Introduction

The Evaluation Office recently completed three global thematic evaluations:

– Early Childhood Development (ECD)
– Life Skills Education (LSE)
– Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP)

In this session we will present the evaluations…
– introduced by Colin Kirk, Director of the Evaluation Office

…and the Management Responses
– presented by Dr Nicholas Alipui, Director, Programme Division
Introduction

Objectives of the session

To consider the findings and recommendations of the three evaluations

To consider UNICEF’s Management Response to each evaluation
Introduction

Overview

UNICEF evaluations aim to promote better results for children
  – by supporting learning, accountability and better performance
Evaluations generate findings, lessons, conclusions and recommendations
  – based on solid evidence and systematic analysis
Global thematic evaluations are undertaken by UNICEF’s Evaluation Office
  – to provide systematic overview of UNICEF’s work in key areas
Introduction

Insights

The three evaluations presented today provide insights into various aspects of UNICEF’s work

– highlighting different issues and experiences in a range of contexts

The evaluation do not provide a comprehensive overview of the full range of UNICEF’s work

– yet some common underlying themes and issues emerge

Each is intended to inform and support decision makers within UNICEF and among UNICEF’s partners

– Each is complemented by a formal UNICEF Management Response
THE EVALUATIONS
The Evaluation of the Early Childhood Development Programme
Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Evaluation of UNICEF’s Early Childhood Development Programme

Rationale:

– Building on research evidence that ECD interventions can improve children’s well-being and reduce inequalities, ECD programming was boosted with support from the Netherlands Government ($13.5 million in 2008-2010)

ECD is a priority for UNICEF:

– When well nurtured and cared for in their earliest years, children are more likely to survive, to grow in a healthy way with fewer illnesses, and to develop thinking, language, emotional and social skills.

– ECD is an organizational priority requiring a comprehensive, holistic approach to addressing the needs of young children.
Objective of the ECD evaluation:

- to strengthen ECD policies and programming by systematic assessment of programme performance and experience including identification of good practices - ultimately to help realize the MDGs and child rights.

Methodology:

Mixed methods approach:
- Review of documentation
- Assessment of UNICEF ECD strategies at all levels
- Comparison of GoN-funded programmes in 10 countries
- Four country case studies
- Survey of all country offices
Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Findings

UNICEF’s ECD strategies and programming were relevant and aligned with stated goals…
  – But data constraints impeded alignment with national and subnational ECD needs

…and effective in meeting output targets
  e.g. number of parents trained

But evidence on improved intervention quality and outcomes for children and families is scant
  – Rigorous evaluation was constrained by the lack of a systematic approach to assessing needs, performance (e.g. quality of services delivered) and outcomes
Mainstreaming ECD:

- Advocacy efforts at all levels influenced government leaders and helped to mainstream ECD policies into national policies, plans and services.
- Intersectoral approaches are desirable for holistic ECD: progress is being made in adapting materials developed for health and nutrition services into other sectors.
- Intersectoral ECD committees in some UNICEF COs provide a model for intersectoral ECD coordination by national partners.
- Building partnerships for ECD has generally been successful.
Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Building capacity for ECD:
- UNICEF lacks a systematic approach to assessing ECD capacity gaps at each level
- Low intensity interventions appear to lack sustainable impact on parent behaviour
- UNICEF’s own capacity for ECD remains limited

Knowledge for ECD:
- Knowledge generation and dissemination is weak
- But UNICEF’s promotion and use of statistical data from the MICS4 ECD module continues to benefit national partners and all levels within UNICEF
- Better specification of reporting requirements would yield higher quality data for management purposes
Early Childhood Development (ECD)

**ECD service coverage:**
- Centre-based pre-primary education service coverage has expanded - but access and quality are uneven
- Coverage for parents of younger children remains limited
- Training, monitoring and technical assistance have been provided, but not yet on a systematic basis

**Equity:**
- Lack of relevant data has limited capacity in case study countries to address inequitable access
- National stakeholders often lack strategies for reaching marginalized children and families
- UNICEF’s advocacy and leadership is critical for supporting progress in reaching underserved populations
Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Recommendations

21 recommendations address the issues noted above, and include recommendations for:

- Better costing and increased investment in human and financial resources in ECD by UNICEF and national authorities
- Making improvements in quality and coverage of holistic services, and in addressing inequitable coverage and services
- Designing better results frameworks and improved tracking and reporting of progress, especially in addressing inequities
- Establishing more systematic approaches to management and coordination, setting standards and developing capacity, and in knowledge generation and management
The global evaluation of life skills education (LSE)
Life Skills Education

The global evaluation of life skills education (LSE): Rationale, objectives, methods

• Rationale:
  – UNICEF has advocated and supported LSE in many countries. Has UNICEF made a difference?

• Objective of the LSE evaluation:
  – *To evaluate LSE initiatives, especially UNICEF’s role and additionality.*

• Methodology:
  – Literature review
  – review of documentation from 40 country offices
  – 7 country case studies
  – survey of UNICEF staff and partners.
Life Skills Education

What is “Life Skills Education”?

“Life Skills” is an elastic, loosely defined term:

- Includes personal, interpersonal and cognitive psychosocial skills and knowledge that help people to interact appropriately, manage emotions and make decisions for an active, safe and productive life.
- Especially relevant to HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health, citizenship issues and disaster risk reduction.

Life skills education aims to change learners’ attitudes and behaviour

- often by using innovative participatory and interactive teaching and learning methods – thereby providing an additional entry point for learner-centred pedagogy and practice.
Life Skills Education

Key findings

LSE programmes are relevant and coverage is growing…

– Closely aligned to national/sectoral polices and plans
– Relevant to learners’ needs and interests
– Increasing integration into national education systems

…but differentiation and adaptation are limited

– By systemic constraints in education systems (e.g. teacher shortages, overcrowded curricula, limited teaching materials, focus on formal examinations)
– By conservative social norms
Life Skill Education

LSE is effective...
- Strong evidence of LSE developing relevant knowledge skills and attitudes among learners
- LSE brings major changes to curricula and classroom practices, and wider changes
- Opportunity to link LSE more closely with child-friendly schools approach - yet little coordination to date

...and sustainable...
- Increasing political recognition
- Mechanisms to guide integration into national systems in place in many countries

But there is still a long way to go
- Institutionalization is mixed and difficult to scale up
- LSE still reliant on external resources
Life skills education

Efficiency is hard to measure

- The use of standards and benchmarks is limited
- Major gaps in M&E (especially on attitudes and behaviours)
- Weak coordination of non-formal LSE interventions with non-formal or formal education programmes

UNICEF has been a key player in LSE…

- Through successful innovation and advocacy, UNICEF has developed a comparative advantage and technical expertise

…but can improve further

- Through better coordination and integration of LSE with child-friendly schools approaches
- By developing more effective assessment tools and strategies for assessing LSE results
Life skills education

Recommendations

**UNICEF should strengthen international LSE policy**
- By developing a taxonomy of LSE learning outcomes
- By developing standards for LSE results and outcomes
- By linking LSE with the child-friendly schools strategy

**UNICEF should contribute to national planning**
- By developing guidelines to understand and address social norms and religious contexts likely to affect implementation
- By supporting national plans to build LSE capacity
- By supporting better use of data for planning
- By supporting national plans to strengthen quality assurance and M&E tools and procedures
Life Skills Education

UNICEF should further extend the reach of LSE
- By strengthening participatory approaches and involving children in LSE planning
- By identifying and addressing the needs and interests of vulnerable and excluded groups in developing curricula and learning materials
- Through support for better coordination of non-formal LSE interventions
- Through continued support for school-based HIV education and sexual and reproductive health life skills to meet the needs of vulnerable young people

UNICEF should strengthen LSE implementation
- By integrating LSE elements within the core curriculum
- By developing clear, practical guidelines for LSE assessment
The evaluation of UNICEF’s Human Rights Based Approach to Programming
The HRBAP evaluation: Rationale, objective, methods

Evaluation of “foundation strategies”

- gender equality and HRBAP evaluations mandated under current MTSP

Objective of HRBAP evaluation:

*To evaluate UNICEF understanding of and commitment to HRBAP and identify strengths and weaknesses in its implementation.*

Methodology:

- Mixed methods, including visits to 6 Country Offices and 4 Regional Offices;
- Period reviewed: 2007-2011
What is HRBAP?

• Essentially HRBAP is an approach to **programming** guided by human rights standards and principles, as set out in international human rights treaties and conventions, such as the CRC.

• Development is seen to be focused on the **rights** of the people it serves (rather than on “needs”).

• Individuals are defined as “**duty bearers**” and “**rights holders**”.

• UNICEF’s MTSP states that applying HRBAP “will improve and help to sustain the results of development efforts to reduce poverty and reach the MDGs by directing attention, long-term commitment, resources and assistance from all sources to the poorest, most vulnerable, excluded, discriminated and marginalized groups” (p14).
Human Rights Based Approach to Programming

Key findings

HRBAP in UNICEF is well conceptualized…
  – It is in line with global good practice (e.g. UN Statement of Common Understanding, 2003).
  – It has become well understood and well embedded within UNICEF (in line with the 1998 Executive Directive).

…and coherent
  – HRBAP is generally coherent with other key UNICEF policies and strategies (e.g. MTSP, gender equality, child protection).
  – But the opportunity exists to foster greater coherence between HRBAP and the current refocus on equity.
UNICEF provides international leadership…
  – Externally, UNICEF is seen to provide leadership in HRBAP across the UN, and in setting standards at country level.

...and a high level of commitment…
  – Internally, UNICEF staff are highly committed to HRBAP, which is seen to support implementation of the CRC.

But implementation is variable
  – Application of HRBAP principles is not comprehensive or consistent across various sectors/focus areas, country contexts and phases in the programme cycle.
  – Variable implementation leads to gaps in identification and participation of vulnerable groups in UNICEF programming.
  – This provides an entry point for reinforcing UNICEF’s equity perspective.
UNICEF needs to further strengthen its capacity

- UNICEF staff are using HRBAP concepts and principles but not always in well-informed or adequately supported ways across all sectors or throughout the programme cycle, especially in difficult contexts.
- Current guidance and tools are inadequate
- Staff lack adequate training opportunities (training is no longer mandatory)
- HRBAP implementation and reporting is not a significant aspect of staff performance reviews
- Effective implementation depends on strong corporate support – especially from the Country Representative and Deputy Country Representative
Human Rights Based Approach to Programming

Recommendations

Refresh organizational commitment to HRBAP:

– Develop a clear policy building on the strong HRBAP foundation while updating to take account of changes in the external context and the normative and aid environments.
– Develop an overall implementation strategy, addressing policies and directives, organizational arrangements, roles and responsibilities, and resource allocation.
– Clarify linkages between HRBAP and the equity approach

Sustain global leadership and engagement

– Sustain leadership in inter-agency discussions and applications of HRBAP
– Initiate more systematic engagement with human rights bodies and mechanisms
Human Rights Based Approach to Programming

Develop capacity for improved implementation

- Ensure consistent and comprehensive application of HRBAP principles across sectors/focus areas, to all stages in the programme cycle, and in all contexts (including humanitarian).
- Develop relevant, targeted guidance and tools
- Improve the quality of HRBAP training and coaching
- Integrate HRBAP into human resource processes—e.g. job descriptions, staff recruitment, performance management, peer support

Strengthen accountability for HRBAP

- Champion HRBAP through Country Representatives and senior staff
- Track resources and performance