- ✓ Feedback loops with UNICEF's Evaluation Office are integrated at key milestones; orientation, inception, sensemaking, and reporting, as outlined in the ToR.
- ✓ A comprehensive documentation package, including data, tools, and analytical outputs, will be maintained and made accessible to UNICEF throughout to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and smooth handover.
- ✓ Rain Barrel and PPOL applies a three-tier review process for technical accuracy, editorial consistency, and alignment with UNICEF guidance prior to submission of final deliverables.

Thank you



Annexes



U-report Theory of Change

Considerations

- ✓ There is currently **no up-to-date, formal** ToC for U-Report.
- ✓ A **previous ToC (2018)** reflects the initiative's configuration at that time, with a primary focus on the digital platform and its use and limited attention to other key elements (e.g. partnerships, UNICEF's role, ecosystem factors).
- ✓ A ToC has been developed **primarily for evaluation purposes** and does not aim to fully represent U-Report as implemented in practice, nor to serve as a tool for strategy, implementation or communications.
- ✓ It **seeks to capture the core U-Report components** and how they interact to generate activities and results.
- ✓ Given the complexity and diversity of U-Report pathways, the ToC is **intentionally high-level** and does not define detailed causal chains.
- ✓ The **level of detail is kept broad to reflect the wide range of contexts**, thematic areas, issues and partners involved in U-Report implementation.

U-report Theory of Change

Principles

The development of the Theory of Change (ToC) has been informed by the following principles

1. **A ToC strictly for evaluation purposes:** We understand and remain aligned that the ToC is not intended to guide the programme, but to support our analytical framework for the evaluation.
2. **A very high-level and strategic approach:** We will keep the ToC simple, focused and high-level, and we will jointly agree on the appropriate level of detail and disaggregation. This is important to ensure that we do not get lost in unnecessary complexity.
3. **A strategic selection of contributors:** We will involve colleagues who can help us maintain this evaluation focus, while avoiding a situation where there are “too many chefs in the kitchen” or multiple interests pulling the ToC in different directions.
4. **A shared understanding of purpose and scope:** Before stepping into co-creation, we should confirm that all participants have a shared understanding of what this ToC will and will not do. This will help prevent confusion during later stages.
5. **A time-bound and efficient process:** Given the tight timeline, we need to ensure that the ToC process is efficient, well-structured and does not consume disproportionate effort relative to its value for the evaluation.