

# RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Working together for children



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### Results-Based Management Handbook: Working together for Children

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# FOREWORD

## RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Achieving results for every child is at the heart of UNICEF's work. Results are how we demonstrate change in the lives of children, especially the most disadvantaged. The focus on results is evident in the development of UNICEF's Strategic Plan and how this will support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Results-Based Management, or RBM, is a widely adopted approach among the international development and humanitarian community to strengthen the achievement of results. Practical results in the countries where UNICEF works: A boy receiving vaccinations and adequate nutrition so he can grow up healthily. A girl learning, and full of ambition for the future. Children protected from violence.

RBM is not a new concept for UNICEF, as many staff are already applying this approach in their everyday work. This RBM Handbook is part of a broader RBM learning package (which comprises an [e-course](#) and a [face-to-face training](#)) that aims to strengthen the application of RBM in all UNICEF offices, programmes, and teams – to enable them contribute effectively and efficiently in realising the rights of children, everywhere.

Achieving results for children starts with good planning, where focus is paramount. We need to design programmes that are measureable and that can be implemented. Achieving results, also implies that we strive relentlessly to ensure efficiencies in delivering programmes for children, with our partners. This RBM Handbook provides practical guidance on how sound plans can be implemented to deliver concrete results for children.

A well-designed programme can be monitored, so that progress can be tracked and course corrections made. A sound programme can be readily evaluated, and these evaluations will enable us to learn about the efficacy of the strategies we adopt. The consistent use of RBM enables us to reach the most disadvantaged children, and report these results readily to the public, governments, development partners, donors and to our Executive Board.

I am confident that this RBM Handbook, along with the other elements of the UNICEF RBM learning package, will support UNICEF staff and partners to strengthen the focus on sustainable outcomes and impacts for children.



**Shanelle Hall**  
**Deputy Executive Director, Field Results**  
**UNICEF**





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| Manual sobre la gestión basada en resultados: la labor conjunta en favor de la niñez





# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>CEDAW</b>   | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| <b>CRC</b>     | Convention on the Rights of the Child                                      |
| <b>CSO</b>     | Civil society organization   |
| <b>DHS</b>     | Demographic and Health Survey  |
| <b>HACT</b>    | Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers                                      |
| <b>IMERP</b>   | Integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan                        |
| <b>MICS</b>    | Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey  |
| <b>M&amp;E</b> | Monitoring and evaluation  |
| <b>MoRES</b>   | Monitoring Results for Equity System                                       |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Non-governmental organization  |
| <b>RAM</b>     | Results Assessment Module  |
| <b>RBM</b>     | Results-based Management   |
| <b>SDGs</b>    | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| <b>SMS</b>     | Short message service (text messaging)                                     |
| <b>SMART</b>   | Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound                     |
| <b>ToRs</b>    | Terms of Reference   |
| <b>UNDAF</b>   | United Nations Development Assessment Framework                            |
| <b>UNEG</b>    | United Nations Evaluation Group  |
| <b>UNDG</b>    | United Nations Development Group   |
| <b>WASH</b>    | Water, sanitation and hygiene  |





## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

**Results-based management (RBM)** is a management approach that seeks to ensure that all actors contribute directly or indirectly to a defined set of results. In UNICEF's case, these results aim to promote positive change for children. Results-based management has been a feature of UNICEF programming for several decades and relies on evidence-based decision-making.

The building blocks of RBM include the situation analysis that lays the foundation for well-articulated theories of change, the identification of measurable results and risk responsive strategies, and the systematic monitoring and reporting of the programmes' progress and evaluation.

While the RBM approach has often led to better-designed programmes, there is room for improvement through a more holistic application in programme implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and management. A 2012 publication called Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System: Progress and challenges noted that:

*Much of the emphasis in the implementation of results-based management has been on developing the strategic plans, country programme documents and the results matrices. The 'managing' for results aspect of results-based management in the form of using information for programme improvement is less prominent.<sup>1</sup>*

Beyond the inherent importance of the results themselves, improving management for results is all the more crucial in the context of resource constraints and amid strong calls from key stakeholders to better demonstrate value for value for money. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require even stronger RBM capabilities from UNICEF and partners to demonstrate a contribution to national results, while adhering to United Nations principles of coherence.



To improve the quality of programming, UNICEF is undertaking an agency-wide effort to improve its application of RBM. This handbook is one component of a three-part RBM learning package that also includes an e-course and face-to-face training. The package aims to enhance individual staff skills and organizational capacity for RBM. In turn, the learning package is part of a broader strategy to enhance the application of RBM in UNICEF. The strategy includes strengthening the provision of adequate guidance and tools, performance management mechanisms, technical support and effective quality assurance, which will foster the optimal application of RBM and learning across UNICEF offices.



## PURPOSE

**The main purpose of this handbook** is to support the application of RBM in UNICEF. It picks up where the United Nations Development Group's *Results-Based Management Handbook* leaves off, specifically addressing UNICEF's mandate, approaches and management processes.

The handbook is intended as a desk reference that will allow UNICEF staff to review and deepen their RBM learning in the midst of their day-to-day work at any point in the programming cycle. It will also support learning and collaboration within teams and offices.

Towards this objective, the handbook is expected to contribute to:

- Improved understanding of RBM by UNICEF staff
- Strengthened application of RBM
- Improved contribution by UNICEF to development results
- Improved capacity of UNICEF staff to support government and development partners in using RBM.





## INTENDED AUDIENCE

The main audience for this handbook is UNICEF staff. Results-based management applies to all programming areas and to all UNICEF offices, programmes and teams. In fragile and humanitarian situations, RBM is applied with agility and flexibility in accelerated planning and monitoring cycles.

In upper-middle-income, high-capacity contexts, using RBM can help UNICEF support governments in integrating a child rights lens into their planning and budgeting. Senior managers have a special role in empowering staff to become successful results managers. The handbook can also be used or adapted for work with and by partners.

Kindly note that some of the hyperlinks provided in this handbook are only accessible to UNICEF staff.



## STRUCTURE

The handbook consists of **six chapters**:

**Chapter 1.** Results-based management in a nutshell

**Chapter 2.** Planning for results

**Chapter 3.** Implementation for managing for results

**Chapter 4.** Monitoring for results

**Chapter 5.** Evaluating results

**Chapter 6.** Reporting results





## Chapter

# RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT IN A NUTSHELL

In **UNICEF**, results-based management supports multiple actors in working together to create meaningful change in children's lives. It means planning and tracking the achievement of actual results to support more effective programming, more efficient resource use, greater accountability and more compelling reporting. It requires planning for, achieving and demonstrating not just that activities have been completed, but that results have been realized for people on the ground. As such, it is applicable throughout the whole programming cycle and in all UNICEF offices, programmes and teams.



### When to use this chapter:

- At any stage in the programme cycle
- When you need a quick introduction or refresher on what RBM is all about
- When you need to share key aspects of RBM with others



### Who should use this chapter:

- UNICEF staff
- UNICEF partners, as relevant

### Chapter overview:

- What is results-based management?
- What are the principles of results-based management?
- Why does UNICEF use results-based management?
- What are the benefits of focusing on results?
- Does results-based management apply to me?
- What are common pitfalls in applying results-based management?





## WHAT IS RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT?

Let's start by defining results:

**result:** |'ri'zvl̩t | v.

A result is a describable or measurable change in a state or condition that derives from a cause-and-effect relationship.

And so, results-based management is:

- "...a management strategy [or approach] by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and higher level goals or impact). The actors in turn use information and evidence on actual results to inform decision-making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting."  
– **United Nations Development Group,**  
• Results-Based Management Handbook, 2011

Let's unpack that.

### Results-based management is about change

The change we want to achieve sets our direction. In RBM, we don't start our programme planning with the activity we want to carry out in mind (such as a training workshop or a multilateral conference). Instead, we begin with the end in mind and are clear on the difference we want to make for children (such as reduced mortality, increased access to clean water, improved learning outcomes or reduced violence against children). This is based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Then we consider the medium- and short-term results we think will make that difference, and the strategies and activities we believe will move us in the direction of the change we want to see. In many circumstances, UNICEF will be making choices on how to contribute to outcomes for children as one of several partners working together to support the achievement of national priorities.

**Results-based management involves a shift in focus from what *we're doing* (activities) to *the changes we're making or to which we're contributing* (results). In UNICEF's case, RBM is about making**



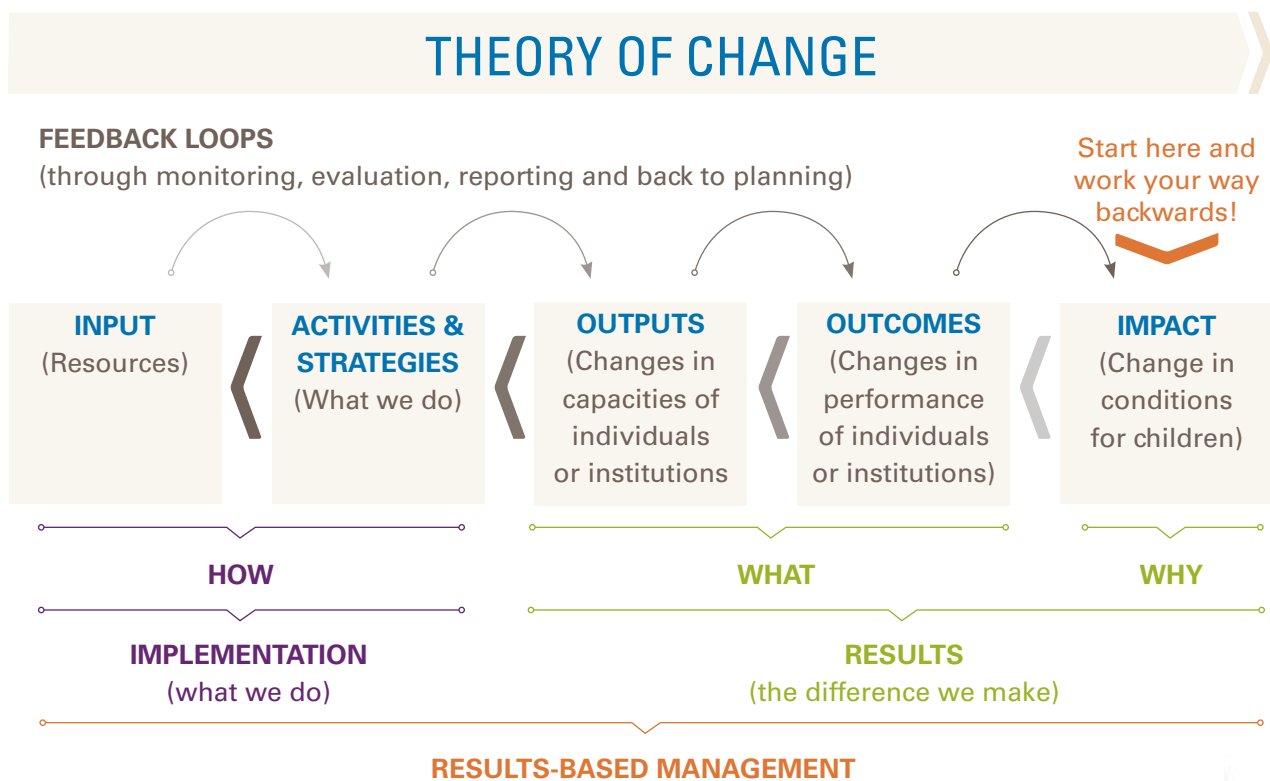
sure our work actually makes a difference in the lives of children. As we manage our programming, we continually track the relationship between what we're doing and what's actually changing 'out there'. We get feedback on the effects of our activities and adjust them to better achieve the change we want.

The assumptions or hypotheses about what inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes are both necessary and sufficient to create the desired results for children are our **theories of change**. We examine the coherence and logic of our theories. Then, as we implement what we have planned, we monitor, make adjustments and evaluate to determine if our intervention is making the hoped-for difference (see Figure 1.1).

If it turns out that things are not getting better for children or are getting worse, our monitoring, research and evaluation helps us find out why. They enable us to answer questions such as:

- Were we wrong about what activities and strategies would bring about the desired changes (our theory of change)? If so, based on sound evidence and analysis we try out different activities and strategies, and then monitor and evaluate whether those move us in the desired direction.
- Did our assumptions about preconditions for success not hold true? Or did events beyond the programme's control (risks) interfere with the desired change process? If so, we do our best to mitigate their effects and capitalize on the opportunities

Figure 1.1. Results-based management: A snapshot





they present. Or is it just that we are not carrying out our activities well enough? If that's the case, we then determine how to improve our implementation.

If we *are* making the desired difference, we ask:

- How might our success lead to more success? Could similar strategies achieve similar results elsewhere? Or on a bigger scale? What would it take for that to happen, and how could we support it?
- Are we being the most efficient we can be?

✳ In short, taking a results-based management approach means being curious about *how change happens*, and being strategic about how best to catalyse positive change in social systems.

### An analogy: Results-based management is like making a meal



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Results-based management can be likened to preparing a meal. You get the relevant people involved (stakeholder participation). You agree on what kind of meal you want to make (your vision of change or expected result). You get a recipe to work from (your theory

of change). You obtain the ingredients you need (your inputs). You mix them all together in suitable proportions and sequence (implementation).

As you cook the meal, you might need to adjust the temperature and duration to the altitude in which you find yourself (response to local context, culture and conditions). Throughout the process, you try to prevent or respond to unforeseen events like people being cut or burned in the kitchen, or getting indigestion (risk management). Then you regularly check how your meal is coming along (monitoring).

At the end of the process, if you've succeeded, the result will be positive and measurable (evaluation) and you will be able to tell the story of the change that's occurred (reporting). You will have: people who've improved their cooking know-how (your output), a tasty meal (your outcome), and a nourished, happy family (your impact).

### Results-based management is an approach for the whole programme cycle

Results-based management influences how we approach every stage of the programme cycle, from harnessing evidence about existing conditions, analysis and trends to strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting, and evaluation. See Figure 1.2 for a generic depiction of the RBM programme cycle, which is also valid in a more accelerated form in fragile and humanitarian contexts.



Figure 1.2. The results-based management programme cycle



\* In short, this is what RBM, applied throughout the whole programme cycle, can look like:

- You **gather** key actors who can help realize children's rights.
- Together you **reach an understanding** of the situation in which you want to intervene.
- Keeping in mind available resources, you **co-create a snapshot of the change you want to work towards** together and how you see this happening.
- You **define roles and responsibilities** of each actor towards the desired change.
- You **carry out** your respective activities based on the strategies you have opted for with the end in mind.
- You **measure** whether you're moving in the right direction and what you've achieved.
- You **respond** to risks and take advantage of emergent opportunities.
- And you **report, learn and adjust** throughout the whole process.





While each step does build on the other, in practice the process is ideally dynamic and iterative rather than static and linear. That is why programme re-design figures at the centre of the cycle. It is a process of collaborative engagement that should promote collective reflection, learning and creativity over expedient ‘box-ticking’.

### Applying results-based management means planning, achieving and demonstrating results

As shown in Figure 1.3, we can further break the cycle into three essential stages, notably planning, achieving and demonstrating results.

#### Planning for results

In a **strategic planning** process, we harness evidence and analysis about the context in which we wish to intervene – both as it is now and how it is likely to evolve. This allows us to identify critical deprivations faced by children and the causes that underlie them. That is what we need in order to identify what we want to change about the current situation and for whom. We prioritize those deprivations and the causes we will address. Then we define pathways of change towards our desired future (our theories of change). **Programme design**

involves defining our desired results and strategies to achieve them. As we do so, we consider the assumptions we are making, how we will mitigate risks to achieving our desired future, capitalize on opportunities, and build longer-term resilience to shocks. And we ensure that we’ll be able to measure whether we’re moving in the hoped-for direction.

#### Achieving results

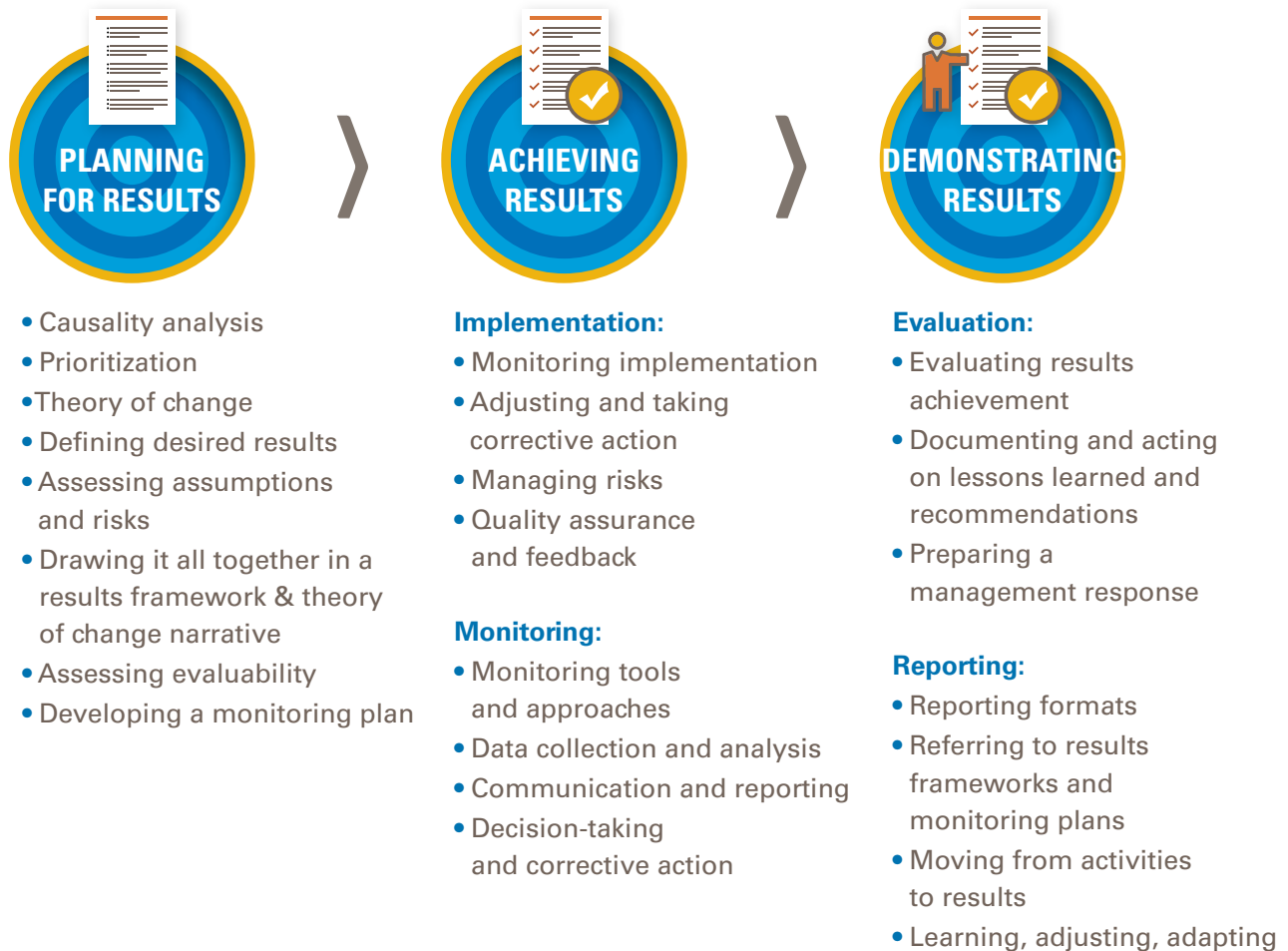
Achieving results begins with **implementation**, as we undertake our selected strategies and activities. It means focusing on **monitoring** results throughout implementation, keeping our eye not just on what we’re doing, but on whether we are helping to bring about the hoped-for change. It is not enough that we planned with a view to what we wanted to change; now we need to see whether we’re actually making a difference.

#### Demonstrating results

Demonstrating results involves **evaluating** the difference we’re making, and **reporting** on whether and to what extent we are contributing to positive change. And then we use that information to make adjustments to our strategies, activities, resources and even to our vision of the changes (results) we want to achieve and our theories about how best to move in that direction.



**Figure 1.3.** Applying results-based management: .....  
Planning for, achieving and demonstrating results



- Results-based management is a coherent, integrated and iterative process in which the results focus applies throughout the programme cycle. Each phase and step in the cycle builds on the previous one, and each step and phase enables the subsequent one.





## WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT?

A number of principles can guide our RBM practice and provide a reference for each stage in the programme cycle. These include: broad-based application, efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, stakeholder engagement, transparency, simplicity and learning.

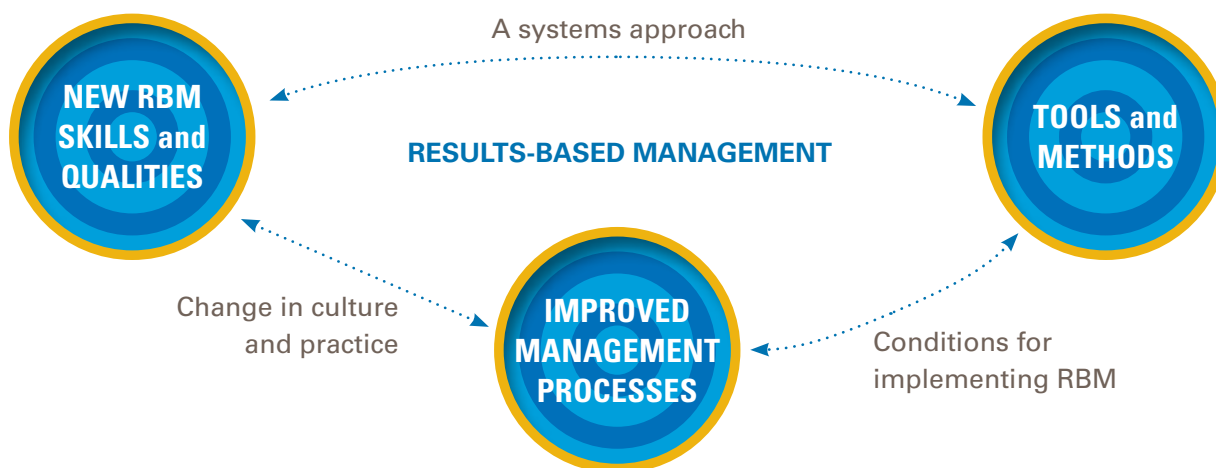
### Broad-based application

Results-based management is used across the organization to apply a results focus to tasks, activities, strategies, programmes and policies. It requires an agency-wide effort to shift to a culture and practice of managing for results at all levels. As illustrated in Figure 1.4, this involves ensuring not only that staff members have the required skills and capacities; it also requires the integration of results-based tools and methods into UNICEF’s management culture and systems. And it means making the management processes of UNICEF as an organization results-focused.

### Efficiency and effectiveness

Results-based management is based on a commitment to achieving results, as well as to converting inputs into activities and then to results in the most economical and efficient way possible. It helps us stay focused on the goal of our work, especially when there are setbacks, problems and changes in circumstances. Being precise about our expected results also provides a reality check when it comes to estimating the time and resources required to achieve them.

**Figure 1.4.** RBM: An organizational approach that creates synergy among management processes, tools and staff skills







Two friends at a child friendly space supported by UNICEF at the Markazi refugee camp for Yemenis in Obock, Djibouti.  
© UNICEF/UNI191716/Rita

## Accountability

Results-based management provides a work environment where accountability for delivering results is clear and shared among staff and other stakeholders. Success in processes to achieve results demands clear identification of roles and responsibilities and the establishment of mechanisms for review and decision-taking.

## Stakeholder engagement

Results-based management engages an array of stakeholders to work on achieving a collective vision of desired change. This may, when appropriate, include government institutions at national, subnational and local levels, the private sector and media, civil society organizations, girls, boys and their families, and communities. It is particularly important to engage the affected population in humanitarian situations. Such a process brings people together to think openly and creatively about the change they want to achieve and how best to organize and coordinate among themselves to achieve it.

Results-based management should support meaningful participation of stakeholders at all points in the programme cycle. By supporting collective thinking about the desired future

and how to get there, RBM becomes in and of itself a contribution to the development process – helping to build coordination, teamwork, synergy, partnerships and collaboration for systemic change.

## Transparency

Results-based management requires openness in the presentation and communication of information about the work of all partners working towards shared results. It enables us to have systems in place that make it easy for all to see how we are achieving results, and where adjustments will be needed to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Establishing explicit theories of change and defining clear, measurable results supports better communication with donors, governments at all levels, children and their families, and team members.

## Simplicity

Results-based management should be kept as simple as possible, so that it is easy to understand, pragmatic and easy to apply.

## Learning

Results-based management is implemented with a view to learning how best to achieve results for children, and using that learning to continually adjust and improve UNICEF programmes and operations. Being clear about where we're trying to go helps us to adjust our strategies and activities as new information comes in.





## WHY DOES UNICEF USE RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT?

The United Nations system adopted RBM as its management approach in the late 1990s in a bid to enhance coherence, effectiveness and accountability. A policy review of the UN in 2007 sparked renewed efforts to enhance RBM in individual agencies and at the country level.

Beyond the United Nations, national governments, public institutions and the private sector are also focusing on results. In large part, this is because taxpayers, citizens and other stakeholders including the target populations increasingly demand accountability and want to see demonstrable results. In addition, development work is becoming increasingly professionalized in recognition of the need for improved effectiveness and impact. **In other words, UNICEF's adoption of RBM is not a response to a fad, but part of a long-standing, internationally accepted management approach and set of practices.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (2016–2030) give further impetus for achieving demonstrable results. The

SDGs are a global agenda, picking up where the Millennium Development Goals left off. They consider the root causes of poverty, look to include the most vulnerable, and recognize the need for integrated, holistic development that balances economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Moving towards the agreed goals and targets requires evidence-based, results-focused programming, and that is what RBM is all about.

UNICEF has two key motivations for effectively applying RBM: making a difference and demonstrating results.

### Making a difference for children

Put simply, the 'why' of UNICEF's work is to achieve concrete and sustained improvements in children's lives: **Results-based management for UNICEF is ultimately about achieving results for children.** It's about being able to meaningfully link what UNICEF does, with the difference it makes in the lives of girls and boys.

*Young girls attend math class in a UNICEF supported school in Jalozai camp, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan.  
© UNICEF/UN018819/Zaidi*





“UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.”

“UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.”

– From UNICEF’s Mission Statement

### Rights and results

If RBM helps UNICEF keep focused on the kind of change it wants to help achieve, human rights norms and standards define that change. Results-based management is a means and the realization of human rights is the end.

The human rights-based approach to programming is a foundational programming strategy for UNICEF. It establishes that UNICEF’s programming, both in development and humanitarian contexts, should further the realization of child rights. It also implies that human rights standards and principles, such as non-discrimination, interdependence of rights, participation and accountability, guide how UNICEF goes about achieving results. **Results-based management is a key element of human rights-based programming since it defines the results to which UNICEF will contribute, and guides the process for attaining them.**

### Equity and results

In keeping with a human-rights based approach to programming, in 2010 UNICEF launched efforts to strengthen its focus on equity as an overarching priority. In so doing, it significantly sharpened UNICEF’s attention on the needs of the world’s most disadvantaged children. This focus also helps define and clarify the types of results that UNICEF aims to help achieve: reduced deprivations among the most marginalized children and the removal of bottlenecks and barriers to their accessing crucial social services and protections. UNICEF’s Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) provides an approach to achieve desired outcomes for the most disadvantaged children. It offers opportunities to operationalize both a human rights-based approach to programming and RBM with a sharpened focus on achieving results for the most disadvantaged girls and boys.





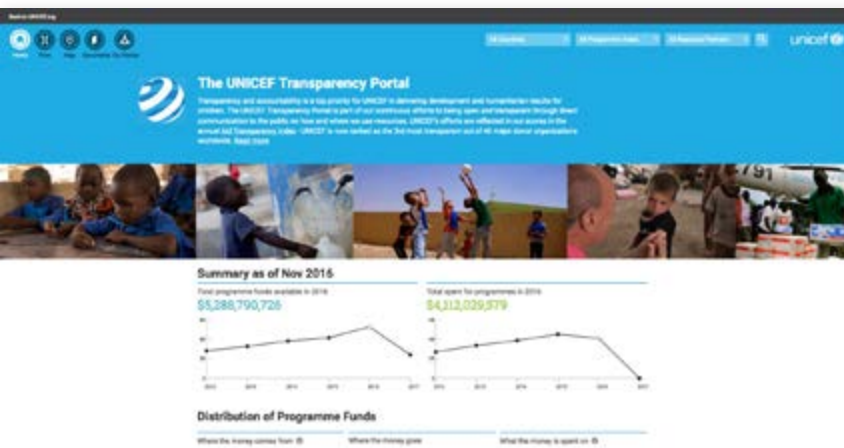
## Demonstrating results

A second key motivation for UNICEF to effectively apply RBM is that donors are demanding demonstrated results for their money, and the public is demanding accountability for results on the ground. **Providing evidence of results is increasingly a prerequisite to UNICEF having the funds and support it needs to carry out its vital mission for children.**

Donors are increasingly including transparency about results achieved among the criteria they use to assess potential aid recipients. Some donors are even taking this a step further with results-based aid and results-based financing. Under these arrangements, recipients receive funding when independent evaluation of indicators demonstrates that pre-agreed results have been achieved; however, recipients have discretion over how to achieve them. Instances where UNICEF has failed to show results have garnered media attention and threaten to impair UNICEF's reputation and

financial sustainability. **In sum, with high competition for limited resources, there is an increasing onus on UNICEF to give evidence of a real bang for donor investments and demonstrate value for money.**

UNICEF needs to communicate its results clearly, not only to donors but also to political leaders, government officials and the girls, boys, women, families and communities it serves around the world. Accountability is one of the core principles of the human rights-based approach ('accountability to affected populations', or AAP, in humanitarian contexts). Accountability is now being strengthened through UNICEF's participation in the [International Aid Transparency Initiative \(IATI\)](#). Under this initiative, UNICEF is releasing on its [Transparency Portal](#) more and more information on how and where we use resources to achieve results for children – including data on expenditures and results achieved. **Putting all this information into the public domain raises the bar when it comes to showing evidence of real results in the field.**



**IATI makes information about aid spending easier to access, use and understand.**

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## DOES RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT APPLY TO ME?

In one word,  
**yes!**

Results-based management is the approach adopted around the world by national governments, the UN system and the interna-

tional development and humanitarian community, among others, to strengthen the achievement of results. It applies to all UNICEF programming areas. It is about programming in a focused, flexible way, with awareness of the relationship between what we're doing and the difference we're making. Results-based management is not just for planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialists. Nor can it be subcontracted to consultants. Results-based management is a management approach and philosophy that applies to all levels and types of staff, whether in programmes, operations, or external relations and communications. **It is meant to support all UNICEF offices, programmes and teams in realizing the organization's mission.** This implies that expectations on individual performance are also guided by RBM. Staff responsibilities necessary to achieve results take into consideration RBM principles and constitute an important part of the RBM cycle.

### A special role for senior managers

Regional directors, country representatives and deputy representatives, programme managers, operations managers, cluster coordinators, heads of programmes/sections and other managers have a special role and responsibility with regard to

results-based management. If you are a manager, you set the tone and create the conditions (or not) for your staff to be able to apply RBM in a meaningful and effective way – not just as a bureaucratic, desk-based, box-ticking exercise.

You can help ensure that staff have the time and resources they need to support continual inquiry into how to effectively





contribute to change for children. You can encourage them to engage with stakeholders and partners in genuine participatory results-based analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. And you can support them in obtaining the financial, technical and logistical support, as well as the skills and know-how that they need to focus on results. Empowering staff to become successful results managers means on the one hand ensuring they have the resources and capacity they need and, on the other hand, holding them accountable for applying RBM consistently.

### **In fragile and humanitarian situations**

The principles and approaches of RBM apply to humanitarian action in rapid- or slow-onset crises as well as in blended humanitarian and longer-term development programming in protracted crises and fragile situations. The difference is that analysis, programme design, monitoring and adjustment are undertaken in more frequent cycles. In a new or rapidly scaled-up humanitarian response, the first rounds of analysis and planning take place over the first days and weeks, and are repeated frequently as the situation evolves. At the same time, programmes are more focused on life-saving and protection results, as set out in the [Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action](#). Because of the rapid pace of response and the shifting context, monitoring is of higher frequency and uses simple, agile approaches to track coverage and quality of services. Monitoring data support resource allocation and adjustments,

feeding information to UNICEF and partners as well as into wider coordination mechanisms.

In fragile contexts and protracted humanitarian situations, more flexible management cycles and processes and more locally defined solutions are required. Such situations also require political acumen and coordination. In these contexts, integrated results-based planning and management by the UN system and through whole-of-government approaches require UNICEF to apply RBM in close coordination with other key implementing actors.

### **In upper-middle-income, high-capacity contexts**

In these contexts, UNICEF generally seeks to leverage its proportionally small financial contribution into a big impact for children. Outcomes usually involve shifts in the performance of government at all levels – for example, in national budgeting and planning, legislation, policy and programming. Outputs will typically focus on strengthening national institutions for child-sensitive action. Results-based management tools can be especially helpful in these contexts if used together with government and other actors to enhance the government's ability to build a child rights lens into its national budgeting and planning cycles. As in all contexts, aligning UNICEF's programming cycle with government planning processes can help UNICEF take advantage of strategic intervention points for influencing public priority-setting, sectoral plans and budget allocation.



## WHAT ARE COMMON PITFALLS IN APPLYING RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT?

If well applied, RBM supports a reflective approach and improved programme effectiveness and impact. Beware, however, of common pitfalls:

- **Carrying out a situation analysis but not referring to it when it comes to programme design.**

Analysis is *essential* to identifying what we want to change about the current situation and how we might best do that. At the planning and design stage, we need to harness existing analysis and gather further data and analysis, as needed, for our intervention to be grounded in evidence about what is going on and what works.



Analysis is  
ESSENTIAL

- **Carrying out a situation analysis that ignores likely and significant context changes,** like threats of disaster or conflict or major economic shocks. Without building in more agility into our programming, we can lose ground on results achieved.
- **Taking shortcuts at the planning stage,** especially when it comes to developing expected results founded on realistic evidence-based theories of change. The upfront stakeholder consultations and time required for effective RBM need to be sufficient to result in realistic and measurable results frameworks and more effective programming.
- **Formulating results statements that are too complex, ambitious and hard to measure, or that denote activities rather than *changes*.** Results-based management requires us to clearly

articulate the changes we hope to work towards. Laying out results that can be observed or measured with defined baselines is a fundamental building block for RBM.

- **Developing results frameworks, theories of change and indicators, but then not making meaningful use of them once programming has begun.** Focusing on RBM at the planning stage but paying less attention to *managing* for results is common. Yet it is from implementation onwards that RBM reveals its full value. Be sure to base your work plans on your expected results and indicators. When it comes time to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on your programme, you should continually refer to your results frameworks, theories of change, and performance monitoring plans. See Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 for details on how to make meaningful use of results-based tools for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.



Base your work plans on your expected results and indicators.





- **Staying wedded to your initial theory of change**, rather than learning and adjusting based on the evidence. As you learn from programme implementation, your initial results frameworks, theories of change and monitoring plans need to be adjusted in accordance with new realities or new understanding. Be honest about it and, in concert with key stakeholders, develop updated versions. Keep successive iterations of those key documents to track how expectations and understanding evolve over time.
- And, the most common pitfall of all: **mechanistically filling out results-based programming templates and ticking the boxes**, seeing RBM primarily as a bureaucratic requirement. This often results in paying lip service to RBM and needed stakeholder consultation while in effect continuing to take an activity-based management

approach. Take advantage of the power of RBM tools to support effective, evidence-based programming and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Focus your energy and attention on the deeper purpose behind all the 'boxes': getting real results on the ground for children.

This handbook is intended to support you in applying RBM meaningfully to your work, avoiding typical pitfalls. We offer here key information, concepts and tools to equip you to focus on results.

A decorative illustration of several stylized human figures in various colors (red, yellow, blue, black) walking in different directions across the page. Some are walking in groups, some alone, and one is on a bicycle. They are scattered across the lower half of the page, adding a sense of movement and activity.

# Welcome!

**Read on, apply** what you read to your own work, and **sharpen YOUR contribution** to the difference UNICEF makes for children.





## Chapter

# PLANNING FOR RESULTS

**Integrating RBM into strategic planning** is essential to being able to achieve and demonstrate results later in the life of a programme. This requires beginning with a grounded understanding of the situation you wish to change and strategic prioritization of the issues you will address. From there you can develop an explicit theory of change for your intervention, define the results you hope to achieve, assess the risks which can cause delays or lead to failure in achieving the intended results, and plan how you will measure your progress.



### When to use this chapter:

- During the planning and design phase of a new country programme requiring the development of Programme Strategy Notes, a Country Programme Document or Country Programme Management Plan.
- In participating in the design of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
- In participating in the development of an inter-agency Humanitarian Response Plan.



### Who should use this chapter:

- UNICEF staff, including sectoral specialists, programme managers, and planning, M&E specialists
- As appropriate, key stakeholders who will be involved in, or affected by, the programme.

### Chapter overview of steps and corresponding tools:



#### Steps

- Step 1.** Understand the situation
- Step 2.** Prioritize issues for action
- Step 3.** Devise a theory of change
- Step 4.** Define desired results
- Step 5.** Align results, strategies and funding
- Step 6.** Assess assumptions and risks
- Step 7.** Draw it all together in a results framework and a theory of change narrative
- Step 8.** Develop a monitoring plan
- Step 9.** Assess the evaluability of the programme



#### Tools

- Tool A.** Causality analysis
- Tool B.** Monitoring results for equity – 10 determinants framework
- Tool C.** The prioritization funnel with five filters
- Tool D.** Theory of change
- Tool E.** Risk monitoring and response matrix
- Tool F.** Results framework
- Tool G.** Monitoring plan





## BACKGROUND

**Strategic planning** is a disciplined approach to developing a multi-year vision of what results will be achieved and how they will be achieved. Organizations such as UNICEF use RBM for strategic planning for the entire organization, for country programme development or for specific programmes.

For UNICEF, strategic planning with an RBM approach will generally include:

- Understanding the situation, particularly the causes of a problem, such as a deprivation or a child rights shortfall or violation
- Prioritizing issues to be addressed by UNICEF action
- Establishing a theory of change for the problem or deprivation
- Developing a strategic plan with a results framework
- Aligning results, strategies and funding.

Strategic planning provides direction on how UNICEF at any time and place will organize itself to achieve its mission of helping every child move forward. It is about how that will be done, with whom and how progress will be measured.

## GUIDELINES FOR RESULTS-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING

In addition to the general principles that guide the application of RBM (detailed in Chapter 1), four guidelines can support

us in carrying out a results-based strategic planning process:

### Align with and influence national planning processes

Aligning with the government's planning cycle and processes allows UNICEF to more effectively inform national development priorities and targets, sectoral strategic plans and budget allocation. In many country contexts, UNICEF's role is to position itself to influence analytic work on children and planning processes by bringing in a child rights lens. This may entail central or decentralized planning with national governments on specific plans, the development of a UNICEF-assisted programme of cooperation, and/or the development of a UN-wide programming framework (such as the UNDAF or integrated strategic framework).

### Ensure stakeholder buy-in and engagement

To achieve results it is critical to develop among stakeholders a shared vision of the change desired and a mutual understanding of their respective roles in creating that change. These stakeholders may range from government officials and



other development partners that are also managing activities and supplying funds to work towards the same outcome, to technical experts and community leaders and representatives of disadvantaged groups that are the subjects of the analysis. Without involving them in planning, shared accountability and ‘buy-in’ will remain elusive. Engaging these stakeholders is also important to ensuring that programming is relevant and grounded in evidence.

## Learn, adapt and adjust your strategic plan

Sometimes, the path towards desired change can be known based on available research (such as the promotion of bed net use to prevent malaria). Frequently, however, we are responding to complex contexts with complex interventions. Because social processes are always in flux, our strategic planning often reflects best guesses about the future. No matter how much evidence we harness at the planning stage, we cannot accurately predict how or when things will change as a result of our actions. Instead, the path towards the change we want is emergent. In these cases, results frameworks and theories of change are best seen as compasses rather than maps. That is, we have an idea of our desired direction, but we can’t know in advance exactly how to get there. As we take action, the way forward unfolds. We notice what is working, learn from difficulties, and take advantage of opportunities as they emerge. In sum, we learn and adapt and change the plan throughout programme implementation, adjusting as we go.



### Take an iterative approach

The strategic planning process has a general logical flow from one step to the other

The strategic planning process has a general logical flow from one step to the other. Yet at each step, we will have new information and insights that may shift or refine the outcomes of the previous steps. Don’t be afraid to go back and make changes to your earlier work.

For example, when you carry out a causality analysis (described in Step 1), you may see that the problem you initially chose to address is just a symptom of a deeper problem. Take the opportunity to select that underlying cause as the issue your intervention will tackle. Similarly, your analysis may shift as you consider how the causality analysis will change in the event of likely shocks or hazards to children and women. Expect to have several iterations (versions) of key design tools such as the results framework or theory of change narrative. Keep in mind that the value of such tools is as much in the process of developing them as in the final product.



In these cases results frameworks and theories of change are best seen as compasses rather than maps





## KEY STEPS IN STRATEGICALLY PLANNING FOR RESULTS

This chapter will take you through nine steps (see Figure 2.1) towards strategically planning for a country programme, sector programme or project.

Figure 2.1. Nine steps in strategically planning for results



### 🚧 STEP 1. UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

The first step in strategic planning is to understand the context in which we wish to intervene. A solid understanding of the current situation for children and how it is likely to evolve is essential to identifying what we want to change about it, how and with whom. To understand the situation and determine the child rights issue(s) we want to address, we need to identify the deprivations and unfulfilled rights of children, and especially to explore their causes. Five lenses can help us develop an understanding of causes in order to better tailor effective responses.

### Identifying deprivations and rights violations

Because UNICEF's mission is to help societies progressively realize children's rights, the situation we need to understand relates to what is hampering progress. UNICEF's equity focus calls for special emphasis on **the most disadvantaged or deprived groups**. This requires understanding not just *which* rights are not being realized, but *who* is most deprived, vulnerable or at risk. To assess this, we can use data and analysis at the country level, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and sector-specific analyses.

Because national averages can mask inequalities, it is important to look at **dis-aggregated data** to better target the most



disadvantaged groups. For example, in certain areas urban children may have better access to education than rural children, or boys may have better health outcomes than girls.

UNICEF will also want to assess **overlapping deprivations** in order to better address them.

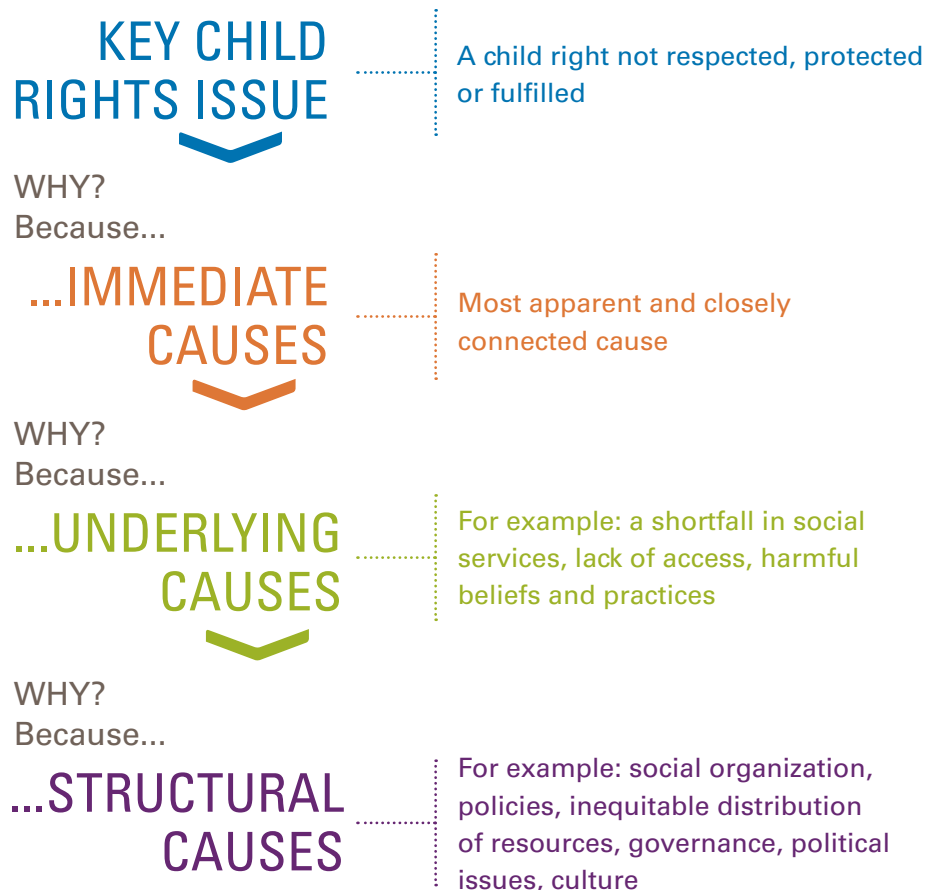
**\*** For example, a school-aged child suffering from malnutrition may have difficulty learning, be more likely to drop out of school, and therefore be more vulnerable to child labour.

### Analysing causality

Once we have identified the child rights problem UNICEF would like to address and which children are most affected by, it is important to examine the causes of that deprivation or unfulfilled right. This involves probing beyond immediate causes to determine the most important underlying and structural causes, as depicted in Figure 2.2. Repeatedly asking ‘why?’ helps us move from immediate to underlying and structural causes.

Digging down into underlying and structural causes enables us to address the main causes of a problem and not

Figure 2.2. Levels of causes





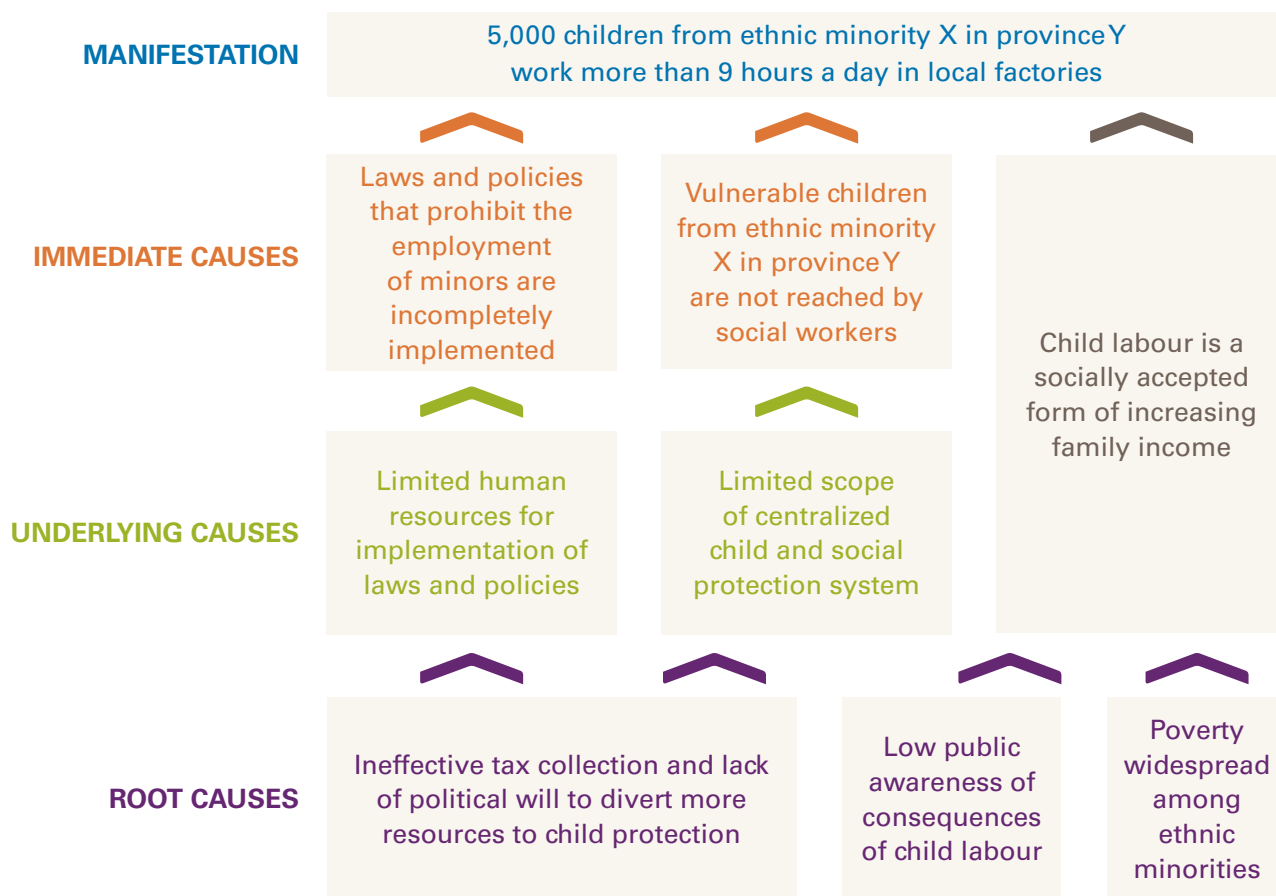
just its symptoms. It also allows us to design strategic responses that can address the issues in a lasting and effective way.

Often depicted in graphic form with arrows indicating a causal relationship, a causality analysis identifies and clusters multiple causes and issues into patterns of relationships. It is sometimes called a ‘problem tree’ (even though, as in Figure 2.3, it often shows only the roots of the tree). It provides a visual, participatory means (when involving

key stakeholders) to gaining insight into the multiple causes of a child rights issue and the relationships among causal factors.

The causality analysis can be carried out as a participatory group exercise with key stakeholders, using cards, markers and masking tape on the wall. It should harness the causal analysis included in the situation analysis as well as additional studies and other research material, where applicable.

**Figure 2.3. Tool A: Causality analysis**





## Five lenses for analysing causality

Five lenses can be of great support in carrying out an analysis of why a child's right is being deprived. These lenses include:

1. human rights;
2. gender;
3. equity;
4. 10 determinants of the coverage of proven interventions; and
5. risk-informed analysis, specifically analysis of likely threats, hazards and shocks with an impact on children and women.

The quality of a causality analysis will determine the soundness of strategic planning and ultimately the effectiveness of the intervention. These lenses can bring greater breath, depth and rigour as one explores the deeper causes that a programme aims to address.

### 1. Human rights

Achieving results (such as the Sustainable Development Goals) is essential to realizing the human rights of women and children. This requires understanding social attitudes and behaviours as well as the governmental frameworks, policies, programmes and resource distributions that contribute to child rights violations. Only with an understanding of those deeper causes can UNICEF target systemic change in social and governmental arrangements so that they can work towards sustained realization of children's rights.

The UN 'Common Understanding'<sup>2</sup> of a human rights-based approach to programming calls for "assessment and analysis in order to identify the human rights claims of rights holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty bearers, as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes of the non-realization of rights." It also calls for assessment of "the capacity of rights holders to claim their rights, and of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations," in order to develop corresponding strategies to build these capacities.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Gender

Identifying gender gaps is essential to UNICEF's equity-focused agenda for accelerating progress towards rights realization among the most deprived children. Are boys and girls enjoying the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections? Are they facing different types of rights violations? Do girls and women have equal agency over decisions that affect them? Sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender-responsive data collection methods are important tools for gender mainstreaming.

Once key gender gaps have been identified, applying a gender lens to the causality analysis means examining the influence of gender relations, roles, status, inequalities and discrimination with regards to access to and control of resources at the household, community and institutional levels. It implies the examination of legislation, policies, behaviours and practices. A sound gender analysis and systematic use of its findings throughout the programme





cycle should serve as a basis for improving results for girls and boys and advancing gender equality.

### 3. Equity

Applying the equity lens to causality analysis means seeking to understand the underlying and root causes of inequity. Why are certain population groups being deprived of basic resources, opportunities and influence over decisions that are available to other groups? What are the sources of discrimination and exclusion? Applying this lens is essential to fulfilling UNICEF's aim of reducing disparities and improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups. With information on the causes of inequities, UNICEF is better equipped to ensure that the most marginalized children have access to services and protections, and the conditions necessary for their rights to be realized.

### 4. 10 determinants of the coverage of proven interventions

In an effort to strengthen its equity focus, UNICEF has identified 10 conditions or 'determinants' that often create bottlenecks or barriers to full coverage of services for children, particularly the most disadvantaged (see Table 2.1). The MoRES (monitoring results for equity) framework serves as a tool for designing equity-focused programmes. It can also be used as checklist to sharpen the causality analysis and ensure that all potential causes are considered. It is effectively used to assess:

- Key causes of deprivation or non-realization of rights

- Key bottlenecks or barriers that are preventing the most disadvantaged from accessing proven interventions, services or care practices that are demonstrated to reduce deprivations

### 5. Risk-informed analysis

Taking a risk-informed approach requires first examining risks related to disaster, climate change, socio-economic or political instability and conflict that could result in child deprivation and rights violations. Specifically, this means identifying which hazards, threats and shocks are most likely and would have the most significant impact, where geographically they would hit and who would be most vulnerable, and what the specific impacts would be. This entails looking at the causality analysis of child deprivations and rights violations and asking what would be different in the event of a hazard, threat or shock.

Applying the risk lens to the causality analysis then involves seeking to establish how the shocks and stresses could impact or interface with underlying vulnerabilities and deprivations. It considers available capacities and those needed to manage possible shocks and stresses. It also examines the roles that individuals, groups and/or institutions could play in reducing either the hazards or shocks themselves, or their negative impact, and what capacities they would need to do so. Applying such a lens allows UNICEF to develop programmes that strengthen institutions' and communities' resilience and response to risks, whether through disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, or conflict-sensitive programming and peacebuilding.





 **Table 2.1. Tool B: Monitoring results for equity – A 10 determinant framework<sup>4</sup>**

|                      | DETERMINANTS  | DEFINITIONS   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| ENABLING ENVIRONMENT | Social norms  | Social rules of behaviour that are mainly driven by social pressure   |
|                      | Legislation/policy  | Adequacy of laws and policies at national and subnational levels  |
|                      | Budget/expenditure  | Allocation & disbursement of required resources at national and subnational levels and efficiency of use  |
|                      | Management/coordination   | Clarify of roles and accountabilities and mechanism for coordination/partnership  |
| SUPPLY               | Availability of essential commodities/ inputs                     | Essential commodities/inputs required to deliver a service or adopt a practice  |
|                      | Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information | Physical access (services, facilities, information, human resources)  |
| DEMAND               | Financial access  | Ability to afford the direct and indirect costs of using services and adopting practices  |
|                      | Social and cultural practices and beliefs                         | Individual beliefs and practices of both providers and populations that may be widely shared but are not mainly driven by 'social pressure' or expectations |
|                      | Timing & continuity of use  | Timeliness/completion/continuity in use of services and adoption of practices   |
| QUALITY              | Quality   | Adherence to required quality standards (national or international norms)   |

See UNICEF, *The Determinant Analysis for Equity Programming*, August 2014, pp. 8–10, for a more detailed description of each of the 10 determinants.



### Other key resources

UNICEF Division of Policy and Strategy, *Guidance on Conducting a Situation Analysis of Children's and Women's Rights*, 2012, pp. 11–15.

UNICEF, *Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, section 3.3, '*Causal Relationships – Getting the Analysis Right*'.

UNICEF, *Child Protection Resource Pack: How to plan, monitor and evaluate child protection programmes*, 2015, pp. 74–76.

UNICEF, '*Technical Note: Emergency risk informed situation analysis*', 2012, pp. 3–4.

UNICEF, '*The Determinant Analysis for Equity Programming*', August 2014.

UNICEF, *Guidance Note on Preparedness for Emergency Response*, 2017.





## **STEP 2.** **PRIORITIZE ISSUES** **FOR ACTION**

Along with understanding the situation that we seek to change, we need to strategically select the priority issues that UNICEF will address through its programming. **Resource constraints** mean that UNICEF simply cannot address all child deprivations in a given context.

A well-developed situation analysis, and a systematic prioritization process, will allow for more **strategic choices** about the results you will aim for and the strategies you will employ to achieve them. Too often programmes read like a wish list with no hierarchy or strategic focus. We are also sometimes tempted to select lines of action because they are what we already do or because they fit with the latest development fad.

A vital way to improve impact is to clearly identify a few key strategic areas for intervention that are likely to be game-changers. This kind of prioritization process can take place at **different levels**, such as the country programme level, the sectoral level, or the intervention level.

Prioritization is **evidence-based, participatory and iterative**. In other words, it is best achieved through a consultative process that hinges on the best available information. This does not happen in one sitting. The prioritization process occurs through several rounds as thinking is sharpened, options considered and the potential for success assessed.

You might use prioritization initially to determine which deprivations to focus on in the development of a causality analysis, since it will help you devise

the most appropriate responses.

Prioritization is facilitated by data on key indicators for children, which enable UNICEF to determine the magnitude and severity of a deprivation. Key references for prioritization at this level would be the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which lays out the rights that all children should enjoy. Any shortfalls then could become a focus for action.

In another instance, once a causality analysis has been developed and there is an understanding of the different causes of a particular problem, a programme officer might decide to focus on one stream of causes, as opposed to others. This could be for specific reasons, such as the availability of resources to act on those causes, the programme officer's knowledge of and track record in dealing with such situations, the understanding of other development actors or a combination of reasons. As a stream of causes are developed and strategies identified to address them, specific interventions identified as a result might also be prioritized over time.

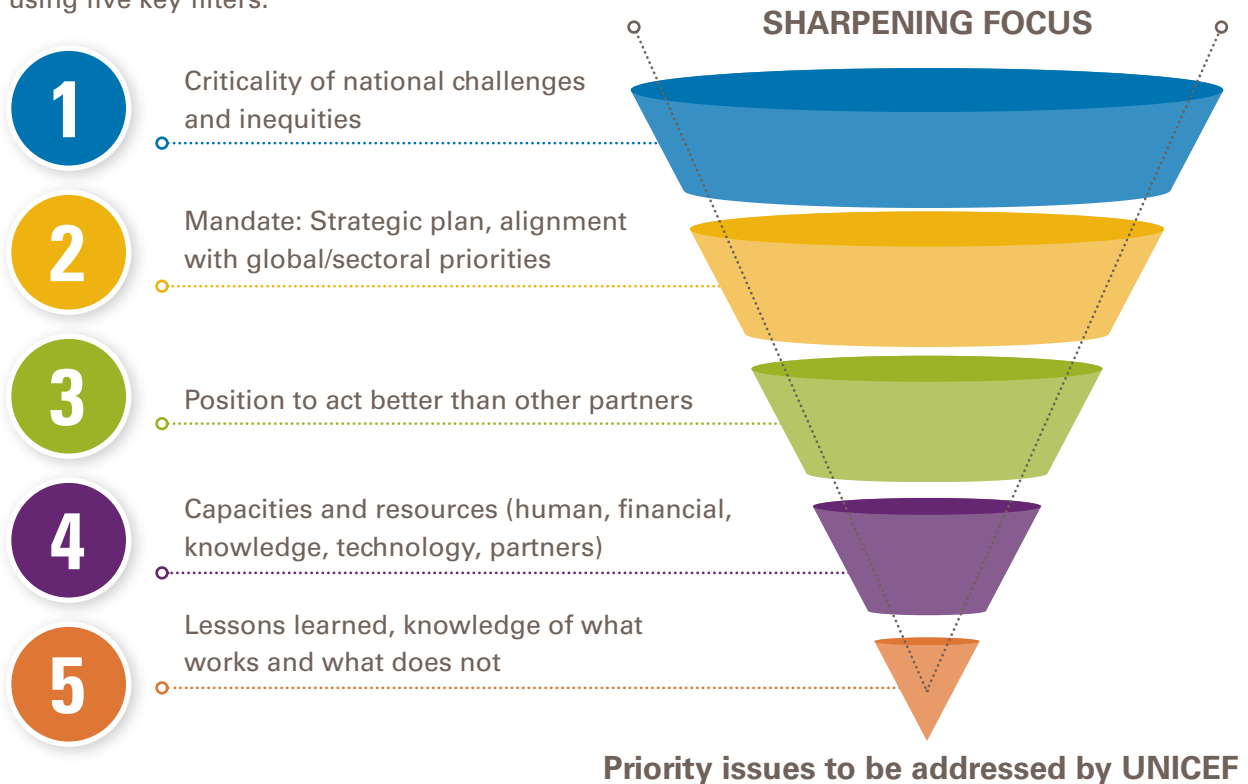
### **Funnelling priorities through five filters**

To support a sound prioritization process, you can use the **prioritization funnel with five key filters** illustrated in Figure 2.4. This will help you determine which issues to focus on in your programming. The tool asks you to consider issues through five filters, to see whether each issue 'passes' through the filter. This analysis could be undertaken in a participatory manner by posting a visual on the wall, writing each issue on a card, and then selecting the issues that pass through each successive filter.



**Figure 2.4. Tool C:** The prioritization funnel with five filters

UNICEF cannot address all deprivations. It needs to prioritize based on its **comparative advantage** using five key filters:



**FILTER 1.**

**Criticality of problems**

Make choices based on evidence of the persistence, severity and scope of the issue or deprivation and its consequences on **affected population groups**. Consider multiple impacts of overlapping deprivations as well as the criticality of the problem in the event of disasters, climate change, conflict or other shocks.

**FILTER 2.**

**Alignment with UNICEF’s mandate**

Issues to work on should align with UNICEF’s mandate. These issues should be consistent with UNICEF’s Mission Statement, the Convention on the Rights

of the Child, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, *Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action*, Gender Action Plan, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, global and sectoral priorities such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Partnership for Education, etc.

**FILTER 3.**

**Complementarity with what others are doing**

Consider the strengths and weaknesses of partners and key actors, their interests, and their programmatic and geographic areas of action. A mapping





of partners, stakeholders and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) will help you identify opportunities and strategic partnerships and enable you to make a decision about where to intervene based on the comparative advantage of other actors.

#### **FILTER 4.** Alignment with UNICEF's comparative advantage

Consider:

- UNICEF's financial and human resources, technological and organizational/operational capacity and structure to act
- Value for money and efficiencies
- Track record that positions UNICEF to act more effectively than others
- UNICEF's capacity to consider and address risks adequately.

#### **FILTER 5.** Application of lessons learned around what works

Consider the results of research and evaluations for evidence of tried and tested interventions and approaches that have worked in addressing bottlenecks and barriers.

### **STEP 3.** **DEVISE A THEORY OF CHANGE**

Having selected a priority child rights issue or deprivation that we wish to address, and having developed an understanding of the manifestations of that issue as well as its causes, we can begin to develop a theory of change. In simple terms, this involves identifying how we

would like the current situation related to that child rights issue to change, and how we think we can help that change to come about. This thinking about what change is desired and how it might occur is the foundation for strategic planning.

An adequate theory of change builds on an accurate analysis of the existing situation (see step 1) and evidence of how change happens in that context. An understanding of causalities – as viewed through the lenses of rights, gender, equity, the 10 determinants and risk – establishes a foundation for the development of a sound theory of change. A good situation analysis also recognizes elements of context that are especially difficult to predict because they are fluid and unstable. In some cases, a situation analysis will be about reframing a problem as a potential opportunity. A theory of change must reflect and explain such contextual complexities.

### **What is a theory of change?**

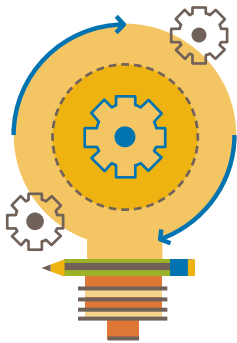
A theory of change is an ongoing process of reflection to explore **why** change is needed and **how** it happens. For UNICEF, a theory of change presents the broad vision of **what results** will be achieved and **how** they will be achieved. It articulates the theories and assumptions that underpin the anticipated change process through which inputs and activities are converted to or lead to identified results at the output, outcome and impact levels.

A theory of change is a structured thinking process that allows stakeholders to formulate more realistic goals, clarify accountability and establish a common understanding of the strategies to be



“Every programme is packed with beliefs, assumptions and hypotheses about how change happens – about the way humans work, or organizations, or political systems, or eco-systems. Theory of change is about articulating these many underlying [causality-related] assumptions about how change will happen in a programme.”

– Quote by Patricia Rogers in: Isabel Vogel for the UK Department for International Development, ‘Review of the Use of “Theory of Change” in International Development’, 2012



used to achieve results. Since all information relevant to the success of a programme is rarely known at the strategic planning stage, theories of change allow for the formulation and testing of hypotheses about how change is likely to occur, and how best to catalyse it. They introduce a level of **experimentation** and **learning** to programme design and implementation. They also draw from an understanding of actions that are known to have worked to produce change.

## What purposes do theories of change serve?

Theories of change are critical to RBM since they:

- Ensure that the programme leads to tangible results that add up to the desired change
- Present an easy-to-understand vision of how the desired results will be achieved
- Clarify programme logic
- Identify appropriate participants and partners critical to results achievement
- Enable organizations to assess their contribution to change
- Help you prepare for effective programme monitoring and evaluation.

An encompassing theory of change supports sound programme design, including:

- Prioritization of programme areas, formulation of results, and articulation of the interventions needed to bring about the desired change
- Clarification of programme boundaries, articulating where the programme sits, what other areas it interacts with, and how it is influenced by its wider context
- Adequate attention to outputs and outcomes that are beyond the direct influence of the programme but that are critical to the programme’s success and its potential to make a difference to the main problem
- Definition of performance measures, indicating how progress on results will be ascertained
- Identification of strategies for translating inputs into activities and then to results, based on the understanding of their comparative impact, the specific bottlenecks to be addressed, existing knowledge of what works, and considerations of feasibility and sustainability
- Explicit identification of assumptions about how outputs will turn into intended outcomes, considering pre-conditions necessary for success and the potential of alternative strategies

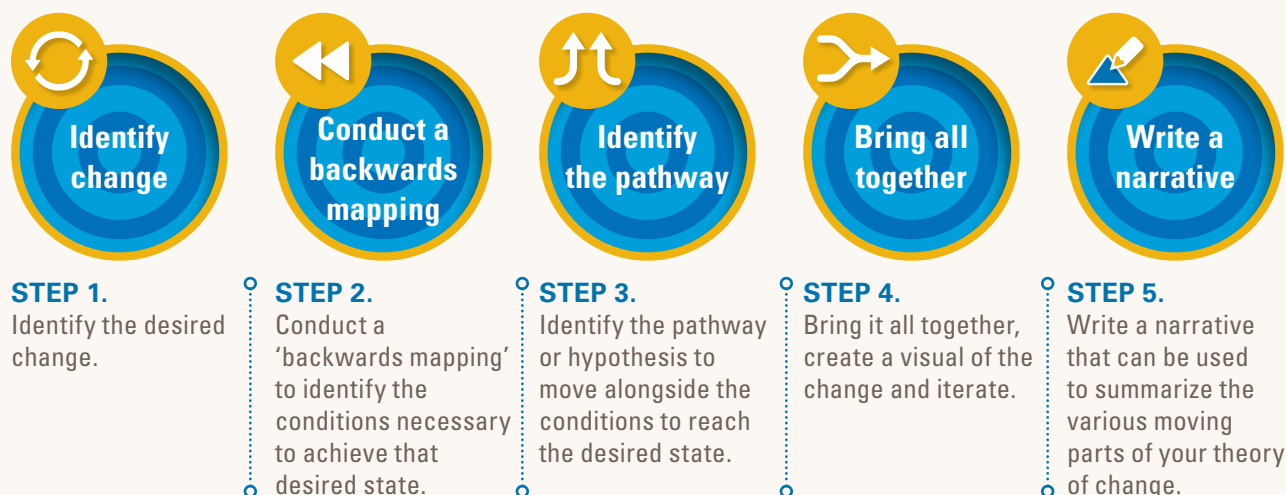




- Identification and involvement of appropriate participants and partners critical to the problem and to achieving the desired results
- Consideration of how to address risks to children and women such as natural

disasters, conflict, epidemics or economic downturns, whether through mitigation measures or appropriate monitoring of those risks beyond the scope of the programme to address.

## Steps to creating a theory of change



### The process

Theories of change may be developed “for any level of intervention – a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy or an organization.”<sup>5</sup> Related terminology that could be used for such an exercise might be a conceptual framework, a programme vision or a logic model.

An effective theory of change is country- or situation-specific, articulates a strategic vision for reaching a desired result, and makes explicit how one level of results leads to another. The process of developing a theory of change is richer when stakeholders are involved, allowing them to bring to bear their experience, knowledge and insights on how change effectively happens.

Wherever a theory of change is applied, it is important to note that its development is not likely to happen in one sitting. However it is approached, the development of a theory of change is an **iterative** exercise.

Creating a theory of change from an approach such as the one described above **enables the consideration of perspectives** without the feelings of being tethered that can occur with developing logic models or results chains.

For instance, using the ‘why? because...’ formula from the causal analysis (see Figure 2.2) and the reverse ‘if...then’ logic, one can move from the desired state and map out



the conditions necessary for that change to happen. To take an example: The causal relationship that “child labour is a socially accepted form of increasing family income **because**...there is low public awareness of the consequences of child labour...” can be reversed into the theory of change that “**if** public awareness of the consequences of child labour is heightened, **then** the social acceptability of child labour will decrease.”

### The process

Developing a theory of change is a reflective process. It can be messy, but free of jargon, enabling the consideration of pathways to change by knowledgeable stakeholders. This process may be even messier when mapped out for complex contexts where risks related to disaster, climate change, socio-economic instability or conflict are high; it may require working out the ‘if...then’ logic in phases, first for the current situation, and then layering over an adjusted analysis taking into consideration most likely scenarios, then testing which results chains remain solid and which require adjustments in sequencing or different pathways.

Once the pathway has been mapped out, it becomes easier to develop a strong results chain with ‘SMART’ (that is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) results and indicators. This may then warrant revisions to the initial theory of change. Hence a theory of change may be elaborated prior to the development of a results chain (from outputs to outcomes to impact), or used to refine one that is already developed. When used to review an existing results chain, it allows for validation of the ‘if...then’ logic.

A technically sound theory of change relies on adequate research and acquiring the knowledge and perspectives on how change happens in a specific country context. It also relies on expert opinion and perspectives about what is likely to work. A sound process implies that there are opportunities for key stakeholders to participate in the development of the theory of change. External facilitation may help reach agreement and manage diverse perspectives.

### Selecting strategies to achieve the desired change

A key part of the theory of change are the hypotheses or assumptions about which strategies (a combination of interventions and activities) will achieve the desired results.

#### Strategies should be selected based on evidence of what works:

- Look to **evidence-based literature and analysis**, particularly programme documents, evaluations, peer-reviewed literature, research-based general theories of how change happens at the individual, organizational, community and policy levels, and other robust documented evidence of what works.
- You may find the **MoRES bottlenecks and strategies database**, or the corresponding [lists of bottlenecks and strategies by outcome area](#), to be useful resources as well. They catalogue evidence of what works to address bottlenecks to coverage of proven interventions for children.





- **Where no robust evidence-based theory of change is available**, start with a hypothesis of ‘what works’, based on the available evidence, and then further refine and validate it through programme implementation and ongoing research and studies. This does require, however, solid and meaningful monitoring and evaluation of all levels of results (output, outcome, impact).
- You can develop theories of change about a planned or existing programme by **articulating stakeholders’ mental models** about how it will work (or how it is working). To do so, you might ask questions such as: “How would life be better for children in 5 to 10 years if this programme worked well?” and “What about the programme will have made it effective in contributing to that change?”

#### **Other key considerations for selecting strategies include:**

- Knowledge of the national context
- UNICEF’s comparative advantage, which translates to the mandate and ability to act
- Nature of available human and financial resources
- Considerations of feasibility and sustainability.

Strategies should also be **risk-informed**. That is, they should consider likely disasters, disease outbreaks, economic shocks, effects of climate change or conflict, the impact they will have on children and women and how these shocks and their impacts might be reduced. This includes thinking through how priority results and necessary pathways will shift in the event of a humanitarian crisis. Ideally, the pathways identified in the theory of change build agility so that services and systems can shift to respond. At the same time, in the context of humanitarian response, strategies should build in longer-term sustainability and the resilience of populations to further shocks.

### **The products**

The products of a theory of change are often presented as a combination of:

- A **graphic** that demonstrates how results will be achieved through a multi-year series of actions (see Figure 2.5)
- A short **written document** that describes each of the elements of the theory of change and how they fit together.



### **Other key resources**

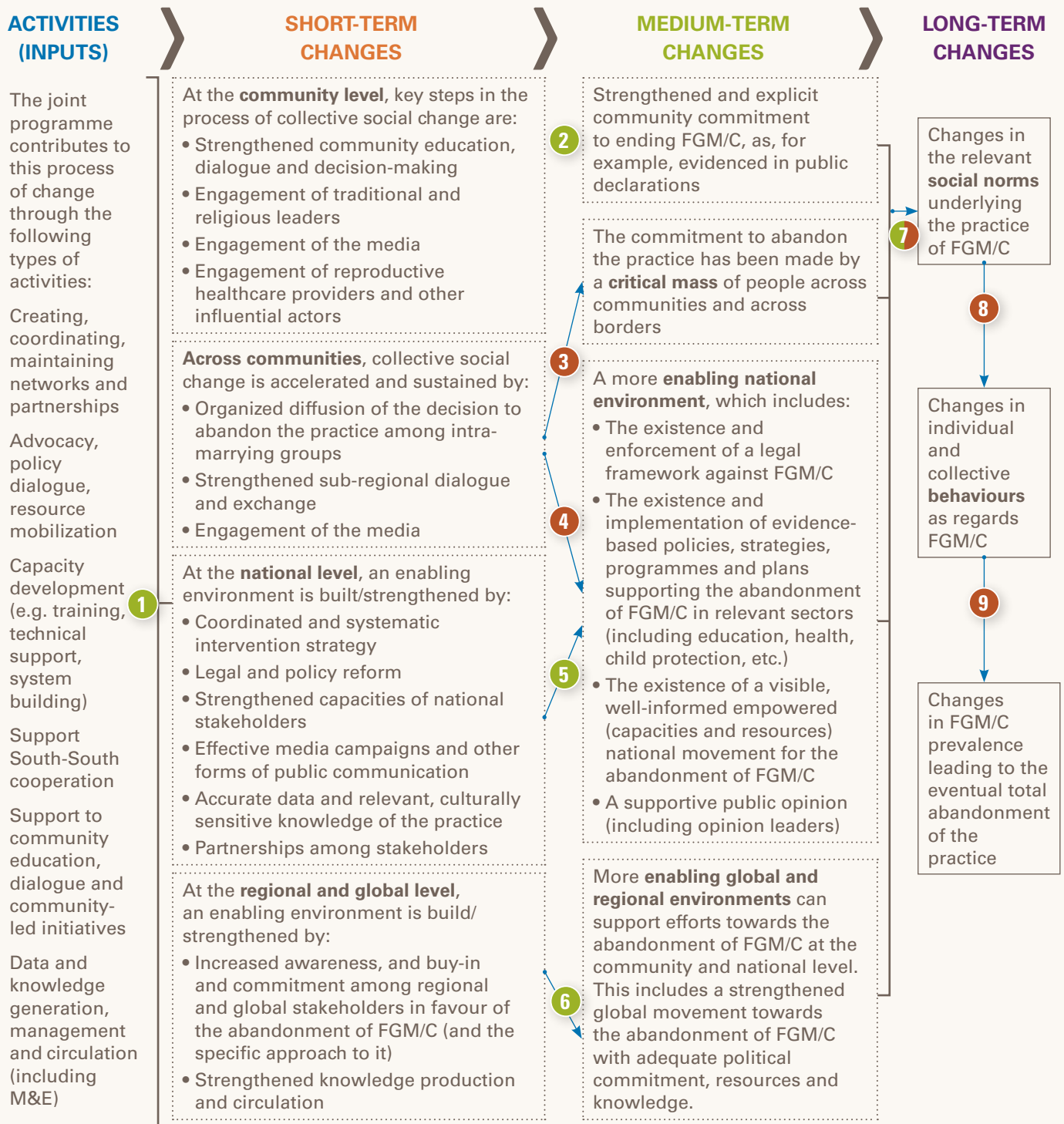
Funnell, Sue C., and Patricia J. Rogers, [Purposeful Program Theory: Effective use of theories of change and logic models](#), Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Valters, Craig, ‘[Theories of Change: Time for a radical approach to learning in development](#)’, Overseas Development Institute, London, 2015.

Vogel, Isabel, for the UK Department for International Development, ‘[Review of the Use of “Theory of Change” in International Development: Review report](#)’, April 2012.

[MoRES SharePoint site bottlenecks and strategies database](#)



**Figure 2.5. Tool D: Theory of change**

**Context assumption: Joint programme taking place in favourable country environments for work on accelerating change, e.g. due to some previous work on FGM/C; some public support; and government commitment**

Source: United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *Joint Evaluation, UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating change, 2008–2012, Final report, volume II*, UNFPA/UNICEF, New York, 2013, annex 13, p. 192.





## **STEP 4.** **DEFINE DESIRED RESULTS**

Once you have developed an initial theory of change that explains the transformation your programme intends to achieve and the pathways to achieve it, the next step is to define your desired results. This may lead you to go back and revise your initial theory of change, since the results statements will make it easier to see and assess your assumptions about how one level of results will lead to the next.

Formulating sound results is essential to results-based management: It requires us to clearly articulate the changes we envision so that we can observe or measure whether we are moving in the right direction. However, often our results statements are so complex and ambitious that they become hard to measure. Alternatively, our 'results' statements denote activities or objectives rather than measurable *changes* or actual results.

This section will help you formulate sound results that reflect measurable change. It will also help you understand the differences between the three levels of results (output, outcome and impact) and to clarify logical linkages along the results chain.

## **What are results?**

A result is a describable or measurable change in a state or condition that derives from a cause-and-effect relationship. The changes can be intended or unintended, positive and/or negative.

The United Nations articulates **three levels of results: outputs, outcomes and impact**. Each level of results, broadly speaking, corresponds to a different level of change.

## **What are results chains?**

A development programme is often supported by a results chain – **the causal sequence** of how results will be achieved. The chain begins with the necessary inputs. It then explains how these inputs will enable the realization of certain activities and the achievement of outputs. It culminates in a description of outcomes and impact. These results form a hierarchy and are logically linked through a cause-and-effect relationship.

A logically coherent chain of sound results, based on credible theories of change (see Step 3), is the foundation for solid programme planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

The significance of each level of the results chain is explained in Table 2.2, which also includes examples of sequences of related results.



**Table 2.2.** The results chain: Definitions and examples

| CHAIN OF RESULTS  | SIGNIFICANCE FOR UNICEF   | EXAMPLE 1   | EXAMPLE 2  |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>IMPACT</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term changes in conditions for identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention</li> <li>• Relate to the SDGs and international and national development goals</li> <li>• Can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental</li> <li>• For UNICEF, increased respect, protection and fulfillment of the human rights of children</li> <li>• Results are primarily nationally owned.</li> </ul>   | Increased completion rates in primary education in crisis-affected areas and for the poorest quintiles      | Decreased levels of child poverty                                      |
| <b>OUTCOMES</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium-term changes in behaviour or performance of targeted institutions or individuals</li> <li>• Logically expected to occur once the development intervention has achieved one or more outputs</li> <li>• For UNICEF, improved coverage and quality of proven interventions for children</li> <li>• Practices, systems and societal norms favourable to the well-being of children</li> <li>• Shared among development partners. Individual development actors can rarely achieve these on their own. UNICEF contributes to these results.</li> </ul> | Increased government budget allocation on subsidies and bursaries for the education of girls in rural areas | Increased provision of focused antenatal care to adolescent girls      |
| <b>OUTPUTS</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shorter-term changes in capacities of individuals or institutions (including skills, resources, motivation and authority to undertake a specific action)</li> <li>• Availability of new products, services</li> <li>• Acquired knowledge or skills of service providers, access to information</li> <li>• Causes of bottlenecks addressed</li> <li>• High degree of attribution to UNICEF action; high degree of accountability.</li> </ul>  | Policy on free primary education enacted  | Adolescents and youth have increased access to youth-friendly services |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs</li> <li>• Carried out by UNICEF, all levels of government and implementing partners.</li> </ul>  | Consultations/drafting of an education policy   | Creation of youth-friendly corners in communities                      |
| <b>INPUTS</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for development interventions (including money, time, personnel and equipment).</li> </ul>  | Financial resources, human resources (such as technical expertise)  |  |





### Developing results chains

To develop a chain of results, build on the initial theory of change you developed in Step 3. Developing a results chain is an iterative process of checking the ‘if, then’ logic, reviewing and improving on the results statements at the various levels of the chain.

Each level in the chain of results should **consider all the results that are both sufficient and necessary to achieve the next level of results, and take into consideration underlying causality assumptions and risks** (based on the causality analysis in Step 1). The way to determine if the necessary and sufficient results have been identified is to refer to evidence of what works. Such evidence is available in research and evaluation or from the experience of stakeholders

who are developing the chain of results. If there are gaps in the chain, they should be filled, either by UNICEF or by other actors with whom UNICEF can coordinate, advocate and work synergistically (see Figure 2.6).

It is important to understand the ‘cause and effect’, ‘if, then’ reasoning behind the results chain. The chain includes an impact statement as a response to the development issue, challenge or problem. It shows that **if** such an impact is to be achieved, **then** certain previous results are needed, and **if** results at this level are to be attained, **then** another set of previous-level results is necessary. This type of reasoning is useful to uncover a continuum of results from the highest to the lowest order; all are required to achieve the desired impact, as shown in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.6. Key principles of results-based planning

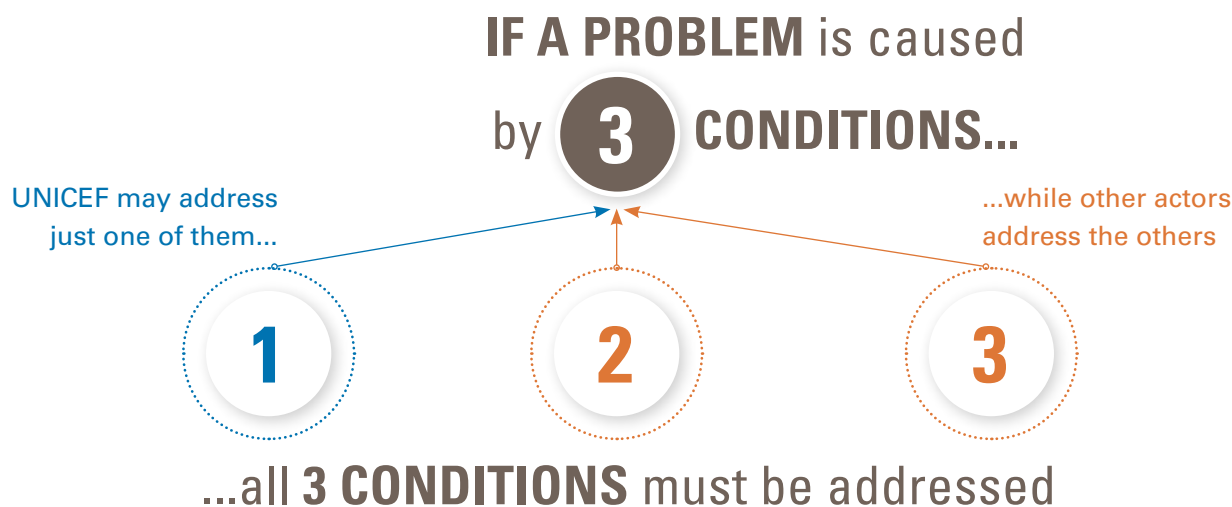
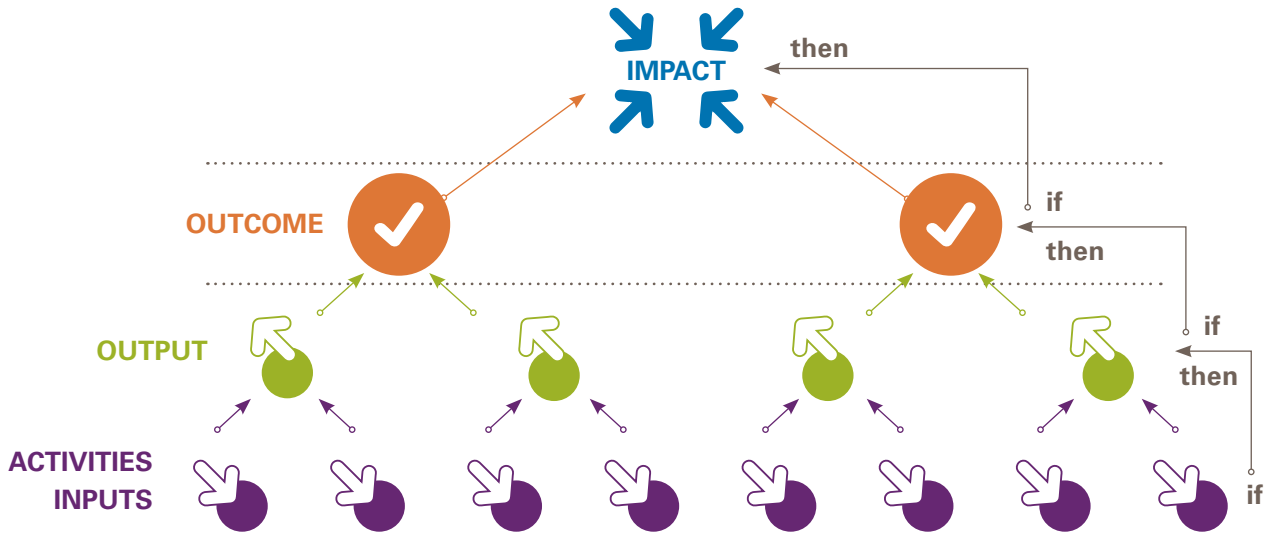




Figure 2.7. Building a results chain using the 'if-then' logic of the theory of change



The **reverse logic** can also be applied to verify whether a programme is on the right track. If certain inputs are provided and activities implemented, will they lead to the expected results? Will the first level of expected results together contribute to the second level of expected results? Will all these results together eventually have the desired impact?

A results chain should include all the expected outputs of a programme that lead to all the expected outcomes of that programme that contribute to the desired impact. Two examples are provided in Figures 2.8 and 2.9.

The **reverse logic** can also be applied to verify whether a programme is on the right track.





Figure 2.8. One example of a results chain<sup>6</sup>

|                   |  |   |   |   |  |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>IMPACT</b>     | More children complete quality primary education, meeting grade standards in crisis-affected areas and for the poorest quintiles in country X  |   |   |   |  |
| <b>OUTCOMES</b>   | <b>1.</b><br>Primary schools for the poorest children benefit from increased government budget allocation or subsidies                         |   | <b>2.</b><br>More children are participating in primary education   |   | <b>3.</b><br>Children receive two meals at school in districts most affected by the food crisis                        |
| <b>OUTPUTS</b>    | <b>1.1</b><br>Re-allocation of public education spending towards primary education (subsidies and bursaries)                                   | <b>1.2</b><br>Improved government policy on free primary education (including subsidies, bursaries and sanctions)   | <b>2.1</b><br>Improved mechanisms to monitor and apply sanctions to primary schools that charge fees                        | <b>2.2</b><br>Primary school children and their families and communities have increased awareness of their right to fee-free education    | <b>3.1</b><br>Increased funding for expansion of existing food programmes run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b> | <b>1.1</b><br>Advocacy for the government to re-focus public education spending (for example, evidence on efficacy of subsidies and bursaries) | <b>1.2</b><br>Technical assistance for the development of improved policy (for example, models from other countries of what works, budget planning support) | <b>2.1</b><br>Technical assistance with establishment of roles, responsibilities and timelines for monitoring and sanctions | <b>2.2</b><br>Public awareness campaign (through posters in the schools, communications to parents or via radio and SMS [text messaging]) | <b>3.1</b><br>Management of grant to local NGOs to expand their school feeding programmes                              |



**Figure 2.9.** Another example of a results chain

|                   |   |  |   |  |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <b>IMPACT</b>     | Reduced maternal and newborn mortality and complications (target population: rural adolescent mothers)  |  |   |  |   |  |
| <b>OUTCOMES</b>   | <b>1.</b> Increased provision of focused antenatal care (including prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, intermittent preventive treatment of malaria in pregnancy, and supplementation) |  |   | <b>2.</b> Increased provision of quality care during labour and delivery   |   |  |
| <b>OUTPUTS</b>    | <b>1.1</b> Increased access to youth-friendly services  | <b>1.2</b> More patient-oriented service                 | <b>1.3</b> Easier and more discreet access to condoms   | <b>2.1</b> Nurses and medical assistants have increased authorization to perform certain obstetric services (such as Caesareans)                   | <b>2.2</b> Increased numbers of primary care facility networks in rural areas programmes run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) | <b>2.3</b> Improved competency of health personnel in emergency obstetric and newborn care |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b> | <b>1.1</b> Support for creation of youth-friendly corners in schools  | <b>1.2</b> Support for training in patient-oriented care | <b>1.3</b> Technical assistance to change policy so condoms are distributed in washrooms, not only pharmacies | <b>2.1</b> Technical assistance to change policy and job descriptions so that nurses and medical assistants can perform certain obstetric services | <b>2.2</b> Financial assistance to create primary care facility networks  | <b>2.3</b> Support for innovative competency-based training programme for health personnel |





## Framing results in rapid-onset or scaled-up humanitarian response

In a rapid-onset or escalation of a crisis, response planning and the framing of a results chain takes place within the first days and is developed more fully within the first weeks. In developing strategies and results chains, you may draw heavily from: global experience and evidence on deprivations and rights violations and known effective strategies for immediate response, UNICEF [Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action](#), and advance analysis of likely scenarios feeding into response plans, which are ideally developed in a collaborative process at the national and inter-agency level.

In the actual response, this draft plan (including its results framework) is adapted based on the information available from the initial needs assessment. The output-level results statements are most often a simple adaptation of the commitments statements in the *Core Commitments for Children*, based on context analysis and a [needs assessment](#). Full information about the situation and the needs of the affected population and the scale of response required may be limited. The results

framework is often revised as more details are known about the situation and as humanitarian priorities and strategies evolve. In protracted humanitarian situations, there is an opportunity to integrate humanitarian and development concerns, with both immediate life-saving results and longer-term results that work towards recovery and greater resilience.

## Formulating sound results

Formulating clear results is essential to effective RBM.

Results-based management invites you to move from objectives, which express a good intention, to results, which articulate a measurable change. An objective emphasizes the provider's perspective and reflects an intent and possible course of action (for example, to promote birth registration).

In contrast, a result emphasizes the perspective of the people/institutions the programme intends to serve and concretely articulates the direction of change, or what will have been achieved by a certain point in time (for example, increased birth registration or more children have been registered).<sup>7</sup> See Table 2.3 for examples of objectives and results.

**Table 2.3.** Objectives versus results

| EXAMPLES OF OBJECTIVES (GOOD INTENTIONS)                                       | EXAMPLES OF RESULTS (MEASURABLE CHANGE)  |
|--|--|
| To strengthen national capacities for preparedness and response to emergencies | Improved capacity of the Ministry of Social Services to prepare and respond to emergencies   |
| To establish Teacher Resource Centres and set up teacher upgrading programmes  | Increased implementation of relevant, quality pedagogical practices by teachers in seven municipalities  |
| To support country X to adopt a child rights monitoring system                 | By 2015, improved monitoring, reporting and response for the realization of the rights of boys and girls in line with CRC and CEDAW by the government of country X |





There are **two main ways to formulate sound results**:

**1. Place your change verb up front (see Figure 2.10).** Do not include target or expected date, which relate to the indicators and would appear in your monitoring plan. This has the advantage of allowing you to measure and express the result at any point in time, even if the direction of change is not what you expected (for example, there was a decrease instead of an increase). Measuring this type of result does not elicit a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

\* Example: Increased practice of non-violent discipline among caregivers.

**2. Use the present tense to indicate the change as if it has already happened (see Figure 2.11).** Include target date.

\* Example: By 2018, ministries at the national level implement the juvenile justice system in a manner that is more in line with international standards.

**Figure 2.10.** Formulating a results statement that begins with a change verb



Source: Adapted from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Quality Outcomes and Results Frameworks, Guidance Note for External Partners, 2014.





**Figure 2.11.** Formulating a results statement using a present tense verb to indicate a desired future

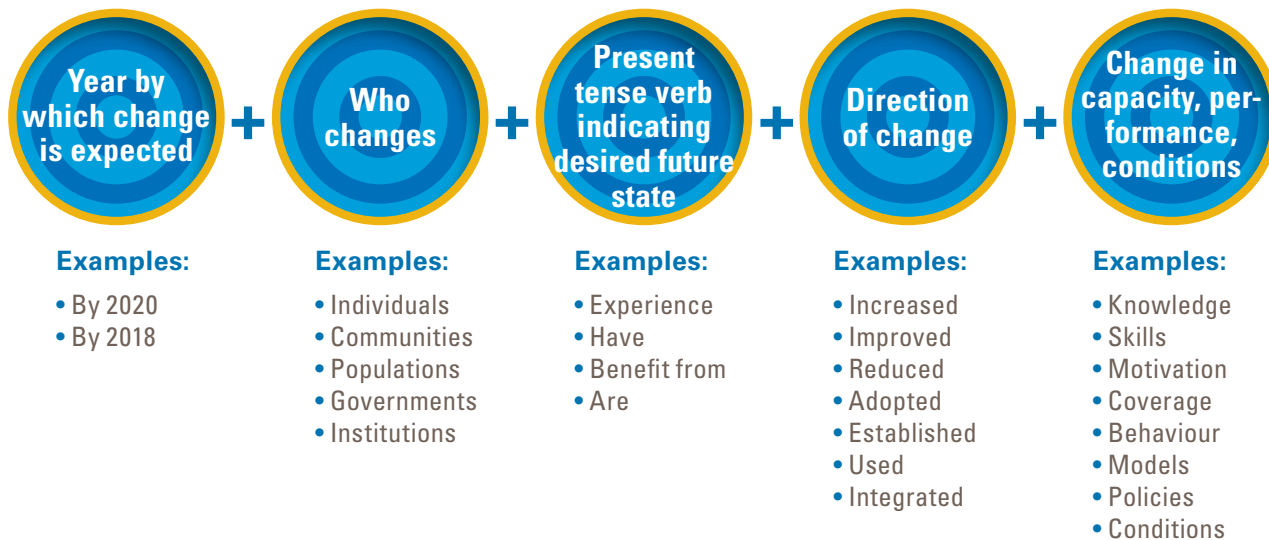
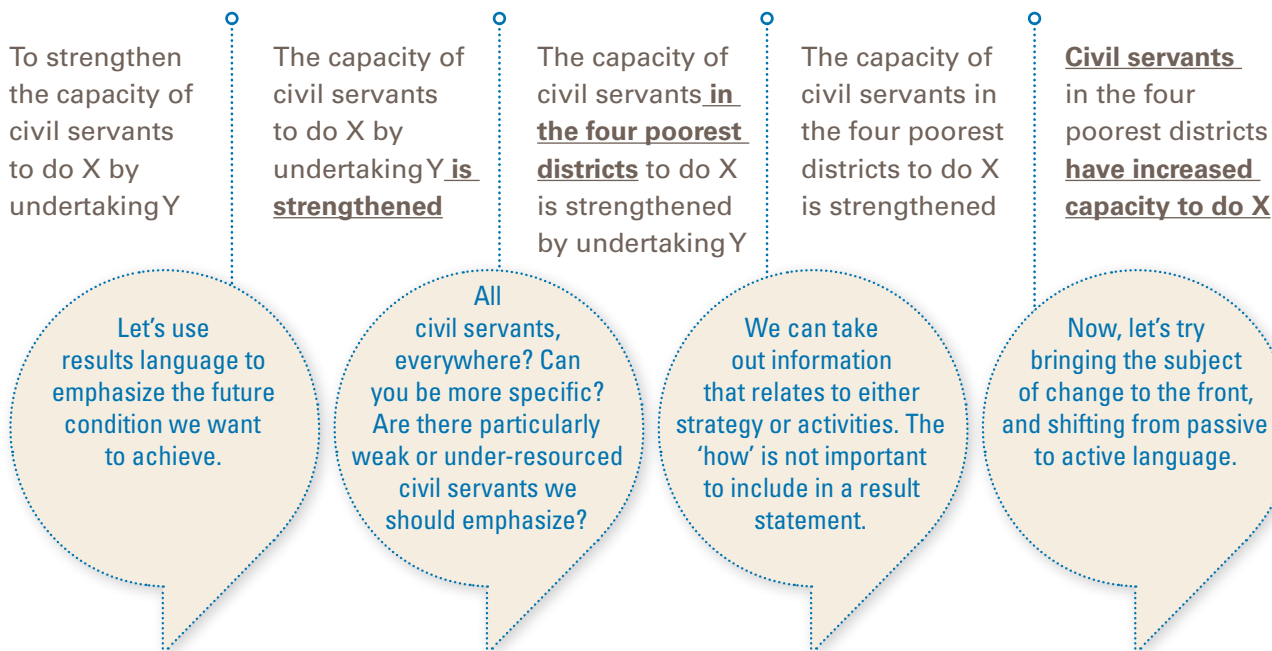


Figure 2.12. provides a step-by-step illustration of how to formulate a results statement that is clear, specific and focused on the desired change.

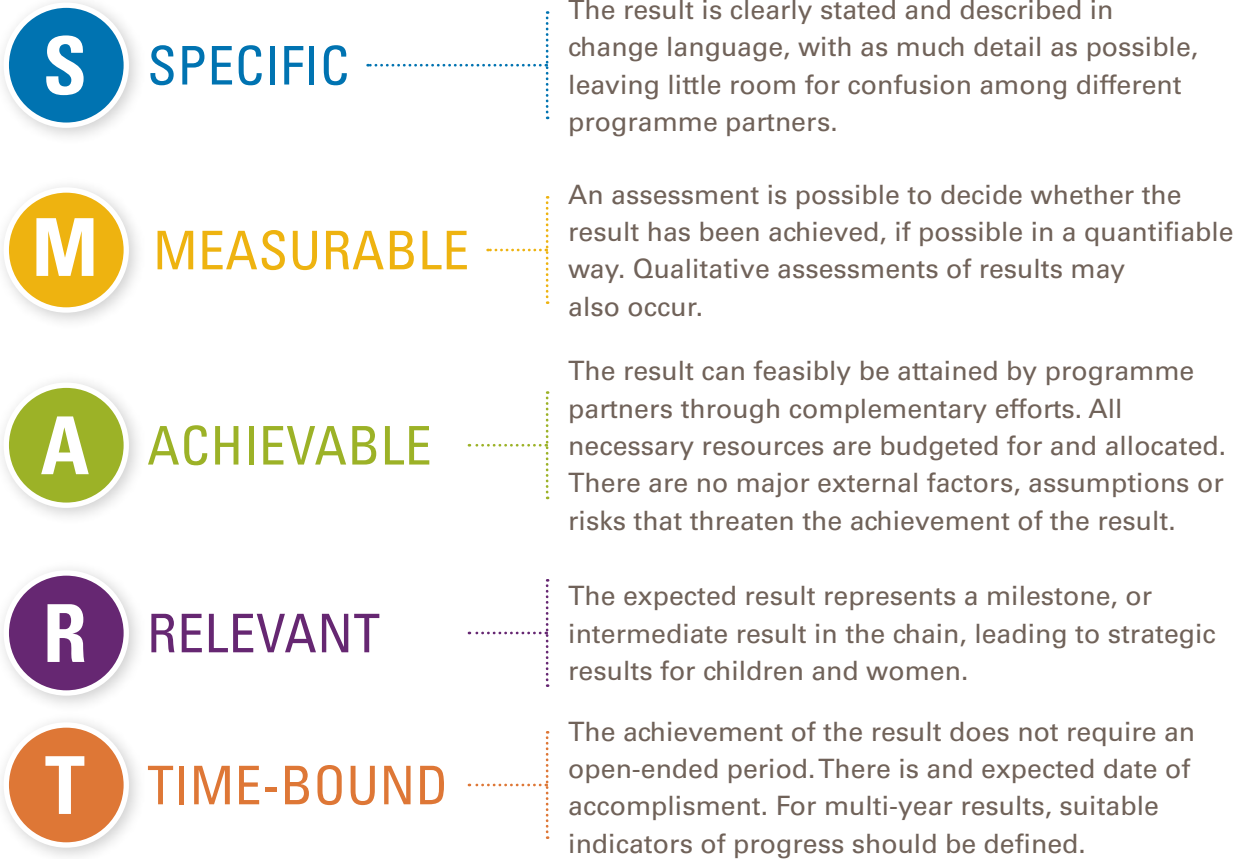
**Figure 2.12.** Formulating a results statement





Well-stated results satisfy the 'SMART' criteria laid out in Figure 2.13.

Figure 2.13. SMART criteria





### Pitfalls to avoid in formulating results

A number of pitfalls in formulating results can get in the way of applying RBM:

\* Wordy, no change language, and stated as an objective

- To promote equitable economic development and democratic governance in accordance with international norms by strengthening national capacities at all levels and empowering citizens by increasing their participation in decision-making processes

\* Too ambitious

- Strengthened rule of law, equal access to justice and the promotion of rights

\* Containing multiple results (for example: delivery of services and protection of rights)

- The State improves its delivery of services and its protection of rights – with the involvement of civil society and in compliance with its international commitments

\* Wishy-washy, not a result (for example: support provided to improve...)

- Support to institutional capacity building for improved governance

\* So general it could mean anything (mixes an objective with an output)

- To promote sustainable development and increase capacity at the municipal level

\* Confusing means and ends

- Strengthen the protection of natural resources through the creation of an enabling environment that promotes sound resources management

The checklist shown in Figure 2.14 will support you in formulating or refining results. Table 2.4 provides examples of results statements at the output, outcome and impact level.

Figure 2.14. Checklist for formulating results

- Clarity on the level (output, outcome or impact) and accountability
- SMART results, supplemented by indicators
- Coherent results chains, applying 'if-then' logic
- Uses change language that places emphasis on the subject of change
- Considers equity, human rights and gender
- Has a clear relationship with issues identified in Step 1 (Understand the situation)
- Avoids known pitfalls in results formulation

**Table 2.4.** Examples of results statements

Note that each of the results below should also specify the target population and the geographic district/region reached.

| OUTPUT   | OUTCOME   | IMPACT   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Health:</b> Decreased measles vaccine stockouts lasting more than one month   | Increase in number of children under 1 year receiving measles vaccine   | Decrease in under-five mortality rate  |
| <b>HIV/AIDS:</b> Increased number of girls, boys, men and women in humanitarian situations are informed about where to access basic health and support services (including access to condoms and continuation of antiretroviral treatment) | Increase in number of girls, boys, men and women in humanitarian situations who use HIV prevention and treatment services | Decrease in new HIV infections among girls and boys under 15 years                       |
| <b>Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH):</b> Increase in number of primary and secondary schools with safe drinking water  | Increase in proportion of girls, boys, men and women using an improved source of drinking water                           | Reduced incidence of water-borne illnesses   |
| <b>Nutrition:</b> Improved provision of infant and young child feeding counseling services   | Increase in exclusive breastfeeding among children 0 to 5 months old  | Decrease in number of girls and boys under age 5 who are moderately and severely stunted |
| <b>Education:</b> Improved inclusion of an emergency component in education sector plans and budgets   | Increase in number of children in humanitarian situations attending formal or non-formal basic education                  | Decrease in primary school-aged girls and boys out of school                             |
| <b>Child protection:</b> Increased availability of free birth registration   | Increase in percentage of children under age 5 whose births are registered  | Improved education and health status   |
| <b>Social inclusion:</b> More explicit attention to child poverty and disparities in government budget frameworks  | Increased social spending per child   | Decrease in number and percentage of children living in extreme poverty                  |



### Other key resources

Funnell, Sue C., and Patricia J. Rogers, Purposeful Program Theory: Effective use of theories of change and logic models, Jossey-Bass, 2011.

UNICEF, 'Guidance on the Development of Programme Strategy Notes', 2016.

UNICEF, Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, 2010.





## **STEP 5.** **ALIGN RESULTS, STRATEGIES AND FUNDING**

Once the results chain is elaborated, and strategies identified, it becomes important to consider the funding available or likely to be mobilized to enable the achievement of the identified results. Applying results-based budgeting principles to the programme's design sets the course for achieving results with a view to ensuring value for money.

Results-based budgeting is an important facet of results-based management. For UNICEF, results-based budgeting is the evidence-based process of allocating and managing resources to achieve results. This kind of budgeting encourages efficiencies in resource allocation and use by considering the costs of achieving results and whether the same (or greater) results could be achieved at lower costs through alternative implementation approaches.

Applying results-based budgeting principles enables a programme specialist to determine the resource requirements for implementing an intervention or strategies that will serve to achieve output results. Sound budgetary application links specific results, and their corresponding strategies and activities, to actual expenditures through correct use of programme and accounting codes.

Essential budgeting-related elements of strategic planning include:

- Considerations in budgeting for child-focused outcomes at the national level
- Crafting value-for-money strategies to be applied to deliver outputs
- Paying attention to value-for-money considerations, notably the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of resource allocation and use.

### **Budgeting for UNICEF-assisted programmes**

Budgeting can be undertaken at outcome, output and activity levels. Activity budgeting considers the costs of inputs necessary to realize an activity, such as the training of community health workers. This may include a supply component (such as training facilities, catering, reproduction of the training manual), technical expertise (development of curriculum and training manual, facilitation), logistics (transportation) and the participants (out-of-station allowance, etc.). Knowing the nature of activities that are likely to be undertaken will facilitate the development of budgets at outcome and output levels.

### **Outcome budgeting**

Estimating resources (technical, financial and human) to achieve impact- and outcome-level results are often lengthy and complicated exercises. Estimating resources to achieve results at the outcome level will entail working with government and other



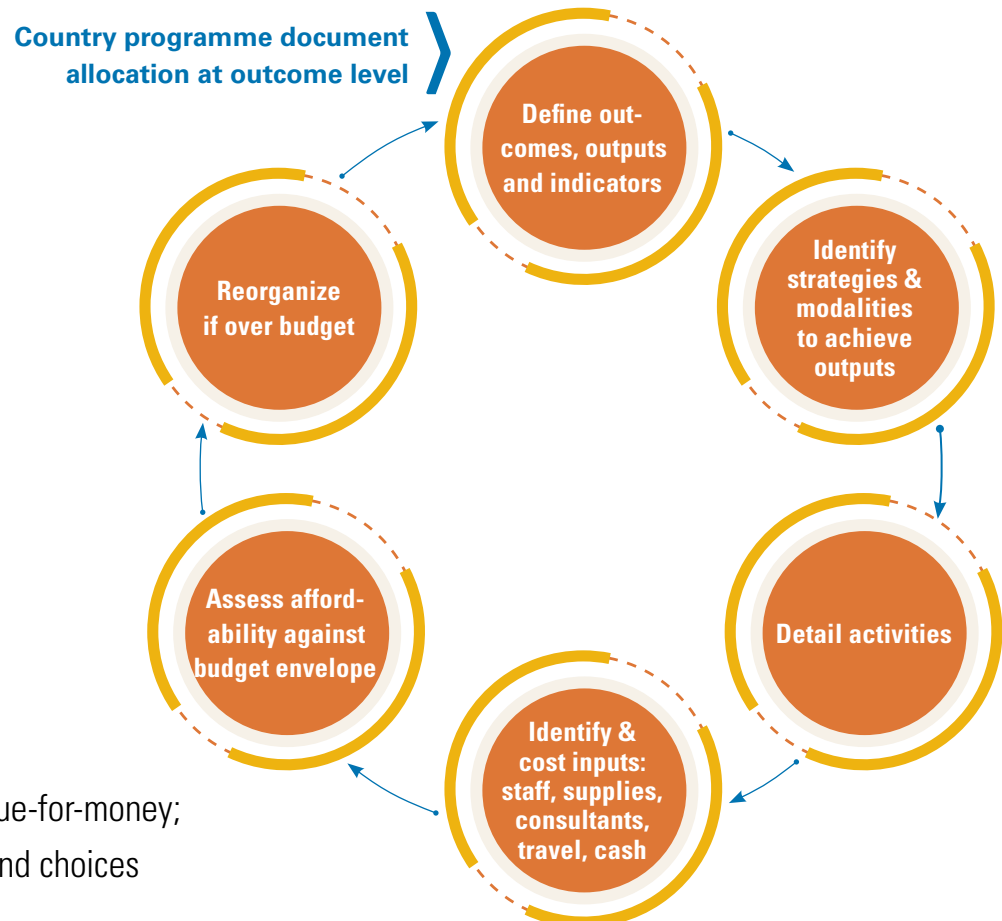
partners to analyse current total resource allocations needed to realize a right, or a set of rights, for children. UNICEF's best role is to participate in exercises that advocate for attention to children in national budgets. It requires encouraging dialogue around the resources needed to accelerate the realization of children's rights.

### Output budgeting

Once the initial level of ambition is agreed upon with government and other partners during the preparation

of strategic plans (UNDAFs, Programme Strategy Notes, Country Programme Documents, etc.), there should be a general understanding of the inputs required to achieve expected outputs and outcomes. A budget and time line required to deliver these results should be developed at this stage (see Figure 2.15). Assumptions about future costs can be based on historical information on how results have been achieved in the past, with an understanding of the specific costs of undertaking activities in a given context.

Figure 2.15. Aligning the budget with a strategy to deliver outputs



\* Be mindful of value-for-money; be prepared to defend choices





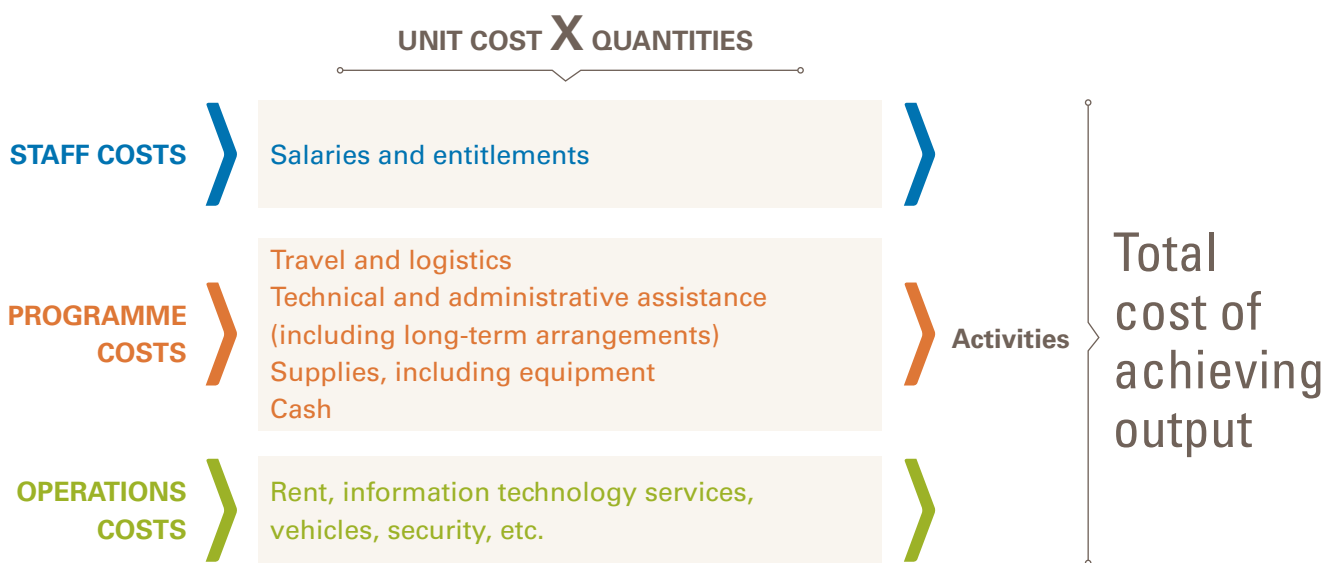
The alignment of results, strategies and resource requirements is iterative. Adjustments can be made to any or all three of these elements until there is a strong probability that identified strategies (for which UNICEF is reasonably

confident it can secure the necessary resources), will support the achievement of results. This might require revising the outputs and strategies from what was initially envisaged to a more affordable set (see Figures 2.16 and 2.17).

**Figure 2.16.** Devising a strategy and outputs: An iterative process influenced by funding



**Figure 2.17.** Types of costs to consider when budgeting







### Value for money

Value for money is the relationship between the resources spent and the results they buy, whether outputs, outcomes or lasting impact. UNICEF tries to maximize the impact of the resources spent to accelerate the realization of children’s rights. Greater requirements for transparency are driving the need for more explicit documentation of actions being taken to ensure value for money.

Value for money is traditionally broken down into three elements: economy, efficiency and effectiveness:

#### Economy

*Best price for inputs (staff, services, supplies, etc.)*

- Programme strategy choices – establish needed inputs
- Business processes to assure best price for procured inputs

#### Efficiency

*Achieving defined output through good value inputs*

- Define realistic output results
- A high-quality programme strategy to achieve output results

#### Effectiveness

*Influence of outputs on achieving outcomes/impact*

- Establishing a high-quality programme strategy

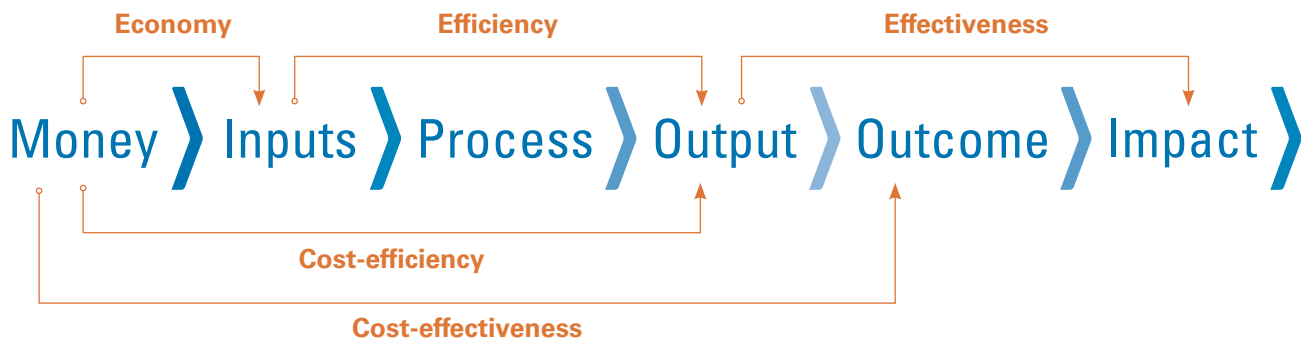
Figure 2.18 illustrates how the three elements relate to each other in the programme cycle.

### Why be explicit about value for money in strategic planning?

UNICEF needs to pay attention to value for money to achieve the best results possible for the resources invested.

- Documenting value for money is a key element of the evidence needed to advocate for scale-up.
- With value for money in mind, UNICEF’s working culture aims to contribute as much as possible to the realization of children’s rights with the resources entrusted to it.
- When resources are tight, good value for money will help deliver more for less.
- Increasingly, donors require statements on value for money from UNICEF in proposals and donor reports.

Figure 2.18. Ensuring value for money in the programme cycle





### Context is key in determining value for money

Value-for-money considerations must always be context-specific and grounded in the short-, medium- and long-term strategic objectives of a programme. For example, putting in place a pilot programme in a remote rural area may be expensive. At face value, it may appear to be a poor investment. Yet if it proves successful and can influence scale-up of a national programme to remote areas, it may be a good value. Though it may be high risk, it has potentially excellent value for money in the long-term. Even within the narrower confines of the day-to-day work in that remote location pilot, value-for-money considerations should be explicit. Programme managers are encouraged to put value-for-money discussions on the agenda for annual reviews and document any actions they have taken to improve value for money in the course of the annual work plan year.

In sum, context is key when determining value for money; comparing benchmarks across different programmes should be avoided.

## ➔ STEP 6. ASSESS ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

Once you have defined desired results (Step 4) based on your initial theory of change, it is important to assess internal and external assumptions that would have to hold true for your results to be attained, as well as the internal and external risks to achieving your results. While the risk-informed theory of change is based on understanding risks that have an impact on children and women, Step 6 scans a wider range of risks from the perspective of programme implementation.

### Assessing internal and external assumptions

**Internal and external assumptions** are the variables or factors that need to be in place for results to be achieved. They should be stated in positive language. If the assumptions hold true, the expectation is that results will be achieved. A key assumption is that others will do and undertake actions to complement what UNICEF is doing if output and outcome results are to be achieved. This understanding informs

### DISTINGUISHING INTERNAL VERSUS EXTERNAL ASSUMPTIONS

- **Internal assumptions** are related to **programme implementation** – for example, outreach workers will go to the most remote villages.
- **External assumptions** are related to **contextual factors** that influence the programme – for example, security conditions in programme areas will be stable.

Note that these differ from the causality-related assumptions/hypotheses in your theory of change. Causality-related assumptions are about what leads to what and how – for example, peer counseling will reduce risky sexual behaviour. Critically reflecting on those assumptions is a key part of the theory of change process.



our prioritization, strategy development, results formulation and management of risks.

Assessing internal and external assumptions serves as an important **reality check** once you have defined your desired results. If you examine those assumptions and, based on your analysis, find that they are unlikely to hold true, you will need to redefine the results chain accordingly. Identifying assumptions may lead to the sharpening of strategies and reformulation of outputs to guarantee greater programme success.

Table 2.5 provides examples of possible assumptions related to a programme. Beside each assumption you will find strategies to ensure that they hold true so that your desired results can be achieved.

### Assessing risks

Risks are potential events or occurrences that could adversely – or positively – affect the achievement of results. Risk can mean both threats to and unexpected opportunities for achieving results. For example, the destruction of a settlement in a natural disaster

**Table 2.5.** Examples of assumptions and how to deal with them<sup>8</sup>

| EXAMPLES  | RESPONSE STRATEGIES  |
|---|--|
| <b>Assumptions internal to the government or UNICEF management performance</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training materials developed on time</li> <li>• UNICEF supplies arrive on time</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve internal management:<br/>Adjust plan to allow sufficient time for developing training materials</li> <li>• Order supplies early</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Assumptions to be researched before finalizing the programme design</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector will cooperate</li> <li>• Politicians are committed to gender equality</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct the necessary research and consultations before proceeding</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Assumptions that can be tested early in the programme</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children will use latrines once constructed</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a pilot before going to scale</li> <li>• Activities to encourage use are built into programme strategies</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Assumptions that can be addressed by modifying activities or budgets</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring system in place</li> <li>• Use of guidelines enforced</li> <li>• Good coordination among partners</li> <li>• Expertise available</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the monitoring system in place</li> <li>• Train supervisors in enforcing the guidelines</li> <li>• Facilitate good coordination</li> <li>• Set aside budget for procurement of expertise</li> </ul> |
| <b>Major assumptions that can be influenced by modifying work plans and adding a clear advocacy agenda</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourable policy environment exists</li> <li>• Political commitment exists</li> <li>• Funding available</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add initiatives and build a persistent and persuasive advocacy agenda to influence policies and political commitment</li> <li>• Approach donors before finalizing programme design</li> </ul>           |
| <b>'Killer' assumptions assume too much or imply that a programme is likely to fail</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement of a result where community level buy-in is required, yet all evidence indicates widespread hostility towards intervention within the community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-think or abandon the programme. In such instances, advocacy might be required to ensure buy-in prior to proceeding with the intervention</li> </ul>  |





could provide an opportunity to rebuild healthier, more sustainable infrastructure.



Risks can be of varying nature, including internal risks, associated with weaknesses in organizational structures, and others related more to events or conditions of the broader external environment and context.

**Managing risk means mitigating the threats – or capitalizing on the opportunities – that uncertainty presents to expected results. It also involves determining when risks are acceptable and should be monitored – for example, in fragile contexts.**

Planning with internal and external risks in mind can significantly improve your programme design, grounding it in the realities of your context, and making it more likely that you will achieve expected results. While risk assessment is often applied to an office as a whole, it can also be useful for programme- or intervention-level analysis and planning. This requires linking the risk assessment to specific expected programme results.

During your strategic planning, keep in mind the following **UNICEF risk management principles**:<sup>9</sup>

- **Accept risk when benefits outweigh costs:** The aim is not always to eliminate risk. Total risk elimination would involve extensive controls and is costly. Walking away from risky situations would often be impractical and may

not serve the achievement of your expected programme results. Greater reward often requires greater risk.

- **Anticipate and manage risk by planning:** When developing strategies and office work plans, designing or reviewing programmes, or preparing for emergencies, identify possible risks to the achievement of expected results. Risks are more easily mitigated when they are identified during planning.
- **Recognize opportunities:** Explore opportunities that may arise in support of expected results and assess the risks related to such new interventions.

**Planning with risk in mind involves:**

1. Identifying key risks for achieving your desired results
2. Assessing their likelihood and the impact they would have on your programme results
3. Accepting risks where warranted; developing strategies and contingency plans to respond to the risks where needed
4. Reviewing your strategic plan accordingly.

These steps are detailed below.

## 1. Risk identification

Begin by gathering stakeholders around your results framework and theory of change and brainstorm the risks for achieving your expected results. As you identify risks, be sure to explicitly link each risk to one or more expected result.

RISK Perception •  
RISK Assessment •  
RISK Management •



Figure 2.19. Examples of risk types and categories



- Fraud and misuse of resources
- Funding and external stakeholder relations
- Governance and accountability
- Unethical behaviour/corruption
- Information and communication technology systems and information security



- Socio-economic, political instability/crisis
- Natural disasters and epidemics
- Conflict
- Climate change

Figure 2.19 provides a starting point and a checklist for identifying the risks that might affect achievement of the expected results you have set down in your results framework.

### 2. Risk-level assessment

Once you have identified key risks related to your programme, invite stakeholders to rank those risks by assessing their level.

Ask them to assess the:

- Level of **likelihood** that the risk will occur.
- Level of **impact** that the risk would have on the programme results if it did occur.

Use the matrix in Table 2.6 to assess the overall level of response required.

Table 2.6. Risk-level matrix<sup>10</sup>

|        |                |            |             |              |            |                    |
|--------|----------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|
| IMPACT | 5 – CRITICAL   | Low        | Medium      | High         | Very high  | Extreme            |
|        | 4 – MAJOR      | Low        | Medium      | High         | High       | Very high          |
|        | 3 – MODERATE   | Very low   | Low         | Medium       | High       | High               |
|        | 2 – MINOR      | Very low   | Low         | Low          | Medium     | Medium             |
|        | 1 – NEGLIGIBLE | Very low   | Very low    | Very low     | Low        | Low                |
|        |                |            | 1- UNLIKELY | 2 – POSSIBLE | 3 – LIKELY | 4 – ALMOST CERTAIN |
|        |                | LIKELIHOOD |             |              |            |                    |





### 3. Risk response

Based on your collective assessment of their likelihood and impact, select your top risks to achieving your expected results (that is, those rated high, very high or extreme). Then develop risk response strategies. Consider:

- Can you prevent the risk from materializing or prevent it from having an impact on the results?
- How can you reduce the impact of the risk?
- How can you reduce the likelihood that the risk will occur?
- How could you maximize the opportunity presented by the risk?
- Can you create contingency funds and flexible schedules to help you cope with risks?
- Can you share exposure or mitigation strategies with other organizations?
- Can you transfer the impact of the risk to a third party (for example, via an insurance policy)?
- Would it be all right to accept the possibility that the risk may occur and go ahead without further measures to address the risk?

### 4. Review of programme design

Once you have identified and assessed risks to your results achievement and planned your response, reconsider your results chain:

- Do you need to remove or revise some of your results to make your programme design more realistic?
- Do you need to adjust, add or change activities, strategies, partners, target populations or geographic locations, in accordance with your response strategies?

Use the risk monitoring and response matrix shown in Table 2.7 to record the risks you've identified and assessed, and the response strategies you have developed. This enables systematic identification and prioritization of identified risks. It supports the integration of response strategies into the programme design and work plans. And it facilitates ongoing tracking of risks and adjustment of responses.



### Other key resources

INFORM, [Index for Risk Management](#)

UNICEF, [UNICEF Enterprise Risk Management: Instruction 1: Risk assessment and reporting](#), 2015.

UNICEF, [Risk Management Policy](#), 2009.

UNICEF's *Programme, Policy and Procedure Manual*, section 3.5.7, '[Risks and Assumptions](#)'.



**Table 2.7. Tool E: Risk monitoring and response matrix**

| RELATED RESULT STATEMENT(S)                               | RISKS<br>(Top 7 to 12 risks for programme or programme area/ component)  | RESIDUAL RISK LEVEL<br>(Assuming response is implemented)<br>Likelihood* (L);<br>Impact** (I) |                |            | RISK RESPONSE STRATEGY   |
|---|--|---|----------------|------------|--|
|   |  | Date 1  | Date 2         | Date 3     |  |
| All results, especially those related to outcomes 1 and 2 | Lack of coordination among donors, agencies, NGOs and public sector policies and programmes generates duplication of efforts and resources | L = 3<br>I = 3  | L = 2<br>I = 3 | L =<br>I = | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a communication strategy to secure dissemination of programme activities, lessons learned and achieved outcomes among other donors and agencies as well as the broader public.</li> <li>Identify and participate in the most relevant coordination forums to identify areas of overlap; agree on ways to maximize complementarity and promote these forums where and when needed.</li> <li>Link with civil servants and programmes of local government that track and coordinate development assistance.</li> </ul> |
| All results   | Heightened risk of car-jacking.  | L = 4<br>I = 3  | L = 5<br>I = 4 | L =<br>I = | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay in constant communication with local communities prior to and during field visits.</li> <li>Train staff in security measures in cooperation with the UN Department of Safety &amp; Security.</li> </ul>  |

**\* Likelihood:**  
 1 – Unlikely  
 2 – Possible  
 3 – Likely  
 4 – Almost certain  
 5 – Certain/imminent

**\*\* Impact:**  
 1 – Negligible  
 2 – Minor  
 3 – Moderate  
 4 – Major  
 5 – Critical





**STEP 7.**  
**DRAW IT ALL TOGETHER**  
**IN A RESULTS FRAMEWORK**  
**AND THEORY OF**  
**CHANGE NARRATIVE**

Once you have developed your theory of change and its assumptions and risks, defined sound results, assessed internal and external assumptions and risks, and developed a measurement framework, you can draw your programme design together into:

- **A results framework**, a table that captures key elements of your programme design, reflecting a culmination in the design of your programme.
- **A theory of change narrative** that summarizes the reasoning why your programme or organization exists and how the desired change is expected to come about.

These can be powerful ways to test your programme logic and assumptions, and also to communicate your programme design. You can summarize your programme results and theory of change in ways that serve the purposes of your different stakeholders.

**Completing a results framework**

At this point you will have most of the elements you need to complete a results framework for the programme you have planned. Your task is simply to pull the information together using the appropriate template. While the format of the results framework may vary somewhat depending on the document you are preparing (for example, a programme strategy note, country programme document or proposal), you might expect the main rubrics to be like those outlined in Table 2.8.

Table 2.9 is an example of a partially completed results framework at the level of a thematic programme component.

**Table 2.8. Tool F: Results framework**

| KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS            | BASELINE | TARGET | MEANS OF VERIFICATION | FREQUENCY OF REPORTING | MAJOR PARTNERS |
|------------------------------------|----------|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Outcome UNICEF will contribute to: |          |        |                       |                        |                |
|                                    |          |        |                       |                        |                |
| Country programme outputs:         |          |        |                       |                        |                |
|                                    |          |        |                       |                        |                |





**Table 2.9.** Example of a partial results framework for one country programme component

| EQUITABLE SOCIAL POLICIES AND PROTECTIVE SYSTEMS   | BASELINE (2016) | TARGET (2021) | MEANS OF VERIFICATION   | FREQUENCY | MAJOR PARTNERS   |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---|-----------|--|
| <b>Key progress indicators</b>   |                 |               |   |           |  |
| <b>Outcome 1:</b> By 2021, child-related national policies, budgets and systems, including the child protection system, are inclusive and equity-focused   |                 |               |   |           |  |
| Public spending on child protection  | \$2.8 million   | 25% increase  | Ministry of Social Protection records   | Yearly    | Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Protection, National Authority for Children, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, ING Bank |
| Monthly social assistance spending per child (child money)   | \$10            | \$15          |   | Yearly    |  |
| <b>Output 1.1:</b> National authorities have increased capacity and evidence to enhance the equity and child focus of the national social protection system  |                 |               |   |           |  |
| 1.1.1 The number of policies and programmes influenced to address child deprivations   | 0               | 5             | Ministry of Social Protection document review; semi-structured interviews by UNICEF | Bi-annual | Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Finance, Cabinet Secretariat, National Council for Children                   |
| 1.1.2 Evidence of the use of analysis of exclusion errors in social policy interventions (Child Grant) for improved programme design/targeting. Scale from 0 to 4: (a) exclusion errors are identified for 30%–60% of departments, 1 point; (b) errors identified for 60%–100% of districts, 2 points; (c) analysis of exclusion errors explicitly considered in programme design, 3 points; (d) most excluded groups explicitly targeted in implementation, 4 points. | 0 pts           | 4 pts         |   | Bi-annual |  |
| <b>Output 1.2:</b> Government's capacity to legislate, plan, budget and to provide child protection services has increased to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation at the central level and in targeted areas  |                 |               |   |           |  |
| 1.2.1 Child protection costed strategic plan exists. Scale from 1 to 3: (a) child protection strategic plan exists, 1 point; (b) plan is adequately costed, 1 point; (c) plan ranks at least 60% on quality assessment scale developed by international experts, 1 point.  | 0 pts           | 3 pts         | Document analysis   | Bi-annual | Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Finance, National Authority for Children, National Council for Children       |
| 1.2.1 Existence of national routine administrative data collection system on violence, exploitation and abuse of children, including violent deaths and injuries. Scale from 1 to 5: (a) system designed, 1 point; (b) system operational, 1 point; (c) system used in at least 70% of districts, 2 points; (d) quality of system rated adequate by international monitors, 1 point.   | 0 pts           | 5 pts         | National Authority for Children data  | Bi-annual |  |





## Writing your theory of change narrative

# Here are 6 steps



to preparing your **theory of change write-up**:

1. Referring to your results chain, identify your desired impact.
2. Map backwards how your outputs and outcomes are contributing to the next level of results.
3. Make your causality assumptions and risks explicit. Make explicit your hypotheses about how change at one level will lead to change at the next (for example, training will lead to increased skills in policy-making, which, in turn, will lead to improved policies and programmes that will foster improvements in children's lives).
4. Also identify assumptions and risks related to internal and external factors that influence the programme and residual risks to be monitored.
5. Identify the key strategic interventions that your initiative will undertake and the pathways of change they will enable.
6. Write a narrative to explain your theory of change (see Figure 2.20). Your narrative may also take a more graphic form as shown in Table 2.10.

What else are you assuming is in place so that you can achieve your desired results? There may be causes you are not addressing, and you may assume that someone else is addressing them, or that they do not need to be addressed for you to effect meaningful change through your programme.

**Figure 2.20.** A sample theory of change narrative

UNICEF's theory of change for the country programme component of equitable social policies and protective systems starts at the impact level, with the understanding that:

**If** children's rights are met as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, **then** it means that the government has successfully adapted the overarching child-related national policies, budgets and protective systems, including the child protection system, to be inclusive and equity-focused.

**If** social policies and protective systems are increasingly child-focused, equitable and functional, **then** the capacities of national stakeholders that bear the duty of planning, budgeting, regulating, coordinating, delivering and monitoring social services must be sufficient to manage them.

A theory of change outlines the logic behind UNICEF's programme, explaining how the organization's strategic interventions will lead to specific results (at the output level) and contribute to changes in national policies, budgets and systems (outcome level). It also provides key assumptions, risks and mitigating measures required to reinforce causal links at various levels.



**Table 2.10.** A sample theory of change in graphic form

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>OUTCOME</b>     | <p><b>Outcome 3:</b> By 2021, child-related national policies, budgets and systems, including the child protection system, are inclusive and equity-focused</p>   |   |
| <b>ASSUMPTIONS</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions of major development partners address bottlenecks/barriers not covered by UNICEF’s country programme (related to other elements of the social protection and poverty reduction programmes and/or child protection, local governance and corporate social responsibility and/or geographic regions beyond its scope) are secured in timely and effective manner, reinforcing synergies with these and other sectors.</li> <li>There is no major crisis that could affect capacities for country programme implementation or coping capacities of communities.</li> <li>Policy makers, parliamentarians, local governments and members of the private sector are receptive to evidence-based advocacy and adapt policies and strategies based on evidence.</li> </ul>  |   |
|                    | <p>National capacity, resources and political commitment are sufficient to maintain and enhance social protection mechanisms and enhance the equity focus of existing socio-economic development plans at various levels.</p>   | <p>National capacity, resources and political commitment are sufficient to implement the new child protection law and to develop a functional child protection system at various levels, with adequate technical capacity for prevention and response.</p>                |
| <b>RISKS</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic, political and climate-related shocks could shrink the fiscal space, change priorities of local authorities and stretch the coping capacities of households affecting access/utilization of social services, thus underlining the need to ensure gender-sensitive and risk informed programming.</li> <li>Economic transition processes are changing international aid modalities and leading to shrinking/shifting levels of official development assistance, underlining the need for effective policy advocacy and leveraging for social sectors and for coordination with development partners to ensure complementarity of programming.</li> <li>Election cycles and political volatility often result in excessive turnover of staff, underlining the need to forge positive relationships with new ministerial counterparts and institutionalize capacity development interventions. Election cycles have also been associated with promises from political parties for cash handouts, universal transfers, untargeted social welfare programmes, which underlines need for strategic frameworks.</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>OUTPUT</b>      | <p><b>Output 3.1:</b> National authorities have increased capacity and evidence to enhance the equity and child focus of the national social protection system.</p>   | <p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Government’s capacity to legislate, plan, budget and to provide child protection services has increased to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation at the central level and in targeted areas.</p>                                   |
|                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central- and local-level authorities are receptive and supportive of the equity approach, human rights-based approaches to programming, gender-sensitive programming and the need to prioritize climate resilience and risk management.</li> <li>Availability of disaggregated data that can support targeting of the most vulnerable as well as monitoring, reporting and evaluation in these sectors.</li> <li>Existence of minimum level of capacity among local authorities and a willingness to adapt local development plans and budgets.</li> <li>No major crisis that could affect capacities of UNICEF and partners to deliver/account for results (considering donors’ reduced presence in upper-middle-income countries).</li> <li>Continuity of national mechanisms.</li> </ul>  |   |
| <b>ASSUMPTIONS</b> | <p>National capacity, resources and political commitment are sufficient to maintain social protection mechanisms (including the universality of the child grant system) and enhance the child and equity focus of existing socio-economic development plans at various levels.</p>  |   |
|                    | <p>National capacity, resources and political commitment are sufficient to maintain social protection mechanisms (including the universality of the child grant system) and enhance the child and equity focus of existing socio-economic development plans at various levels.</p>  | <p>The Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection will be able to clarify (and reinforce) roles and responsibilities of various national actors in different sectors, thus enabling UNICEF to target partnerships for expansion of protective services.</p> |





**Table 2.10.** A sample theory of change in graphic form (cont.)

|                             |  |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>RISKS</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic, political and climate-related shocks can affect the continuity of UNICEF operations and the capacities of counterparts and partners to achieve and account for results, thus underlining the need for strong enterprise risk management, including a harmonized approach to cash management and emergency preparedness and response.</li> <li>Changing aid environment can affect UNICEF's capacity for resource mobilization, underlining the need for an updated strategy and action plan.</li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>ENABLING ENVIRONMENT</b> | <p><b>UNICEF strategic interventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Policy advocacy</b> to prioritize children in development, poverty reduction and social protection plans and policies and create national monitoring systems for child equity.</li> <li><b>Strengthening the link</b> between planning and budgeting processes at national and subnational levels.</li> <li><b>Evidence-generation</b> on multiple deprivations of children and the risks they face in relation to disasters, environmental degradation, pollution and the impacts of climate change.</li> <li><b>Capacity development</b> and cooperation to improve the child focus of public finance management.</li> <li><b>Policy evaluation</b> to improve the current child focus in national social protection.</li> </ul> | <p><b>UNICEF strategic interventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Capacity development</b> to support national authorities to strengthen the legal and policy framework and to better budget, monitor and track expenditures for child protection services.</li> <li><b>Capacity development and technical assistance</b> to support implementation of the new Child Protection Law – including by costing implementation.</li> <li><b>Technical assistance</b> to support the Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection to develop a robust capacity development framework for national actors involved in child protection.</li> <li><b>Technical assistance</b> to integrate child protection interventions in national and subnational plans for disaster risk reduction/disaster risk management and climate change.</li> </ul> |
| <b>SUPPLY/QUALITY</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Technical assistance and capacity development</b> to undertake public expenditure reviews, costing and investment cases.</li> <li><b>Capacity development</b> of the government's central agency responsible for development planning, monitoring and evaluation of children's issues, and the strengthening of national mechanisms for data collection, use, analysis and evaluation, including in relation to the impact of disasters on children.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Partnerships</b> to support the new child online protection programme.</li> <li><b>Capacity and skills strengthening</b> of professionals across social welfare, health, education and justice sectors to enable the translation of the law into the actual delivery of protective services.</li> <li><b>Capacity development</b> of human and service structures for child protection at national, subnational and community levels.</li> <li><b>Support routine administrative</b> data collection and analysis to prevent and protect children from neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence.</li> </ul>  |



## **STEP 8.** **DEVELOP A MONITORING PLAN**

Once you have defined the results you expect to achieve through your programme and assessed assumptions and risks related to reaching them, the next step is to think about how you will track your achievement of those results. To do this, develop a measurement framework for results, otherwise known as a monitoring plan (see Table 2.11).

**Developing indicators for each result and planning how you will measure them will help you test whether your results are measurable. Again working in an iterative way, revise your results if needed at this stage, to ensure your results statements and indicators will actually allow you to manage for results.**

## **Selecting performance indicators**

### **What is an indicator?**

Indicators are ‘signals’ of achievement or change related to an expected result. They provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment.

**Indicators should be neutral:** They specify what is to be measured along a scale or dimension but do not indicate the direction of change.

### **Types of indicators**

An indicator can be a **qualitative** or **quantitative** measure of performance:

Quantitative indicators are represented by a number, percentage or share, rate or ratio. In contrast, qualitative indicators seek to measure quality and are often based on perception, opinion or levels of satisfaction.

 **Table 2.11. Tool G: Monitoring plan** (see Table 2.16 for a completed example)

| RESULTS  | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | BASELINE | TARGET | MEANS OF VERIFICATION |
|----------|------------------------|----------|--------|-----------------------|
| IMPACT   |                        |          |        |                       |
| OUTCOMES |                        |          |        |                       |
| OUTPUTS  |                        |          |        |                       |





Note that there can be overlap between quantitative and qualitative indicators. Some statistical data or information stated with numbers can provide qualitative meaning. For example, a survey might measure quality on a scale of 1–10. Another example is a ‘yes/no’ indicator (such as whether or not laws or policies are in place, or whether data or services are available). These can be made more objective and more sensitive to change over time by using a weighted scale or checklist. See examples in Table 2.12.

**Proxy indicators** are used when results cannot be measured directly. For example, the percentage of births attended by trained health personnel

may be used as a proxy indicator for the quality of reproductive health services in order to measure progress over a shorter period of time.

**Process indicators** measure the performance of key processes that affect expectations of countries, donors or communities. Process indicators that can measure national coordination efforts or stakeholder participation and buy-in (including meaningful child and youth participation in decisions that affect them) are important to measure. These might include indicators such as the application of programming principles or the use of national systems for monitoring and evaluation.

**Table 2.12.** Quantitative and qualitative indicators<sup>11</sup>

| QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS  | QUALITATIVE INDICATORS   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures of quantity</li> <li>• Number</li> <li>• Percentage</li> <li>• Ratio</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception</li> <li>• Opinion</li> <li>• Judgements</li> </ul>  |
| <b>EXAMPLES</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of boys/girls under 1 year receiving measles-containing vaccine at national level</li> <li>• Number of new HIV infections among boys/girls under 15 years</li> <li>• Percentage of women/men in humanitarian situations who access and use safe drinking water</li> <li>• Attendance rate in early childhood education</li> <li>• Percentage of Convention on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations implemented</li> <li>• Percentage of boys/girls in contact with police who are dealt with in child-friendly police stations</li> <li>• Number of schools that have included life skills and citizenship education in their school plans, thanks to UNICEF support</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of satisfaction (along a scale of 1-3) with school curricula</li> <li>• Perceptions of quality of national of education systems</li> <li>• M&amp;E system for social protection programmes for vulnerable boys and girls</li> <li>• Extent (along a scale) of policy coordination on HIV/AIDS prevention</li> <li>• Quality (on a weighted scale) of costed strategies for child protection</li> <li>• Development, adoption and use (on a weighted scale) of a policy for home visits of newborns</li> <li>• Extent (on a weighted scale) to which menstrual hygiene management is implemented in school water, sanitation and hygiene programmes</li> </ul> |
| <b>MEANS OF VERIFICATION</b>   |  |
| Formal surveys   | Public hearings, testimonials, focus groups, attitude surveys, participant observation, document analysis  |



## Disaggregating indicators

To support equity, monitoring systems should allow all indicators to be disaggregated along different dimensions, such as age, sex, ethnicity, rural/urban/intra-urban spaces, and wealth quintiles, as well as geographic location, among others.

✳ For example, an initiative that aims to increase the use of safe water in a city might need to monitor disaggregation for one indicator, as shown in Table 2.13.

## Indicator selection/ validation checklist

As you define and negotiate your indicators with key stakeholders, you might find the checklist in Table 2.14 helpful.

### Limit your indicators to 2–4 per result.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators allows you to cross-check and triangulate your findings and generate a richer understanding of what has been achieved. Remember, though, that you're aiming to create a dashboard, not a monster of indicators you won't have the time or resources to monitor.

## Where to get your indicators

Ideally, the indicator:

- Is nationally owned or part of the government's own M&E framework
- Is part of UNICEF's standard indicators (at both outcome and output levels). A global set of standard outcome and output indicators was introduced in 2016 for use through RAM. The standard indicators are reducing the burden on country office to develop indicators, as they provide a basis from which all offices can derive and adjust their indicators to track progress ensure quality reporting on results. Standard indicators allow for easier global aggregation of results and clearer depiction of UNICEF's contribution to key areas of work.
- Is also part of the country's UNDAF
- Is aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan and its impact as well as outcome indicators (which may be considered impact indicators at the country level)
- Can be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals
- Is realistic and reflects country measurements of achievement.

**Table 2.13.** Possible disaggregation of one indicator

| INDICATOR  | GEOGRAPHIC AREA | SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS    | GENDER                 | FAMILY COMPOSITION                   |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Percentage of people living in households using improved sources of drinking water | Country         | 1 <sup>st</sup> quintile | Sex of household head: | Households with children below age 5 |
|  | Region          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile |                        | Households with adolescents          |
|  | City            | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile | Female                 | Households without children          |
|  | Rural areas     | 4 <sup>th</sup> quintile | Male                   |                                      |
|  | Urban areas     | 5 <sup>th</sup> quintile |                        |                                      |



**Table 2.14.** Checklist for indicator selection and validation

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Describes how achievement of the result will be measured  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Clear and easy to understand, even to a layperson   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Shows trends over time (progressive realization, non-retrogression)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Can be appropriately disaggregated  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. To the extent possible uses available information   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Is cost effective and feasible to collect and analyse   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Measures positive as well as potential negative directions (that is, it is neutral)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Was developed in a participatory fashion (including with those whose performance will be measured) and is relevant to the needs of the user | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Two to four indicators per result   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. One of the indicators per result measures sex-disaggregated data and/or advances in gender equality.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

UNICEF has introduced a set of **standard outcome and output indicators** available in [inSight's Results Assessment Module \(RAM\)](#). To the extent possible, use these indicators and avoid formulating your own. At the same time, make sure that the indicator you select actually measures your result accurately.

You will also find indicator selection guidance for certain outcome areas and themes in the [MoRES toolkit](#), under 'monitoring tools'.

**In humanitarian response**, it is also important to consider proxy high-frequency output-level indicators that should be aligned with agreed indicators inter-agency level by sectors/ clusters. Ideally, these should be national adaptations of [The Sphere Project/ Inter-Agency Network of Education in Emergencies](#), the [Core Humanitarian](#)

[Standard](#) and other model indicators. UNICEF guidance on indicators for performance monitoring in humanitarian response is aligned with the [Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action](#) and their inter-agency references.

### Establishing baselines and targets

Indicators require a baseline and a target. This is what allows you to measure whether your programme is achieving or contributing to change.



#### Baseline

A baseline is the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress on results can be assessed or comparisons made. Baseline values





offer a snapshot of your organization, programme or project at the inception or beginning phase. The baseline is the value of the indicator at the outset.



### Target

A target is what one hopes to achieve. It is the desired value of the indicator at a determined time in the future. It is what the project would like to achieve within a certain period of time, in relation to one of the expected results. Identification of targets draws from 1) an understanding of trends, 2) an estimation of costs and financial feasibility, 3) understanding of the programming environment and 4) human resource implications. Targets may sometimes be referred to as milestones, since they help assess whether you are progressing as expected at set intervals over the lifetime of the programme.

Sometimes targets can be drawn from international agreements or conventions, or national planning documents or strategies. In other cases, no obvious targets are readily available for a given indicator. Experts who understand the programme area and country context should provide their best estimate as to the threshold that would allow a programme to be considered a success. Target setting should also be done with partners to build a broad consensus as to what success looks like.

### TIPS FOR SELECTING INDICATORS AND SETTING BASELINES AND TARGETS

- The indicator should be neutral
  - No direction of change in the indicator
  - No increase or decrease in the indicator
- The target is what signals how much change and in what direction
- **The baseline and target should use the same unit of measurement as the indicator!**



### Benchmark

A benchmark is a reference point or standard against which performance or achievements can be assessed. A benchmark refers to the performance that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable organizations, or what can be reasonably inferred to have been achieved in the circumstances. Benchmarks can support you in defining targets.

Keep in mind that, in some cases, the value or status of an indicator is not expected to change in a linear manner (such as a 10 per cent increase a year). For example, an indicator tracking social norms might show no change for several years, but may move quickly once a tipping point has been reached. Or, the value of an indicator such as the 'number of reported cases of violence against children' might rise initially due to increased awareness of reporting mechanisms, but eventually fall as a result





of violence prevention programmes. In these cases, the annual targets can be set accordingly (see Table 2.15 for other examples).

### Defining methods of data collection and means of verification

Data on indicators need to be collected to determine progress towards results.

This should be considered when a results framework is being developed. Choosing a data collection method depends on the type of indicator and the purpose of the information being gathered. It also depends on how often this information will be gathered. The means of verification will indicate where to look to obtain data to support assessment of the result, such as a survey report or publication of school examination results.

**Table 2.15.** Examples of indicators and related baselines and targets<sup>12</sup>

| INDICATOR  | BASELINE           | TARGET (BY END OF PROGRAMME) | ANNUAL TARGET  |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Quantitative</b>  |                    |                              |  |
| Percentage of children 6–59 months with severe acute malnutrition who are admitted into treatment in X humanitarian situation  | 40%<br>(2016)      | 80%<br>(2018)                | 20% increase<br>per year                             |
| Percentage of total children covered by government cash transfer programmes in X country/region  | 50%<br>(2016)      | 90%<br>(2020)                | 60% (2017)<br>70% (2018)<br>80% (2019)<br>90% (2020) |
| <b>Qualitative</b>   |                    |                              |  |
| Existence of costed strategies for child protection.<br>Scale from 0 to 3: (a) government has a costed strategy for child protection: 1 point; (b) strategy is considered explicitly during the budget process: 1 point; (c) strategy matches child protection priorities to resource allocation: 1 point.   | 0 points<br>(2016) | 3 points<br>(2020)           | 1 point (2017)<br>2 points (2018)<br>3 points (2020) |
| Extent of policy coordination for child protection.<br>Scale from 0 to 10: (a) parliamentary oversight body exists: 2 points; (b) inter-ministerial mechanism in place that coordinates child protection activities and that meets at least three times per year: 5 points; (c) international development agencies have a coordination mechanism for child protection that meets at least 10 times per year: 3 points. | 2 points<br>(2016) | 10 points<br>(2021)          | 7 points (2019)<br>10 points (2021)                  |



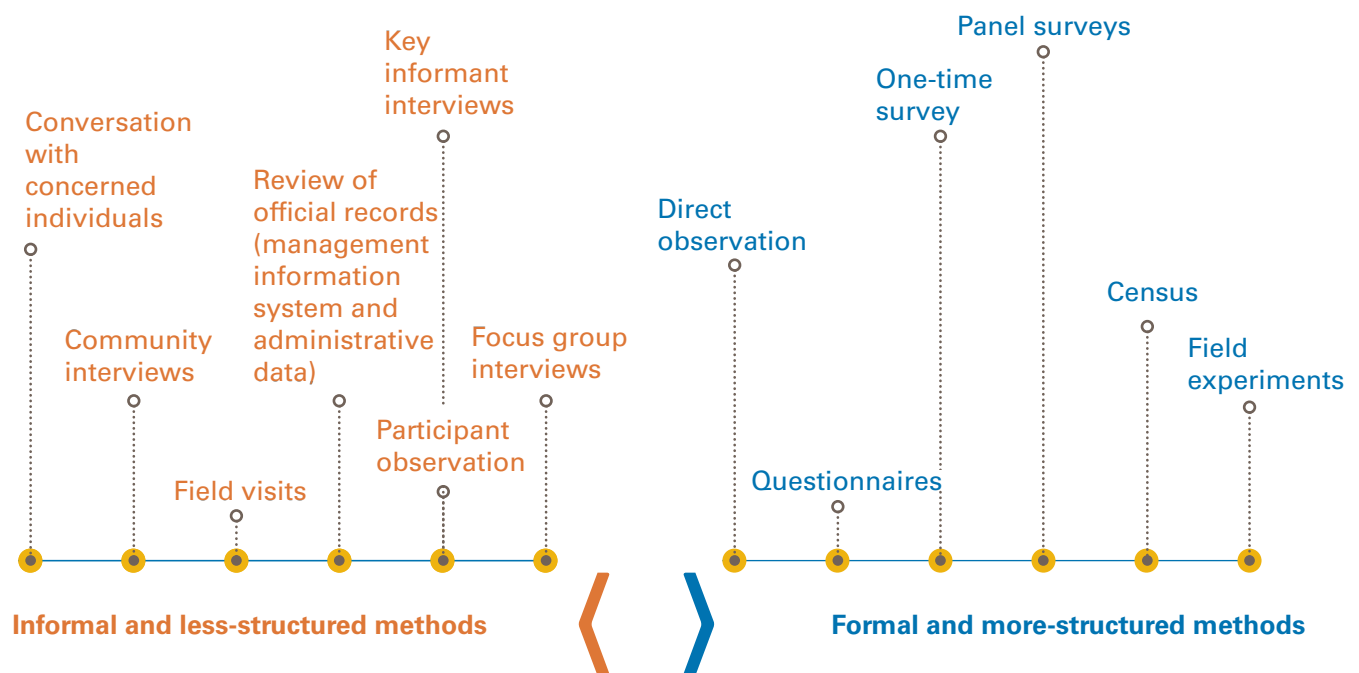
Your data collection methods can vary widely (see Figure 2.21).

Examples include:

- Document analysis
- Observation
- Case studies
- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Testimonials
- Tests
- Photographs, slides, videos
- Appreciative inquiry or most significant change testimonials
- Transect walks
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)/ Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methods.<sup>13</sup>

Your situation analysis (Step 1) may have identified gaps in data that contribute to inequity. Programme monitoring, therefore, will not only enable you to track your achievement of results. It may also contribute to meaningful change for children, particularly if you work with government officials to improve their capacity for data collection and analysis. As you are developing your measurement framework for results (see Table 2.16 for an example), think strategically with stakeholders about what indicators and means of verification will best help to build local capacity and fill in knowledge and data gaps.

**Figure 2.21.** Examples of data collection methods



Source: Kusek, Jody Zall and Roy C. Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A handbook for development practitioners*, World Bank Publications, Washington, D.C., 2004.



**Table 2.16.** Example of a completed measurement framework for results

| RESULTS  | PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  | BASELINE (2016)  | TARGET (2020)  | MEANS OF VERIFICATION   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Impact</b><br>Increased life opportunities for conflict-affected and vulnerable girls, boys and youth in X region of country Y  | Percentage of schools in the certified school districts achieving at least average level in state tests for 9 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> grades | 11th grade:<br>Dept. X 42%<br>Dept. Y 79%<br>Dept. Z 22%<br><br>9 <sup>th</sup> grade not released for 2016  | 5% over baseline   | Database on state examination results                               |
|  | Self-perception by children and young people of their skills to improve their quality of life and the development of their community                    | To be completed with qualitative baseline report   | 10% increase from baseline   | Study of perception of children on opportunities in the communities |
| <b>Outcomes</b><br>1. Increased and more equitable educational enrolment for out-of-school, vulnerable and conflict-affected girls, boys and youth in target municipalities in departments X and Y | Net enrolment rates in the central municipalities of nodal regions, broken down by gender and by age  | All figures presented in percentages.<br>Municipality A:<br>Primary: F – 92, M – 90, Total – 91.<br>Secondary: F – 72, M – 67, Total – 70.<br>Vocational: F – 34, M – 28, Total – 31.<br>Total: F – 72; M – 69.<br>Grand total – 71.<br>Municipality B, etc. | Rates for all municipalities for primary level remain at the same percentage.<br><br>Rates for all municipalities for secondary level reach 50% or do not drop if baseline is above 50%.<br><br>Rates for all municipalities for vocational education reach 30%. | Secretariat of Education monitoring database                        |
|  | Gender parity index in central municipalities of nodal region   | Municipality A:<br>Primary: 1.03<br>Secondary: 1.07<br>Vocational: 1.21<br>Total: 1.05<br>Municipality B, etc.   | At the primary level, increase or reduce by at least 0.01.<br><br>In secondary level for all municipalities reduce by 0.05.<br><br>In vocational education for all municipalities reduce by 0.1.   | Secretariat of Education monitoring database                        |
| <b>Outputs</b><br>1.1 Increased capacities of schools, civil society organizations and education partners to target and enrol out-of-school girls, boys and youth                                  | Number of out-of-school children, adolescents and young people identified by the programme  | 0  | 70,000 children, adolescents and young people  | Database from the census of out-of-school children                  |
|  | Number of schools and community-based organizations involved in activities/strategies for active research system  | To be conducted in 2016  | 42 schools   | School documents  |



### Developing integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plans

An integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan (IMERP) builds on the results chain and monitoring plan and identifies the major research, monitoring and evaluation activities that will be needed to support the monitoring of progress and assessment of results. At this point, you will also begin to considering how findings will be used.

An IMERP guides the development of work and monitoring plans during the implementation of programmes. As such, whether developed during strategic planning (that is, during processes to develop country programme documents, UNDAFs or humanitarian response plans) or at the operational stage (work

plans), IMERPs represent a final stage in the programme planning process. This stage ensures that research, monitoring and evaluation activities are:

- Prioritized to focus on the most critical information needs of decision-makers, especially given scarce resources
- Integrated across programmes and sectors wherever feasible, to reduce costs
- Planned realistically in terms of the timing of activities given end use, practical implementation requirements and the capacity of country offices and partners.

Table 2.17 provides an indication of the fields that would likely be included in the development of integrated monitoring, research and evaluation plans.

**Table 2.17.** Format for an integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan

| ACTIVITY  | YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3 | YEAR 4 | YEAR 5 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Surveys, studies  |        |        |        |        |        |
| Evaluations   |        |        |        |        |        |
| Support to national monitoring systems and data collection activities |        |        |        |        |        |
| Monitoring and evaluation capacity development (UNICEF and partners)  |        |        |        |        |        |
| Major events where research and M&E data will be used                 |        |        |        |        |        |





## **STEP 9.** **ASSESS THE EVALUABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME**

An excellent practice implemented by some UNICEF programmes is to commission an evaluability assessment of your programme by a qualified institution or professional before finalizing the design and beginning implementation. An evaluability assessment can contribute to improving the programme's design and potential to be evaluated. Such an assessment can help to consolidate the programme's design and address any

specific pending issues with the theory of change before implementation begins. It will highlight data needs and gaps to be addressed. And it can save time and avoid costly mistakes at later stages in the programme cycle.

(Note that an evaluability assessment at the planning stage is not synonymous with, nor does it necessarily replace, an evaluability exercise prior to undertaking a major evaluation. See Chapter 5 for details.)

A large, stylized illustration of a diverse group of people walking in various directions across the page. The figures are small and colorful, scattered around the main text area.

# Congratulations!

You have **completed** your **strategic planning** and are now ready to begin implementation.



# IMPLEMENTATION

Once a programme has been designed and approved, it is ready for implementation. Careful management of all aspects of programme delivery is crucial for the efficient and effective achievement of results. Effective implementation depends on a thorough selection of implementation strategies, modalities and partners. It also entails tracking progress against time, budget and scope. Managing and mitigating risks is another important element of implementation.

## When to use this chapter:

- Prior to implementing your programme or project, such as in the development of work plans
- While implementing your programme or project, or managing the implementation of work plans and overseeing the work of implementing partners, either through work plans or programme documents used by civil society organization (CSO) partners.

## Who should use this chapter:

- Programme staff responsible for managing for results
- Support and operations staff responsible for backstopping a UNICEF operation
- UNICEF partners involved in programme/project implementation.

## Chapter overview of implementation steps and corresponding tools:

### Steps

- Step 1.** Plan for implementation
- Step 2.** Manage implementation and monitoring
- Step 3.** Make adjustments and take corrective action

### Ongoing steps:

- Identify and mitigate risk
- Ensure knowledge transfer and continuous learning

### Tools

- Tool E.** Risk monitoring and response matrix (in Chapter 2)
- Tool H.** A sample work plan template





## OVERVIEW

**For actual change to take place**, the results planned in the previous section have to be translated into action. All the work done in Chapter 2 around planning your programme continues to be relevant during the implementation period. The results framework and theory of change are carried forward into the implementation phase of programmes. Monitoring risks and progress towards results will shape and define the scope and nature of implementation.

# implementation: | ˌɪmpləˈmɛntɪˈʃən | *n.*

Implementation is the management of inputs to undertake activities in order to achieve outputs, which contribute to outcomes – as articulated in the results framework and documented in work plans.

The development, implementation and monitoring of work plans is undertaken with existing policies, procedures and guidance in mind and with the support of management tools and systems.

During implementation, managers bring together the relevant expertise within offices to achieve results articulated in strategic plans (Country Programme Documents, Strategy Notes, UNDAFs, Humanitarian Response Plans) and management plans (Country Programme Management Plans). Given UNICEF's broad range of programming and operational contexts, effective implementation requires the ability to dynamically draw on specific technical tools and management and social skills while demonstrating a deep understanding of issues relevant to the specific context.

The pace of implementation can change rapidly when UNICEF is responding to an emergency. Flexibility is therefore required to move from regular programming to humanitarian response, where the speed and frequency of processes and practices increase; as well as connectedness, to ensure bridging the humanitarian and development divide.

Effective implementation cannot be reduced to one prescription that can be applied universally across all programming contexts. However, there are practices and skills that are needed for effective implementation generally – whether you are managing a WASH programme in an emergency or a child protection programme in a high-income country.

Effective implementation is fundamentally about creating the planned change in pursuit of outputs and ultimately outcomes. Implementation is where programme planning comes to life and engages with different functional areas within UNICEF and with partners to achieve results.





# Important questions

related to **implementation**:



- How can I focus my work plan on results rather than activities?
- How should we organize ourselves to achieve results established in our initial plans (in the Programme Strategy Note, Country Programme Document, UNDAF or Country Programme Management Plan, for example)?
- How can we ensure a focus on equity, gender equality and inclusion throughout implementation, in development and humanitarian contexts?
- How will I manage resources effectively and efficiently so that we achieve results as planned?
- What adjustments need to take place to better achieve expected results?
- What does risk monitoring tell me? Do I need to adjust risk mitigation, including preparedness measures, to achieve and protect expected results?
- How can I ensure continuous learning and feedback based on the extent to which we are achieving development results?

## Principles to guide implementation

A number of key principles guide implementation:

- **Stakeholder participation.** The engagement of stakeholders is a

key ingredient throughout the RBM cycle and builds ownership of the programme or project design and implementation. Ensuring strong stakeholder participation in all implementation deliberations is fundamental to sustainability.

- **Being iterative and adjusting along the way.** Results-based management means being flexible with your strategies. If your activities are not yielding expected results at the output and outcome level, then modify your strategies and activities.
- **Transparency.** UNICEF should ensure that its processes and management of programmes and projects are undertaken transparently.
- **Efficiency.** Value for money is fundamental to ensuring both the efficiency and the effectiveness of your intervention. Maximizing impact to improve children's and women's lives at reasonable cost is the goal.
- **Evidence-based:** Data should be used to steer choices of implementation modality vis-à-vis key considerations such as cost, speed, quality, national ownership, governance and dependencies on other entities for the modality.

## The importance of establishing results-based management systems

For results-based implementation and management to take hold, it is important that RBM systems are in place and existing systems and procedures are aligned to yield results. This means that

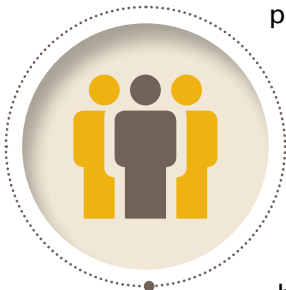




roles and responsibilities are defined and work processes are established, supported by clear RBM procedures and support mechanisms such as training and coaching in RBM and performance measurement. Critical to this process are managers, who are increasingly expected to manage for results.

## Required skills of an RBM manager

Managing for results requires a skills set that values **team work, participation, flexibility and the ability to continually revise and refine**. Why is this so important? Results-based management is the opposite of a blueprint approach. Would you want to be responsible for results and indicators that you did not define? Of course not. Working with all key stakeholders and **listening** to their priorities and needs in planning programme implementation requires good listening and facilitation skills, and working in a collaborative and team-based manner versus a top-down approach. Doing so will help to ensure buy-in and stakeholder engagement.



As a manager, working in a horizontal relationship with colleagues can lead to greater teamwork

As a manager, working in a horizontal relationship with colleagues can lead to greater teamwork and empowering partnerships among stakeholders. Stakeholders feel empowered when their ideas, efforts and results are valued.

When your programme is going off the rails, do you adjust strategies and activities so that you are more likely to achieve expected results? If so, you are being 'iterative' – adjusting, learning and self-correcting as you go along. All these qualities are important for an effective RBM manager that seeks to achieve results by always keeping value for money in mind.

## KEY STEPS IN IMPLEMENTATION

Work plans are the means through which strategic multi-year planning documents are made operational. Strategy notes, country programme documents and UNDAFs provide a reference for the development of annual, rolling or multi-year work plans. Through such plans, operational strategies are fleshed out to achieve the results set out in the strategic planning phase. For this to happen, UNICEF programme managers work with partners to develop work plans that define essential activities and their estimated costs and budgets, roles and responsibilities, and timelines. The work plans are then implemented (often in conjunction with partners), and their progress is monitored.

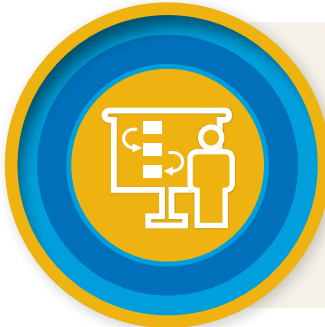
Figure 3.1 illustrates key steps in results-based implementation.



Figure 3.1. Key steps in results-based implementation



## STEP 1. PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION



Implementation planning involves **FIVE** main activities:

- Identify strategies and activities needed to achieve planned outputs
- Determine implementation modalities
- Estimate the costs of carrying out activities, based on input requirements
- Determine the time required to carry out activities
- Document the work plan

The overall process of implementation is iterative (that is, it involves continual adjustment and refinement). To decide on the best implementation approach, input requirements and the time needed to undertake activities may have to be estimated for more than one implementation strategy (such as advocacy and communication for development). Strategies refer to a course of action needed to achieve planned results. Strategies bring coherence and interconnectedness to activities to reach intended outputs, against agreed standards, and reduce the likelihood of fragmented action.

### Applying programme strategies during implementation

- During implementation, the agreed strategies determine the nature of the activities that are planned and executed.
- Experience during implementation informs the programme design with regards to the effectiveness of the programme strategies.





Core UNICEF strategies that guide the formulation of activities include:

- Capacity development
- Evidence-generation, policy dialogue and advocacy
- Partnerships
- South-South and triangular cooperation
- Identification and promotion of innovation
- Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages
- Service delivery.

In order to make well-informed decisions during planning, managers must bring together relevant colleagues (such as programme, communications, monitoring and evaluation, operations and supply specialists) throughout the implementation process to seek their expertise and collaboration. Such an integrated approach ensures that the work plan is informed and acted upon by the right resource persons.

## Identify strategies and activities needed to achieve planned outputs

Implementation strategies and broad activities may have been discussed with stakeholders during strategic programme planning – more specifically, during the development of the theory of change. At the time of implementation, the manager takes into account the discussions held during the programme planning and design process and further considers:

- **Organizational policies and guidance.** Do policies exist that prohibit or encourage specific activities? Is there guidance for undertaking specific activities?

- **Historical and technical information.**

What activities were actually required to achieve previous similar outputs? What have been the best practices identified in previous programmes?

- **Constraints.** What factors will limit options for activities (such as financial resources, time, geography, access or security)?

- **Assumptions,** such as those identified during the development of the theory of change and other operational assumptions, such as when resources will likely become available.

- **Expertise and action** required from within UNICEF offices and with implementation partners to carry out activities.

- **Expert judgement** possessed by the programme manager or available from many other sources, such as other units in the organization, consultants and stakeholders.

- **Environmental sustainability,** meaning any possible unintended positive and/or negative impacts on the environment.

- **Capacity development approach:** Are the proposed activities contributing to fostering resilience, the humanitarian development continuum, the gender and equity divide?

In addition to activities directly related to achieving outputs through work plans, managers also include activity requirements in plans to monitor and support programme implementation. One example could be the requirement to consult collaboratively with colleagues in offices to ensure a solid foundation for implementation. It could also mean planning for activities and their resource requirements related to:



- Human resources management, procurement, contracting, logistics, warehousing, financial management, etc.
- Programmatic assurance that resources are being used for their intended purposes
- Identification of bottlenecks as well as feedback from stakeholders
- Learning and knowledge transfer, such as best practice documentation.

## Determine implementation modalities

UNICEF generally supports one or more of four implementation modalities to achieve a result. These include implementation by:

- One or several government departments or entity
- Civil society organizations
- Other UN agencies
- UNICEF itself (direct implementation).

The UNICEF manager decides which of the four identified modalities will be best suited to achieving the desired results. In making the decision, the manager considers the following factors:

- **Economy:** Is UNICEF or a potential partner best placed to obtain inputs of appropriate quality at the right price?
- **Efficiency:** How well does UNICEF versus a potential partner or vendor undertake activities to convert inputs into quality outputs?
- **Effectiveness:** Is it more likely that desired outcomes, including an equity-based approach to programme delivery, will be achieved if one implementation approach is chosen over another?

- **Sustainability:** Is the approach financially and environmentally viable over the long-term? Is the approach acceptable to local communities and stakeholders and will it support the achievement of sustainable outcomes?
- **Speed of Implementation:** Which implementation modalities have the potential to achieve the intended results within the specified timeframe?

This decision is driven by the overall programme strategy, as well as:

- Organizational mandate and policies
- Human resource capacity
- Office infrastructure and process efficiencies and effectiveness
- Opportunity cost of implementing the activity versus outsourcing or partnering
- Operating context, including the capacity of partners and cultural considerations
- Volume of expected transactions and the potential impact on office capacity
- Parties that are best placed to mobilize quickly when a timely response is required
- Organizational alignment with key programme issues (e.g., gender, inclusion)
- Availability of funding (budgetary constraints or conditionality linked to sources of funding may influence the choice of implementation approach)
- Value-for-money principles.

UNICEF's role in implementation varies depending on who is implementing the programme (see Table 3.1 on the next page).





**Table 3.1. UNICEF's role and contribution varies with different implementation approaches**

| IMPLEMENTING ENTITY               | ACTIVITY<br>Support a selected number of schools to improve retention and quality in learning in line with national child-friendly school standards   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
|                                   | UNICEF'S CONTRIBUTION   | UNICEF'S ROLE   | PARTNER'S ROLE   |
| <b>GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT</b>      | <p>UNICEF provides technical assistance, cash and supplies to government.</p> <p><b>Relevant strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity development</li> <li>• Evidence-generation, policy dialogue and advocacy</li> <li>• Identification and promotion of innovation.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly plans with partner</li> <li>• Provides cash for contract for construction of WASH facilities</li> <li>• Procures and provides furniture and supplies</li> <li>• Provides cash for regular monitoring</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance throughout the process</li> <li>• Jointly monitors progress and verifies utilization of resources.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates with other ministries &amp; stakeholders</li> <li>• Leads implementation of activities as per jointly developed plan</li> <li>• Jointly reviews progress with UNICEF and reports on utilization of resources provided by UNICEF.</li> </ul> |
| <b>CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION</b> | <p>UNICEF provides technical assistance, transfers cash* and supplies to CSOs</p> <p>* Part of the cash being provided will be used by the CSO partner to purchase furniture for the project, since it was decided by UNICEF (Supply and Programme Divisions) that the furniture was best purchased locally and the CSO had good procurement procedures and practices to undertake the procurement of furniture themselves.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly plans with partner</li> <li>• Provides cash for institutional contract, monitoring and training</li> <li>• Procures and provides supplies</li> <li>• Provides technical assistance</li> <li>• Jointly monitors progress and verifies utilization of resources.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements activities as per jointly developed plan</li> <li>• Reports on progress of activities and utilization of resources provided by UNICEF.</li> </ul>  |
|                                   | <p>UNICEF and partner decide to work together using their own resources.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly plans with partner</li> <li>• Undertakes activities using own resources</li> <li>• Jointly monitors progress and utilization of resources against work plan.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as UNICEF's.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>OTHER UN AGENCIES</b>          | <p>UNICEF transfers cash and supplies to another UN agency to carry out a component of the activity – construction of separate WASH facilities.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly plans with partner</li> <li>• Provides cash for construction</li> <li>• Monitors progress and utilization of resources against work plan.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements activities as per jointly developed plan</li> <li>• Reports on progress of activities and utilization of resources provided by UNICEF.</li> </ul>  |

**Table 3.1.** UNICEF’s role and contribution varies with different implementation approaches (cont.)

| IMPLEMENTING ENTITY                 | ACTIVITY<br>Support a selected number of schools to improve retention and quality in learning in line with national child-friendly school standards |  |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
|                                     | UNICEF’S CONTRIBUTION   | UNICEF’S ROLE  | PARTNER’S ROLE  |
| <b>UNICEF DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION</b> | UNICEF hires staff (or uses existing staff) or contracts consultants to undertake all activities.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF engages consultant</li> <li>• UNICEF procures furniture and supplies</li> <li>• UNICEF procures and enters into an institutional contract for WASH facility construction</li> <li>• UNICEF undertakes supervision of installation of furniture and supplies</li> <li>• UNICEF develops and undertakes training of teachers and provides mentoring in active learning methodology</li> <li>• UNICEF undertakes regular monitoring of schools</li> <li>• UNICEF assumes overall management responsibility and accountability for undertaking specific activities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly reviews progress with UNICEF and any adjustment required.</li> </ul> |

### Estimate the cost of activities, based on input requirements

Input planning involves determining what resources (people, cash and supplies) and what quantity of each resource should be used and when it is needed to implement activities.

In UNICEF, there are three primary types of inputs: technical assistance, cash and supplies.

#### Technical assistance

Technical assistance can be made available in two ways. It can be provided:

- Directly by UNICEF staff to partners

- By consultants (recruited and funded by UNICEF) working with UNICEF or with the government.

Identifying the skills and competencies needed to execute activities is a critical component of input planning. This process starts during the development of the country programme management plan. When specific skills sets do not exist (or the number is not sufficient) in a UNICEF office, then the skills need to be obtained through staff training or through consultancies, temporary appointments, institutional contracts or partnering.

The types of human resources required will also depend on the type of implementation strategies and approaches





chosen. For instance, when activities are completely outsourced to a vendor or undertaken by a partner, project management, contract management and oversight skills become more important for UNICEF staff.

### Cash

Cash can be used in two ways. It can be:

- Transferred to implementing partners to carry out activities
- Utilized by UNICEF offices to carry out activities directly.

Managers sometimes think of cash requirements as the amount of cash to be transferred to implementing partners. However, the cash requirement of an intervention is an estimate of *all costs required to implement the planned activities*. Cost estimation leads to the creation of funding proposals and budgets.

A **cost estimate** is an approximation of the probable cost of completing activities on the basis of available information. There are three common types of cost estimates, each of which requires an increasing level of effort to prepare:

**Planning estimate:** A rough approximation of costs within a reasonable range of activities prepared for information purposes only (that is, a ‘ballpark’ estimate).

- More often used for strategic or higher-level planning and associated monitoring.

**Budget estimate:** An approximation based on well-defined (but preliminary) cost data and established procedures.

- More often used for implementation planning and activity-level monitoring.

**Firm estimate (and not-to-exceed/not less than estimates):** A figure based on cost data sound enough for entering into a binding contract.

- More often used when entering into institutional contracts with vendors.

Typically, cash requirements include consideration of both the direct and indirect costs. Examples of **direct costs** include:

- Salaries and benefits for staff members working exclusively on one programme
- Travel expenses and personal equipment costs attributable to these staff members
- Supplies and materials for particular programmes
- Rent, where the programme uses a particular facility exclusively (such as a warehouse dedicated to education supplies)



Reality may dictate that cost estimates are undertaken after budgets are approved. However, estimates should be undertaken prior to funding or a budget request. Results-based budgeting requires activity-based budgets that allow for better-informed resource allocation decisions as well as identification of areas for possible cost reductions.





- Contract fees for vendors for services and goods
- Cash required to be transferred to partners.

Indirect costs are costs shared across several programmes and include any expenses that are not directly tied to the operation of a specific programme. Examples of indirect costs include:

- General administration and management expenses (such as management staff salaries and benefits)
- Infrastructure costs (such as rent and utilities, transportation and technical licenses)
- Other costs that are incurred for the benefit of all the programmes within the organization (such as communication costs).

### **Supplies**

Supplies are used in three ways. They are:

- Transferred to implementing partners to carry out activities
- Purchased for/on behalf of governments
- Utilized internally by UNICEF offices.

Early supply planning, undertaken in a collaborative manner with relevant stakeholders (programme and supply functions in the UNICEF office, including government counterparts and CSO partners) is one of the most important ways to leverage successful supply operations.

To achieve effective and timely programme implementation, UNICEF offices incorporate the planning and review of supply components at key

stages in the programme design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. The active and early involvement of supply and logistics staff is an integral part of programme planning.

Where a programme includes a major supply component, a review of the supply needs and early planning will help determine:

- The outputs and activities that require supply items
- The type and quantity of supplies required
- When supplies are needed at the project sites
- The achievability of planned results and timelines given the available resources and time
- Whether Procurement Services is an option.

Supply planning is undertaken in conjunction with programme work plans. It is important to coordinate the supply planning process internally and with external partners to clarify to what extent supply inputs are needed and how many. It is also necessary to define how, when, where and who will run operations related to procurement and logistics.

For some essential strategic commodities – such as vaccines, immunization devices, cold chain products, mosquito nets and insecticides – there is a formalized annual forecasting process coordinated by the Supply Division. The forecasts form the basis of agreements established with suppliers.





Managers undertake planning for supply and end-user monitoring to ensure that supplies are safeguarded and received and used by the (intended) beneficiaries.

Needed inputs (cash, technical assistance provided by staff, and supplies) differ for the same activity based on the implementation approach that is used (see Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2.** Different implementation approaches require different inputs from UNICEF

| IMPLEMENTATION ENTITY                        | ACTIVITY<br>1. Support for the development and roll-out of national child-friendly school standards and evaluation sheets   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | Examples of inputs  |   |
|  | UNICEF'S DIRECT INPUTS  | UNICEF'S INDIRECT INPUTS  |
| GOVERNMENT                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash</li> <li>• Technical assistance provided by staff</li> <li>• Supplies.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to document activity with partner</li> <li>• Staff time to review and approve cash requests and progress reports</li> <li>• Staff time for the procurement &amp; distribution of supplies</li> <li>• Staff time to carry out programme monitoring activities, including assurance activities</li> <li>• Staff time to manage relationships with government &amp; other development partners (management time).</li> </ul> |
| CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash</li> <li>• Technical assistance provided by staff</li> <li>• Supplies.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to document activity with partner</li> <li>• Staff time for the review of the partnership proposal with CSO</li> <li>• Staff time to review and approve cash requests and progress reports</li> <li>• Staff time for monitoring activities, including assurance activities.</li> </ul>  |
| OTHER UN AGENCIES (as implementing partners) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash</li> <li>• Technical assistance provided by staff.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to document activity with partner</li> <li>• Staff time to review and approve cash requests and progress reports.</li> </ul>  |
| UNICEF DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash</li> <li>• Staff time to procure consultancy services</li> <li>• Staff time to procure supplies</li> <li>• Staff time to develop training materials</li> <li>• Staff time to deliver training</li> <li>• Staff time of staff to provide technical content.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to manage and issue payments to consultants.</li> </ul>   |



### Determine the time required to carry out activities

Activity duration estimation is the process of taking information on programme activities and inputs and then estimating the time required for the purposes of scheduling. The level of effort the manager puts into understanding and documenting time requirements will vary by the size, complexity and criticality of the intervention.

Activity sequencing is an important component of implementation planning and necessitates an understanding of:

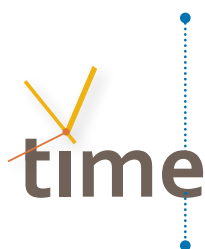
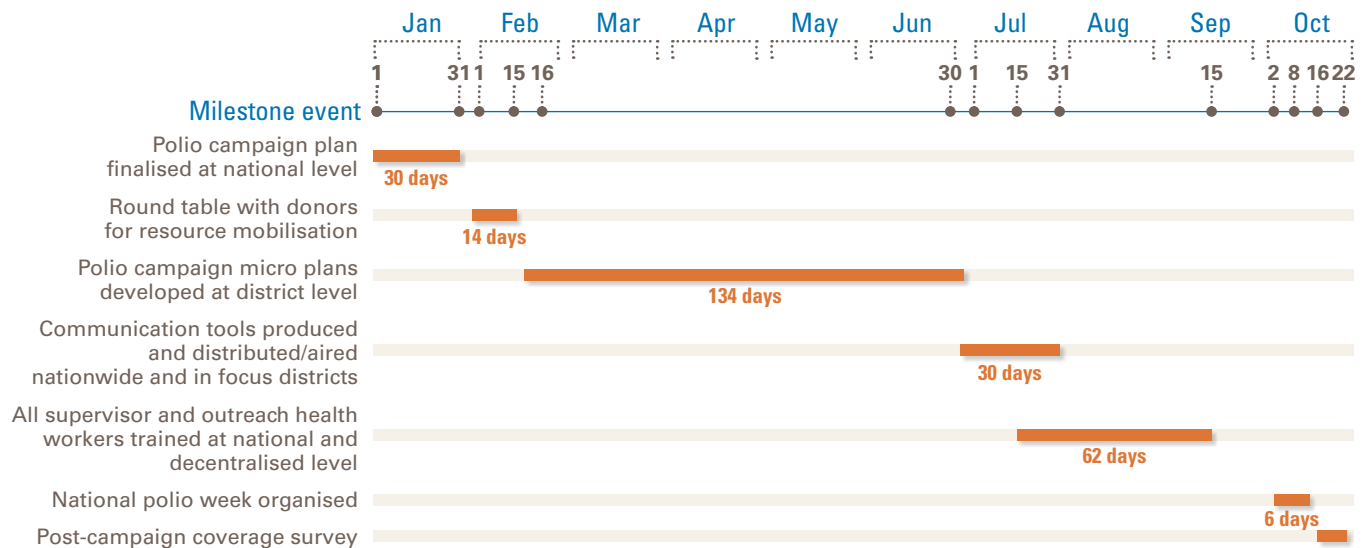
- All activities required to complete the intervention
- The time (duration) that each activity will take to complete

- The dependencies among activities
- Logical end points such as milestones or deliverable items.

Activities must be sequenced accurately to support a realistic and achievable schedule. When determining activity sequencing it is essential to consider external factors that will affect implementation timing (such as seasonal considerations, key events and timelines of stakeholders).

Many different tools are used to understand time requirements and to schedule team members accordingly. For a simple intervention, a calendar may suffice. A Gantt chart is probably the most widely used way to show a project schedule. It can easily be created using Word or Excel (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. A Gantt chart showing sequencing and timing of programme activities



Critical to understanding the time required to complete activities is factoring in any lead time needed to have inputs in place.

For example, time required to recruit staff, procure supplies, gain approvals and put funding agreements in place need to be taken into account in the overall schedule.



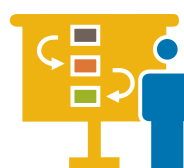


**Table 3.3.** A programme schedule based on milestones

| MILESTONE EVENT  | TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Polio campaign plan finalized at national level  | • By end January        |
| • Round table with donors for resource mobilization                                      | • By mid-February       |
| • Polio campaign micro plans developed at district level                                 | • By end June           |
| • Communication tools produced and distributed/aired nationwide and in focus districts   | • By end July & onwards |
| • All supervisor and outreach health workers trained at national and decentralized level | • By mid-September      |
| • National polio week organized  | • 2–8 October           |
| • Post-campaign coverage survey  | • 16–22 October         |

Additionally, a milestone schedule is sometimes used to highlight significant events/steps towards realization of complex activities or results. The milestone schedule indicates timelines by which important events are expected to be completed. It can easily be created using Word or Excel. An example of a milestone schedule for a specific intervention is shown in Table 3.3.

When interdependencies among activities are more complex, activity or work flow diagrams can also assist in sequencing. Activity or work flow diagrams can be created using Word, PowerPoint or Visio. However, it can also be helpful to diagram activities on a white board to increase the team’s understanding of linkages. An example of an activity diagram is shown in Figure 3.3.



### Document the work plan

Work plans help you operationalize your results

framework on an annual, multi-year or rolling basis. It is critical that work plans do not turn into a shopping list of activities but are closely aligned to your outputs and outcomes as defined in your results framework and documented in the country programme document UNDAF and strategy note. As can be seen in the work plan template in Figure 3.4, each key outcome and output is subsequently outlined and corresponding activities are articulated. These activities should closely respond to the programme’s priorities and results as laid out in the country programme document, UNDAF and programme strategy notes. In humanitarian contexts, the reference

**Figure 3.3.** A sample programme activity diagram



**Figure 3.4. Tool H: A sample work plan template**

| RESULTS                                       | ACTIVITY | LOCATION | IMPLEMENTING PARTNER(S) | TIME FRAME |    |    |    | PLANNED BUDGET |          |       |
|---|----------|----------|-------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----------------|----------|-------|
|   |          |          |                         | Q1         | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Funded         | Unfunded | Total |
| 1. Outcome:                                   |          |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
| 1.1 Output & indicator(s) (baseline; target): | 1.1.1    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.1.2    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.1.3    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.1.4    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.1.5    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
| 1.2 Output & indicator(s) (baseline; target): | 1.2.1    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.2.2    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.2.3    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.2.4    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |
|   | 1.2.5    |          |                         |            |    |    |    |                |          |       |

will be the inter-agency Humanitarian Response Plan and/or Refugee Response Plan and UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action for Children appeal.

Work plans are not created in a vacuum, but should involve implementing partners and other key stakeholders. Working together to determine the most relevant strategies and activities is an essential part of implementation. Ensuring that all parties have a keen understanding of and buy-in to the expected results is critical to building strong RBM systems.

Often, the pressure to get fast results encourages people to skip documenting plans and get right to implementation of the tasks. Although this strategy can create a burst of immediate activity, it

also increases the likelihood of waste and mistakes. Nor does it provide a baseline to monitor performance of the programme. In addition, a documented work plan is a component of being ‘evaluation ready’.

The documented plan (whether it is a work plan or a more detailed micro plan to support the implementation of activities) provides the basis for implementation and monitoring and should include:

- Scope of effort (outcome/output/indicator)
- Activities to be implemented during the implementation period
- Partner responsible for implementation
- Required timelines
- Planned budget.





Other components of programme implementation to document within the plan are monitoring, quality assurance and feedback points. This will help ensure that results are being achieved as planned, resources are being utilized for their intended purpose, and perspectives from programme stakeholders and communities are being fed back for timely decision-taking. Monitoring, quality assurance and feedback are often addressed in meetings and regular reviews that may be scheduled quarterly or every six months.

The draft documented plan is then circulated to team members for further inputs and refinements and to ensure common understanding. The final product is one that is owned by the entire programme team, including with those who are directly responsible for carrying out activities – the implementing partners.

### Items to consider regarding the work plan's length and level of detail

- Create a 'planning horizon', which includes a detailed work plan that estimates the time required for activities as far into the future as you feel comfortable.
- The planning horizon will move forward as the programme progresses.
- Past the horizon, lay out the programme at a higher level, reflecting

the increased amount of uncertainty. High-level activities that were vague initially will need to be defined in more detail as their time frame moves closer.

### Formats for documenting the work plan

UNICEF has templates for work plans as well as annual management plans. For some activities, the level of detail in a UNICEF work plan will be sufficient. However, other activities will require more detailed plans (sometimes called micro plans, implementation plans or project plans).

There are many different ways to document a plan, which should reflect the needs of the programme and the team members. For large complex programmes, the plan can be a combination of many sub-plans (such as a staffing plan, budget, schedule, etc.).

Ultimately, each manager decides the level of detail required to plan and monitor scope, time, resources, risk and stakeholder management (see Table 3.4 for an example).

A sample [work plan template](#) is also available (Tool H). (See [UNICEF's Programme Policy and Procedure Manual](#) for more details.)

Consider the following when finalizing work plans:



Plans can be documented simply or elaborately in Word or Excel. Microsoft Project is a software that allows dependencies and relationships for costs and schedules to be documented and easily updated for changes during implementation.



- Ensure activities will be sufficient to achieve the desired outputs (vertical logic).
  - Review horizontal logic of outputs and indicators in light of the activities (Will they move the indicator?) and meet identified appropriate targets, such as the annual target.
  - Will activities be financed from regular resources or other resources? Are there any funding gaps?
  - Once plans have been developed outside the management system, do annual work plans/rolling work plans align with the initial results structure? And can they be readily uploaded to the VISION programme management system?
  - What quality assurance processes exist to ensure the quality and coherence of work plans?
- \*** Remember that your M&E plan is not always adequate for annual measurement. You may need to establish annual targets to be reflected in work plans that are context-specific. Make sure to refer to your monitoring plan for these indicators.

**Table 3.4.** An example of inputs required to implement activities defined in a work plan, linked to outputs and outcomes

| OUTCOME  | OUTPUT   | ACTIVITIES  | INPUTS  |
|--|--|---|---|
| Gender-sensitive quality standards adopted at national level and implemented in model schools, promoting the inclusion of vulnerable children. | Gender-sensitive national school standards and evaluation sheets produced. | Development and roll-out of national school standards and evaluation sheets that are gender-sensitive.    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support via consultant to review existing child-friendly school standards and to develop school evaluation sheet</li> <li>• Cash for the national validation workshop and initial testing</li> <li>• Procurement of evaluation sheets for distribution nationwide</li> <li>• Cash to support national supervision &amp; data analysis of school evaluation.</li> </ul> |
|  |  | Provision of (hardware and software) support to selected number of schools (55) to improve their systems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of school furniture &amp; supplies for vulnerable children</li> <li>• Institutional contract for construction of separate WASH facilities</li> <li>• Partnership with NGO for training of teachers and mentoring in active learning methodology</li> <li>• Cash for regular monitoring of selected schools in national database.</li> </ul>                          |



### Other key resources

[UNICEF's Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, section 4.02, 'Programme Implementation and Management' \(on work planning\)](#)





## STEP 2. MANAGE IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

- Manage resources and efforts
- Track progress, constraints and opportunities

Once implementation planning is complete, the manager works to obtain inputs so that activities can be implemented and monitored according to the work plan.

Obtaining and managing inputs should be carried out in compliance with UNICEF's policies, procedures, processes and systems. The manager's level of understanding of organizational policies, procedures and processes as well as his/her ability to utilize required systems will directly impact the effectiveness of the programme.

Managing implementation and monitoring involves two main activities:

- Manage resources and effort
- Track progress, constraints and opportunities.

### Manage resources and effort

Managing for results involves bringing together all human, financial, technical and other resources to achieve desired development results. It focuses on providing sound information to improve decision-making. This entails tracking progress and managing in a way that will maximize results.

Key to this process is being able to identify the constraints that may impede implementation, while keeping an eye

out for opportunities to pick up the pace of progress. Hence, when implementing the work plan, a number of areas should be closely monitored. These include:

- Human resources, including staff performance
- Grant compliance
- Managing relationships with stakeholders and implementing partners
- Communication, media and information
- Financial resources or budget.



### Human resources, including staff performance

- To manage the implementation of programmes, managers must ensure that the right personnel are in place. Knowledge and experience with RBM is increasingly in demand, and staff engaged by a programme should possess basic RBM skills, such as familiarity with results frameworks, theory of change, monitoring plans, collection of data and results-based reporting. Staff should also be continuously supported to strengthen their ability to apply RBM principles and tools.
- Additionally, managers need to review staffing and skills sets identified as a part of the implementation planning step to determine whether there are any gaps that will require short-term





resourcing (such as consultancies and temporary appointments). Related human resources considerations:

- **Recruitment and 'onboarding'.** Sourcing, screening and selecting new personnel takes time and effort. Candidates selected should have the right knowledge, skills and behaviour to perform the job. Recruits need to be brought quickly on board so as to reduce time needed to work at full proficiency.
- **Deployment and redeployment strategies.** Once the right people are on board, they need to be effectively deployed. In other words, their strengths and interests should be matched with the needs of the programmes they will be supporting. This requires getting to know staff and matching resources to activities that are identified within the work plan. Results-based management principles dictate that all work undertaken should relate to a specific output/outcome/result. By aligning human resources to the work plan (which is aligned to the results structure), this will be achieved.
- **Performance management.** The performance goals of human resources need to be discussed, documented and aligned with the overall requirements and results of programmes. Effective performance management is about continuous communication, planning, monitoring and objective performance evaluation. When done right, it elevates employee performance and overall results.
- **Learning and training.** To ensure that staff have the skills to meet current

and emerging needs it is important to create learning maps and training activities appropriate for the team.

### Grant compliance

- Compliance with funding agreements is key to sustaining trust and credibility with donor partners. A problem in one country office can have a trickle effect across UNICEF-donor relationships globally. Throughout implementation, managers must ensure that programme and financial data required for donor reporting is being captured. Additionally, managers must see to it that implementation of activities is occurring in accordance to the specified work plan (which should align with the funding agreement and is directly linked to the results structure).
- Typically, donor reporting focuses on whether funds are used before grants expire and for the use specified in the funding agreement. These are basic components of ensuring compliance. However, managers must also determine whether there are any other conditions that must be complied with. Certain 'visibility requirements' may be specified, for example, or reporting to the donor when certain types of issues are encountered.
- The information on grant conditionality and requirements is contained in grant agreements available in UNICEF offices. Managers seek advice from donor relations specialists in the country office, regional office or headquarters to ensure they understand how to fully comply with funding agreements during implementation. This is especially true when a





manager is new to a programme and funding agreements are already in place. In such cases, managers must acquaint themselves with the conditionality of existing agreements and manage accordingly.

### **Managing relationships with stakeholders and implementing partners**

- Partners also need to be knowledgeable about RBM practices, including the development and use of the results framework, monitoring plan, indicators, data collection and results-based reporting. The goal is coherence between government management systems and the results-based management used by UNICEF so that there is no duplication of effort or working at cross purposes. This is also why it is important to involve partners from the beginning. Working collaboratively from the start helps promote ownership of various frameworks used by the government and UNICEF. With core government and CSO implementing partners, an emphasis on results can ensure buy-in and follow through. With contractors, on the other hand, managing relationships is more about strict compliance and quality assurance.
- If the office has chosen to implement through partners, then partnership agreements are put in place. The type of agreement used depends on the type of partner (government, CSO or UN agency), whether resources are being transferred, and the value of resources – in cases where there is a resource transfer.
- If resources are being transferred to a government entity, the work plan constitutes the basis for the collaboration, and no additional documentation is required. Detailed activity planning is undertaken bilaterally with the implementing partner at the time of implementation. Where no resources are being transferred to the CSO or UN partner, managers determine whether there is a need to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding. Such an agreement is important where there are specific roles and responsibilities assigned to each partner.
- If resources are being transferred to a CSO partner, then a Programme Cooperation Agreement and Programme Document or a Small-Scale Funding Agreement needs to be put in place prior to resources being transferred. Since such agreements take time (for joint development and internal review), managers need to factor in sufficient lead time.
- If resources are being transferred to a UN partner to implement programmatic activities, then the manager puts in place a UN-UN Contribution Agreement or a joint programme depending on the scope of the work to be undertaken.
- Managers must also consider whether partners require any training or orientation in working with UNICEF. Implementation can be significantly delayed when partners are not familiar with UNICEF's expectations in carrying out and reporting on activities.



- Ensuring adequate technical support and oversight at all stages of programming is critical to the quality of programme implementation with partners. This includes managing inputs (cash and supplies) transferred to partners to ensure timely reporting and intended use.
- Managing third-party service vendors and consultants is essentially managing the relationship as outlined in a contract between UNICEF and the third party. Tasks assigned to third-party vendors and consultants should be in alignment with those set forth in the work plan.
- The principles related to managing third-party vendors and consultants are very similar. That said, UNICEF requirements for each vary slightly and managers need to be aware of the differences.
- Contract management involves planning, budgeting, scheduling and monitoring the progress of work and taking corrective actions to safeguard the interests of UNICEF and the contractor. Ineffective administration of a contract leads to increased costs and delays in delivery and may expose UNICEF to legal complications with unpredictable results.
- Third parties have to be onboarded to the project in question. The onboarding process is often more detailed for consultants, who require ground passes and access to UNICEF networks and venues required for their work.
- The performance of the third party must be monitored to ensure that the progress of work is proceeding in accordance with the requirements of the contract. Monitoring is also needed to ensure timely detection of potential problems and/or the need for amendments to deal with changes in deliverables (scope, time and budget).
- The performance of third parties needs to be documented. Payment of fees is subject to satisfactory completion of services as approved by the Contracting Office. If deliverables are evaluated as less than fully satisfactory, no further contracts can be granted to the consultant, and payments may be reduced or withheld entirely.
- However, efforts to resolve performance problems should always aim for the successful execution of the contract. The manager strives to reach a just and practical solution that will allow work to proceed and, at the same time, safeguard the interests of UNICEF.

### **Communication, media and information**

- Communication in this context means telling the performance story: highlighting evidence seen in the indicators, the achievement of targets or current versus baseline data. Quotes, graphs and testimonials are useful in clarifying the data and providing a human dimension. The performance story may be communicated in reports that are more results-based than activity-based and may be supplemented with a variety of media, such as videos, and interviews.





- Throughout implementation, managers must be mindful of managing communication with stakeholders – both internal and external. Sometimes requests are explicit – such as audit requests or information requests from donors, governments or the general public – and the manager must respond.
- Some external stakeholder communication is routine and forms part of a manager’s every day functions. Other requests, however, such as media inquiries, may require consultation with communications officers.
- Internal stakeholder communication could be in response to an ad hoc request from senior management or a headquarters division or may form part of regular reporting requirements.
- All of these forms of communication require a certain level of effort. It is important to remember that the quality of communication with stakeholders not only affects the success of a project, but may positively or negatively impact on the reputation of the office and/or UNICEF.
- During implementation, managers must be mindful of the need to communicate the status of the programme, especially any adjustments required. This communication extends throughout the team as well as to senior managers and partners. Communication with various types of stakeholders serve different purposes. ‘RACI’ (which stands for Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) is

a management tool used to help all project stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities and those of other project members. A RACI analysis can be helpful in not only charting responsibilities but also in determining cross function/sectional communication during implementation:

- **Responsible:** person who performs an activity or does the work.
  - **Accountable:** person who is ultimately answerable for decisions taken
  - **Consulted:** person who needs to provide feedback and contribute to the activity
  - **Informed:** person who needs to know of the decision or action.
- It is a manager’s responsibility to ensure that office-based senior staff are aware of communication requests and have the opportunity to review drafts before they are issued to stakeholders. In addition, communication should be coordinated throughout the office (and relevant headquarters divisions, such as those concerned with donor relations) to ensure that all relevant parties are provided with adequate and consistent responses, as the need arises.



### Financial resources or budget

- Financial resources have a direct bearing on the reach and results of a programme. The programme manager must ensure that financial resources are adequate to achieve expected results and that value for money is being achieved. Value for money is



about maximizing the impact of each dollar spent to improve children's lives. Value for money doesn't mean we always pay the lowest price. Rather, it means we strive to understand what is driving our costs and make sure that we are getting the desired quality at the lowest price. UNICEF partners also need to understand value for money.

- The overall financial performance of the programme needs to be monitored: Do we have funding in place to resource the programme as planned? Are we utilizing existing resources as planned?
  - **Funding.** If funding has not already been secured for the programme, managers seek additional funding to carry out programme activities. Often this means submitting a proposal to donors or accessing funds whose allocation is managed internally by UNICEF (such as thematic funds).
  - Often plans are based on assumptions related to funding availability. Managers review whether funding is being made available as planned in order to determine whether fundraising efforts are required and/or adjustments to the programme need to be made before funding becomes available.
  - **Utilization.** Cash is made available to programmes by issuing budgets in financial systems (VISION in UNICEF). Upon the allocation of budgets, managers allocate funds for planned activities. Input procurement actions (purchase orders, service contracts, etc.) and staffing are coded to the

planned activities, which enables managers to monitor the utilization of resources.

- The rate at which budgets are utilized needs to be tracked against the planned cost of activities; the rate at which activities are implemented also needs to be tracked. Grants must be tracked as well and used before their expiration dates. Grants must be managed so that timely funding source decisions can be made; problems with financial utilization need to be flagged for discussion with donors.
- Managers keep track of the approximate amount of cash required per quarter (for example, the expected size of a cash transfer to implementing partners or payments to local vendors). This information is provided to financial managers to ensure that adequate cash is maintained in local bank accounts, enabling timely payments and transfers and avoiding implementation delays.

## Track progress, constraints and opportunities

Managing for results focuses on providing sound information to improve decision-making. This entails tracking progress and managing in a way that will maximize the achievement of results. Monitoring the work plan and implementation progress is an important part of the day-to-day management of your programme (the topic is developed further in Chapter 4). Monitoring includes identifying constraints and opportunities





that may require a reconsideration of programme strategies, and may even lead to changes in programme design. Monitoring takes place at different levels, as show in Figure 3.5.

While measuring results achieved is important, so is tracking how the programme is being implemented. This information can build an understanding of why certain results are or are not being attained.

UNICEF managers should continuously track the use of inputs and resources, the progress of activities and the delivery of outputs. This is what is referred to as implementation monitoring. Tracking involves examining how activities are delivered and their efficiency in terms of time and resource allocation and use. It also links implementation to a particular unit of responsibility. By undertaking regular reviews of actual progress against the work plan, the manager is able to assess the status

of implementation and whether adjustments are required.

What managers track will vary in response to the chosen implementation strategy and modality. For example, end-user monitoring and supply monitoring of equipment and materials delivered may not be applicable to programmes with a focus on evidence-generation, policy and advocacy.

In addition to tracking the availability and use of inputs and the implementation of activities, programme monitoring at this stage is also required for a number of other components, such as:

- Grant compliance
- Budget
- Scope
- Time
- Staff performance
- Partnership management
- Contract management
- Supply chain management.

Figure 3.5. Levels of monitoring

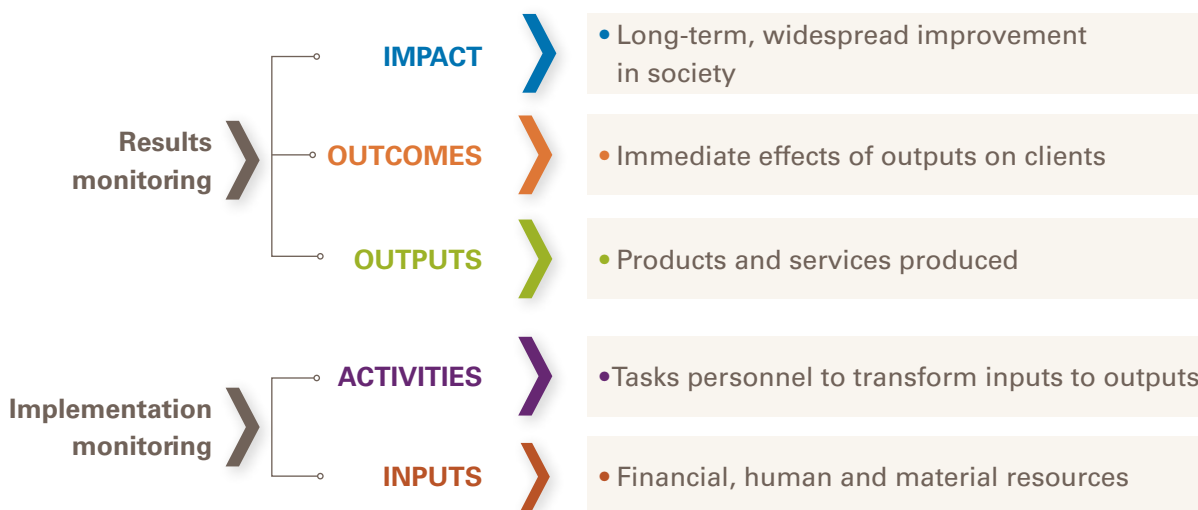




Table 3.5 provides a checklist of key considerations and questions you might ask when tracking resources and monitoring implementation.

**Table 3.5.** Checklist of key considerations for implementation monitoring

Note: Some components may not be applicable to all country programmes

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>GRANT COMPLIANCE</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the execution of the project in compliance with donor requirements?</li> <li>• Is the required data and documentation being captured and maintained for donor reporting?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>BUDGET</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is cash (grant) or budget being utilized by the project as expected (for the intended purpose and as per expected time frame)?</li> <li>• Have donors made contributions as anticipated?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>SPECIFICATION (SCOPE)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the activities that need to be accomplished to deliver an output taking place and being measured?</li> <li>• Are indicators identified in the programme plan appropriate to measure progress?</li> <li>• How do you guard against ‘scope creep’ to include additional activities?</li> <li>• Are activities producing the required output?</li> <li>• Are there unexpected obstacles to achieving the desired output?</li> <li>• Are the outputs achieved contributing to address disparities and risks faced by the most vulnerable children?</li> </ul> |
| <b>TIME</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are activities taking place within planned time frames?</li> <li>• Have key milestones been met or are they on track to being delivered?</li> <li>• Are problems anticipated in completing critical path activities?</li> <li>• Are scheduled tasks taking additional hours to complete on time, requiring team members to work overtime to meet schedules?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>STAFF PERFORMANCE</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are staff performing as per performance plans and the new results-based staff performance system?</li> <li>• Are performance evaluations taking place as planned?</li> <li>• Are problem areas identified – knowledge, skills, attitude, enabling environment, etc.?</li> <li>• Is additional training/coaching/mentoring required?</li> <li>• Is team morale declining?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are partners requesting resources as planned?</li> <li>• Are assurance activities taking place to ensure partner reports are accurate, results-based and that funds are being used as intended?</li> <li>• Are partners reporting results as required?</li> <li>• Are partnership reviews taking place as required?</li> <li>• Are partners respecting their accountability to affected populations?</li> <li>• Are cash transfers being reported in a timely manner?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>CONTRACT MANAGEMENT</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are contractors delivering agreed-on results on time and within quality specifications?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>END-USER MONITORING</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are services and goods being delivered to the target population as planned?</li> <li>• Are services and goods delivered having any unintended effects in the community?</li> <li>• Is the quality of services and goods in line with required standards?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>SUPPLY MANAGEMENT</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are supplies being ordered in the quantity and according to the specification required?</li> <li>• Are logistics and warehousing in place to transport and store supplies?</li> <li>• Are supplies in place and on time for project implementation?</li> </ul>  |





## STEP 3. MAKE ADJUSTMENTS & TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION

- Refine the work plan
- Adjust implementation

In managing implementation, it may become apparent that certain roadblocks are impeding progress and that adjustments need to be made to work plans, activities and implementation strategies.

Continuing to adjust and take corrective action is key to good programme management. This may entail:

- Refining the work plan
- Adjusting implementation strategies and modalities.

### Refine the work plan

Corrective adjustments are documented by updating the work plan and, where required, updating the programme strategy note. This includes updates to assumptions used to develop the plan, if those assumptions change, but may also include adjustments in strategies and activities to better achieve results. Keeping the work plan updated lends itself to continuous learning and being 'evaluation ready'.

Your main tools may also need to be adjusted during the course of a year so that they remain relevant and useful to all parties. This may require an annual meeting of key stakeholders or programme reviews (quarterly and every six months) to help to ensure that implementation is occurring as planned and that the results framework and

### Monitoring work plan implementation

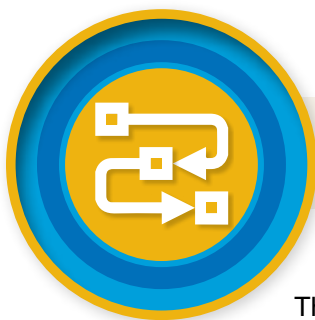
- Track inputs
- Monitor progress towards milestones
- Identify adjustments required
- Document adjustments to report and share
- Track and report implications of adjustments and change
- Analyse impact on resources, quality and time requirements
- Initiate discussions with partners on adjustments and impact on funding agreements.

corresponding theories of change and monitoring plan remain relevant and up to date.

### Adjust implementation

Managers should make sure that identified adjustments are communicated to project staff, UNICEF management and other stakeholders, as appropriate. It is particularly important to identify whether planned adjustments will affect UNICEF's ability to comply with funding agreements from donors. Where compliance may be at risk or project implementation may run past grant expiry date, challenges and opportunities should be discussed as early as possible with donors.





## ONGOING STEPS

- Identify and mitigate risks
- Ensure knowledge transfer and continuous learning

Throughout implementation, managers monitor performance and identify and mitigate risks that may impede the achievement of results. Managers also put in place mechanisms to promote learning from experience and the exchange of knowledge.

### Identify and mitigate risks

Managers are continuously seeking to identify and mitigate risks that may impede the achievement of results. At the same time, they must seek to balance risks with the costs related to mitigating them and the value that taking risks may bring.

Risk management involves periodic monitoring and re-assessment of risks that can impact the achievement of results, taking measures to mitigate negative risks (including preparedness measures) and to maximize opportunities. Risk management in this context applies to both re-assessment and adjustment in relation to risks to children and women, and in relation to a wider range of risks to programme implementation. In the planning phase (see Chapter 2), you will have identified the risks to the achievement of your results, assessed their likelihood and impact, defined risk response measures, and recorded it all in a risk monitoring and response matrix.

During implementation, managers should continually monitor, respond to and report on risks. It is also important to periodically assess whether any new risks have emerged. However, managers must seek to balance risks with the costs of responding to them and the value that taking risks may bring. Figure 3.6 (next page) provides some basic questions with regard to risk, costs and results.

Meeting periodically with implementing partners to discuss risks and measures to mitigate them is an essential aspect of a programme manager's job. Take out your risk monitoring and response matrix (see Chapter 2, Tool E) during programme reviews and review the risks and response strategies you had anticipated. Assess the current risk level and record it in your risk matrix under the current date (as shown in Table 3.6, next page). Have risks you identified earlier diminished in likelihood to the point where you no longer need to track them? If so, revise your risk matrix to reflect this. Or, possibly, the impact is less or more than expected. Perhaps new risks that you did not initially foresee are apparent to you now. Add them to the matrix and revise your mitigation strategies or develop new ones accordingly. Make sure these changes are reflected in your matrix. Use your matrix to review your risks and determine what adjustments are needed in strategies and work plans.





**Figure 3.6.** Connecting risk response with costs and results



- Do we understand the risks that our programme faces?
- Do we know the risks facing girls, boys and women?
- Do we know our key risks?
- Are we accepting the right level of risk?
- Do we know if our risks are being properly managed?



- Are we focused on the risks that matter?
- Do we have duplicative or overlapping risk mitigation measures?
- Do we have the right mix of skills at the right cost?
- Have we optimized the use of technology to manage risk?
- Can we use alternative strategies to reduce costs?



- Are the risks we take aligned to our strategies and objectives?
- Are risks impacting expected results for girls, boys and women?
- Are we monitoring risks to get process improvement ideas?
- Are we taking the right risks to leverage comparative advantage?
- Is risk management slowing me down or helping me go faster?

**Table 3.6.** Risk monitoring and response matrix

| RELATED RESULT STATEMENT(S) | RISKS<br>(Top 7–12 for programme or programme area/component) | RESIDUAL RISK LEVEL<br>(Assuming response is implemented) |                |            | RISK RESPONSE STRATEGY |
|-----------------------------|---|---|----------------|------------|------------------------|
|                             |   | LIKELIHOOD (L); IMPACT (I)                                |                |            |                        |
|                             |   | Date 1  | Date 2         | Date 3     |                        |
|                             |   | L = 3<br>I = 3  | L = 2<br>I = 3 | L =<br>I = |                        |
|                             |   | L = 4<br>I = 3  | L = 5<br>I = 4 |            |                        |



With regard to risks related to children and women, there are many specialized sources for risk monitoring information (such as those that are hazard specific or multi-hazard risks related to disasters and conflicts); the challenge is to periodically check on any change in risk analysis.

At the implementation stage, having this matrix in hand allows for:

- Quick activation of any response measures
- A better understanding of risks for programme adjustments as new activities might need to be added to the work plan to mitigate risks
- A better understanding of implementation for purposes of knowledge exchange.

## Ensure knowledge transfer and continuous learning

The benefits of knowledge exchange are vast and include:

- Improved efficiency and reduced costs through strengthened ability to respond quickly to emerging issues
- Rapid mobilization of expertise and experience, avoidance of previous mistakes and duplication of efforts
- Adoption of integrated approaches to programming by establishing communities and networks that cut across sectors and geographic locations

- Equipping UNICEF staff with the knowledge and guidance they need to be effective advocates on children's issues
- Leveraging South-South knowledge exchange for programmes
- Operational effectiveness from a culture of continuous learning from experience.

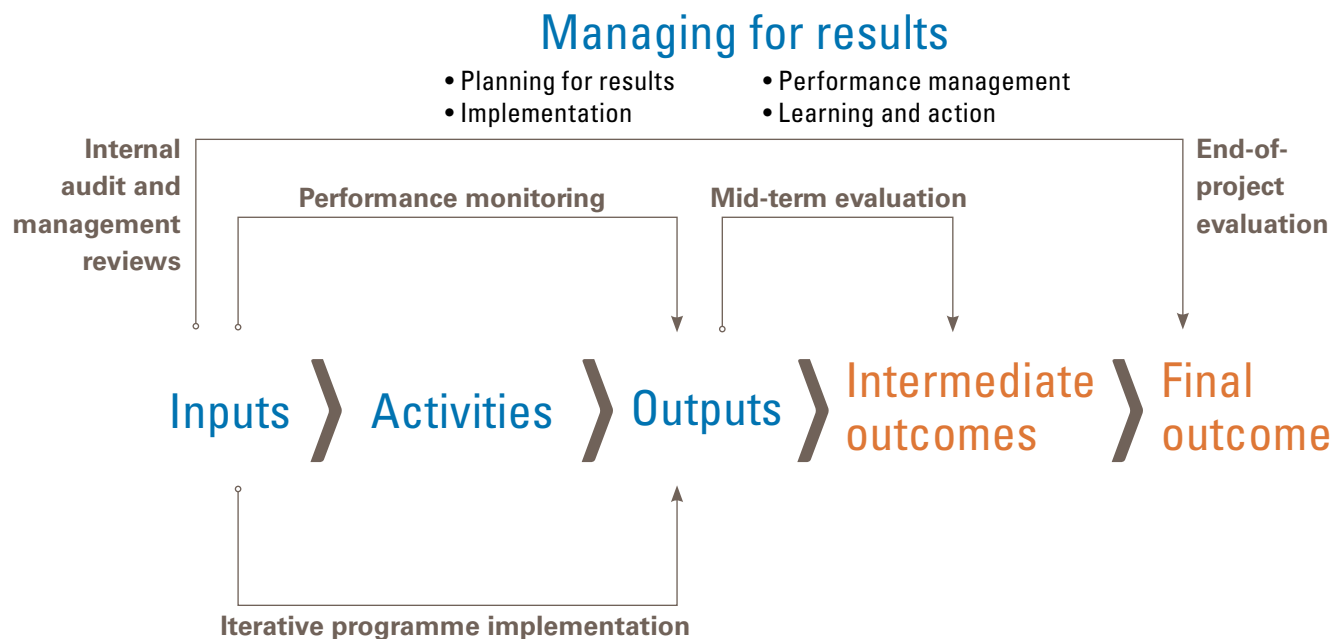
As illustrated in Figure 3.7 (next page), numerous entry points for organizational learning may reveal themselves as programme implementation takes place. Internal audit and management reviews are an opportunity to ensure that controls and management practices, processes and tools are in place. Performance monitoring is ongoing and will track the performance of activities, outputs, outcomes and impact (see Chapter 4 for more details on monitoring). Mid-term and end-of-programme reviews and evaluations focus specifically on results, among other things. They are an important forum for learning and corrective action (see Chapter 5 for more details on evaluation). During implementation, managers should take steps to ensure that programmes are evaluation ready by checking that:

- Plans and adjustments are documented
- Key indicators are selected and data are regularly collected to assess whether targets are being met
- Analysis and reporting of results is carried out.





**Figure 3.7.** Using performance information for organizational learning



### Other key resources

Mayne, John, 'Best Practices in Results-Based Management: A review of experience. A report for the United Nations Secretariat, Volume 1: Main Report, July 2007, pp. 35–40.

[Knowledge Exchange](#)

[Supply Manual](#)

[E-Human Resources Handbook](#)

[Division of Financial and Administrative Management policies and procedures](#)

[UNICEF Procedure for Country and Regional Office Transfer of Resources to Civil Society Organizations, 2015.](#)

HACT Policy and Procedure:

1. [UNICEF HACT Policy, 2015.](#)

2. [UNICEF HACT Procedure, 2015.](#)

[Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, Chapter 4, Programme Implementation & Management.](#)



# MONITORING FOR RESULTS

**How do you know** whether you are achieving what you set out to do in your programme? Monitoring allows managers to find out how well their interventions are progressing. It is a key component of results-based management, providing an opportunity to track both the implementation and the results of an initiative, project or programme. Armed with a results framework, a detailed monitoring plan can help managers track their indicators and targets, collect evidence of change (or lack thereof), and report on progress to date.



## When to use this chapter:

- When monitoring the results framework
- When developing your monitoring plan
- Prior to undertaking monitoring
- When you need to know what to monitor.



## Who should use this chapter:

- All UNICEF staff, particularly programme specialists/officers
- Planning and M&E specialists
- Implementing partners.

## Chapter overview of steps and corresponding tools:

### Steps

- Step 1.** Consult your results framework
- Step 2.** Plan for monitoring
- Step 3.** Select monitoring tools and approaches
- Step 4.** Collect and analyse data
- Step 5.** Communicate and report findings
- Step 6.** Take corrective action

### Tools

- Tool G.** Monitoring plan (Chapter 2)





## OVERVIEW

In **Chapter 2**, we learned how to build a results framework and a subsequent monitoring plan for your programme. The plan is a key reference tool for managers to monitor, report on and evaluate interventions. In this chapter, we examine more closely how to use the monitoring plan and other tools to operationalize the monitoring of UNICEF-funded interventions.

### What is monitoring?

# monitoring: | 'mɒnətərɪŋ | v.

Monitoring is the ongoing, regular observation and recording of activities taking place in a project or programme.

It is a process of routinely gathering information on critical aspects as well as unforeseen negative effects on a project or programme during implementation.

To monitor is to check on how activities and results are progressing. “It is observation – systematic and purposeful observation.”<sup>14</sup> It is also dialogue with key stakeholders to understand how activities are progressing: the challenges, obstacles and strategies that stakeholders identify to ensure continued progress towards expected results.

This dialogue includes feedback to and from primary stakeholders. For UNICEF, primary stakeholders are women and children (as appropriate to their evolving capacities), who are then provided information on how their feedback has been addressed. This process is consistent with UNICEF’s human rights-based

approach to programming and also fosters social accountability. Such feedback should provide early indicators of progress or lack thereof in the achievement of results. The information generated from various monitoring approaches should be used by managers to improve programme management, to strengthen national systems, and to increase positive impact on populations being served.

Results-based management requires a culture of looking beyond inputs and activities and what we did, to a culture of monitoring what is changing (in terms of capacities, performance and, ultimately, conditions for children). In monitoring terminology, this is a move from ‘inputs’ and ‘activity’ monitoring to results monitoring.



## What is the purpose of programme monitoring?

Monitoring draws on the key RBM tools developed in the planning stage, including the results framework and the monitoring plan, which are the core building blocks of a monitoring system. Results monitoring focuses specifically on results at the output, outcome and impact level and enables you to track progress towards your ultimate destination (impact) and all the points in between (your outputs and outcomes). Monitoring enables you to manage for results, especially if you are falling short of targets or require additional resources or different strategies to better reach your desired outcomes.

Programme monitoring is a process that provides us with data needed to determine three things:

- 1. Whether we are implementing the programme as planned** (implementation)

- 2. Whether we are achieving the expected results** (based on the theory of change and planned outputs, outcomes and impact)

- 3. Whether adjustments need to be made** to the programme activities and strategies in order to ensure that expected results are achieved.

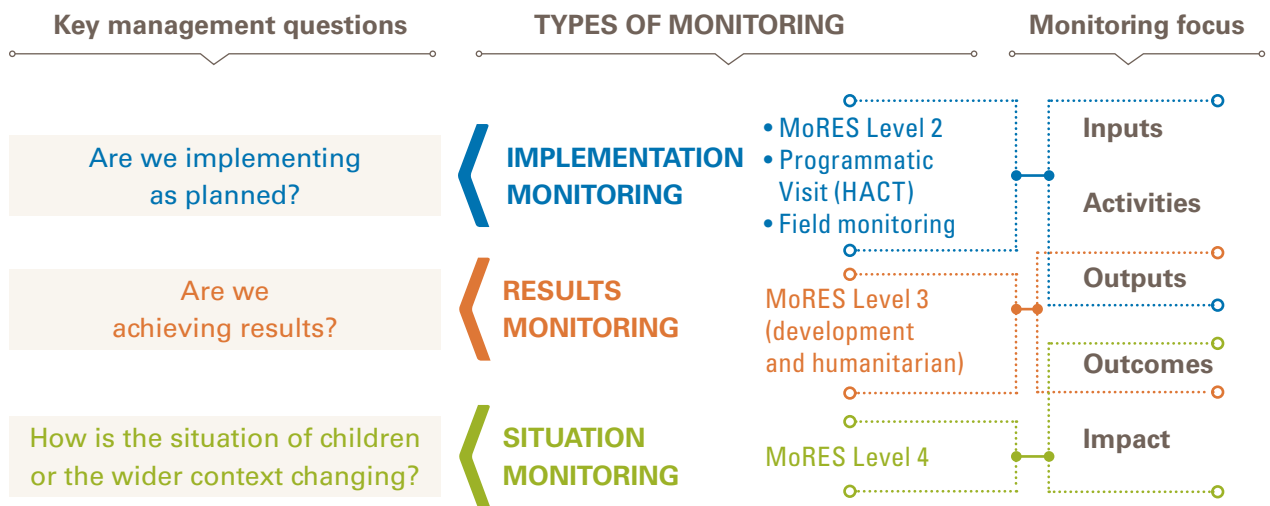
## Types of monitoring

There are several common types of monitoring, as shown in Figure 4.1.

### Implementation monitoring

In implementation monitoring, continuous or periodic oversight of the implementation of an activity is undertaken to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and targeted processes are proceeding according to plan. The central question is: Are we implementing as planned?

Figure 4.1. Types of monitoring





### Results monitoring

In results monitoring, results (outputs and outcomes) are measured and reported on at periodic intervals. In monitoring programmes in humanitarian situations, this will be of higher frequency. The resulting data are subsequently used in programme management and decision-making. In an equity-focused approach (carried out through the Monitoring for Results in Equity System, or MoRES), results monitoring provides information to assess progress in reducing bottlenecks that impede coverage of proven interventions (at the output level) and increase coverage of evidence-based interventions (at the outcome level). In a human rights-based approach, results monitoring focuses on changes in the capacities of duty bearers and rights holders (at the output level) and changes in their performance (at the outcome level). The central question here is: Are we achieving the expected results?

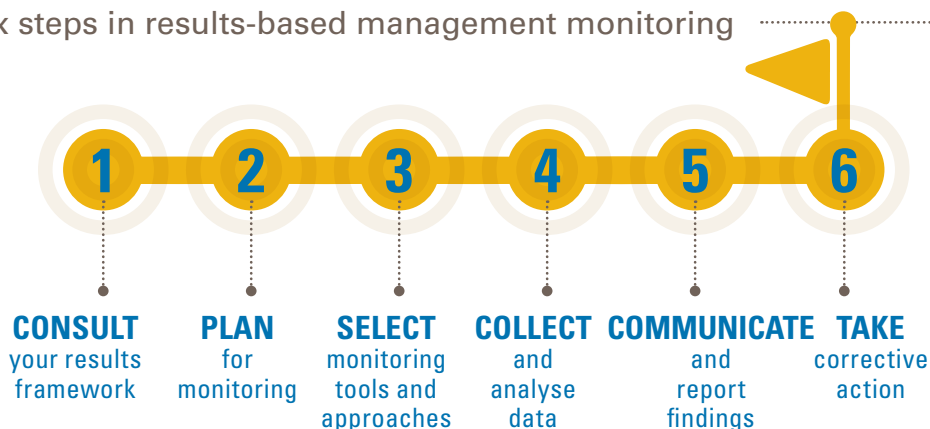
### Situation monitoring

In impact or situation monitoring, a condition or set of conditions, such as the situation of children and women, is monitored. Situation monitoring measures change or lack of change in such conditions. Monitoring the situation of children and women and development goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals is necessary when trying to draw conclusions about the impact of programmes or policies.

## KEY STEPS IN MONITORING FOR RESULTS

Figure 4.2 illustrates the six steps in results-based management monitoring.

**Figure 4.2.** Six steps in results-based management monitoring



### Other key resources

*UNICEF's Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, chapter 5 on Monitoring.





## **STEP 1.** **CONSULT YOUR RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

Monitoring begins with sound strategic planning. This includes the development of a theory of change and its results framework, with a hierarchy of results from a multi-year perspective (see Chapter 2). Strategic planning documents such as Programme Strategy Notes, Country Programme Document, Humanitarian Action for Children Appeals and related response plans in humanitarian crises, the UN Development Assistance Framework, the Country Programme Management Plan and associated results frameworks and monitoring and evaluation plans should be the starting point for operational monitoring as implementation kicks in.

Results monitoring usually involves major data collection activities requiring significant resources and strategic timing to feed into key decision-making events. Data collection needs to be planned in parallel with evaluation and research activities, mapping out end use, sequencing and budgeting, especially given that monitoring feeds into both evaluation and research. In UNICEF, this is accomplished through the integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan.

## **STEP 2.** **PLAN FOR MONITORING**

### **Essential elements of monitoring**

#### **Planning for monitoring**

Planning for monitoring begins with strategic planning and runs through planning for implementation, evaluation reporting and time spent revisiting strategies and plans. Monitoring should draw on existing monitoring systems wherever possible. Planning for monitoring entails working out an effective and efficient set of data collection systems and activities at different levels: 1) planning for results monitoring usually involves the contributions of a wide range of stakeholders, 2) planning for implementation monitoring aims to clearly track the contribution of a single partner agency, such as UNICEF.

Monitoring activities can be incorporated into work plans, but often a more detailed monitoring plan is necessary. Methods of data collection are not likely to be included in work plans, nor will such plans likely convey how monitoring information will be used by programme management. In order to ensure greater clarity and visibility of monitoring activities, a separate plan may be developed to detail what information will need to be collected, how and when data collection will occur, and how that information will be used.





A detailed monitoring plan for your project or programme often takes the form of a matrix that outlines for each result the following items: indicators, baseline, targets, data collection methods, sites, responsible persons, frequency and utilization (see Table 4.1). PRIME<sup>15</sup> is a tool that can facilitate quality assurance in the implementation of M&E activities identified in plans.

### Identification of responsibility

Monitoring is considered a core responsibility of staff – from the UNICEF representative to programme and operations staff. Programme managers lead programme monitoring planning and implementation from their programme perspective. Monitoring and evaluation specialists in country offices or at the regional level provide technical support to programme staff.

### Time and financial resources

All too often, time and resources are not sufficient to allow for meaningful monitoring of development interventions and humanitarian response. It is essential that time be allocated in advance so that monitoring activities are undertaken. A budget for monitoring and evaluation should be part of the M&E plan.

## Preparing and using your detailed monitoring plan

From the beginning and throughout implementation, it is important to have a working monitoring plan that includes all the essential elements and ensures that the necessary human resources, tools and budget are available and coordinated. This will allow you to track progress, make adjustments along the way to increase effectiveness and efficiency, inform decision-making, and report on the status of your programme. A cross-sectoral perspective allows for efficiencies, such as the planning of a national survey (such as MICS) in an integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan. A cross-sectoral perspective feeds into sector-specific and more detailed monitoring plans.

### Sites (geographic locations/areas where data will be collected)

In planning how to monitor your indicators, consider where data collection will physically take place for different types of monitoring. This will support you in planning and costing your monitoring activities.

### Responsible persons

Plan who (which people, agencies, partners) will be responsible for collecting, analysing and reporting on



Plan who (which people, agencies, partners) will be responsible for collecting, analysing and reporting on the data.

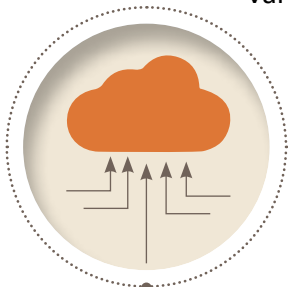
the data. Ensure a role for local stakeholders in programme management so that they can participate in data collection and make appropriate decisions for programming and implementation. Data should be analysed at all levels – not just the central level.

Consider also how primary stakeholders at the community level can be engaged at the local level, and how their feedback can be channelled back to central management. Be sure to assign a specific UNICEF team member who will follow up, and include that in their work plan.

### Frequency of data collection

Frequency of data collection may be quarterly, bi-annually, annually or even at the end of a project. Monitoring will vary along the results chain. For

example, you may only be able to monitor the outcome after year one or two of programme implementation. Outputs will typically be monitored on a more frequent basis, such as every six months to a year.



Data should be collected often enough to adjust activities and strategies as needed and to make course corrections.

Consider collecting data on a more regular basis (monthly, quarterly, every six months) depending on how often the data will be analysed and used to inform programming, and how feasible it is to collect data more frequently. Data should be collected often enough to adjust activities and strategies as needed and to make course corrections.

In humanitarian crises, monitoring for short-term life-saving and protection results requires much higher frequency (monthly, for example) and this in and of itself narrows the choices of methodologies. At the same time, even in humanitarian crises, very soon after a sudden onset disaster and over time in slow-onset crises (such as drought and conflict), longer-term recovery and development results should be included when possible, requiring a different and slower pace of monitoring.

### Utilization

Consider ahead of time the purpose of the data you have collected. This is also a useful check on the value of your indicators and whether it makes sense to invest in monitoring them.

Table 4.1 (next page) is an excerpt of a detailed monitoring plan. In the scenario presented, an education specialist monitors two outputs.

Readers may refer to the 'Field Monitoring Guidance' in UNICEF's *Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, which covers planning and managing systematic approaches to field monitoring, including references to data collection and analysis tools.




**Table 4.1.** Excerpt of a detailed monitoring plan

| RESULTS AND INDICATORS   | BASELINE | COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT TARGET | ANNUAL TARGET                       |
|--|----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Outcome 1: Children increasingly access primary schools</b>   |          |                                   |                                     |
| <b>Output 1.1: Improved mechanisms to monitor and apply sanctions to primary schools that charge fees</b>  |          |                                   |                                     |
| Quality of mechanisms to encourage the implementation of the policy to eliminate school fees. Scale from 0 to 3: (a) government has a policy on sanctions: 1 point; (b) school district officials' job descriptions and performance contracts include implementing sanctions: 2 points; (c) schools are systematically monitored and sanctioned if they charge fees: 3 points. | 0        | 3                                 | 2017: 1<br>2018: 2<br>2020: 3       |
| <b>Output 2: Increased awareness on the part of primary schoolchildren and their families and communities of their right to fee-free education</b>   |          |                                   |                                     |
| Percentage of girls, boys, families and community leaders surveyed who report being aware 1) of their right to fee-free education, and 2) of mechanisms to report primary schools that charge fees to school district authorities.   | 0%       | 95%                               | 2017: 40%<br>2018: 80%<br>2020: 95% |

## Monitoring in humanitarian situations

The approach to monitoring a sudden-onset or rapid scale-up humanitarian response must be adapted due to the urgency and demand for frequent information and the contextual limitations on data collection systems. In such situations, implementation and results monitoring are usually more tightly managed together to support effective decision-making. At the

management level, monitoring systems should at least be able to answer the following questions:

- Are we making progress against targets? That is, what is the coverage on key results?
- What is the quality of the response on the ground?
- Do we have the resources to achieve results?
- Where we are cluster lead agency, are we accountable in that role?



### COLLECTING DATA FOR PERFORMANCE MONITORING

| METHODS<br>(Methods of data collection and data sources, as relevant)  | SITES<br>(Geographic locations/areas where data will be collected) | RESPONSIBLE PERSONS<br>(Who will collect, analyse, report and ensure utilization of data) | FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING PERIOD<br>(When will data collection and analysis be undertaken) | UTILIZATION OF DATA  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and analysis of data collected by education field officers</li> <li>• Meetings with Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Reports by Ministry of Education</li> </ul> | Schools supported by UNICEF & Ministry of Education                | Ministry of Education & UNICEF staff  | Every six months  | Bi-annually: in time for mid-year and annual reviews, to make any necessary programme adjustments, including resource re-allocation.<br><br>To identify districts and schools that need more support |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District-level surveys</li> <li>• Reports by Ministry of Education</li> </ul>   | Districts supported by UNICEF & Ministry of Education              | Ministry of Education & UNICEF staff  | Every six months  | Bi-annually: in time for mid-year and annual reviews, to make any necessary programme adjustments, including resource re-allocation.<br><br>To identify districts that need more support.            |

#### Four data collection and analysis streams

Based on data collection approaches that are most often feasible in rapid onset or scale-up humanitarian crises, four data collection and analysis streams are recommended to cover information needs, spanning both implementation and results monitoring:



**High-frequency monitoring data that allow coverage estimates on an agreed limited set of priority indicators** (for example, monthly reporting on two to three indicators per sector). How to do this depends on the primary implementing partners for the humanitarian response (that is, civil society organization partners or the government) and what systems are already in place. **With CSO partners**, the key will be to get





agreement on the frequency of reporting on two to three common indicators and have this information integrated into the new or revised programme document. **Where government is the primary partner**, UNICEF needs strong input tracking; in some cases, UNICEF can advocate for and provide technical inputs to national fast-track reporting systems, such as SMS reporting from nutrition centres. **Where clusters or sector coordination is in place**, this same agreement on frequency, indicators and formats should be tabled and leveraged at the cluster/sector level. UNICEF prioritization of indicators should be harmonized with indicators agreed upon at the cluster level. **In all cases**, early agreement on indicators with partners is key and preparedness plans or the inter-agency appeal and Humanitarian Response Plans are the first critical opportunities to establish this agreement. The frequency of reporting can be adjusted depending on the evolution of the humanitarian crisis. As the frequency lessens, reporting can and should expand to a wider range of indicators and analysis.

**2 Systematic field monitoring to provide feedback on quality.** This refers to good practice in community-level field monitoring, including systematic feedback from affected people and communities, and especially those most vulnerable, including women and adolescents, where this can be done safely and appropriately. While the high-frequency monitoring of coverage focuses on a few prioritized results, field monitoring can explore the situation more broadly, including connections to recovery. In a large-scale humanitarian

response, scaled-up field monitoring requires dedicated capacity. Where country offices or national partners have strong field-based real-time monitoring mechanisms established in-country that allow for two-way communications with affected people and communities, these may be re-purposed and re-oriented geographically.

**3 Tracking effectiveness of cluster coordination where UNICEF is cluster lead agency or co-lead or where monitoring is UNICEF's area of responsibility.** UNICEF uses a simple Cluster Coordination Milestone Monitoring tool as a process monitoring checklist of progress when cluster/sector/working groups are initially being set up. Once clusters are functioning, it is recommended that cluster coordinators initiate a more participatory feedback process, monitoring against agreed core cluster functions and supported by the established [Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring](#).

**4 Tracking data on key operations support indicators** – such as funding, supplies, human resources – that are available through UNICEF's internal performance management system - [inSight](#).

\* [inSight](#) is UNICEF's flagship performance management system and it provides staff with programme and operations performance information through dashboards, scorecards, management reports, data cubes and assessment modules such as the Results Assessment Module (RAM).



While these four data streams are most likely to provide the best means of answering key management questions in an acute humanitarian crisis, data collection approaches should be pushed beyond this wherever possible. Moreover, the selection of monitoring approaches should be adapted to programming. **In acute situations, the focus is on narrow data collection on priority life-saving and protection results. As the situation allows, programming expands to longer-term issues and so should monitoring approaches.** The challenge is to use the best mix of approaches for monitoring at different levels of results, and shift with agility as needed, so that different results can be measured at different frequencies in accordance with programming priorities.

Some methods shift frequency and focus more easily than others: For example, national management information systems cover a wide range of indicators, but usually cannot be changed very easily. By contrast, once real-time technology-assisted systems (such as RapidPro, including uReport)

are well established in terms of both the technology platform and the network of users/participants, the data collection focus can shift to address different issues as the situation evolves. Similarly, for field monitoring systems, once the data collectors are trained on core methods (observation, measurement, key informant interviews, focus group discussions), we can adjust the tools and explore new questions using the same method. Ideally, in risk-informed programme planning, the adaptability of monitoring systems has been anticipated, including capacity-building and national systems building, to support this.

Over time, even in humanitarian crises, it becomes important to collect **outcome-level data**, whether as part of a multisector survey, if possible, or using adapted methodologies (the latter are still areas of innovation and experimentation). As with stable contexts, outcome-level data collection is ideally carried out with a wide range of stakeholders, and agreement on 'good enough' methods in challenging scenarios is key.



## Other key resources

UNICEF's Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, chapter 5 on Monitoring.

UNICEF, 'Revised Guidance on Field Monitoring Visits', July 2015.

UNICEF, Humanitarian Performance Monitoring Toolkit, 2011.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Humanitarian Response Monitoring'.



**STEP 3.****SELECT MONITORING TOOLS AND APPROACHES**

Certain tools and approaches have special traction in monitoring development interventions in UNICEF-supported programmes (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2.** A selection of monitoring tools and approaches

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Routine data systems</b> continuously collect information at different time periods (daily, weekly, monthly) and across different levels – individual (student, patient), administrative units (school, health centre), and administrative levels (district, municipality).</p> | <p><b>National record systems</b><br/>They commonly operate in education and health settings, such as Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), but they are increasingly being utilized in other areas, such as water supply and child protection</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> They offer full coverage of service points, breadth of information and systematic data over time.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> They are expensive to set up, require continued investment to ensure quality of data entry, often hold lots of information that is not processed and analysed and cannot be changed easily.</p> |
|   | <p><b>Sentinel surveillance</b><br/>It involves repeat data collection from a sample of service delivery units or communities in selected areas or groups of people. Common examples include demographic sentinel site surveillance systems, antenatal care clinics as sentinel sites for HIV surveillance, nutritional surveillance and food security surveillance sentinel sites. Monitoring data from sentinel sites offer an indication of what is happening more broadly. Sentinel surveillance may be useful when indicators of interest cannot be integrated into routine systems</p>  |
|   | <p><b>Field monitoring systems</b><br/>Structured community-level field monitoring can provide information on implementation on the ground based on a sample of sites/communities selected, and provide a lens on likely progress towards results. Field monitoring can be conducted directly by programme personnel or by third parties. Third-party monitoring systems can be used for shorter periods or in contexts of weak government capacity to scale up monitoring. Field monitoring allows both immediate site-specific feedback loops and follow up as well as aggregate analysis of trends across multiple sites.</p>                                |
|   | <p>All of the above can be accelerated, at least for a narrow set of data, through the use of new technologies. Strong field monitoring systems enable quick corrective action and support the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery.</p>  |





**Table 4.2.** A selection of monitoring tools and approaches (cont.)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Surveys</b> have been widely used in assessing access to, demand for and quality of service provision as well as higher-level outcomes. Surveys typically use a questionnaire, administered by trained enumerators to collect data on variables of interest.</p> | <p><b>Random surveys</b><br/>Surveys such as MICS and DHS, which are based on random sampling, can offer robust data for statistical analysis (with confidence intervals depending on the sample size). Surveys typically use a questionnaire administered by trained enumerators to collect data on variables of interest.</p> <p><b>Purposive sample surveys</b><br/>Approaches with purposive sampling or combinations of purposive and then semi-random sampling can be undertaken where time and access constraints or gaps in sample frames do not allow for random surveys – for example, sentinel site surveys.</p> <p><b>SMS-based surveys</b><br/>Allow random sampling but within a defined group of cell phone users or using cell phone users as intermediaries to reach others. The sample frame is biased, but the technology allows for a high volume of data to be collected very quickly.</p>   |
| <p><b>Qualitative methods</b> include observation, focus groups and key informant interviews.</p>  | <p><b>Observation</b><br/>It is a basic method that can include non-participant observation (observing participant(s) without actively participating) as well as participant observation (identifying the attitudes and practices of a community by living in the community). It is often blended with other methods, such as field monitoring systems.</p> <p><b>Key informant interview</b><br/>It is an interview with a person (or group of persons) with unique skills or professional background related to the issue/intervention being evaluated, who is knowledgeable about the project participants or has access to other information of interest.</p> <p><b>Focus group interviews</b><br/>They involve small discussions with 6 to 12 people who share certain characteristics; this makes participants relatively more relaxed and more likely to discuss sensitive issues because of their common experience. If focus groups are repeated often enough, they can be considered to represent the perspective of a certain group. Focus groups are useful for analysis of specific complex problems and to identify attitudes and priorities in smaller groups.</p> |
| <p><b>Feedback and complaint mechanisms</b></p>  | <p>This refers to a wide range of processes that actively seek the views of primary stakeholders or affected populations to strengthen their voice and to improve policy and practice in programming, an element of broader social accountability mechanisms. Feedback and complaint mechanisms require communication and community engagement as a base as well as accessible, safe and responsive channels for people to provide their feedback. They also require specific channels and standard operating procedures for complaints to ensure that sensitive issues, including sexual exploitation and abuse, are handled with the necessary attention to safety and confidentiality. Most often a range of coordinated and complementary channels must be developed and managed with other stakeholders, ensuring feedback and follow-up at local as well as central levels. The concept of feedback and complaint mechanisms can include field monitoring if so designed, as well as new real-time monitoring mechanisms.</p>   |





◀ **Table 4.2.** A selection of monitoring tools and approaches (cont.)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Participatory methods:</b> These approaches are particularly well suited for higher-frequency data collection on changes in vulnerabilities and understanding access to, demand for, and quality of services at the local level. Participatory methods are used to strengthen accountability through community participation.</p> | <p><b>Community score cards</b><br/>They include a range of approaches where community members define what is being measured in relation to specific concerns and engage in data collection. This can be done and aggregated across communities.</p> <p><b>Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Visualization in Participatory Planning (VIPP) and other variations.</b><br/>A key characteristic of these methods is combining a variety of processes and techniques to collect, analyse and disseminate information in ways that are accessible to citizens and that can influence donor and/or local and national policies. PRA, Rapid Rural Appraisal and Rapid Assessment Procedures often draw on the same methods as qualitative data collection and can also draw on surveys, but add techniques to help visualize collective analysis, such as seasonal calendars, community ranking, community mapping and transect walks. VIPP tends to focus more on group analysis for planning, with a range of participatory workshop techniques for drawing in participants' perspectives, which is useful in stakeholders' self-assessments.</p> |
| <p><b>Real-time monitoring (RTM).</b><br/>Technology-based innovations are accelerating the pace of data collection and enabling quick corrective action as well as longer-term decisions on achieving results. They are enabling more adaptive and responsive programming for results.</p>   | <p>Real-time monitoring is frequent (over short periods, depending on need) data collection and reporting. It is used to strengthen programme performance or to inform policy and necessary adjustments in service delivery, such as the interruption of the cold chain in vaccine management. Real-time monitoring uses different methodological approaches, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine data systems</li> <li>• Sentinel site surveillance systems</li> <li>• Rapid surveys and assessments</li> <li>• Community-based monitoring: citizen-based monitoring to gather a constant flow of data and analyse it to allow decision makers to monitor what is happening for timely corrective action.</li> </ul>   |



### Other key resources

UNICEF, 'Note on Tools and Activities Supporting MoRES in the Education Sector'.

UNICEF, 'The Determinant Analysis for Equity Programming', August 2014.

UNICEF's *Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, chapter 5 on Monitoring.



## **STEP 4.** **COLLECT AND ANALYSE DATA**

The choice of data collection approaches hinges on a number of interrelated considerations. These include:

- Indicators
- Contextual constraints and opportunities
- Cost
- Social accountability.

**The choice of indicators must balance costs, contextual considerations and the purposes of monitoring.** While primary data collection (which may include conducting a survey, focus groups, direct

observation or other means) might be appropriate for the 'best' indicator, costs associated with primary data collection and analysis can be very high. Existing data systems might be lower in cost, but may not provide or be able to provide the indicator that would best measure the intended result.

The decision to develop new monitoring systems/activities will be based on whether they will provide a better indicator than existing data systems (that is, an indicator that is more reliable, relevant or specific to what is being monitored, or is more sensitive in detecting change).



Asking the following questions can help you assess the quality of data being used in monitoring your initiative:

- How reputable is the organization, agency or government department that collected the data?
- Are the results generally accepted by others in the country and are these results consistent with the findings of others?
- Is there a description of measures used during the study to supervise the quality of the data collected as well as validation tools (triangulation, supervision of fieldwork, data cleaning)?
- Is the questionnaire/checklist available to assist in reviewing the data and are clear definitions provided for terms with variable meanings (such as households, family size, etc.)?
- Was the sample large enough to be representative of the overall population?
- Is the statistical method used to collect and analyse the data available?
- Is the raw data (pre-analysis data) available and, if so, is the analysis reproducible with the same or similar result (assess by testing a few variables/indicators)?
- Are the questions or topics in the questionnaire/discussion checklist consistent with the variables present in the analysis?





Different methods support different types of indicators. The question is whether available data or new, lower-cost data collection will provide data that are good enough for decision-making.

Options must be weighed against **contextual limitations and opportunities** to data collection. In humanitarian crises, for example, certain methodologies are just too slow; some are not feasible given the mobility of the population, quickly rendering sample frames out of date. By contrast, in high-income countries, existing capacities and systems might make longer-term investments in developing monitoring approaches worthwhile.

Finally, some monitoring approaches and methods bring added value in terms of strengthening **social accountability**. For example, participatory approaches and methods can contribute to building up local-level engagement.

## Monitoring of Results for Equity System (MoRES)

As we read in Chapter 1, MoRES is an approach to enhance analysis, programming, and monitoring and evaluation to achieve better results for the most disadvantaged children. MoRES aims to strengthen results monitoring and the difference that UNICEF's and other programmes/systems can make in addressing bottlenecks to achieving equitable results. MoRES is heavily linked to UNICEF's equity focus and thus seeks to identify and address inequities. MoRES encompasses monitoring efforts at different levels – analysis and programming with an equity perspective; monitoring of progress on government priorities and sector plans and UNICEF's

specific contribution to these; frequent monitoring at the disaggregated and decentralized levels of progress in removing bottlenecks and barriers; and longer-term evaluations of final outcomes and impacts.<sup>16</sup>

MoRES conceptualizes the analysis, programming, monitoring and evaluation process as four interconnected and interdependent levels:

- **Level 1 involves identifying the most disadvantaged** children and, using the 10 Determinant Framework, helps identify bottlenecks and barriers to **their access to services**. It then looks at the alignment of government and UNICEF policies, strategies, plans and programmes.
- **Level 2 involves the monitoring of UNICEF activities and related inputs**, which constitutes a significant part of implementation monitoring.
- **Level 3 refers to frequent monitoring** (at decentralized levels with partners) of outputs and of key barriers and bottlenecks to achieving results; this is used to signal the need for possible programme adjustments and the activation of feedback loops.
- **Level 4 refers to longer-term monitoring** of final outcomes to determine whether the intended results were achieved; thus they are closely related to impact-level changes.

The frequency of monitoring is determined by:

- Reasonable expectation of change as a consequence of programme activities
- Availability and affordability of data/information for monitoring



- Possibility of corrective actions taking place at that frequency
- Agreed timelines with partners.

Thus, the frequency of monitoring varies depending on the nature of the interventions and the bottlenecks being monitored. For example, in humanitarian situations, monitoring will focus on those determinants that are changing most quickly (for example, supply determinants, coordination mechanisms) as well as those that experience has shown are most critical and challenging in humanitarian response.

Partnerships are also seen as an important aspect of MoRES, since long-term sustainability requires partnerships that include national governments, UN country teams, other multilateral partners, bilateral agencies, civil society organizations and communities.

Collaboration can help reduce inefficiencies where several partners are working on the same issue and accelerating scale-up.

An example of MoRES monitoring is provided in the box below:



## MoRES-guided inclusive education monitoring framework

### The issue

In Serbia, an upper-middle-income country, national educational enrolment and completion rates are high. However, they mask deep disparities throughout the country. Those particularly disadvantaged are Roma children, children with disabilities and children living in poverty. At the same time, education reform has been extensive and legislation exists that provides strategic orientation for an inclusive education system. However, putting these measures into action is only just beginning.

### Why MoRES was applied

The MoRES system was applied to inform the design and implementation of education policy and programming, in accordance with a 2009 Law on the Foundations of the Education System that provides the legal framework and strategic orientation for inclusive education. Use of the MoRES approach identified and prioritized bottlenecks preventing progress in this area. It showed that monitoring of inclusive education was the least defined and understood area of education reform. In particular, inclusive education was without a defined framework of goals, targets, baselines, expected results and indicators, making it difficult to strategically and effectively manage, coordinate, develop capacity, assess progress and identify areas needing programmatic correction. MoRES-based analyses now guide the government's response to these shortcomings.





## The value added by MoRES

Using the MoRES determinant analysis and framework (see Chapter 2, Tool B) allowed stakeholders to better understand inclusive education. It revealed the bottlenecks and strategic solutions needed to achieve equitable results, including the need to develop a strategy and institutional capacity to monitor and document progress. As a result, a MoRES-guided inclusive education monitoring framework was developed and implemented, which has made and continues to make several contributions:

- Increased understanding of the concept of inclusive education among stakeholders and forged a common vision on main goals and next steps to further strengthen the integration of inclusive education at all levels of the education system
- Expanded awareness of the need for a robust monitoring system to support relevant, evidence-based inclusive education policy and programming, as well as the capacity to implement it
- Improved awareness among administrators and teachers of the importance of self-evaluation processes in support of school planning and the development of inclusive education
- Established baselines on inclusive education (baseline data and information were collected in a sample of 13 per cent of the country's municipalities)
- Used data to support the development of improved inclusive education plans by the government (covering the years 2015–2017) and UNICEF (related to the new country programme 2015–2020) that identify and address the removal of priority bottlenecks preventing progress in realizing inclusive education goals and objectives
- Mainstreamed MoRES-inspired instruments into regular education monitoring mechanisms, resulting in an enhanced national school quality framework.

Source: Serbia: Integrating the MoRES approach in the education system to improve putting into practice and sustaining inclusive education. In: UNICEF, *Pursuing Equity in Practice. A Compendium of Country Case Studies on the application of the Monitoring for Results Equity System*, second edition, 2016.



## Other key resources

[UNICEF, 'Revised Guidance on Field Monitoring Visits', July 2015.](#)

United Nations Development Group, ['UNDG Guidance – Frequent Monitoring for Equitable Results'](#), 2014.

UNICEF, ['A Fair Chance for Every Child', UNICEF Executive Board Special Session on Equity, Conference Room Paper](#), June 2015.

World Bank, ['Social Accountability: Strengthening the Demand Side of Governance and Service Delivery'](#), *Social Accountability Sourcebook*, 2005.



## **STEP 5.** **COMMUNICATE AND REPORT FINDINGS**

Communicating and reporting on monitoring is telling the performance story of your programme. Making reference to your monitoring plan with its results, indicators, baselines and targets is critical in presenting the evidence of actual versus expected change. Bringing together and triangulating the analysis of information from different data collection methods and systems provides a critical input to results-based management.

The frequency of reporting will vary depending on the information to be communicated. Weekly, monthly, quarterly and even bi-annual reporting implies a focus primarily on the inputs, activities and some outputs, as work plans are implemented. Once reporting on output, outcome and impact is the focus, longer cycles of annual, mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reports of monitoring activities are expected to provide broader details on progress towards results.

Reporting constitutes a critical element in conducting **field monitoring visits** and activating feedback loops, since it enables analysis and dissemination of collected information to relevant stakeholders for follow-up action, as necessary.<sup>17</sup>

The UNICEF Results Assessment Module (RAM) in inSight<sup>18</sup> enables you to report on the delivery of planned outputs every six months following the mid-year

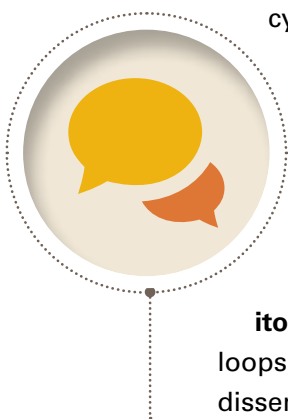
review and annual review, which are carried out collaboratively with key partners. Each report will include for each output:

- A narrative analysis of progress towards the output
- A rating of progress (on track, constrained, no progress, met, discontinued)
- An update of the indicator status
- Documentary evidence for the analysis, the rating and the indicator status.

In contexts where monitoring plans have included consideration of social accountability and any context where feedback from primary stakeholders has been sought, communication of conclusions and follow-up actions has to be planned for and undertaken in coordination with other programme stakeholders. In humanitarian response, this is a critical aspect of the interconnections among communications, community engagement and accountability to affected people and communities.

Sound reporting on monitoring results is contingent upon:

- **Good timing.** It is important to communicate the outcome of monitoring activities to key stakeholders in a timely and predictable manner. Hence, a sound trip report should conclude a monitoring mission, outlining the findings, recommendations and responsibilities for follow-up actions. Quarterly, mid-term or annual reviews are important elements of a programme monitoring mechanism.



Communicating and reporting on monitoring is telling the performance story of your programme.





- **Easy access to resulting data.** Available data storage and management mechanisms and platforms should be used to facilitate easy access to data from field monitoring visits by other staff and partners, and to permit analysis of trends over time.
- **Sharing of data.** Monitoring findings should be discussed with implementing partners and shared with relevant stakeholders.
- **An analysis of progress against plans.** Established mechanisms (such as completing sections of the Results Assessment Module in inSight or preparing situation reports) should be used to analyse progress against plans. This analysis will help determine future actions, both internally and with partners.

## **STEP 6.** **TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION**

Before making adjustments to a programme, it is important to understand who will actually use the data, and for what purpose. Potential users may include:

1. Government ministries
2. Implementing partners
3. Communities
4. Stakeholders
5. Sectoral coordination structures and national-level coordinating authorities (such as parliament)
6. UNICEF, other agencies and donors.

People use monitoring data for a variety of purposes, both internal and external. Such data provide feedback for the manager, but also play an important role in making sure that other stakeholders understand whether the objectives of the initiative are being achieved. Possible uses include support in:

- Preparing for programme reviews (mid-year, annual)
- Making adjustments to programme strategies, design and inputs after periodic or ad hoc reviews
- Providing data for continuous review of barriers and bottlenecks, which can lead to making programme adjustments as appropriate
- Providing baseline information during programme planning
- Identifying best practices
- Making resource allocation decisions
- Initiating open and sustained communication between an organization and the public
- Encouraging transparency and accountability.

The whole point about monitoring data is that it should be used as evidence for action or decision-taking. Reliable monitoring information will enable programme managers to:

1. **Consider changes to what we are doing and how we are doing it.**

Questions that could be asked are:

- What needs to be scaled up or down?





- What should be stopped? What needs to be changed?
- What new activities or strategies should be introduced?
- Do we need to change the results framework and corresponding theories of change, or just the strategies and activities, and thus costing?

**2. Build capacity.** Monitoring data may be used to justify additional human resources or better-skilled human resources, getting more funding, building better systems or improving the governance and management of a programme.

**3. Allocate resources more appropriately.**

Monitoring data can be used to:

- Reallocate financial resources
- Make sure equipment is allocated correctly
- Ensure that supplies are distributed correctly.

**4. Re-prioritize.** Certain aspects of the programme may need to change, based on monitoring data. We may need to change implementing partners, change strategies, and/or make other adjustments



All four of these actions can help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your intervention by applying lessons learned and taking corrective action.

Here's an example from education.

- 1. Change what we are doing.** If we have been supplying school materials but learning outcomes are still poor, we may need to shift to other strategies, such as training teachers and involving parents in school management.
- 2. Build capacity.** If children are not learning as expected, we may have to re-train teachers in more effective teaching methods.
- 3. Re-allocate resources.** If there are enough school materials in one district, we may need to re-allocate resources so that disadvantaged districts get more resources.
- 4. Re-prioritize.** Should we notice lack of improvements, we need to make changes. For example, if advocacy efforts to encourage girls to finish secondary school are not yielding results, we may have to move from advocacy to ensuring that there are sanitation facilities and special mentoring programmes for girls, for example.





# EVALUATING RESULTS

Evaluations provide credible, evidence-based information to help UNICEF continually improve its performance and results, contributing to both organizational learning and accountability.



## When to use this chapter:

- During the programme design phase to ensure that the programme meets the demands of an eventual evaluation (evaluability)
- Prior to developing an evaluation plan and strategy
- While planning and managing an evaluation for a UNICEF-supported programme or joint initiative
- Prior to undertaking an evaluation.



## Who should use this chapter:

- Programme staff and M&E personnel responsible for planning or managing evaluations
- Monitoring and evaluation specialists in country offices in their capacity to provide technical support
- Regional M&E specialists in their capacity to provide oversight and quality assurance to country offices



## Who should use this chapter (cont):

- UNICEF partners who have a stake in the evaluation
- Decision makers who are looking at new ways to redesign their own interventions to make them more participatory and responsive to local needs and those of stakeholders.

## Chapter overview of key steps in evaluating results:

There are seven steps in the evaluation cycle where RBM should be mainstreamed:



## Steps

- Step 1.** Assess utility, necessity, evaluability
- Step 2.** Plan and commission the evaluation
- Step 3.** Manage the inception phase
- Step 4.** Provide ongoing support, including information collection and analysis
- Step 5.** Disseminate and use evaluation findings
- Step 6.** Prepare and track the implementation of the management response
- Step 7.** Use evaluation for learning and accountability.



## OVERVIEW

**One of the purposes** of results-based management is to understand and sharpen an organization's contribution to results. Evaluation is a core component of the RBM cycle.

It helps determine the extent to which planned or unexpected results have been achieved; it also provides credible evidence-based information, recommendations and lessons to improve future programming and decision-making. Solid RBM systems are the foundation for useful evaluations.

Evaluation also plays a key role in demonstrating how and to what degree the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are being achieved for the benefit of children worldwide. The follow-up and review processes for the implementation of the Agenda will be informed by country-led evaluations and data. The Agenda calls for strengthening national evaluation systems as part of efforts to enhance capacity-development support for developing countries. General Assembly resolution 69/237, '[Capacity building for the evaluation of development activities at country level](#)', approved in 2014, invites United Nations entities "to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation in accordance with their national policies and priorities." This resolution provides the normative framework for supporting countries in reporting on their progress and results with regards to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### What is evaluation?

# evaluation:

| ɪ,væljʊ'eɪʃən | *n.*

Evaluation aims to determine the **relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency** and **sustainability** of interventions, and the contributions of the organization to results.

Evaluations are carried out at all levels of UNICEF, and are applicable in all country contexts.

It should be noted that the UNEG's evaluation norms and standards have been updated to better reflect the strategic changes that have happened over the last 10 years, notably the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The updated norms and standards include four new norms on 1) internationally agreed principles, goals and targets, 2) human rights and gender equality, 3) national evaluation capacities, and 4) professionalism, in addition to stronger emphasis on the utility and use of evaluation.





The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) has defined evaluation as:

“An assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

“An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.”

– **United Nations Evaluation Group, *Updated Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, June 2016, p. 10**



## Other key resources

United Nations, [Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), Final outcome document adopted by UN Member States in September 2015.

[‘Building Capacity for the Evaluation of Development Activities at the Country Level’](#), General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/237, 2014.

UN Evaluation Group, [Norms and Standards for Evaluation \(2016\)](#).

[‘Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF’](#), UNICEF Executive Board document E/ICEF/2013/14, 18 April 2013.

[Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ‘DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance’](#).



## The purpose of evaluation

Evaluation serves multiple purposes, as shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1.** The multiple purposes of evaluation

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  Accountability for results |  Knowledge-generation |  Empowerment of vulnerable groups         |
|  Organizational learning    |  Policy advocacy      |  National evaluation capacity development |



### Accountability for results

Evaluation constitutes an important element of accountability for an organization. Evaluations are a source of evidence for the achievement of results and institutional performance and serve as a major means of decision-making and verification for reporting on outputs and outcomes. Evaluations help UNICEF and its partners better understand if investments are being used effectively and efficiently to improve results with equity. Evaluations are usually conducted by external experts; evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons should be widely shared in accessible formats, and be available in the public domain.

Evaluation assesses the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions as well as gender, equity and human rights dimensions.



### Organizational learning

Evaluation is an important contributor to building knowledge and to organizational learning. Knowledge generated through evaluations provides input for future decision-making. In addition, evaluations inform key country programme milestones such as mid-term reviews, new country programme development, and strategic moments of reflection. They can assist in the re-orientation of a programme when facing changes in the national context. They can also be useful when assessing pilots to determine if an initiative should go to scale. By supporting organizational learning and accountability, evaluation fosters continual improvement in the achievement of results.



### Knowledge-generation

Understanding what works and what does not work and ensuring that lessons learned and emerging good practice are well disseminated helps accelerate learning. This learning, in turn, can be introduced into the intervention





being evaluated as well as future interventions – an important aspect of organizational learning.



### Policy advocacy

Knowledge generated through evaluation can be used to influence policy decisions to enhance equity and improve the well-being of people, with special attention to children in vulnerable and marginalized situations. Evaluations provide evidence-based information that can be used to leverage partner resources and political commitment for pro-equity and child-oriented programmes and policies.



### Empowerment of vulnerable groups

Evaluations should include the views and perceptions of all stakeholders, including children, especially the most marginalized groups. By involving stakeholders in evaluation, evaluation processes can be empowering. Evaluation processes should have a clear intent to impart skills, information and to build self-confidence to enhance the ‘evaluative thinking’ of all. Evaluation processes have also the potential to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to become evidence-based advocates. It is important to remember that, in all evaluations, it is paramount to mainstream equity and gender. This can be done by including

equity and gender considerations in the terms of reference; formulating equity and gender-sensitive evaluation questions and indicators; identifying issues to be examined in the evaluation scope, and selecting appropriate methods and tools for data collection, analysis and reporting. Data-gathering and analysis methods will usually vary according to gender. For example, in some societies, women and girls will often remain silent in large groups with men or boys. Women or girls may not be able to express themselves freely in all situations. As women and men often communicate differently, different strategies will need to be employed. In analysing data, it will be important to see if there are any patterns or trends that indicate changes (or the absence of change) in women’s and girls’ status and in boys’ and men’s status and relations as a result of an initiative.



### National evaluation capacity development

UNICEF supports the creation of national enabling environments for evaluation. This entails contributions to M&E systems and country-led evaluations as well as evaluative studies. In compliance with [resolution A/RES/69/237](#) (previously cited), UNICEF should support countries, specifically national and local authorities, in strengthening their national M&E systems.



### Other key resources

United Nations Evaluation Group website, [‘Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance’](#), 2011.

UNICEF, [UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014–2017 for regional gender advisers](#).

UNICEF, [‘Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Reporting’](#).

UNICEF, [How to Design and Manage Equity-Focused Evaluations](#), 2012

UN Women, Independent Evaluation Office, [How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation handbook](#), 2015.



## Evaluating humanitarian action

Accountability for results does not diminish in fragile and humanitarian situations. Given that human lives are at stake and the significant increase in resources spent by UNICEF in emergency response, it is critical to assess what is working well, what is working less well and why, and what might be done differently.



*Polio vaccination team in Jiddari Local Government Area, Borno State, Nigeria. © UNICEF/ UN036154/Page*

In rapid-onset emergencies, preparedness for evaluation activities should ideally occur prior to the onset of the emergency to ensure that adequate systems are in place to provide data and information in line with evaluations.

Evaluations in emergencies pose particular challenges:

- The need to quickly deploy evaluation teams
- Difficulty in sampling and accessing stakeholders
- The need for evaluators to have an understanding of the humanitarian landscape
- The rapidly changing environment and operational objective

- The possibility of diverting attention from life-saving interventions to support implementation of an evaluation.

It should be remembered that in “humanitarian settings objectives are fast-changing, as the situations on the ground are fluid and rapidly evolve (e.g., continuous civilian population displacements, epidemic outbreaks), planning tends to be poorly documented, and baseline data are often absent. When conflicts prevail, security and access tend to be highly deteriorated. As a result, despite multiple efforts, performance and learning can stall and poor accountability to national stakeholders and aid recipients prevails.”<sup>19</sup> In emergency and humanitarian action, different types of evaluations may be used, including: real-time evaluations, impact evaluations, or system-wide evaluation.

When deciding on evaluation priorities in emergencies, country offices should consider undertaking joint evaluation exercises with other humanitarian agencies (both within and outside the UN system) to support improved coordination of emergency response, lessen the burden of evaluative activity on stakeholder populations, and pool scarce resources.<sup>20</sup>

## Other key resources

[Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website on humanitarian response, ‘Operational Peer Review’.](#)

[UNICEF website, ‘Humanitarian Evaluations’](#)

[UNICEF’s Evaluation and Research Database.](#)

[UNICEF, \*Programme Policy and Procedure Manual\*, section 6.6 on evaluation in humanitarian situations.](#)

[ALNAP, \*Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide\*, 2016.](#)

[Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website on humanitarian response.](#)

[Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) on Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations.](#)





# contribution VS attribution

Evaluations help UNICEF determine its contribution to results. That said, longer-term outcome or impact results can rarely be attributed solely to UNICEF efforts. As UNICEF works in partnership with governments and other stakeholders, UNICEF mainly seeks to assess its **contribution** to results. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, a result may have a number of contributing factors, such as interventions by non-governmental organizations/UN country teams, the government, UNICEF or external factors.

In all UNICEF interventions, including complex and complicated humanitarian interventions, it is rarely possible to attribute a result to one specific cause or actor. A food agency may attribute reduced malnutrition to food distribution, but it may also be due to improved water quality, child-care practices, hygiene, health care, sanitation and vector control, or even normal seasonal changes. It is usually easier and appropriate in evaluation of humanitarian action to assess contribution than attribution.<sup>21</sup>

## KEY STEPS IN MANAGING AN EVALUATION

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/237 and the new Agenda 2030, with the Sustainable Development Goals at its core, provide strong entry points for strengthened attention to evaluation. Indeed, evaluations provide critical information to decision makers and stakeholders that enable them to assess achievements and limitations and chart out practical strategic and programmatic recommendations that can improve future programmes and organizational learning.

Based on decisions made during the planning process in preparing the results framework and monitoring plan, one typically goes through seven steps in managing an evaluation (see Figure 5.2).

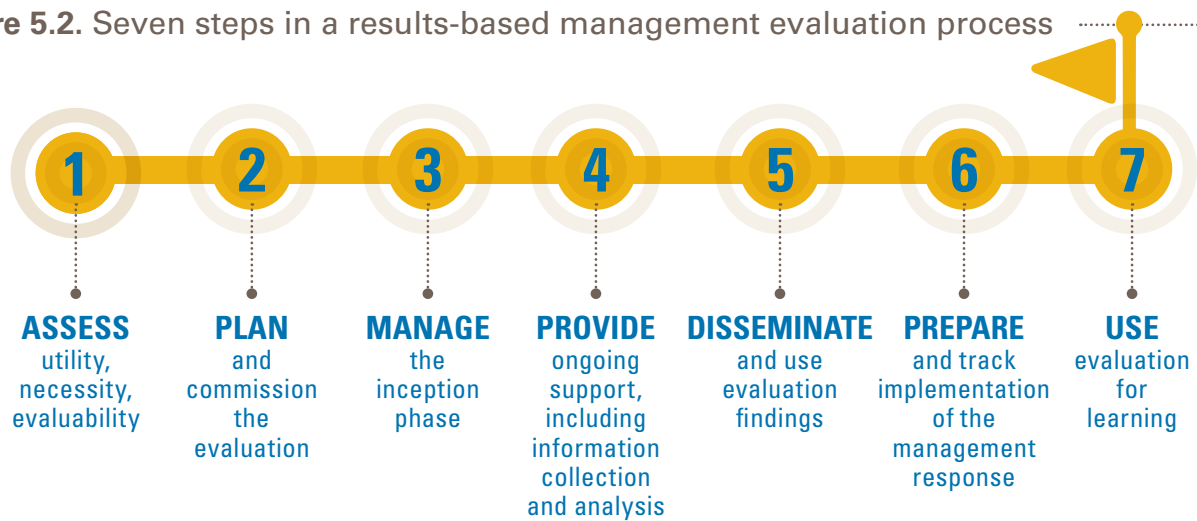
Figure 5.1. Results: A product of many contributing factors







Figure 5.2. Seven steps in a results-based management evaluation process



### **STEP 1.** **ASSESS UTILITY, NECESSITY, EVALUABILITY**

Assessing utility, necessity and evaluability is an exercise undertaken prior to an evaluation that helps identify whether an intervention can be evaluated, and whether an evaluation is justified and likely to provide useful information. It can also serve to ensure that necessary conditions for an evaluation are in place.

An evaluability assessment generally looks at four areas:

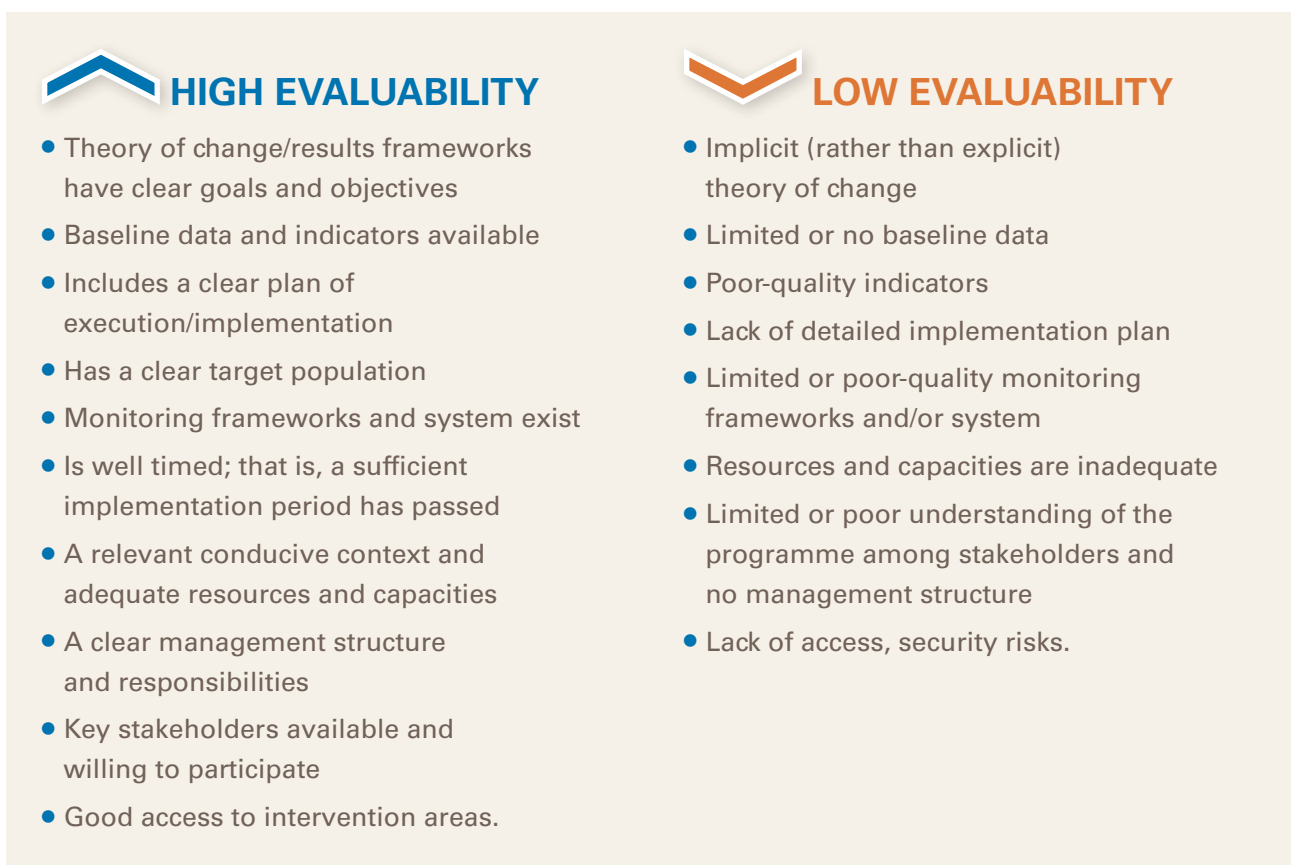
1. Design of the programme
2. Availability of information for an evaluation
3. Conduciveness of the context.
4. Accountability framework

Not all interventions may need an evaluability assessment. Figure 5.3 and Table 5.2 (next page) can help analyse, and serve as checklists for, the need for evaluability assessments.





**Figure 5.3. High and low evaluability** .....



Source: UN Women, *How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation handbook*, Tool 5, 2015.

.....

**Table 5.2.** Parameters and key questions for an evaluability assessment<sup>22</sup>

| EVALUABILITY PARAMETERS              | KEY QUESTIONS TO CONDUCT AN EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>PROGRAMME DESIGN</b>              | <p><b>Theory of change/results framework</b><br/>(examine programme relevance, appropriateness and coherence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the programme clearly identify the problem and stakeholders (context analysis)?</li> <li>• Are gender inequality factors and women’s and girls’ needs clearly and explicitly identified?</li> <li>• Are equity issues and human rights-based approach to programming clearly addressed?</li> <li>• Does the programme have a clear strategic intent and an explicit theory of change?</li> <li>• Does the programme have clear expected results at various levels of the results chain?</li> <li>• Does the programme articulate levels of activities, financial resources, results and strategies?</li> </ul> |
| <b>AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION</b>   | <p><b>Existence and availability of relevant information</b><br/>(examine programme accessibility and adequacy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the programme have sufficient data and information on the intervention and the context?</li> <li>• Does the programme have baseline information?</li> <li>• Does the programme have a monitoring system to gather and systematize information with defined responsibilities, resources and periodicity?</li> <li>• Does the programme have solid indicators?</li> <li>• What kind of information on women’s and girls’ rights is accessible and how is it or will it be collected?</li> <li>• What kind of information is available on marginalized groups and how will it be collected?</li> </ul>          |
| <b>CONDUCTIVENESS OF THE CONTEXT</b> | <p><b>Conduciveness of the context</b><br/>(examine stakeholder involvement, resources and capacity, and socio-political context)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the level of stakeholder involvement and their perspectives on the programme?</li> <li>• Does the programme have resources and capacities to undertake the evaluation (such as an adequate budget, time, technical knowledge)?</li> <li>• How conducive is the institutional and socio-political context (for example, is there an evaluation culture, groups of interest that could influence the independence of the evaluation, etc.)?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>                | <p><b>Accountability</b><br/>(management structure, monitoring and reporting, ownership and leadership)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the programme have a clear management structure?</li> <li>• Do partners have responsibilities, accountability and ownership of the programme?</li> </ul>   |



### Other key resources

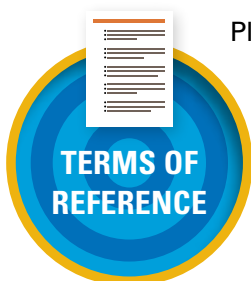
UN Women, Independent Evaluation Office, [How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation handbook](#), Tool 5: How to Conduct an Evaluability Assessment.

UNICEF, [How to Design and Manage Equity-Focused Evaluations](#), 2012.





## STEP 2. PLAN AND COMMISSION THE EVALUATION



Planning an evaluation implies, among other things, identifying the activity, theme, strategy, project or programme to be evaluated, and defining the scope of the evaluation, in close consultation with clients and stakeholders. It also means determining who will be responsible for managing the evaluation and defining the evaluation's purpose. Clearly and accurately articulating the purpose will help in developing a sound terms of reference (ToR). It is important to know why the evaluation is being undertaken, why it is being undertaken at a particular point in time, and how and by whom the evaluation will be used.

The next step in the planning stage is the preparation, by the evaluation manager, of the ToR. The ToR is a reference document to guide the management, implementation and use of the evaluation. It lays out the purpose, scope, process and products of an evaluation, including management arrangements. The management arrangements indicate who will manage the evaluation and what the role of the evaluation manager will be. UNICEF encourages the establishment of a reference group for all evaluations conducted at the global, regional or country office level. The reference group is composed of representatives of key stakeholders, who serve as a sounding board to the evaluation process. The reference group provides inputs to key milestones, including the ToR, the inception report and the draft report.

The ToR also includes: evaluation questions clustered against pre-established evaluation criteria; the scope of the evaluation, which includes the programmatic, geographic and time horizons of the evaluation; products, time-frame and budget; and methodological principles and evaluation design.

The ToR provides:

- **All stakeholders** with information on what is expected from the evaluation in terms of process and use. It also clarifies the role of the evaluation manager vis-à-vis the role of the reference group and of the evaluation team.
- **The evaluation team** with the parameters of the assignment, clear expectations and expected deliverables.

A ToR for a UNICEF evaluation should include:

- Context for the evaluation
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Scope (outlining what is covered and what is not covered by the evaluation)
- Evaluation criteria (see below)
- Key evaluation questions
- Methodology – approach for data collection and analysis and involvement of stakeholders
- Work plan, organization and budget
- Products and reporting
- Management arrangements
- Standards and ethical considerations, use of evaluation results, including responsibilities for such use.



## Evaluation criteria

### Internationally agreed criteria developed by OECD/DAC

Evaluation criteria drawn up by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which have been generally adopted in development undertakings, focus on a number of key areas:

- **Relevance.** The extent to which the objectives of policies, programmes or projects are consistent with the needs of target populations and country and with global priorities. In changing circumstances, are the objectives of an intervention and its design still relevant?
- **Effectiveness.** The extent to which the development intervention's objectives and results were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives and results.
- **Efficiency.** A measure of how economically resources/inputs (including funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. This may require comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient processes have been adopted.
- **Impact.** The long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

- **Sustainability.** The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. Sustainability looks to the probability of continued long-term benefits. Interventions should be environmentally and financially sustainable.

### Complementary UNICEF-specific criteria

Evaluation criteria specific to UNICEF include:

- **Equity.** The extent to which interventions contribute to the reduction of disparities.
- **Gender.** The extent to which the intervention is aligned with and contributes to national policies and strategies on gender equality; and the extent to which intervention results contribute to reducing gender inequalities.
- **Human rights.** A human rights-based approach to programming is a conceptual framework for development that is based on international human rights standards. This dimension may explore how well this approach has been integrated into the intervention and how the intervention has involved rights holders, especially the most vulnerable, and duty bearers.

### Additional criteria used in humanitarian situations

The above criteria are also included in humanitarian evaluations, with the possible exception of sustainability. However, additional criteria are often used, as appropriate:





Coverage  
Coherence  
Sustainability  
Protection  
Coordination

- **Coverage.** Which groups have been reached by a programme and what are the effects on those groups? In humanitarian situations, there is a pressing need to reach certain population groups facing life-threatening suffering, who are often marginalized geographically, socio-economically, or by virtue of their social standing.
- **Coherence.** Is there coherence across policies guiding different actors in security, developmental, trade, military and humanitarian spheres? Are humanitarian considerations explicitly taken into account by these policies?
- **Sustainability/connectedness.** Do activities of a short-term emergency nature take into account longer-term and connected problems, in particular, the need to ‘build back better’ in a way that serves to redress rather than to reinforce or worsen inequity, and to address the equity-rooted sources of conflict and natural disasters?
- **Protection.** Is the response adequate in terms of protecting different groups?
- **Coordination.** What are the effects of coordination or lack of coordination on humanitarian action?

## Commissioning the evaluation

Another important aspect of evaluation planning is preparing for the selection of an experienced and knowledgeable evaluator or evaluation team. Evaluators are expected to have RBM technical

skills and relevant experience in leading or conducting similar evaluations. In many cases, experience in conducting sectoral evaluations related to key outcome areas of UNICEF (WASH, child protection, health education, etc.) will be important. Equally important will be to ensure that the evaluator or the team have relevant **technical, managerial and personal competencies as defined by the UN Evaluation Group’s *Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System***. The evaluator or evaluation team should also have expertise in human rights-based approaches to programming and experience in leading or conducting equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations. The latter will help ensure that the evaluation analysis and recommendations will lead to the correction of any imbalances and put forward strategies that ‘do no harm’ and help to advance gender and equity relations.

## ➡ STEP 3. MANAGE THE INCEPTION PHASE

The inception phase kicks off the evaluation. It starts after the evaluation team has been contracted and may last between 15 to 30 days, depending on the complexity of the evaluation. The evaluation manager implements the evaluation through the evaluation team. The evaluation manager is thus responsible for the overall evaluation process and products. The evaluation manager is accountable for a good selection of evaluators. He or she oversees the evaluation team



HELPFUL TIPS!

throughout the process and provides overall support while respecting the independence of the team. Support to the evaluation team may take various forms:

- Providing the evaluation team with all the relevant documentation, reports and strategies
- Extensively briefing the team on the scope and purpose of the evaluation and key expectations
- Offering a preliminary list of stakeholders who should be interviewed
- Providing valuable input into field visits, given time and logistical limitations
- Connecting the evaluation team with the evaluation reference group and ensuring that the role of the reference group is respected
- Providing support to the evaluation team in organizing meetings and field visits
- Scheduling briefing updates
- Ensuring security briefings for the evaluators.

The inception phase will typically involve the review of all relevant programme documentation, national policies, strategic documents and sectoral reports, and may include some interviews to clarify expectations. This is the time when the evaluation team elaborates the methodology and determines sampling if needed. The inception report will indicate how well the evaluator or the evaluation team understand the ToR and

the scope of the evaluation exercise.

The inception report contains and delineates all elements of the ToR, including eventual evaluability concerns.

The evaluation team is responsible for developing a full methodology in the inception report. Data should come from a variety of sources to strengthen their accuracy, validity and reliability, and to that ensure that all affected people/stakeholders are considered.<sup>23</sup>

The methodology for the evaluation should explicitly address issues of gender and underrepresented groups and illustrate how stakeholders will participate in the evaluation, particularly in the implementation and follow-up.

## Using tools from the planning phase

Three key tools are required in the inception and subsequent phases of the evaluation, namely, the results framework, the theory of change narrative and the monitoring plan.

The results framework is often attached as a visual one-page diagram or snapshot that presents the key activities and causal-related outputs, outcomes and impact. Second, the corresponding theory of change narrative may need to be verified. Often, however, staff and evaluators encounter the following situations:

- Explicit theories of change are absent
- A theory of change narrative or visual depiction exists but benefited from little consultation with key stakeholders and was not used





- An explicit articulation of the theories of change (when more than one are available) may exist, but is outdated or incomplete
- Theories of change need to be reconstructed since they were not laid out at the outset
- Equity and/or gender issues are not addressed in the results framework or theory of change narrative.

The third tool is the monitoring plan developed in the planning phase. Since this plan outlines the indicators and corresponding baseline and targets, it constitutes an important input for triangulation and analysis.

A key constraint often highlighted in evaluations is the limited availability of data. Indeed, special measures may need to be taken by the evaluation manager to collect up-to-date data in time for the evaluation. Real World Evaluation Methods is an approach currently used to undertake quality evaluation under data, political and time constraints.

#### **STEP 4.** **PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT, INCLUDING INFORMATION COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

The evaluation manager is responsible for the overall evaluation process. Key roles include oversight, provision of technical support, quality assurance and risk management. This typically begins with the inception phase and continues with the data, collection, analysis and

reporting phases and follow-up to the evaluation. The nature of support provided by the evaluation manager may include:

- Setting up meetings for the evaluation team
- Organizing the information requirements of the team
- Sharing previous outstanding evaluation reports with the team
- Providing logistical support
- Joining the team in key meetings, such as debriefings, meetings with the reference group, etc.
- Asking for periodic updates and providing feedback
- Ensuring that the evaluation team respect the roles of all parties involved
- Ensuring key stakeholders are adequately consulted
- Highlighting challenges, pitfalls, obstacles or trouble spots
- Reviewing the inception and evaluation reports and providing comments and suggestions
- Approving and signing off on the evaluation.

Balancing oversight and support to the evaluation team while allowing their independence should be a standard principle for the evaluation manager. This is done by letting the evaluation team meet independently with government staff, the reference group or stakeholders so as not to unduly influence the independence of the findings.





In terms of quality assurance, the evaluation manager plays a key role. He or she should ensure that senior managers, the reference group and eventually other stakeholders provide inputs and feedback on the inception report, the evaluation report and other products, such as briefings and PowerPoints presentations. Evaluation findings can be enriched and triangulated through

a stakeholder workshop that seeks to elicit stakeholder feedback on issues such as lessons learned, strengths and weaknesses of the programme, good practices, degree of sustainability, and recommendations for the future.

The evaluation manager should ensure that the evaluation report meets the expected standards.



### Highly satisfactory UNICEF evaluations

UNICEF uses the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System to assess the quality of all evaluations. Evaluators and managers might find it useful to take a look at some of the highest quality evaluations in 2015:

- State of Palestine, Water, Sanitation & Hygiene in Schools Programme
- Tajikistan, Evaluation of UNICEF Tajikistan's Work in Priority Districts
- Chad, Evaluation de la composante survie et développement de l'enfant du programme de coopération Tchad-UNICEF
- Evaluability Assessment of the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA)
- Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): Accelerating change
- Philippines, Evaluation of the Intervention and Rehabilitation Programme in Residential Facilities and Diversion Programmes for Children in Conflict with the Law.

Source: [UNICEF's Evaluation and Research Database](#).



### Other key resources

[UNICEF's Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, section 6 on Evaluation.](#)

[UNICEF, Adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference, July 2010.](#)

[UNICEF, Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards, July 2010.](#)

World Bank website, [Conducting Quality Impact Evaluations Under Budget, Time and Data Constraints.](#)





## **STEP 5.** **DISSEMINATE AND USE EVALUATION FINDINGS**

Once the evaluation is complete, there is still important work to be done in disseminating and using evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons.<sup>24</sup> The active use of knowledge generated, for accountability and learning, should be the ultimate aim of an evaluation. Time and resources for effective follow-up and learning should be allocated at the planning stage of an evaluation. Having open forums to discuss findings among all key stakeholders is critical to improving future programming and evidence-based decision making.

Evaluation findings can be used for different purposes, including to:

- Support evidence-based decision-making
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of an intervention
- Compilations and dissemination of good practices
- Make strategic choices on resource allocations
- Determine the potential for scaling up
- Revise the results framework and corresponding theories of change
- Improve management systems
- Promote stakeholder participation and ownership
- Develop staff and stakeholder capacities
- Promote coordination and harmonization among partners and UNICEF
- Influence policy-making.

Evaluation results can also be packaged and made accessible in a number of ways:

- Have the report translated into local languages
- Summarize key findings and recommendations
- Produce a child-friendly version
- Develop a brief with a concise summary that is user-friendly and simple to read and understand
- Share findings and recommendations in an academic journal
- Write a press release and/or give media interviews
- Organize meetings with government policy makers and programmers so that findings are used
- Present findings as a video, drama, plays or photography.

## **STEP 6.** **PREPARE AND TRACK THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

After an evaluation report has been approved, the UNICEF office that commissioned the report must meet with relevant stakeholders to prepare a management response under the guidance of the evaluation manager. The purpose



of the response is to ensure that the evaluation's recommendations will be implemented and its findings will be used by UNICEF and its partners. UNICEF uses the management response template to consolidate its response and actions. As can be seen in Table 5.3, an overall response to the evaluation is the first part of the management response. A subsequent section describes the planned use of the evaluation followed by a description of actions to be taken, who will be responsible, the expected completion date, the implementation stage and actions taken.

While the management response is a formal reaction to the evaluation by management, additional sessions might be held with stakeholders and implementing partners to define how they will use the evaluation findings and to follow up on relevant recommendations.

All UNICEF-supported evaluations should make use of the written management response mechanism. The management response must be uploaded to the Tracking System within four weeks of the completion of the evaluation report. For more information, refer to the Guidance on Management Response.

**Table 5.3.** Sample management response

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**EVALUATION TITLE: UNICEF UPSTREAM WORK IN BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY 2003–2012**

---

**Year: 2014**

**Office and person in charge for management response:** Programme Division, person X, position

**Overall response to the evaluation:** The evaluation examined how and how well UNICEF engaged in upstream work in basic education and gender equality, which is defined as “activities which were intended to have or had a system-wide, sustainable effect on the national capacities of public sector duty bearers in the basic education sector for fulfilling children’s rights, directly or indirectly.” The evaluation was conducted in a proficient and methodical manner. Evidence was gathered from a review of documentation, a survey, four case studies and interviews with selected staff members. While some of the case studies could not fully reflect the context, overall the evaluation provides a balanced and properly justified analysis together with a sound set of recommendations that will help to improve the effectiveness of the organization’s work. The evaluation confirms that UNICEF can and does play a critical role at global, regional and national levels in upstream work, and that this complements and adds value to the organization’s downstream work on the ground. While UNICEF engagement in upstream work had strengthened over the course of the evaluation, there is evidence that further work is required to improve skill sets, financial instruments and ability to monitor results from upstream work. UNICEF management recognizes that a robust response to all of the recommendations in this evaluation offers the opportunity to play a more substantive role in global, regional and national policy formation and financing mechanisms to the benefit of children.

**Planned use of evaluation:** The findings and recommendations from the evaluation will be used to steer ongoing efforts to integrate upstream and downstream work to support action in countries. The evaluation will also be used to strengthen UNICEF systems for monitoring the scale and impact of upstream work in the education sector and beyond, enabling the organization to make evidence-based decisions on the allocation of resources to this work. In the education sector, the evaluation will also be used to guide efforts to build the capacity of country offices to engage more effectively in upstream work, while at the same time continuing to improve downstream results and overall programming.

**Recommendation 1:** UNICEF Strategic Policy and Strategy Division needs to develop an organization-wide framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on the results of upstream work.

---





**Table 5.3. Sample management response (cont)**

**EVALUATION TITLE: UNICEF UPSTREAM WORK IN BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY 2003–2012**

**Management response:** (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): PARTIALLY AGREE

*If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:* Management believes its Strategic Plan 2014–2017 already provides the appropriate framework for supporting the achievement of upstream results. UNICEF has developed a toolkit as part of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) rollout, which provides a framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on activities related to enhancing the enabling environment to support the achievement of results for children, especially the most disadvantaged. The foundations of the Global and Regional Programme have been described in the Strategic Plan and theory of change, and have been consolidated in a reference document for the UNICEF Global Management Team (June 2014).

| ACTIONS PLANNED  | RESPONSIBLE OFFICE/PERSON             | EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE | IMPLEMENTATION STAGE | ACTIONS TAKEN  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--|
| A technical resource package (that includes tools) on defining, targeting, achieving, measuring and reporting on upstream results will be included in several Strategic Plan-related tools and products. | Division of Data, Research and Policy | June 2015                | Under way            | Consultations with various parts of the organization have commenced. |

### Who is accountable for managing the response?

According to UNICEF's Evaluation Policy, the UNICEF representative or head of office is ultimately accountable for the evaluation function. Accordingly, he or she approves the management response and is accountable for ensuring its timely preparation and subsequent implementation and monitoring.

The M&E specialist supports the relevant programme chief in developing a high-quality management response, for endorsement by senior management.

Regional M&E chiefs provide quality assurance and oversight for ensuring the

development of relevant and high-quality management responses. High-quality responses should be realistic, strategic and programmatic in ways that incorporate lessons learned and best practices and that lead to improvements in programme design and implementation.

At UNICEF headquarters, the Evaluation Office provides organization-wide guidance on the management response mechanism, administers the tracking system, monitors key trends and reports annually on the functioning of the system. The Office of Internal Audit and Investigation verifies the existence and implementation of management responses during scheduled audits.



### Other key resources

UNICEF, *Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, section 6.12 'Management Response to Evaluations'.

UNICEF, Management Response Guidelines, 2012.



## **STEP 7.** **USE EVALUATION FOR LEARNING**

Evaluations provide an independent view of the programme's strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for improving performance and future programming. Evaluation serves a current and immediate purpose as a management instrument. "In addition, [evaluations] are also seen as a major source of knowledge about whether an organization is doing the right thing in the right place and at the right cost. These experiences are believed to be fed into the organization learning system and 'memory' thus contributing to position UNICEF as a knowledge and learning organization. Thus, the organization is expected to learn from its practices, correct them and develop new and better ways of doing what it is supposed to do."<sup>25</sup>

Who are the stakeholders that can learn from an evaluation? Here are some core categories of stakeholders:

- UNICEF senior management and staff
- Those who finance the programme
- Implementing partners responsible for planning and monitoring functions
- Members of local organizations who have a stake in the programme

- Programme managers who supervise and coordinate the implementation process
- Individuals/households, especially children, who are supposed to benefit from the services provided by the programme
- The evaluators themselves
- Other organizations and groups that compete for available resources
- Organizations, groups or individuals in the context surrounding the intervention.

Evaluations can be opportunities for learning. Lessons that result from evaluations can be disseminated widely. Workshops to reflect on lessons learned and to exchange good practices can be organized. Regional offices can promote events for horizontal knowledge exchange. As mentioned previously, forums for disseminating findings are important for sharing information and experiences among stakeholders. The management response outlines general follow-up to an evaluation's recommendations. Structured meetings with programme staff at all levels can also help translate key recommendations into actionable interventions that can improve operations and thus the impact of the intervention on stakeholders.



### **Other key resources**

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, [Best of UNICEF's Research](#).

United Nations Evaluation Group website, [UNEG Good Practice Guidelines for Follow-up to Evaluations](#), June 2010.

[UNICEF's Global Evaluation Database](#).





# REPORTING RESULTS

**Reports help us demonstrate** the effectiveness of an intervention by explaining how UNICEF has used resources to achieve results. Reporting is part of UNICEF’s accountability to stakeholders, including the UNICEF Executive Board, governments, partners and donors. Demands on UNICEF by stakeholders to show the link between resources and results are growing. At the same time, there are increased requirements for transparency at all levels on what UNICEF does, and where and how it undertakes its work. All of these factors combined are creating a heavy demand for reporting on results.



## When to use this chapter:

- In the early stages of programming, so you know what type of information is required for reporting
- With partners early on so they can align their reporting with UNICEF reporting
- Prior to writing reports to ensure you are reporting on results and not activities
- During and after the implementation of a programme.



## Who should use this chapter:

- All UNICEF staff engaged in reporting.

## Chapter overview reporting steps:

There are eight steps in the reporting cycle where RBM should be mainstreamed:

### Steps

- Step 1.** Understand the information needs of your audience
- Step 2.** Prepare your results-based reporting format
- Step 3.** Refer to your results framework and monitoring plan
- Step 4.** Collect the data
- Step 5.** Be visual: Use charts, graphs, photos, testimonials
- Step 6.** Tell your performance story, moving from activities to results
- Step 7.** Manage the reporting function
- Step 8.** Learn, adjust and adapt.



## OVERVIEW

**Reporting is the opportunity for UNICEF** to demonstrate results that have been achieved for children and the specific contribution that UNICEF has made to the achievement of those results. It is both an opportunity and an act of accountability to report to those who have entrusted UNICEF with funds and the mandate to work on behalf of children worldwide.

A well-run UNICEF office can easily report on the contributions it makes to results for children if it has:

- Results-based reporting systems from implementing partners that are clearly aligned with UNICEF's expected outputs and outcomes
- Explicit theories of change about how results are to be achieved
- Clearly defined results and indicators, which have been updated as needed
- Sound programme implementation
- Regular monitoring of programme actions
- Periodic evaluations of the most important elements of the country programme

- Effective management of its reporting responsibilities.

If results and indicators are poorly designed in the planning phase, then you will have difficulty reporting clearly on results. If monitoring data are missing or implementing partners' reporting requirements are not aligned with those of UNICEF, there will be significant gaps not only in implementation, but in reporting as well. It is also important that agreements with civil society organization include monitoring and reporting requirements that support UNICEF's own requirements. This will streamline the work and should lighten UNICEF's workload. Thus, all elements of results-based management – from planning to implementation and monitoring – need to be in place for reporting to be carried out effectively.

There are many forms of reporting in UNICEF. A country office writes an annual report to the regional director and executive director, and will also typically write several (and often many) reports to donors, as well as an annual report to the UN Country Team. UNICEF also issues corporate reports on UNICEF performance to the Executive Board and to donors and

*A girl writes on a white board at a make-shift school in rural Dar'a in the Syrian Arab Republic.*

© UNICEF/UN041529/anonymous





- “From a governmental perspective, reporting on results remains the area where UNICEF has the greatest potential to influence softly earmarked contributions in a positive direction. Getting reporting for governments right ought to have highest priority within UNICEF”.<sup>26</sup>

the public. In addition, UNICEF provides information to the public as a member of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), which commits the organization to publicly disclose its financial and programme information using a common, open international standard that is easy to understand, to compare and to use among stakeholders in a timely manner.

The focus of this chapter is to support country office staff in the fulfilment of their reporting responsibilities.

## What is reporting?

A report is typically a document containing information organized in a narrative, graphic and/or tabular form, prepared on an ad hoc, periodic, recurring or regular basis, or as required. Reports may be presented or communicated in oral or written form. Reporting is an essential element of results-based management, and it is becoming increasingly important as the organization moves towards a more evidence- and results-based focus.

## Purpose of reporting

Reports help us demonstrate the effectiveness of an intervention. It is one of our obligations to stakeholders, including the girls, boys and communities targeted by the intervention, the UNICEF Executive Board, governments, partners and donors. Reports show how we used resources to achieve results and are a means of holding us accountable.

Reporting should also:

- Outline quantitative information on the status of achievement towards defined results
- Highlight challenges and areas for improvement
- Describe definable activities and their effects on reaching a result.

Good reporting demonstrates the effectiveness of an intervention, but also highlights challenges and areas for improvement. This helps us learn and apply lessons within the programme and to other programmes.



## Other key resources

[‘Improving Quality Donor Reporting’, Public Sector Resource Development Webinar Series, UNICEF, 9 July 2013.](#)

[UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, section 4.10, ‘Programme Review and Reporting’.](#)





## Transparency

UNICEF is committed to transparency. It is essential that its story be told well, since UNICEF's story is in the public domain. UNICEF now has a transparency portal at [open.unicef.org](https://open.unicef.org) that provides up-to-date information (by region, country or programme, among other things) on what UNICEF does, where it works, the funds it receives and how those funds are spent.

On the portal, stakeholders can view different perspectives, including:

- Programme countries: What UNICEF does and who funds its programmes in a particular country
- Donors: Which countries and programmes donors are funding and how those funds are used.

UNICEF releases all country office annual reports (COAR), donor reports, the executive director's annual report (EDAR), regional results reports and thematic reports publicly, and in 2017 began to post all UNICEF donor reports to [open.unicef.org](https://open.unicef.org). Thus, the portal reflects key drivers of results-based management – particularly transparency and funding.

## Key elements of effective reporting

### Draw lessons from successful reports

A review of UNICEF's best reports<sup>26</sup> highlighted the following characteristics. They:

- Consistently demonstrated the integration of results-based management principles
- Presented results and analysis in clearly-defined sections
- Presented a strong analysis and compared baseline and target figures
- Were transparent about shortfalls and challenges
- Used charts and graphs to underscore progress achieved
- Openly discussed constraints and challenges
- Strengthened links between donor-funded programmes and national results



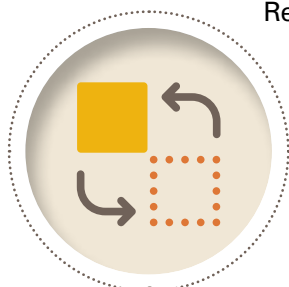
Use charts and graphs to underscore progress achieved.





- Fully acknowledged the funder and how the contribution was used
- Made the case for future funding.

### Capture the change process



Capture  
the change  
process...

Reporting presents evidence that an initiative has contributed to the achievement of planned results – and demonstrates how the results were achieved. For effective reporting:

- Use active ‘change language’
- Look at the effects of completed activities
- Focus on what has changed as a result of your intervention
- Present evidence of change by using your indicators, baselines and targets
- Incorporate lessons learned and best practices
- Highlight how you will overcome gaps and bottlenecks
- Keep it concise, brief and to the point.

### Speak to UNICEF’s comparative advantage

Donor reports should highlight UNICEF’s unique comparative advantage vis-à-vis other organizations. This includes:

- Programme sectors where UNICEF interventions are acknowledged world-wide for their effectiveness, such as its low-cost high-impact health services, community-led sanitation, etc.
- Upstream areas, including technical support and capacity-building, the human rights-based approach to

programming and evidence-based policy advocacy.

- Advocacy to address inequity and disparities, realize children’s rights and promote child participation.
- Global policy agenda issues such as social transfers and protection from violence against children, including school bullying, and various forms of inequality and exclusion.

### Emphasize partnering and ‘One UN’

Remember that reports should describe joint efforts with government and implementing partners. For projects involving more than one UN agency, seek to draw attention to the strength of the entire UN system working together. Be honest and acknowledge the contribution of others. It is important to emphasize the benefits of joint efforts or ‘Delivering as One’.

### Types of reporting

UNICEF offices typically produce a number of different reports, including:

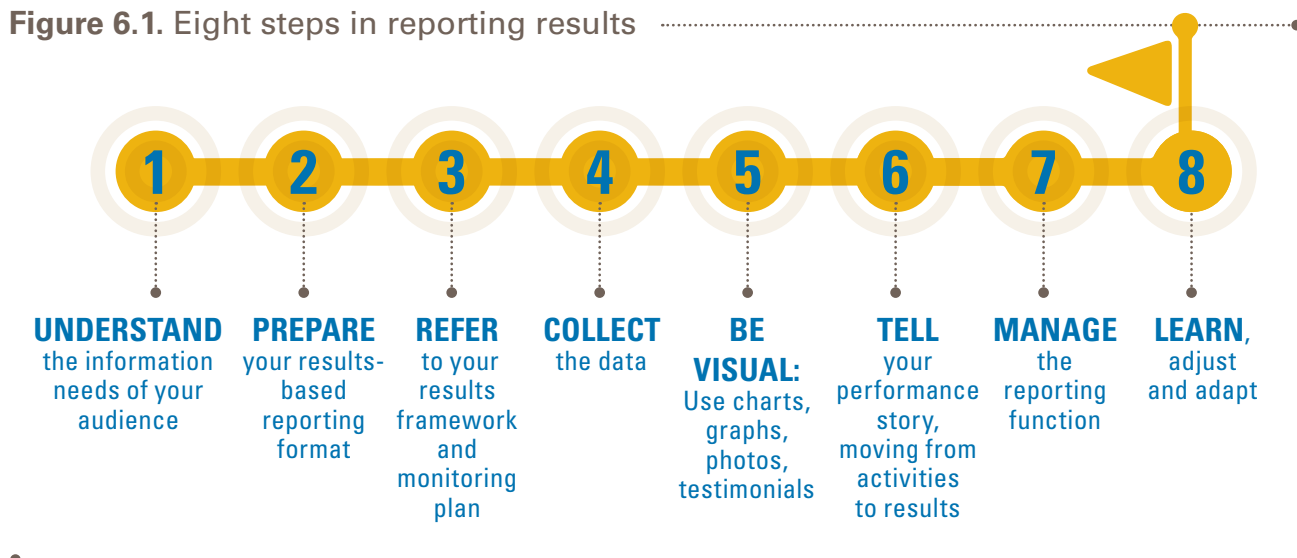
- Country office annual reports
- Analytic progress statements in the Results Assessment Module (RAM)
- Annual report to the UN Country Team
- Donor reports
- Reporting on various types of funds that have their own specific reporting requirements (such as reporting on thematic funds and consolidated emergency reporting, Situations Report (SitRep) in humanitarian situation).



## KEY STEPS IN REPORTING RESULTS

Typically there are eight steps to writing your results-based report (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1. Eight steps in reporting results



### Other key resources

United Nations Development Group, [One UN Country Results Report](#), 2015.

UNICEF, [Country Office Annual Reports](#).

UNICEF, [Public Private Partnership Division Donor Reporting](#).

Results Assessment Module: [inSight > RAM > Guidance and Support](#)

[UNICEF Donor Reporting: Checklist and guidance](#).





## 🛠️ STEP 1. UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF YOUR AUDIENCE

For every report type, there are instructions on what is to be reported. It is essential to read and understand any reporting instructions before you start writing. Following the instructions from the outset will not only save time and energy, it will ensure that you are providing information that is useful for the specific audience for whom you are writing.

Reports are most effective when they are written with a particular audience in mind. For example, if you are writing a report to headquarters, your intended audience is probably people with whom you work. If you are writing a report for a funder, the intended audience may be a professional, but not someone with whom you are acquainted. Just as what you say to your parents and friends might be different than what you say to the funder, what and how you report information will vary depending on the audience.



Report back in ways that can be understood by your audience.

## 🛠️ STEP 2. PREPARE YOUR RESULTS- BASED REPORTING FORMAT

### Contents of a report

Results-based reporting combines elements of quantitative and qualitative analysis, with narratives and other

information that helps UNICEF ‘tell a story’ about the intervention and its implementation.

A proper report contains three main parts: results, analysis and UNICEF’s contribution.

### Results

State the expected results that UNICEF is committed to (defined in the country programme document, donor agreement, results framework, monitoring plan, etc.) and their current status (if possible). Report the current status of the indicators and how they have changed from the baseline (or since the last report) and whether or not you have met your targets. Remember the report is results-oriented with a focus on the expected outputs and outcomes. The clear causal sequence between key activities (if any are reported), outputs, outcome and impact should be reconstructed in the narrative of the report.

### Analysis

Describe **how** the results and improvements in the indicators were achieved – with a focus on the work of the main implementing partners, which will typically be government but may also be civil society organizations or other groups. In some cases, the key actor is UNICEF itself.

The report should focus more on **what has changed** than describe everything that has been done. The analysis should



also provide a clear indication of actual versus expected results and an explanation of any challenges, lessons learned as well as future direction.

### UNICEF's contribution

Report the UNICEF actions that contributed to the result/improvement in the indicators. Summarize the technical assistance, advocacy and convening actions, evidence-generation, capacity development and other actions (such as cash and supply assistance) that UNICEF catalysed, why these are important and the subsequent effects of these actions.

### Other important elements of your report

- Results and strategies used to achieve them

- Progress on baseline, targets and indicators
- Who has benefitted
- With whom we achieved results
- Constraints and challenges
- Opportunities
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations.

In crisis and post-crisis countries, options should be explored for consolidated reporting with a wider range of UN system actors (humanitarian and/or political/peacekeeping), when possible and appropriate. Consolidated reporting will generally have its own reporting requirements that the writer should follow.

## Suggested wording

to **highlight** UNICEF's comparative advantage



"UNICEF's life-saving interventions substantially contributed to mitigating an otherwise catastrophic impact on the life of children."



"UNICEF's humanitarian assistance remained vital for those newly displaced and those continuing to be displaced."



"UNICEF's in-depth sector knowledge and expertise in emergency programming and as a cluster lead agency has been instrumental in determining the necessary interventions at various phases of the response."



### Other key resources

United Nations Development Group, [One UN Country Results Report](#), 2015.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website: [Response Monitoring: Overview](#).





### ➡ STEP 3. REFER TO YOUR RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND MONITORING PLAN

To guide your results-based report, use both your results framework and corresponding theory of change narrative, the country programme document results matrix and the monitoring plan as key inputs. Your results framework will highlight the expected results at the output, outcome and impact level. Copy and paste the exact wording into your results-based report. Now refer to your monitoring plan and copy and paste your indicators, baseline and target. Your report should articulate progress towards the achievement of results by giving the reader the status of the indicators, baseline and targets.



To test whether your expected results are truly measurable, write a report at the beginning of your project!

Your monitoring plan will be your key aid in reporting: It tells you how to track the indicators you have selected to measure how well you are achieving results. Be sure to report on unexpected results as well. While you will refer to any relevant activities, it is important to highlight the *effects* of completed activities – that is, their outputs and outcomes.

Too often organizations find they are unable to report against their expected results: The results were too ambitious, they cannot obtain data on their chosen

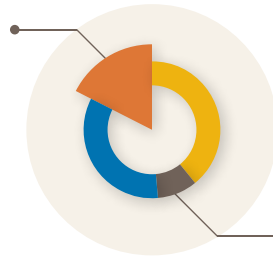
indicators, or they have no baseline. To test whether your expected results are truly measurable, write a report at the *beginning* of your project! This thought experiment is a great reality check, and will help you develop a measurable results framework and a workable monitoring plan from the outset.

### ➡ STEP 4. COLLECT THE DATA

Before reporting, you will need to collect data on your chosen indicators and targets. If your implementing partner's reporting is aligned with UNICEF, there should be consistency in your reporting and much time will be saved. If your partner has not aligned reporting to UNICEF or donor requirements, much time will be wasted requesting additional information, filling in the gaps and providing additional analysis. Thus, including clear reporting requirements in your contracts with implementing partners is essential. All too often, UNICEF staff prepare reports that do not speak to the effects of completed activities and the results of UNICEF-supported interventions at the output, outcome and impact level.

You might also refer to UNICEF guidelines on agreements with civil society organizations and to humanitarian performance monitoring, which promotes common indicators and agreements to report on common indicators.

# data in visual format...



...help bring results

## TO LIFE



### 🛠️ STEP 5.




#### BE VISUAL: USE CHARTS, GRAPHS, PHOTOS, TESTIMONIALS

Use charts and graphs to illuminate and provide evidence of your findings. Visual examples such as **photos, videos, graphs and charts** (see Table 6.1 and Figure 6.2 for examples) help to tell the results story. Data in visual format help bring results to life. As they say, a photo is worth a thousand words.

**Testimonials** are another way of learning about a project or its impact through the voices of participants and stakeholders.

Testimonials record a person's thoughts, feelings and experiences and are told in first-person narrative. Testimonials can help convey the degree of empowerment, the impact of results, how decisions are made or issues tackled. Testimonials can help corroborate other sources of data and information and provide a more personal insight into a project's achievements.

**Table 6.1.** Example of how data can be translated into a visual format

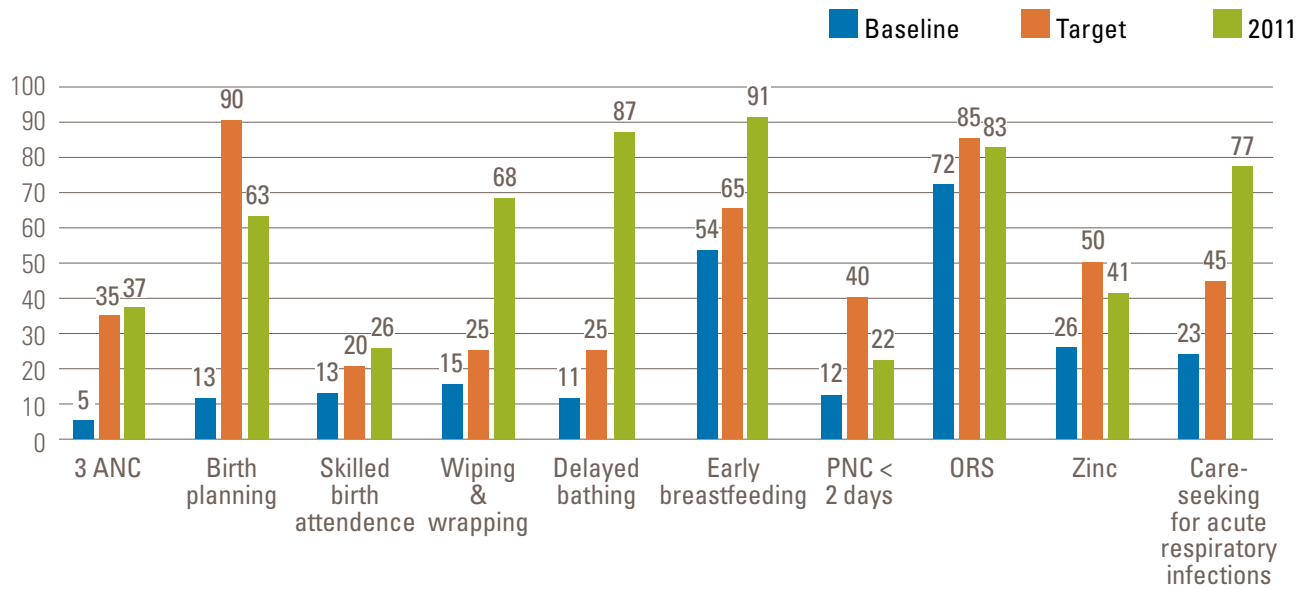
| WASH INDICATORS  | CLUSTER TARGET                | CLUSTER TOTAL PROGRESS BY 31 DECEMBER | UNICEF TARGET   | UNICEF TOTAL PROGRESS BY 31 DECEMBER |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
|  Number of people provided with 5 litres of safe drinking water per day | 223,000<br>(400,000 affected) | >223,000                              | Met target      | 116,591                              |
|  Number of people provided with sanitation                              | 75,000                        | 75,000                                | Met target      | 19,733                               |
|  Number of people reached with hygiene promotion messages               | 30,000                        | >30,000                               | Exceeded target | 97,848                               |

UNICEF, as cluster lead agency, is responsible for information management of cluster partner results and sharing overall results achieved by cluster members collectively.





**Figure 6.2.** Example of how data can be translated into a visual format



**STEP 6.**  
**TELL YOUR PERFORMANCE STORY, MOVING FROM ACTIVITIES TO RESULTS**

**Remember,**  
 writing reports  
 is about reporting  
 on **results.**

While you will refer to any relevant activities during the period, it is important to highlight the *effects* of those completed activities – that is, their outputs and outcomes.

If your results are too ambitious, review your results framework and propose changes during the annual programme review and work planning. Indeed, you may need to review your results frameworks – especially activities and strategies and corresponding theories of change – to make sure they are realistic.

Examine the two reports presented in Table 6.2. Are they activity-based or results-based?



**Table 6.2.** Activity-based versus results-based reporting

| REPORT NO. 1  | ACTIVITY- OR RESULTS-BASED REPORT?   | REPORT NO. 2  | ACTIVITY- OR RESULTS-BASED REPORT?  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Outcome: Enhanced teacher quality and accountability in Pasmaania</b></p> | <p>As part of the programme to enhance teacher quality and accountability in Pasmaania, UNICEF provided technical advice and financial resources to develop a new in-service teacher training curriculum with the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>In 2015, over 24,000 teachers completed this curriculum through the existing continuous professional development network. In the 12 target districts, UNICEF directly supported the training of 2,500 teachers through the training of trainers and provision of course materials.</p> | <p><b>Outcome: Enhanced teacher quality and accountability in Pasmaania</b></p> | <p>As part of the programme to enhance teacher quality and accountability in Pasmaania, UNICEF provided technical advice and financial resources to develop a new in-service teacher training curriculum with the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>Baseline collected at the beginning of the programme showed that only 57% of teachers were using modern teaching methods; the target was 75% using the techniques encouraged in the curriculum. Teacher attendance was 70% of the attendance in the classroom.</p> <p>Before and after the training, in-classroom interactions of the teachers with their students were observed. Approximately 80% of all teachers were using techniques encouraged in the curriculum against 57% before the training, surpassing the target of 75%. As one student noted, “Now, I really enjoy going to class. I find the teachers more engaged and the teaching methods more participatory and engaging.”</p> <p>In addition, 500 Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) received training on monitoring teacher attendance and learning outcomes, and 86% of trained parent PTA members were actively involved in monitoring teacher attendance in their schools. Teacher attendance had improved from the previous year in 75% of the schools. Approximately 120,000 children reported having interactions demonstrating more skilful use of better pedagogical practices by their teachers.</p> <p>The evaluation also demonstrated that the complementary interventions of improving teachers’ capacities and increasing their accountability to local communities had a significant and positive impact on learning outcomes.</p> |





*Boy plays with some of the toys donated by the UNICEF supported NGO Terre des Hommes in Juba, South Sudan.  
© UNICEF/UN027620/Gonzalez Farran*

Ultimately, reporting should tell the UNICEF story about the results that were achieved. But there are different ways to tell the story:

#### **Quantitative and qualitative analysis.**

Reporting combines elements of quantitative and qualitative analysis to give examples of the impact, outcome and outputs of the programme on the people it is designed to assist.

**Visual examples** such as photos, videos, graphs and charts help tell the results story. Data in visual format help to bring the results to life.

**Narrative examples** give readers a practical sense of what the programme is achieving and paint a picture of how people's lives can be different as a result

of UNICEF and stakeholder intervention and support. The example in Table 6.2 includes quotes from students about the new learning methods used by teachers, which can be very effective.

See Table 6.3 for additional pointers on how to improve your reporting.

### **Using change language when describing actual results**

Results are about change, so it is important to use 'change language' when describing them.

Change language describes results by explaining a concrete, visible, measurable change in state or situation. Change language should focus on what is different rather than what was done. Think about it this way: Change language describes a specific condition or change that has happened, not the actions taken to get there. Examples:

- A 30 per cent increase in children under 5 in endemic areas that sleep under insecticide-treated bed nets (2015–2020).
- By 2022, primary school enrolment of girls increased from 55 per cent to 95 per cent in 1,200 primary schools.
- Child mortality from AIDS and related causes decreased from 80 per cent in 2010 to 60 per cent in 2015.

Tables 6.4 and 6.5 provide examples of how reporting can be successfully used to provide evidence of positive change. Table 6.6 provides additional tips on how to write compelling reports.

**Table 6.3.** Nine tips to improve results-based reporting

1. Ensure you plan for, schedule and anticipate reporting
2. Be clear and concise
3. Use the language of change
4. Report on results, not processes and only activities
5. Contextualize progress achieved
6. Analyse progress
7. Be careful with results attribution
8. Highlight partnerships
9. Illustrate results achieved.

**Table 6.4.** Excerpt of a results-based report on social protection

**Expected output:** Increased knowledge/awareness among parents/caregivers/community members of social protection schemes for children aged 0 to 3 years (on track)

**Indicator:**

Percentage of target population understanding social protection schemes

**Baseline:**

10%

**Target:**

80%

**Actual output (mid-term report):**

After 1.5 years of implementation, a mid-term review indicates that 85% of targeted parents/caregivers and community members understood social protection schemes well. This showed an increase from a baseline of 10% and surpassed the target of 80%. Parents could not only explain all entitlements, but also provide their children with the opportunity to access social protection services when needed. This impressive result achieved was due to good communication for development (C4D) activities, including the development of a culturally and language-appropriate communication package for awareness-raising, capacity development of community authorities, and information, education and communication (IEC) motivators, parents or caregivers. For the remaining time, another 15% of the targeted group, whose awareness needs further strengthening, will be the main focus of communication interventions.

Adapted from: UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office in cooperation with Mosaic.net International, UNICEF Training on Results-Based Management and Theory of Change, Hanoi, Viet Nam, 20–24 April 2015




**Table 6.5.** Excerpt of results-based report on humanitarian action

**Expected output:** By end-2014, the Government of (name of country) and other partners have improved the capacity to monitor, report on and respond to the realization of the rights of boys and girls in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (on track)

| Indicator:  | Baseline: | Target: | Progress to date: |
|---|-----------|---------|-------------------|
| Number of reporters who are able to monitor, report on and respond to the realization of rights of boys and girls in line with the CRC and CEDAW. | 500       | 1,500   | 1,548             |

**Actual output (mid-term report):** The escalation of the conflict in the country in 2015 resulted in a spike in child rights violations. More than 50 per cent of internally displaced persons (2.1 million) and population in need of humanitarian assistance (5.2 million) are children. UNICEF, in close collaboration with (names of other UN agencies), supported the strengthening of the medical Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)\* system by expanding and developing the capacities of the MRM facilitator network across all of (country). By the end of 2015, UNICEF strengthened 1,548 MRM facilitators in monitoring, reporting and responding to the rights of boys and girls in line with the CRC and CEDAW. This produced an increase from a baseline of 500 reporters of child violations to 1,548 reporters of child violations: 188 NGO staff members, 1,320 MRM focal points from NGOs and volunteers, as well as 40 UNICEF facilitators, with a 55% women and 45% male reporters ratio. Actually, UNICEF surpassed its target of 1,500 reporters to 1,548 by the end of the year. Through a new partnership with the US Agency for International Development, the number of NGO partners could be substantially expanded.

**Expected outcome:** By end-2015, improved monitoring, reporting and response for the realization of the rights of boys and girls in line with the CRC and CEDAW (in progress)

| Indicator:  | Baseline:        | Target:          | Progress to date: |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Number of reported cases, documented and verified | 1,500 reported   | 5,000 reported   | 825 reported      |
|   | 1,200 documented | 3,000 documented | 1,500 documented  |
|   | 1,000 verified   | 900 verified     | 700 verified      |

**Actual outcome:** As a result of the functional MRM system in all governorates of the country, UNICEF has strengthened its capacity to monitor, document and verify grave child rights violations and to inform interventions and advocacy. As a result of increased MRM network and reporting capacities, 825 incidents of grave violations were reported, affecting 2,399 children. The majority of cases concerned killings of children, abductions, recruitment by armed groups and sexual violence. Almost 700 cases could be verified.

However, given the scale and dynamic of the crisis, UNICEF and partners recognize that the number of reported cases remained low overall, since only 1,500 out of the 3,000 reported cases could be documented (representing only 50%). The main constraints were the security concerns and limited access to geographic areas controlled by armed groups, where the highest number of violations is taking place.

\*Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict.



## Other key resources

'Improving Quality Donor Reporting', Public Sector Resource Development Webinar Series, UNICEF, 9 July 2013.

UNICEF National Committees are a good source of narratives and performance stories:

- [UK National Committee.](#)
- [Canada National Committee website Natcom.](#)

[UN Secretariat Editorial Manual](#); [UNDP Editorial Style Manual](#); [UNICEF Style Manual](#).

**Table 6.6.** Reporting do's and don'ts

| DO  | DON'T   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide contextual information so the reader can understand why the progress reported is important.</li> <li>• Focus on the result (progress and/or constraints).</li> <li>• Clarify UNICEF's contribution. Use specific verbs: For example, instead of 'supported', use 'trained', 'advocated', 'mobilized', 'consulted'.</li> <li>• Make the link between the result reported and the positive change the intervention is expected to bring to the lives of boys and girls.</li> <li>• Provide evidence and disaggregated data so the impact on the most disadvantaged children and on gender can be made visible.</li> <li>• Acknowledge partners' contributions and role.</li> <li>• Clarify contribution to removal of barriers and bottlenecks.</li> <li>• Share lessons learned/constraints.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't use UNICEF internal jargon (such as MoRES, IR, C4D, SSA, PCA, etc.).</li> <li>• Don't refer to UNICEF internal processes (MENARO or HQ reviews)</li> <li>• Don't focus too much on reporting on activities and processes (the result gets lost).</li> <li>• Don't give isolated small-scale results that are not connected to larger efforts linked to the results chain.</li> <li>• Don't use passive construction in sentences.</li> <li>• Don't begin describing a result with a negative statement.</li> <li>• Don't overrepresent or underrepresent UNICEF's role and contribution. "Thanks to UNICEF..." for example, sounds inflated and implausible. Conversely, UNICEF's role may not be mentioned at all or just vaguely or is described as limited to inputs rather than technical support. Both are to be avoided.</li> <li>• Don't treat a partnership as a result instead of reporting on the achievements attained through the partnership.</li> <li>• Don't report just on the existence of a policy, survey or evaluation. Rather, clarify their relevance to the context, referring to findings or recommendations and/or agreements resulting from these efforts.</li> <li>• Don't be verbose or repetitive.</li> </ul> |

## **STEP 7.** **MANAGE THE REPORTING FUNCTION**

Even with good monitoring tools, proper reporting requires preparation time. Offices should establish a reporting plan that covers all of the following areas:

- Reporting roles
- The types of reports needed
- How frequently they are produced
- Who should produce them
- Who the recipients will be.

An effective UNICEF office will have clearly defined reporting roles within the office and ensure that staff are well trained in effective results-based management reporting.

How do you manage the reporting function in your office? Are reporting roles clearly delineated? Do you have a reporting plan that lays out the types of reports needed, who should produce them and who the recipients will be? Have staff been trained in effective report writing?





Other key elements of the reporting function include the following:

- **Information:** Ensure that the other elements of results-based management are applied so that the information needed to write a quality report is available.
- **Formats:** Ensure staff are aware of the formats and requirements of reports they are working on.
- **Schedule:** Have a reporting plan with a schedule of reports and who is responsible to develop and approve each report.
- **Donor reporting:** Ensure that reports are linked to the original proposal. Reports should address what is contained in donor proposals and country programme strategy notes.

UNICEF's financial reports distinguish between expenditures and commitments, so it is important that the narrative text in a donor report is consistent with the financial report. Offices should ensure that the narrative text distinguishes between funds actually expended and instances where funds have been committed (that is, purchase orders placed or funds provided to partners), but not yet spent.

In summary, reports should be viewed as tools to communicate an initiative's achievements, contributions towards results, challenges and lessons learned. They strengthen transparency and accountability and assist us in taking corrective action if necessary.



...reports should be viewed as tools to communicate...

## STEP 8. LEARN, ADJUST AND ADAPT

What do you do with the information you compiled? There may be a number of possible destinations for your report: regional office, headquarters, implementing partner or funder. This will depend on whether the report is being produced internally, for UNICEF purposes, or for the outside world. While being accountable is important, it is also important to continually learn, adjust and adapt. Reporting should generate lessons learned, best practices and solutions to problems and obstacles in order to improve decision-making.

Reporting is an opportunity to learn and adjust that can take many forms, such as:

- **Revisiting** your strategies, resource allocations or activities to better meet expected results
- **Reviewing** your results frameworks and monitoring plan so that they are realistic and practical
- **Revising** your methods and approaches to make them children- and gender- sensitive
- **Ensuring** participatory processes that encourage everyone's voices to be heard
- **Building** on what works, strengths and resources.

Think about your own programme and/ or project and your own learning. Are you doing what is proposed here? Do you revisit your strategies, resource allocations or activities when you receive information indicating that your



programme or project is not unfolding as planned? Are you revisiting your results frameworks or monitoring plans on a regular basis to make adjustments? Do you involve key stakeholders in this process?

Performance information can be used for organizational learning throughout programme and project implementation. In addition, ongoing implementation and monitoring may generate opportunities to revisit and review performance. Internal audits, management reviews, mid-term or end-of-project evaluations are other opportunities to take stock of operations, results and lessons learned that can be used for organizational learning and programme and project redirection.

Reporting should also lead to best practice examples and innovations, knowledge exchange and increased staff skills and capacities.

**Best practice examples and innovations** can be used to scale up operations when combined with culturally sensitive practices that encourage participation and inclusiveness.

**Knowledge exchange** within the country and region is also important in refining approaches or building on established practice. This knowledge exchange can occur in many ways, including through round tables, conferences, videos, the Internet, study tours and capacity-building workshops.

**Staff skills and capacities** can be enhanced through the exchange of knowledge. It is important to look for opportunities to do so; being part of knowledge exchange forums is one way to build capacity in any given area.

Indeed, learning can take place through periodic monitoring, bi-annual and annual reviews, mid-term evaluations or end-of-programme or project evaluations.

## In summary

### Quality reporting always includes three elements:

- Current status of results and indicators compared to the baseline and what was planned
- Analysis of *how* movement towards results has been achieved
- UNICEF's specific contribution to the achievement of results.

### Effective reporting always requires:

- Clear understanding of reporting instructions from stakeholders
- Good results-based management planning and implementation so data to report is available
- Clearly defined reporting processes in the UNICEF office.



## Other key resources

[Best of UNICEF's Research.](#)

[Global Evaluation Database.](#)





## CONCLUSION

You have now  
**completed**

*the Results-Based  
Management Handbook.*

Managing for results takes persistence and endurance. The more you practice using the various tools and frameworks, the more comfortable you will be using them in your work. Managing for results also requires being iterative, participatory and learning from experience. These are the building blocks for making a difference in the lives of children and women.







## GLOSSARY

### Activity

Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, capacity-building, workshops, publications, technical assistance or other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

Related term: development intervention.

### Assumptions

'Assumptions' can refer to underlying hypotheses about how change will happen in a programme. These are called 'causality-related assumptions'. A theory of change makes them into explicit, testable hypotheses.

'Assumptions' can also refer to the variables or factors that need to be in place for results to be achieved. These are called 'internal or external assumptions', since they can be internal or external to a particular intervention or organization. They should be stated in positive language.

### Baseline

The baseline is the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress on results can be assessed or comparisons made. It is expressed as the status of the selected indicators at the beginning of the programme.

### Benchmark

Reference point or standard against which performance or achievements can be assessed. A benchmark is expressed as the status of the selected indicator that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable organizations, or what can be reasonably inferred to have been achieved in the circumstances.

### Bottleneck

A bottleneck is a constraint related to the supply, demand and quality determinants that hamper the achievement of equitable, effective coverage of evidence-based interventions/services/care practices.

### Capacity gap

The elements of capacity that need to be strengthened in order for duty bearers or rights holders to perform their ideal roles in realizing their rights obligations, or for rights holders to be able to claim their rights.





For duty bearers, the elements of capacity are:

- *Motivation* (the duty bearer feels an obligation to perform the role according to national and/or international standards)
- *Authority* (the duty bearer has authority to perform the role according to the obligation)
- *Resources* (the duty bearer has the human, organizational and financial resources to perform the role).

For rights holders, the elements of capacity are:

- *Understanding* (the rights holder knows that she/he has rights and can claim them)
- *Resources* (the rights holder has the human, organizational and financial resources to claim his/her rights)
- *Risks* (the rights holder does not face undue risks if she/he claims her/his rights, or those risks can be sufficiently mitigated).

## Causality analysis

A type of analysis used in programme formulation to identify the immediate, underlying and structural or root causes of development challenges. Development problems often derive from the same root cause(s). The analysis organizes the main data, trends and findings into relationships of cause and effect. It identifies causes and their linkages as well as the differentiated impact of the selected development challenges. A 'causality framework' or 'causality tree analysis' (sometimes referred to as a 'problem tree') can be used as a tool to cluster contributing causes and examine the linkages among them and their various determinants.

### Causes: immediate

The causes of rights violations that are most apparent and closely identified with the violation. Addressing these causes may or may not help to realize the right.

### Causes: structural

The causes of rights violations that are political, economic, social or cultural systems or structures. These may be common to a wide range of rights violations.



## Causes: underlying

The causes of rights violations that are less obvious than the immediate causes but are implicitly linked to the rights violations. Addressing these causes may be more challenging than addressing immediate causes, but may contribute more to realizing the right in question.

## Data

Specific quantitative and qualitative information or facts.

## Data analysis

The process of converting collected (raw) data into usable information.

## Development intervention

An instrument for partner (donor and non-donor) support aimed at promoting development. Examples are policy advice, projects, programmes.

## Disaggregated data

Data from different groups. 'Disaggregate' means to separate a whole into its parts. The information is broken down by groups such as sex, age, ethnic origin, income level, rural/urban residence, etc.

## Effect

Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.

Related term: result

## Effectiveness

Extent to which expected results are achieved.

## Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.





## Evaluability

Extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. Evaluability assessment calls for the early review of a proposed activity in order to ascertain whether its objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable.

## Evaluation

The systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of expected results, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.

Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or programme. It is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, ongoing or completed development intervention.

Evaluation in some instances involves the definition of appropriate standards, the examination of performance against those standards, an assessment of actual and expected results, and the identification of relevant lessons.

## Feedback

The transmission of findings generated through the monitoring and evaluation process to parties for whom it is relevant and useful, so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons from experience.

## Horizontal logic

The relationship between an expected result and indicators and their planned measurement (as indicated from left to right in the monitoring plan). Is it clear which indicators will measure which results? Will the chosen indicators allow measurement of that expected result? Are the baseline and targets measures of the indicator? Do the selected data collection methods, sites, responsible persons, and frequency and use of data allow for measurement of the selected indicator?



## Human rights-based approach to programming

A conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

United Nations agencies have agreed on three essential attributes of such an approach:

- As development policies and programmes are formulated, the main objective should be to fulfil human rights.
- A human rights-based approach identifies *rights holders* and their entitlements and corresponding *duty bearers* and their obligations, and works towards strengthening the capacities of rights holders to make their claims and of duty bearers to meet their obligations.
- *Principles and standards* derived from international human rights treaties should guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.<sup>27</sup>

## Impact

The highest-level positive or negative long-term change for identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The consequence of one or more outcomes. Impact implies changes in the economic, social, cultural, civil, political and environmental conditions of people. For UNICEF, positive impacts involve increased respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of children and should also have some relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals, other internationally agreed development goals, national development goals (as well as human rights as enshrined in constitutions), and national commitments to international conventions and treaties.

## Implementation

Implementation is the management of inputs to undertake activities in order to achieve or contribute to development results (outputs, outcomes and impact).

## Indicator (or performance indicator)

A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable. It provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts, with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment. It specifies what is to be measured along a scale or dimension but does not indicate the direction or change.





## Inputs

The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for development interventions or activities.

## Lessons learned

Generalizations based on monitoring or evaluation of projects, programmes or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact.

## Logical framework (logframe), also called logic model, results framework, results matrix or results structure

A management tool (typically a matrix or vertical flow diagram) used to improve the design of interventions. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships. It shows how a programme is understood or intended to produce particular results. It sometimes includes indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a development intervention.

## Monitoring (or performance monitoring)

A continuous process of collecting and analysing data for performance indicators to compare how well a development intervention, partnership or policy reform is being implemented against expected results (achievement of outputs and progress toward outcomes).

## Monitoring plan

A plan (usually in the form of a matrix) that organizes how results are going to be monitored. A monitoring plan has indicators with a baseline, targets, data collection methods, geographical sites where data will be collected, responsible persons, frequency, and utilization of monitoring information.

### Different types of monitoring:

**Real-time monitoring:** Monitoring activities carried out constantly, often with the use of technology (such as SMS, sensors, cameras), to get real-time information to be acted upon immediately (for example, the interruption of the cold chain in vaccine management).



**Frequent monitoring:** Monitoring activities that use data usually from administrative systems or surveys to trigger programme adjustments and accelerate impact through timely course correction (typically undertaken quarterly or monthly).

**Annual monitoring:** Monitoring activities that produce annual estimates and information for each sector and thus allow longer-term strategic adjustments.

**Multi-year monitoring:** Monitoring activities carried out every few years to assess the impact on programmes related to mortality, poverty reduction and education attainments, for example, usually carried out through multisector household surveys, such as DHS or MICS.

**Situation monitoring:** The systematic tracking of a condition or set of conditions, such as the situation of children and women. Situation monitoring measures change or lack of change in a condition or a set of conditions.

## Outcome

A medium-term change that is logically expected to occur once the development intervention has achieved one or more outputs. Corresponds to changes in individual or institutional performance, such as changes in access and quality of services for children, behaviour and practices, decision-making, policy-making and increased efficiency or effectiveness. These changes are expected to lead to changes in conditions for children, women and families (impacts).

## Outputs

Shorter-term changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, directly attributable to the activities of an organization, policy, programme or intervention. Increase in capacity (the motivation, authority and resources of duty bearers and the understanding, resources of rights holders as well as a reduction in the risk involved in their claiming of their rights).

## Partners

The individuals and/or organizations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives. The concept of partnership connotes shared expected impact, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations. Partners may include governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations, universities, professional and business associations, multilateral organizations and private companies, among others.





## Performance

The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated expected results or plans.

## Performance measurement

A system for assessing performance of development interventions against stated expected results.

See also: performance monitoring, indicator.

## Performance monitoring

A continual process of collecting and analysing data for performance indicators, to assess how well development interventions are achieving expected results.

## Programme

A time-bound intervention similar to a project but which cuts across sectors, themes or geographic areas, uses a multidisciplinary approach, involves multiple institutions, and/or may be supported by several different funding sources.

## Reach

A development intervention's target population.

## Relevance

The extent to which the outputs, outcomes or impacts of a development intervention are consistent with the requirements of the target population, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the expected results of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

## Result

Describable or measurable change in a state or condition that derives from a cause-and-effect relationship. There are three types of such changes – outputs, outcomes and impact – that can be set in motion by a development intervention. The changes can be intended or unintended, positive and/or negative.





## Results-based budgeting

Results-based budgeting determines the resources required to support the achievement of results. It is the process of allocating resources to achieve identified outputs and outcomes.

## Results-based management

A management strategy or approach by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the desired results (outputs, outcomes and impact). It involves the use of information and evidence on actual results to inform decision-making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting.

## Results chain

The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired results – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes and impact. It is based on a theory of change, including underlying assumptions.

## Risk

Potential events or occurrences – both internal and external to the programme – that could adversely, or positively, affect the achievement of results.

## Risk management

Identifying and assessing risks that can affect the achievement of results and taking measures to mitigate the threats – or capitalizing on the opportunities – that they present to expected results.

## Stakeholders

Agencies, organizations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention. They include the community whose situation the programme seeks to change; field staff who implement activities; programme managers who oversee implementation; donors and other decision-makers who influence or decide the course of action related to the programme; and supporters, critics and other persons who influence the programme environment.

Related term: target group

Related term no longer used: beneficiary.





## Strategies

Approaches and modalities to deploy human, material and financial resources and to implement activities to achieve results.

## Sustainability

The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

## Target

Specifies a particular value that an indicator should reach by a specific date in the future. It is what the project would like to achieve within a certain period of time, in relation to one of the expected results. For example: *Total literacy rate to reach 85 per cent among groups X and Y by the year 2010.*

## Target group

The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken.

## Theory of change

A theory of change explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. It can be developed for any level of intervention – an event, a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy or an organization. It is made up of hypotheses or assumptions about how an intervention contributes to intended or observed results.

A theory of change is both a:

**Process:** Discussion-based analysis and learning that produces powerful insights to support programme design and strategy as well as implementation, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment

**Product:** Communication products, such as a visual depiction, graphic or table; a narrative.

## Vertical logic

The cause-effect relationship between activities and the associated output, outputs and the associated outcomes, outcomes and the associated impact (usually arranged in a vertical manner in a matrix or flow diagram). Can one reasonably expect the higher-level result to occur if the lower-level results are achieved?



## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Bester, Angela, 'Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System: Progress and challenges. A report prepared for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, for the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review', July 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> The UN Statement of Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming (the 'Common Understanding') was adopted by the United Nations Development Group in 2003.
- <sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Group, 'The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a common understanding among UN Agencies', 2003.
- <sup>4</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'The Determinant Analysis for Equity Programming', August 2014, p. 7.
- <sup>5</sup> Rogers, Patricia, 'Theory of Change', Methodological Briefs, Impact Evaluation No. 2, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.
- <sup>6</sup> A series of results chains in a given programme or project is often referred to as a results framework or logic model.
- <sup>7</sup> Adapted from: United Nations Children's Fund, Child Protection Resource Pack: How to plan, monitor and evaluate child protection programmes, 2015, p. 124.
- <sup>8</sup> Based on: United National Children's Fund, *Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, section 3.5.7, 'Risks and Assumptions'.
- <sup>9</sup> Adapted from the UNICEF Risk Management Policy, 2009, p. 4.
- <sup>10</sup> Adapted from the UNICEF Risk Management Policy, p. 5.
- <sup>11</sup> Adapted from UNDG, Results-Based Management Handbook, Harmonizing RBM concepts and approaches for improved development results at country level, 2011, p.19.
- <sup>12</sup> Adapted from UNICEF, Child Protection Resource Pack - How to Plan, Monitor, and Evaluate Child Protection Programmes, 2015, p. 124
- <sup>13</sup> Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning and Action are "approaches employed by development practitioners to enable effective interaction and planning with communities. The approaches are based on the philosophy of bottom-up participation and empowerment and recognize that if local people participate in the development processes of planning, implementation and monitoring, they can progressively transform their own lives and surrounding environment." Methods include: sorting, ranking, mapping, timelines, seasonal calendars and force-field analysis. Source: Bottomley, Ruth, 'PRA and PLA Approaches: A case study with examples of participatory approaches employed by MAG and CMAC in Cambodia', not dated.





- 14 Bartle, Phil, 'The Nature of Monitoring and Evaluation, Definition and Purpose', Workshop handout, Community Empowerment Collective, 2011.
- 15 PRIME is an updated electronic version of the integrated monitoring & evaluation planning tool used by UNICEF country offices, regional offices and headquarters to share information about future and ongoing evaluations, research, studies and M&E capacity-development activities.
- 16 Resource: *Educational Sectoral Analysis Methodological Guidelines*, 2014
- 17 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Revised Guidance on Field Monitoring Visits', July 2015.
- 18 VISION (Virtual Integrated System of Information) is comprised of the SAP system for all business transactions, and the web-based performance management system for monitoring and reporting. It is accessible to all UNICEF staff.
- 19 Polastro, Riccardo, 'Evaluating Humanitarian Action in Real Time: Recent practices, challenges, and innovations', *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation / La Revue canadienne d'évaluation de programme*, vol. 29.1 (spring), 2014, pp. 118–134.
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- 22 Department for International Development (United Kingdom), 'Planning Evaluability Assessments: A synthesis of the literature with recommendations', Working paper 40, October 2013.
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- 25 Carlsson, Jerker, 'Learning from Evaluations', in: Carlsson, Jerker and Lennart Wohlgemuth, editors, *Learning from Development Cooperation*, pp. 120–129.
- 26 'Improving Quality Donor Reporting', Public Sector Resource Development Webinar Series, UNICEF, 9 July 2013
- 27 Excerpted from Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights Approach to Development Cooperation', OHCHR, New York and Geneva, 2006.







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