

EVALUATION REPORT

August 2014

Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES)

MoRES ■ ■ **From evidence to equity?** ■

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children

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**Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Monitoring Results
for Equity System (MoRES)
MoRES: FROM EVIDENCE TO EQUITY?**

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United Nations Children's Fund
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PREFACE

Throughout its history, UNICEF has worked for children in the greatest need. In 2010, the Executive Director launched efforts to further strengthen the focus on equity and this has become UNICEF's overarching priority. In support of the equity agenda, UNICEF has developed an innovative approach to the design, management and monitoring of programmes which has become known as MoRES: the Monitoring Results for Equity System. The MoRES approach has evolved over time and is being woven into the delivery of UNICEF's new Strategic Plan, which will run from 2014 through 2017. MoRES is now a central element of UNICEF's work and has been applied in programmes around the globe.

Given the growing strategic and practical importance of MoRES, the Evaluation Office identified this complex and dynamic initiative as an important topic for evaluation. Undertaken in the early stages of the development and introduction of MoRES, the evaluation was purposely framed as a formative evaluation intended to provide timely feedback to inform and strengthen the approach. A theory-based approach was employed to examine the conceptual basis of MoRES. Case studies were prepared to explore and learn from the experiences of UNICEF and partners of implementing MoRES across a range of sectors and countries. Interviews provided further insights. Drawing on the extensive array of information collected, the evaluation provides a balanced assessment of strengths and shortcomings in the approach, its practical application and in the overall management of the process. The evaluation has generated findings, conclusions and recommendations which, I believe, will be of use in further strengthening programming and implementation and to support UNICEF's efforts to achieve more equitable results for children.

The fieldwork on which the evaluation is based was completed at the end of 2013, with analysis and reporting continuing into 2014. Meanwhile, UNICEF teams and partners have continued to deploy MoRES and further sharpened the approach. Nevertheless, it is clear from various workshops and validation meetings held to review the draft evaluation report that the findings and conclusions of the evaluation resonate with UNICEF staff and remain widely relevant.

The Evaluation Office commissioned the consulting firm ITAD, based in the UK, to field a team to undertake the evaluation. On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to express my appreciation of the team's work: in particular Angela Christie and Sam McPherson, who jointly led the exercise, supported by Sarah Castle, Jodie Dubber, Achim Engelhardt, Nadine Jubb, Emma Newbatt, Jeremy Ockelford, Sarah Owen, Eduardo Romero Perez, Derek Poate, Melanie Punton, and James Shoobridge. ITAD's Managing Director, Dane Rogers, also provided valuable insights and support.

I am grateful to UNICEF staff at all levels of the organization for their interest and support throughout the evaluation process. I would also like to thank the Evaluation Office colleagues who managed this challenging evaluation: Mathew Varghese, the evaluation manager; Laurence Reichel, who provided technical and managerial support; as well as Geeta Dey, Celeste Lebowitz and Dalma Rivero who provided strong administrative support throughout.

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ACRONYMS

BBA	Barrier and Bottleneck Analysis	MAA	Monitorage Amélioré pour l'Action (Improved Monitoring for Action)
CCC	Core Commitments for Children	MAF	MDG Acceleration Framework
CO	Country Office	MBB	Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan	MDG	Millennium Development Goal
CPC	Country Programmes of Cooperation	MIC	Middle-income country
CPD	Convention on the Rights of the Child	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
CTT	(MoRES) Co-ordination and Technical Team	MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	MTCT	Mother to child transmission (of HIV)
DaO	Delivering as One	MTR	Mid-Term Review
DF	Determinants framework	MTSP	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
DIVA	Diagnose, Intervene, Verify, Adjust	NDP	National Development Plan
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DROP	Deputy Representative and Operations	PPPM	Policy Programme and Procedure Manual
EA	Evaluability assessment	RAM	Results Assessment Module
ECD	Early childhood development	RBM	Results-based management
ED	Executive Director	RCA	Rapid Convenient Assessment
EO	(UNICEF) Evaluation Office	RO	Regional Office
ET	Evaluation team	RTMMV	Real-Time Monitoring for the Most Vulnerable
FRG	Field Reference Group	SD	Service delivery
HAC	Humanitarian Action for Children	SNIS	Système national de l'information sanitaire (National Health Information System)
HPM	Humanitarian Performance Monitoring	SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
HQ	(UNICEF) Headquarters	SP	Strategic Plan
HRBAP	Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming	SRA	Strategic Result Area
IC-EBP	Investment Case for Evidence-Based Planning	TBE	Theory-Based Evaluation
ICT	Information and communication technology	ToC	Theory of Change
IO	Intermediate Outcome	ToR	Terms of Reference
IR	Intermediate Results	UN	United Nations
IRF	Intermediate Results Framework	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
L3M	Level 3 monitoring	WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
LIC	Low-income country	WHO	World Health Organization
LQAS	Lot quality assurance sampling		
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation		



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF MORES

1. The objective of the formative evaluation of MoRES is to support continuing efforts across UNICEF to articulate, develop and mainstream MoRES by learning from experience. MoRES is defined by UNICEF as *“a conceptual framework for effective planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and managing for results to achieve desired outcomes for the most disadvantaged children.”*

2. The evaluation of MoRES is conceived as formative, strategically focused on operational learning and adaptation rather than on issues of accountability and outcomes. The evaluation has used two approaches to address the evaluation questions raised in the terms of reference: a theory based approach and a case study approach. The theory based approach has been used to enable a better understanding of the problems MoRES seeks to address, the theory of change which underpins MoRES and the chain of results which MoRES is designed to generate. The case study approach has enabled the recording of what has actually happened in relation to MoRES in a number of countries which has then been used to test and validate the theory of change underpinning MoRES. The evaluation has also included institutional change management analysis, to enable reflection on both the governance and management arrangements supporting the roll-out of MoRES. A large number of UNICEF stakeholders were interviewed and have contributed significantly to evaluation findings.

3. The evaluation report presents findings at the end of each chapter and conclusions and recommendations in a final chapter. Findings relate to a) the conceptual underpinnings of MoRES; b) the experience of MoRES in

practice; and c) the process of institutionalising MoRES. Overall evaluative conclusions are based upon these findings and respond to questions raised in the ToR relating to the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, coordination and coherence of MoRES. The report makes six overarching strategic, practical and feasible recommendations, focusing on what actions to take to enhance the mainstreaming, management, partnerships and results associated with MoRES.

SECTION 2: KEY FINDINGS

Conceptual underpinnings

4. The equity refocus in 2010 significantly sharpened UNICEF's attention on the needs of the world's most disadvantaged children. It was launched under the premise that equity-focused programming is not only right in principle, but right in practice.

5. MoRES implementation in UNICEF can be broadly divided into three phases: the process of conceptual development, the initial roll-out phase, and a period of mainstreaming, which is ongoing. The conceptual development phase started from mid-2010 onwards; the roll-out phase took off from late 2011 and was centred on piloting of MoRES in 27 workstream one countries; the mainstreaming stage started in late 2012 and is still ongoing.

6. Overall, UNICEF's refocus on equity, combined with the introduction of MoRES, represents a potent blend of strategic and operational intent. UNICEF's current SP states that 'Equity means that all children have an opportunity to *survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism.*' The equity refocus aligns with this overall commitment to child

rights, while MoRES offers the opportunity to operationalise a rights-based approach in a more evidence-based way.

7. MoRES is based on the rationale that an equity-focused system is needed to resolve critical analytical, targeting, monitoring and decision-making shortcomings in programming.

Although originally presented as a cup with four levels and a feedback loop, the system can be better understood to be composed of interconnected elements. The system is integrated rather than linear, allowing for multiple entry points.

8. An analysis of the concepts underpinning the elements of MoRES suggests that it presents UNICEF with a number of opportunities.

Firstly, by focusing more attention on evidence-based analysis and prioritisation at the country level, UNICEF is in a position to better align strategies with the needs of the most deprived children. Secondly, by recognising the dominance of the historic service delivery focus, wider determinants of developmental impacts can be taken into account. Thirdly, an additional focus within programming on key barriers and bottlenecks to development can lead to their removal. Fourthly, evidence and improved understanding of the dynamic between outputs and final impacts can contribute to timely programme adjustment. Finally, ongoing programming and resource allocation can be better informed by more regular data gathering on programme performance.

MoRES in practice

9. MoRES has enhanced motivation and conviction regarding the refocus on equity.

MoRES has helped operationalise the equity focus (including the mapping and analysis of deprivations), which was critical to UNICEF before MoRES was introduced. There is compelling evidence that Level 1 analysis has helped shape national programmes towards equity targets in some countries.

10. There is widespread support for equity across governments and partners.

In many countries, MoRES has been introduced on 'fertile ground': a number of the national governments of countries studied in this evaluation were noted to have an equity focus that pre-dated MoRES. However, in some countries there is discomfort with focusing on the most disadvantaged children in areas where poverty levels are generally high.

11. Context makes a difference, particularly in terms of the scale and scope of deprivation challenges, level of local autonomy and accessibility to local areas (especially in fragile countries).

The variable institutional context in which UNICEF operates is a fundamental consideration in determining which elements of MoRES apply and how.

12. Although the robustness of existing systems for planning and monitoring may vary according to the country context, MoRES is almost never being introduced onto a 'blank page'.

The quality of existing data-gathering systems is a significant factor in the applicability and affordability of MoRES, as is the capability level and stability of local government staff.

13. Compatibility with existing approaches and systems is a facilitating (or limiting) factor.

Where MoRES has introduced new approaches, this has presented COs with process and technical challenges that translate into demands on UNICEF and government resources and capacity. It has been especially challenging to adapt MoRES to meet the varying needs of governments and local stakeholders, who in many cases have established ways of doing things.

14. There has been a considerable transfer of effort to MoRES across UNICEF

and MoRES has required heavy investment of UNICEF time and human resources. COs have made a concerted effort to implement MoRES and have been flexible and adaptable in their approach. They have been conscious of and conscientious with regard to the need to



integrate elements of MoRES with existing systems. UNICEF COs have had to be very strategic in their approach to implementing MoRES, in order to promote acceptance and adoption of MoRES, (or elements of the approach), by national governments and partners.

15. **Implementing MoRES has shown that various MoRES elements have been usefully and productively applied.** SitAn at the appropriate level of decentralisation represents a critical contribution by MoRES from the perspective of locating the most disadvantaged children. However, evaluation with a focus on the specific target groups MoRES has been designed to assist is missing from the current frame.
16. **There are significant unresolved technical challenges that signal a need for stronger guidance.** Issues that have raised particular challenges include indicator selection, frequency of monitoring, the use of tracer interventions, the validity of the minimum bottleneck principle and the efficacy of coverage as a cross sector concept and a defining expression of equity.
17. **Although there is considerable evidence of additional data-gathering, there is as yet only limited evidence of the feedback loop in operation leading to programme adaptation.** This is linked to resource constraints and political will. Complex/fragmented planning and finance cycles in many countries and highly centralised budgets exacerbate the problems associated with insufficient resource.
18. **Government buy-in and investment is a vital consideration for scale-up,** requiring that MoRES can demonstrate that it strengthens or adds value to, rather than replaces government systems and processes. Governments generally lack the capacity (human and financial resources) to undertake all MoRES activities. However, evidence from the country case studies show that there is at least some engagement of national governments with MoRES (or component(s) of MoRES)

in each context in which MoRES has been introduced.

Institutionalising MoRES

19. **The analysis of the MoRES experience from an institutional perspective has created a rich source of learning for UNICEF on how to successfully roll out corporate priorities, strategic programmes or organizational transitions.** Unpacking and analysing what has worked and what has not in relation to a major organizational change initiative like MoRES can potentially provide valuable insights which can be drawn upon, not only by UNICEF but by other organizations, to support future similar initiatives.
20. **MoRES was positioned and developed in a way that facilitated considerable momentum around the approach within UNICEF.** Significant progress was made during the development phase of MoRES; in particular, by creating a strong sense of organizational urgency around its development and roll-out, and starting to build a guiding coalition to support MoRES.
21. **Perceptions among some staff concerning the MoRES development process still represent a barrier to universal buy-in.** While the conceptual development and positioning facilitated significant momentum within UNICEF, perceptions among some staff indicate that it could have been done better. There were unresolved issues around the refinement and development of a clear concept and vision and a more participatory process involving frontline and field staff, as well as a clearer management structure, would have strengthened organizational buy-in.
22. **The roll-out of MoRES was not coordinated well in the early stages and this has been damaging to the MoRES 'brand'.** Implementation, communication and consultation processes were widely reported to be inadequate in the early stages in particular and, while they have improved, they are still not perceived as optimal.

23. Despite the challenges, there is a very high level of positive country engagement with MoRES. The relatively large scale roll-out and increasing flexibility that has been afforded to country staff to innovate around MoRES means that this engagement has continued.

24. The drive to ‘mainstream’ MoRES internally within UNICEF is underway. The integration and alignment of MoRES with existing systems, and vice versa, is still a work in progress for UNICEF.

25. UNICEF recognises the importance of partnership in the implementation of MoRES, and there are clear efforts to engage governments, and in some cases donor partners, in the processes at country level. This is backed up by support for cross-organizational working at the top levels of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. However, arguably, methods of integration and alignment with other systems were not considered at an early stage in the conception of MoRES – this, combined with the short timelines for implementation during early roll-out, has in some cases meant that partnerships with UN agencies and other development partners at country level are only at a nascent stage.

26. Evaluating the overall impact of MoRES as a system in the future will be very difficult. This is mainly due to issues with ongoing lack of clarity in the MoRES design, lack of data availability and the fact that generating any coherent counterfactual will be very challenging.

SECTION 3: CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the evaluation team concludes that MoRES has shaken UNICEF in a number of positive and sometimes not so positive ways and that the aim of the mainstreaming phase is to take from the experience that which most supports UNICEF to meet its mandate and

mission for children. The following conclusions are intended to help meet that aim.

27. Conceptually, MoRES is relevant to the refocus on equity, providing UNICEF with an operational means to act on its strategic commitment to do more to meet the needs of the world’s most disadvantaged children. The urgent needs of disadvantaged children were known and recognised by UNICEF before the refocus on equity and the implementation of MoRES. However, the refocus on equity served to draw the organization’s attention to the persistence of deprivations for the most disadvantaged children. It also required UNICEF to better understand the nature of, and solutions to, the barriers to equitable development and signalled the need for an evidence base – as well as a logical and ethical case – on which to build enhanced efforts to reach children living beyond the margins of development. MoRES responded to this need.

28. However, more practically, the relevance of MoRES to individual countries cannot be established without some political and economic analysis of the specific context in which deprivations for disadvantaged children endure. The fundamental assumption on which MoRES is based is that generating better data will result in better targeted programmes and ultimately enhanced equity. However, there are early indications that resource availability and political will are also decisive factors. A finding of the evaluation is that better data do not always lead to better decision making.

29. The relevance of MoRES is also determined by the extent to which MoRES takes account of the political, institutional as well as the development context in which it operates. The variable political and institutional context in which UNICEF operates is a fundamental consideration in determining which elements of MoRES apply and whether they are likely to make a difference. Institutionally, it is particularly important to



acknowledge not only government systems but also institutional mandate when seeking to add value through MoRES initiatives.

- 30. MoRES will not deliver its full potential (efficiently or effectively) until UNICEF is clearer about what MoRES 'is' and how it should be applied.** As the operational response to the refocus of equity, MoRES conveys a significant promise to deliver results. For this to happen, there needs to be a clear and common understanding of what MoRES actually 'is' and how it can best be presented and implemented.
- 31. The complexity of MoRES as an initiative has created challenges to efficiency. Managing concerns over a "new" system and dealing with technical challenges has absorbed time and money.** MoRES has been presented as a complex and dynamic system. This has created challenges in terms of understanding, implementation and buy-in, leading to inefficiencies in operation and lowering the potential effectiveness of MoRES. COs and government partners alike have struggled to understand MoRES and significant technical challenges remain unresolved.
- 32. The effectiveness and likely impact of MoRES will remain unproven without better evidence of where and how MoRES has and has not delivered meaningful early signals of reduced inequity – and why.** COs have done well in adopting the parts of MoRES which are likely to add most value in their contexts. However, better understanding which elements of MoRES work best, in which contexts and in which sectors from the perspective of rapid results for equity, lies at the heart of securing best value from the commitment made to MoRES to date and will support the most meaningful roll-out.
- 33. Resourcing for MoRES is a key sustainability issue – UNICEF cannot afford to resolve all systems gaps in the countries in which it works nor pay for the adaptation of all programmes.** The introduction of MoRES to date has helped identify considerable weaknesses in planning and monitoring systems across many of the countries in which MoRES has been implemented as well as weak technical capabilities with regard to results based management. Resolving all of these shortfalls as a means to an end would represent a significant diversion of resources and potentially lead to a serious delay in reaching children, since such systems improvements take time to translate into benefits for children.
- 34. Coherence of MoRES with internal UNICEF systems and processes has not yet been fully achieved.** The drive to 'mainstream' MoRES internally within UNICEF is not yet complete. While some significant recent work has been done to date, the full integration and alignment of MoRES with existing UNICEF systems, and vice versa, is still a work in progress for the organization.
- 35. UNICEF's collaboration within the UN family is helpful when focused on the added value of elements of MoRES and its coherence with wider initiatives.** UNICEF has begun to make good progress in promoting elements of MoRES to other UN agencies, both at HQ level and, in some cases, at the country level. This process will be better consolidated if there is continued support from a central level, with a focus on proving and promoting the key elements of MoRES and identifying synergies at country level, rather than driving the implementation of MoRES as an entire system.
- 36. The MoRES experience offers an important opportunity to learn significant lessons about improving the coordination of change processes in UNICEF.** UNICEF has rallied to the call to action represented by MoRES and the attempt by COs to flex and adapt to make MoRES work is testimony to their commitment, capability and creativity.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions presented within this report and the supporting case study reports:

- 37. Recommendation 1: Maintain the focus on equity; UNICEF should emphasise that the primary purpose of MoRES is to support UNICEF's refocus on equity through a central commitment to generating robust evidence.** Overall, most can now be achieved through MoRES if it is rolled out as a commitment to encourage equity-focused decision-making based on robust evidence, rather than as an integrated (UNICEF) system. MoRES should be understood not as a one-size fits all system but as an approach that a) begins with an intent to accelerate progress towards equity for children, b) recognises local context – particularly the political and institutional landscape as its starting point before c) determining what MoRES as an evidence based approach can add in terms of value and d) establishing what the ideal partnership strategy is to achieve this.
- 38. Recommendation 2: Develop a mainstreaming strategy based on the enhanced conceptual clarity and findings produced by the formative evaluation report.** The mainstreaming strategy should a) recognize the importance of generating robust data based evidence for equity gaps at national and decentralised levels and assessing the financial and capacity implications of more frequent monitoring; b) communicate MoRES as an approach rather than a system; c) include enhanced guidance and systems for knowledge management which support the application of the elements of MoRES; d) devolve responsibility for the adaptation of the MoRES elements to fit context and sector requirements to the regional and country levels; e) introduce a resourcing and capacity plan for partners, country offices and regional offices; and f) ensure that appropriate accountability mechanism are in place at various levels within the UNICEF

management structure (HQ, RO and CO) with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

- 39. Recommendation 3: Resolve the technical challenges associated with MoRES processes and tools.** There are some elements to MoRES which add significant – even transformational – value when they fill a gap in existing systems, particularly the focus on enhanced monitoring and barrier and bottleneck analysis (level 3 at the appropriate level of decentralization). However, across all contexts, there remain technical challenges to resolve which signal a need for stronger guidance and continuous review.
- 40. Recommendation 4: Develop a policy advocacy strategy at national level for stronger links (a feedback loop) between locally identified barriers/bottlenecks and access to the resources required to remove them.** Sometimes the participation of the government in resolving barriers/bottlenecks is limited by capacity and resources. Furthermore, the complex/fragmented government planning and finance cycles in many countries and highly centralized budgets create further barriers, since resources are not easily or readily reallocated.
- 41. Recommendation 5: Evaluate MoRES as an approach which supports the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan and Country Programme, rather than conduct a stand-alone (impact) evaluation of MoRES.** Focus on the results to be achieved for the most disadvantaged children and the accelerated reduction in equity gaps.
- 42. Recommendation 6: UNICEF management should use the experience of MoRES roll-out (and evidence from other initiatives) to inform the management and implementation of future major organizational change initiatives within UNICEF.** The experience of implementing MoRES within UNICEF has generated some very important lessons on how major change processes involving corporate priorities can be implemented successfully.



RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

SECCIÓN 1: PANORAMA GENERAL DE LA EVALUACIÓN FORMATIVA DEL SISTEMA DE MONITOREO DE RESULTADOS PARA LA EQUIDAD (MoRES)

1. El objetivo de la evaluación formativa de MoRES es apoyar los esfuerzos de UNICEF tendientes a articular, desarrollar e incorporar este sistema por medio del aprendizaje basado en la experiencia. UNICEF define MoRES como *“un marco conceptual que permite obtener los resultados esperados en beneficio de los niños y las niñas más desfavorecidos, mediante una planificación, programación, aplicación, supervisión y gestión efectivas”*.

2. La evaluación de MoRES se concibe como un proceso formativo y centrado estratégicamente en el aprendizaje operacional y en la adaptación, más que en la rendición de cuentas y los resultados. En la evaluación se utilizaron dos enfoques para abordar las preguntas evaluativas extraídas del mandato: un enfoque basado en la teoría y otro, en estudios de casos. El primero se utilizó para facilitar la comprensión de los problemas que MoRES busca abordar, la teoría del cambio que le sirve de base y la cadena de resultados que el sistema debería generar. El enfoque centrado en estudios de casos ha permitido conocer lo que realmente ha ocurrido con MoRES en varios países, lo que posteriormente ha servido para poner a prueba y validar la teoría del cambio sobre la cual se sustenta. La evaluación también incluyó el análisis de la gestión del cambio institucional para posibilitar la reflexión en torno a la gobernanza y los mecanismos de gestión que impulsan MoRES. Un alto número de interesados de UNICEF fueron entrevistados y han contribuido notablemente a las observaciones de la evaluación.

3. El informe de evaluación incluye observaciones al final de cada capítulo, así como también conclusiones y recomendaciones en el capítulo final. Las observaciones están relacionadas con (a) las bases conceptuales de MoRES; (b) las conclusiones extraídas tras la aplicación del sistema; y (c) el proceso de institucionalización del sistema. Las conclusiones generales de la evaluación se basan en estas observaciones y responden a interrogantes planteados en los términos de referencia relativos a la pertinencia, eficiencia, eficacia, sostenibilidad, impacto, coordinación y coherencia de MoRES. El informe hace seis recomendaciones viables de carácter general, estratégico y práctico, y se centra en las medidas necesarias para mejorar la incorporación, la gestión, las alianzas y los resultados asociados con MoRES.

SECCIÓN 2: CONCLUSIONES FUNDAMENTALES

Bases conceptuales

4. El nuevo enfoque de la equidad, adoptado en 2010, intensificó significativamente la atención de UNICEF a las necesidades de los niños menos favorecidos del mundo. Se adoptó bajo la premisa de que una programación basada en la equidad no es solamente correcto en principio, sino también correcto en la práctica.

5. La aplicación de MoRES en UNICEF se puede dividir en tres fases: el proceso de desarrollo conceptual, la fase inicial de ejecución y un período de incorporación, que está en curso. La fase de desarrollo conceptual se inició a mediados de 2010; la fase de introducción, denominada *workstream one* y consistente en la puesta a prueba de MoRES en 27 países, comenzó a finales de 2011. La etapa de incorporación institucional se inició a finales de 2012 y no ha concluido.

6. En términos generales, el enfoque renovado de UNICEF en la equidad combinado con la introducción de MoRES, representa un extraordinario esfuerzo estratégico y operacional. Para el Plan Estratégico actual de UNICEF, *“Equidad significa que todos los niños tienen una oportunidad de sobrevivir, desarrollar y alcanzar su máximo potencial, sin discriminación, prejuicios o favoritismos.”* Aunque el replanteamiento sobre la equidad armoniza con este compromiso general hacia los derechos del niño, MoRES ofrece la posibilidad de poner en marcha un enfoque basado en los derechos con mayor fundamentación en pruebas empíricas.

7. MoRES parte de la noción de que se requiere un sistema centrado en la equidad para subsanar las principales deficiencias analíticas, de selección de beneficiarios, supervisión y toma de decisiones en la programación. A pesar de que originalmente se presentó como un proceso de cuatro niveles y un sistema de retroinformación, MoRES se comprende mejor concibiéndolo como un conjunto de elementos interconectados. Al no ser un sistema lineal, sino integrado, ofrece múltiples vías de acceso.

8. Un análisis de los conceptos que subyacen en los elementos de MoRES indica que este le ofrece a UNICEF una serie de posibilidades. En primer lugar, prestar más atención al análisis basado en información objetiva y a la definición de prioridades en los países permite a UNICEF adecuar mejor las estrategias a las necesidades de los niños y las niñas más desfavorecidos. En segundo lugar, reconocer que el predominio del tradicional enfoque centrado en la prestación de servicios facilita la consideración de determinantes más amplios de los efectos en el desarrollo. En tercer lugar, brindar mayor atención dentro de la programación a las principales barreras para el desarrollo que posibilita la eliminación de estas. En cuarto lugar, contar con datos empíricos y comprender mejor la dinámica entre los resultados y las repercusiones finales contribuiría a ajustar

los programas oportunamente. Por último, recopilar datos sobre el desempeño de los programas con más regularidad imprimiría mayor solidez a los programas y a la asignación de los recursos.

MoRES en la práctica

9. MoRES ha incrementado el interés y la confianza en el nuevo enfoque de la equidad. Este sistema ha favorecido la puesta en marcha del enfoque de la equidad (incluyendo la identificación y el análisis de las privaciones), que revestía suma importancia para UNICEF antes de la adopción de MoRES. Hay pruebas contundentes de que el análisis de nivel 1 ha ayudado a configurar los programas nacionales orientados a la equidad en algunos países.

10. Tanto los gobiernos como los socios respaldan ampliamente la equidad. MoRES ha encontrado un “terreno fértil” en numerosos países; de hecho, se sabe que varios gobiernos nacionales de los países incluidos en esta evaluación asignaban particular importancia a la equidad antes de la existencia de MoRES. Sin embargo, en algunos países con altos niveles de pobreza causa malestar el hecho de prestar especial atención a los niños más desfavorecidos.

11. El contexto marca una diferencia, particularmente desde el punto de vista de la escala y el alcance de las privaciones, el grado de autonomía local y la accesibilidad a determinadas zonas (sobre todo en países frágiles). Los diferentes contextos institucionales en los cuales opera UNICEF constituyen un factor esencial al determinar qué elementos de MoRES aplican y cómo lo hacen.

12. A pesar de que la solidez de los sistemas de planificación y supervisión existentes varían de acuerdo con el contexto del país, MoRES casi nunca se adopta en una “página en blanco”. La calidad de los sistemas actuales de recolección de datos es un factor de peso para la aplicabilidad y la asequibilidad de MoRES, al igual que la capacidad



y la estabilidad de los funcionarios de los gobiernos locales.

13. La compatibilidad con los enfoques y los sistemas vigentes es un factor facilitador (o limitador). La introducción de nuevos enfoques por parte de MoRES ha supuesto dificultades técnicas y de procedimiento para las oficinas de UNICEF en los países, que desembocan en exigencias a este organismo y en requerimientos en materia de capacidad y recursos gubernamentales. Ha sido especialmente difícil adaptar MoRES a las diversas necesidades de los gobiernos y los interesados locales, que, en no pocos casos, han establecido cómo se deben hacer las cosas.

14. En UNICEF ha habido una considerable transferencia de actividad al sistema MoRES, lo que ha requerido de este organismo una gran inversión de tiempo y recursos humanos. Las oficinas de país de UNICEF han realizado un esfuerzo concertado para aplicar MoRES, demostrando flexibilidad y capacidad de adaptación. También han sido conscientes de la necesidad de integrar elementos de este sistema en los sistemas vigentes. Con el objeto de propiciar la aceptación y la adopción de MoRES (o de determinados elementos del mismo) por parte de los gobiernos nacionales y los socios, las oficinas de UNICEF en los países han tenido que actuar de una manera sumamente estratégica.

15. La puesta en práctica de MoRES ha demostrado que varios de sus elementos se han aplicado de un modo útil y productivo. El Análisis de Situación de los Derechos de la Infancia, la Adolescencia y la Mujer (SitAn) en el nivel apropiado de descentralización supone una contribución crucial de MoRES a la ubicación de los niños y las niñas menos favorecidos. No obstante, el marco actual carece de una evaluación enfocada en los grupos objetivo a los cuales debería beneficiar el sistema.

16. Los importantes problemas técnicos sin resolver ponen de manifiesto la necesidad de directrices más sólidas. Algunas cuestiones problemáticas son la selección de los indicadores, la frecuencia de la supervisión, el uso de intervenciones de rastreo, la validez del análisis de la capacidad limitante y la eficacia de la cobertura como concepto intersectorial y expresión definitoria de la equidad.

17. Aunque abundan las evidencias de que existe recopilación adicional de datos, hay pocas pruebas de que esté funcionando un sistema de retroinformación que conduzca a la adaptación de los programas. Esto se relaciona con la voluntad política y la limitación de los recursos económicos. La complejidad y fragmentación de la planificación, los ciclos de financiamiento en muchos países y los presupuestos altamente centralizados agravan los problemas derivados de la insuficiencia de recursos.

18. La aprobación y la inversión de los gobiernos son decisivas para la ampliación de la escala y requieren que MoRES demuestre que no reemplaza a los sistemas y procesos gubernamentales, sino que los fortalece o les añade valor. Por lo regular, los gobiernos carecen de capacidad (humana y financiera) para llevar a cabo todas las actividades de este sistema. Sin embargo, estudios de casos por países revelan que hay gobiernos nacionales comprometidos hasta cierto punto con MoRES (o con componentes del mismo) en todos los contextos en los que ha entrado en vigor.

Institucionalización de MoRES

19. Analizar la experiencia de MoRES desde una perspectiva institucional ha constituido una rica fuente de aprendizaje para UNICEF sobre la manera de abordar exitosamente las prioridades institucionales, los programas estratégicos y las transiciones organizativas. La clasificación y el análisis de las medidas que han dado resultado y las que no han sido efectivas en relación con una

iniciativa de cambio institucional importante, como MoRES, pueden proporcionar valiosas ideas que UNICEF y otros organismos pueden aprovechar en futuros proyectos de carácter similar.

20. La manera en que MoRES se promovió y elaboró despertó un gran interés en UNICEF. Durante la fase de elaboración del sistema se registraron avances significativos, especialmente gracias a un sentido de urgencia institucional en torno a su desarrollo y puesta en funcionamiento, y a la conformación de una coalición para apoyarlo.

21. Las percepciones de algunos funcionarios sobre el proceso de desarrollo de MoRES siguen obstaculizando la aprobación universal. Si bien el desarrollo conceptual y la promoción suscitaban un notable interés en UNICEF, algunos funcionarios creen que esto se habría podido hacer mejor. Entre los asuntos problemáticos estaba la necesidad de precisar y perfeccionar los conceptos y la visión. Además, la aprobación institucional habría resultado fortalecida con una estructura de gestión más clara y un proceso más participativo, en el que tomaran parte funcionarios de primera línea y personal sobre el terreno.

22. La aplicación de MoRES no se coordinó adecuadamente en las primeras etapas y esto ha sido perjudicial para la “marca” MoRES. Numerosas informaciones sugieren que los procesos de aplicación, comunicación y consulta no fueron apropiados en las etapas iniciales y, aunque han mejorado, todavía no se consideran óptimos.

23. Pese a las dificultades, los países tienen un altísimo nivel de compromiso con MoRES. La puesta en práctica a una escala relativamente grande y la creciente flexibilidad que se ha concedido al personal de los países para innovar en torno al sistema implican que este compromiso sigue siendo firme.

24. El impulso para incorporar MoRES en UNICEF está vigente. El proceso de integración y armonización de MoRES con sistemas existentes, y viceversa, es aún un trabajo en marcha en UNICEF.

25. UNICEF reconoce la importancia de las asociaciones para la aplicación de MoRES, y se están tomando medidas para vincular a los gobiernos y, en algunos casos, a los socios donantes, en los procesos a nivel de país. Estos esfuerzos están respaldados por el trabajo interinstitucional al más alto nivel de UNICEF, el PNUD (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo) y el UNFPA (Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas). No obstante, se puede aducir que en una etapa temprana de la conceptualización de MoRES no se contemplaron métodos de integración y adaptación a otros sistemas. Junto con la brevedad de los plazos para la aplicación durante la fase inicial de puesta en marcha, esto ha significado que las alianzas con algunos organismos de las Naciones Unidas y otros asociados para el desarrollo a nivel de país se encuentran en una etapa incipiente.

26. Evaluar el impacto general de MoRES como un sistema será muy difícil en el futuro. Esto obedece, sobre todo, a problemas originados en la persistente falta de claridad en el diseño del sistema, a la falta de disponibilidad de datos y a las dificultades que conllevará la formulación de hipótesis coherentes.

SECCIÓN 3: CONCLUSIONES

En términos generales, el equipo de evaluación llegó a la conclusión de que MoRES ha repercutido tanto positiva como negativamente en UNICEF, y de que el propósito de la fase de incorporación es aprovechar la experiencia adquirida para coadyuvar a que este organismo cumpla su mandato y su misión en pro de la infancia. Las siguientes conclusiones tienen por objeto facilitar la consecución de este objetivo:



- 27. Desde el punto de vista conceptual, MoRES es pertinente para el nuevo enfoque de la equidad, puesto que proporciona a UNICEF un mecanismo operacional para cumplir su compromiso estratégico de redoblar los esfuerzos orientados a satisfacer las necesidades de los niños y las niñas más desfavorecidos del mundo.** UNICEF conocía las urgentes necesidades de estos niños antes de la adopción del enfoque renovado de la equidad y de la adopción de MoRES. Sin embargo, la reorientación a la equidad sirvió para llamar la atención de la organización sobre la persistencia de esas privaciones. Este enfoque exigía de UNICEF una mayor comprensión de la naturaleza de los obstáculos y de las soluciones para el desarrollo equitativo, y revelaba la necesidad de contar con una base de datos empíricos – además de argumentos lógicos y éticos – que sustentaran la intensificación de las iniciativas en favor de los niños que viven al margen del desarrollo. MoRES respondió a esta necesidad.
- 28. Sin embargo, desde un punto de vista más práctico, no es posible establecer la pertinencia de MoRES para los países sin tener un análisis político y económico de los contextos específicos en los cuales persisten las privaciones que sufren los niños más desfavorecidos.** La suposición fundamental sobre la cual se basa MoRES es que generar datos de mejor calidad se traduce en programas mejor orientados y, a la larga, en una mayor equidad. Pero hay indicios de que otros factores, como la disponibilidad de recursos y la voluntad política, también son decisivos. Un hallazgo de la evaluación es que datos de mejor calidad no siempre conducen a mejores decisiones.
- 29. La pertinencia de MoRES también depende de la medida en que tiene en cuenta los contextos político, institucional y de desarrollo en los que opera.** Los diferentes contextos políticos e institucionales en los que UNICEF realiza su labor representan una consideración esencial no solo para determinar qué elementos de MoRES son aplicables, sino también la posibilidad de que faciliten el logro de resultados positivos. En el plano institucional, cuando se busca dar un valor añadido a través de iniciativas basadas en MoRES, reviste particular importancia no sólo conocer los sistemas gubernamentales sino también el mandato institucional..
- 30. MoRES solo revelará su pleno potencial (eficaz o eficientemente) cuando UNICEF tenga más claridad sobre lo que “es” y la manera en que se debe aplicar.** Como respuesta operacional al nuevo enfoque de la equidad, MoRES permite albergar la esperanza de obtener resultados positivos. Esto precisa de una comprensión clara y compartida de lo que el sistema realmente “es” y de la manera más adecuada de aplicarlo y darlo a conocer.
- 31. La complejidad de MoRES ha ocasionado dificultades en materia de eficiencia. Gestionar las dificultades propias de un sistema “nuevo” y hacer frente a los desafíos técnicos ha exigido tiempo y dinero.** MoRES se ha dado a conocer como un sistema complejo y dinámico. Esto ha dificultado la comprensión, la aplicación y la aceptación, afectando su operación y su eficiencia potencial. Las oficinas de país y los gobiernos socios se han esforzado por igual para entender el sistema, pero importantes problemas técnicos siguen pendientes de resolución.
- 32. La eficacia y el posible impacto de MoRES solo se podrán verificar cuando se disponga de pruebas más sólidas acerca de en qué contextos y de qué manera ha redundado –o no y por qué– en una disminución de las desigualdades.** Las oficinas de país de UNICEF han hecho lo correcto al adoptar los elementos del sistema que tienen mayores posibilidades de aportar el mayor valor añadido en sus contextos. Sin embargo, comprender mejor qué elementos de MoRES son más efectivos en términos de

resultados rápidos para la equidad, en qué contextos y en qué sectores, es básico para que el valor añadido sea significativo y para el éxito de la aplicación.

- 33. Asignar recursos al sistema MoRES es vital para la sostenibilidad. UNICEF no puede resolver todas las deficiencias de los sistemas en los países donde trabaja ni sufragar la adaptación de todos los programas.** MoRES ha permitido detectar grandes fallos en los sistemas de planificación y supervisión en numerosos países donde se ha aplicado, así como también deficiencias en las capacidades técnicas relacionadas con la gestión basada en los resultados. Solucionar todas estas cuestiones como medio para llegar a un fin supondría una desviación importante de recursos y posiblemente una seria demora en la prestación de asistencia a los niños, debido a que convertir el mejoramiento de estos sistemas en beneficios para la infancia es un proceso que toma tiempo.
- 34. Todavía no se ha logrado una total coherencia entre MoRES y los sistemas y procesos internos de UNICEF.** Aunque se está trabajando en este tema, la total integración y armonización de MoRES con los sistemas existentes en UNICEF, y viceversa, no ha concluido.
- 35. La colaboración de UNICEF en el marco de la familia de las Naciones Unidas es útil cuando se centra en el valor añadido de los elementos de MoRES y en su coherencia con iniciativas más amplias.** La promoción que UNICEF ha hecho de los elementos de MoRES ante otros organismos de las Naciones Unidas, tanto en la sede como en algunos países, ha empezado a rendir frutos. Este proceso tendrá más posibilidades de consolidarse si se cuenta con el permanente respaldo de un nivel central y se presta particular atención a los elementos fundamentales del sistema y a la identificación de sinergias en los países, en lugar

de impulsar la aplicación de MoRES como un sistema completo.

- 36. La experiencia con MoRES constituye una valiosa oportunidad para extraer enseñanzas importantes acerca de cómo mejorar la coordinación de los procesos de cambio en UNICEF.** Este organismo ha respondido con determinación al llamado a la acción que representa MoRES, y los esfuerzos de las oficinas nacionales para adaptarse y lograr que el sistema funcione dan testimonio de su compromiso, capacidad y creatividad.

SECCIÓN 4: RECOMENDACIONES

Las siguientes recomendaciones se fundamentan, por una parte, en los hallazgos y las conclusiones que se presentan en este informe y, por otra parte, en los estudios monográficos de apoyo:

- 37. Recomendación 1: Seguir prestando especial atención a la equidad. UNICEF debe insistir en que el objetivo primordial de MoRES es apoyar su replanteamiento sobre la equidad mediante el firme compromiso de generar datos empíricos sólidos.** MoRES se traduciría en mayores resultados si se concibe como un compromiso destinado a propiciar decisiones enfocadas en la equidad y basadas en pruebas concluyentes, y no como un sistema integrado (en UNICEF). No debe entenderse como un sistema aplicable a todos los casos, sino como un enfoque que (a) comienza con la intención de acelerar los avances hacia la equidad en pro de la niñez; (b) toma en cuenta el contexto local y, en particular, los escenarios político e institucional, como punto de partida para (c) determinar –teniendo en cuenta que se basa en información objetiva– lo que puede aportar como valor añadido y (d) precisar cuál es la estrategia de asociación ideal para lograrlo.



- 38. Recomendación 2: Elaborar una estrategia de incorporación basada en los hallazgos y la mayor claridad conceptual provenientes del informe de la evaluación formativa.** La estrategia de incorporación debería (a) reconocer la importancia de obtener pruebas basadas en información objetiva relacionadas con las brechas de equidad a nivel nacional y descentralizado, y evaluar las implicaciones financieras y de capacidad de una supervisión más frecuente; (b) promover MoRES más como un enfoque que como un sistema; (c) incluir mejores sistemas y directrices para la gestión del conocimiento, con vistas a apoyar la aplicación de los elementos de MoRES; (d) delegar a las regiones y a los países la responsabilidad de adaptar los elementos de MoRES al contexto y a los requisitos del sector; (e) adoptar un plan de asignación de recursos y de fomento de la capacidad destinado a los asociados y a las oficinas nacionales y regionales; y (f) velar porque se establezcan mecanismos apropiados de rendición de cuentas en diversos niveles de la estructura de gestión de UNICEF (sede, oficinas regionales y oficinas nacionales), con funciones y responsabilidades claramente definidas.
- 39. Recomendación 3: Solucionar los problemas técnicos que conciernen a los procesos e instrumentos de MoRES.** Algunos elementos del sistema añaden gran valor –incluso con poder de transformación– al subsanar fallos en los sistemas existentes, sobre todo, el hincapié en el mejoramiento de la supervisión y el análisis de los obstáculos y limitaciones (nivel 3 al nivel apropiado de descentralización). No obstante, en todos los contextos persisten dificultades técnicas para determinar qué elementos del sistema requieren mayor orientación y revisión permanente.
- 40. Recomendación 4: Formular una estrategia nacional de promoción de políticas, a fin de reforzar los vínculos (sistema de retroalimentación) entre las limitaciones o los obstáculos detectados localmente y el acceso a los recursos necesarios para eliminarlos.** En algunas ocasiones, la falta de capacidad y la limitación de los recursos impiden que los gobiernos participen plenamente en la superación de los obstáculos. Además, la complejidad y la fragmentación de la planificación gubernamental, los ciclos de financiación en muchos países y los presupuestos altamente centralizados crean problemas adicionales, pues la reasignación de los recursos no es fácil.
- 41. Recomendación 5: Evaluar MoRES como una iniciativa que busca apoyar la elaboración y la aplicación del Plan Estratégico y el Programa de País, en vez de realizar una evaluación independiente (impacto) del sistema.** Centrarse en los resultados que se espera alcanzar en beneficio de los niños y las niñas más desfavorecidos y en la rápida disminución de las brechas en materia de equidad.
- 42. Recomendación 6: La administración de UNICEF debería utilizar la experiencia de MoRES (y datos concluyentes de otras iniciativas) para orientar la gestión y la aplicación de futuros programas de cambio institucional en UNICEF.** La puesta en marcha de MoRES en UNICEF ha dejado valiosas enseñanzas sobre la manera de aplicar exitosamente procesos de cambio trascendentales que incluyen prioridades institucionales.

RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

SECTION 1 : EXAMEN DE L'ÉVALUATION FORMATIVE DE L'APPROCHE MoRES

1. L'évaluation formative de l'approche MoRES (Monitoring Results for Equity System) a pour objectif d'appuyer les efforts continuellement déployés au sein de l'UNICEF afin de formuler, renforcer et intégrer le MoRES en s'appuyant sur l'expérience. L'UNICEF décrit le MoRES comme « un cadre conceptuel pour une planification, une programmation, une mise en œuvre, un suivi et une gestion efficaces afin d'atteindre les résultats désirés en faveur des enfants les plus désavantagés. »

2. L'évaluation du MoRES est conçue pour être formative, orientée stratégiquement vers un apprentissage et une adaptation opérationnels, plutôt que sur des questions de redevabilité et de réalisations. L'évaluation s'est appuyée sur deux approches pour aborder les questions soulevées dans les termes de référence : une approche fondée sur la théorie et une approche fondée sur les études de cas. L'approche fondée sur la théorie a été utilisée pour permettre une meilleure compréhension des problèmes que l'approche MoRES cherche à résoudre, de la théorie du changement qui sous-tend le MoRES et des chaînes de résultats que le MoRES est censé générer. L'approche fondée sur les études de cas a permis de consigner ce qu'il est advenu suite à la mise en œuvre de l'approche MoRES dans un certain nombre de pays qui ont ensuite été choisis pour tester et valider la théorie du changement qui sous-tend cette approche. L'évaluation a également comporté une analyse de la gestion des changements institutionnels et permis une réflexion tant sur la gouvernance que sur les mécanismes de gestion soutenant le déploiement du MoRES. De nombreux partenaires de l'UNICEF ont été interrogés et ont largement contribué aux conclusions de l'évaluation.

3. Le rapport d'évaluation présente des observations à la fin de chaque chapitre ; des conclusions et des recommandations sont énoncées dans le dernier chapitre. Les observations portent sur a) le cadre conceptuel qui sous-tend l'approche MoRES, b) l'expérience MoRES en pratique ; et c) le processus d'institutionnalisation de l'approche MoRES. Les principales conclusions de l'évaluation reposent sur ces constats et répondent aux questions soulevées dans les termes de référence ayant trait à la pertinence, l'efficacité, la viabilité, l'impact, la coordination et la cohérence de l'approche MoRES. Le rapport contient six recommandations principales qui sont stratégiques, pratiques, et réalisables, et mettent en exergue les actions à entreprendre pour favoriser la généralisation, la gestion, les partenariats et les résultats associés à l'approche MoRES.

SECTION 2 : OBSERVATIONS PRINCIPALES

Aspects conceptuels qui sous-tendent le MoRES

4. La décision en 2010 de recentrer l'action de l'UNICEF sur l'équité a permis à l'organisation de renforcer l'attention accordée aux besoins des enfants les plus désavantagés. L'approche MoRES a été initiée avec pour hypothèse que la programmation fondée sur l'équité n'est pas seulement juste un principe de Droit en théorie mais qu'elle doit être traduite en pratique.

5. La mise en œuvre de l'approche MoRES à l'UNICEF peut être divisée en trois phases : la phase de développement conceptuel de l'approche, la phase pilote de mise en œuvre, et la phase de généralisation qui est en cours. La phase de développement conceptuel de l'approche a débuté depuis mi-2010 et se poursuit ; la phase initiale de mise en œuvre a débuté à la fin de 2011 ; elle visait à tester



l'approche MoRES dans un groupe initial de 27 pays pilotes ; la phase de généralisation progressive de l'approche a débuté fin 2012 et est toujours en cours .

- 6. Globalement, le recentrage de l'UNICEF sur l'équité, combiné avec l'approche MoRES, a permis d'associer de manière très efficace l'intention stratégique et opérationnelle.** Selon le Plan stratégique de l'UNICEF, *L'équité signifie que tous les enfants ont la possibilité de survivre, de se développer et d'atteindre totalement leur potentiel sans discrimination, idées préconçues ou favoritisme.* Le recentrage sur l'équité va dans le sens de cet engagement global en faveur des droits de l'enfant ; tandis que le MoRES offre la possibilité d'appliquer une approche axée sur les droits et qui repose sur des évidences.
- 7. Le MoRES s'appuie sur le principe qu'une approche axée sur l'équité est nécessaire pour résoudre les principales lacunes observées en matière d'analyse, de ciblage, de monitoring et de prise de décision dans la programmation.** Bien que présenté à l'origine comme une 'tasse' avec quatre niveaux et une anse qui matérialise la remontée d'information permettant la réorientation des prises de décisions, le système est plus facile à comprendre si l'on considère qu'il se compose d'éléments interdépendants. Le système est intégré plutôt que linéaire, ce qui offre plusieurs points d'entrée.
- 8. Une analyse des concepts qui sous-tendent les éléments du MoRES suggère qu'il offre de nombreuses opportunités à l'UNICEF.** Premièrement, parce qu'en accordant davantage d'attention à l'analyse des données et à l'établissement des priorités au niveau du pays, l'UNICEF est mieux placé pour aligner ses stratégies sur les besoins des enfants les plus démunis. Deuxièmement, parce qu'en reconnaissant qu'on a longtemps focalisé sur la stratégie de prestation de service, des déterminants plus larges en termes d'impact sur le développement peuvent maintenant être pris en compte. Troisièmement, parce qu'une attention renforcée accordée pendant

la programmation à l'analyse des principaux obstacles et goulots d'étranglement qui entravent le développement peut faciliter leur élimination. Quatrièmement, parce que d'une part le travail sur les données et d'autre part, une meilleure compréhension de la dynamique entre les extrants et impacts finaux peuvent contribuer à un ajustement opportun du programme. Finalement, la programmation en cours et l'allocation des ressources peuvent bénéficier d'une collecte plus régulière des données sur les résultats du programme.

Le MoRES en pratique

- 9. Le MoRES a renforcé la motivation et la conviction en faveur du recentrage sur l'équité.** Le MoRES a contribué à opérationnaliser le recentrage sur l'équité (notamment à travers l'élaboration d'états des lieux et d'analyses des privations), qui était d'importance critique pour l'UNICEF avant l'introduction du MoRES. Il a été largement démontré que l'analyse de Niveau 1 a contribué à l'élaboration de programmes nationaux en faveur des cibles d'équité dans certains pays.
- 10. L'équité bénéficie d'un large soutien de la part des gouvernements et des partenaires.** Dans de nombreux pays, le MoRES a été introduit sur un « terrain fertile » : on a constaté qu'un certain nombre de gouvernements de pays impliqués dans le cadre de cette évaluation privilégiaient déjà l'équité avant l'introduction du MoRES. Toutefois, dans certains pays, on éprouve de la réticence à focaliser sur les enfants les plus désavantagés dans des zones où les niveaux de pauvreté sont généralement élevés.
- 11. Le contexte peut changer la donne, en fonction de l'échelle et des types de privations, du niveau d'autonomie locale et d'accessibilité aux zones locales (surtout dans les pays fragiles).** Le contexte institutionnel variable dans lequel l'UNICEF opère est donc une considération fondamentale pour déterminer quels éléments du MoRES s'appliquent et comment.

12. Bien que la robustesse des systèmes existants de planification et de suivi puisse varier en fonction du contexte national, le MoRES n'est pratiquement jamais introduit dans un contexte vierge. La qualité des systèmes de collecte de données en vigueur est un facteur non négligeable dans l'applicabilité et le coût abordable du MoRES, tout comme le niveau de capacités et la stabilité des fonctionnaires locaux.

13. La compatibilité avec les mesures et systèmes en vigueur est un facteur facilitant (ou limitant). Lorsque le MoRES a introduit de nouvelles approches, les bureaux de pays ont été confrontés à des défis opérationnels et techniques qui se sont traduits en demandes de ressources et de capacités supplémentaires auxquelles l'UNICEF et les gouvernements ont dû répondre. Il s'est avéré particulièrement difficile d'adapter le MoRES pour répondre aux divers besoins des gouvernements et des acteurs locaux, qui, souvent, avaient déjà leur propre manière de faire les choses.

14. On a constaté un transfert considérable d'efforts en faveur du MoRES dans l'ensemble de l'UNICEF qui a exigé un lourd investissement en temps et ressources humaines. Les bureaux de pays ont déployé des efforts concertés pour mettre en œuvre le MoRES, en se montrant à la fois souples et adaptables. Ils ont prouvé qu'ils étaient conscients de la nécessité d'intégrer les éléments du MoRES dans les systèmes existants et l'ont fait consciencieusement. Les bureaux de pays de l'UNICEF ont dû adopter une approche très stratégique lors de la mise en œuvre du MoRES, afin de le faire accepter et de promouvoir son adoption, (ou l'adoption d'éléments de cette approche) auprès des autorités nationales et de leurs partenaires.

15. La mise en œuvre du MoRES a démontré que plusieurs éléments de ce système sont appliqués de manière utile et productive.

Une analyse de la situation à un niveau approprié de décentralisation permet au MoRES d'apporter une contribution cruciale lorsqu'il s'agit de localiser les enfants les plus désavantagés. Toutefois, une évaluation portant sur les groupes cibles spécifiques que le MoRES est censé aider n'a pas été intégrée dans le cadre actuel.

16. Plusieurs problèmes techniques importants encore non résolus mettent en évidence la nécessité de se doter de directives plus solides. Les problèmes qui se sont avérés particulièrement difficiles à résoudre sont notamment le choix des indicateurs, la fréquence du suivi, l'utilisation d'interventions de traçage, la validité du principe de goulot d'étranglement minimum et, l'efficacité de la couverture en tant que concept intersectoriel et caractéristique de l'équité.

17. Bien qu'il semble que des données supplémentaires soient collectées, les résultats sur la remontée d'information pour l'adaptation du programme sont limités. Ce problème est lié aux contraintes en matière de ressources et à la volonté politique. Des cycles de planification ainsi que des architectures financières complexes et fragmentés dans de nombreux pays, de même que des budgets très centralisés exacerbent les problèmes associés à la pénurie de ressources.

18. L'implication et l'investissement de la part du gouvernement sont indispensables à la mise à l'échelle, exigeant ainsi au MoRES de démontrer qu'il renforce et ajoute de la valeur aux systèmes et mécanismes gouvernementaux, sans toutefois les remplacer. Les gouvernements n'ont généralement pas les capacités (ressources humaines et financières) d'entreprendre toutes les activités du MoRES. Toutefois, les études de cas révèlent au moins un certain engagement de la part des gouvernements envers le MoRES (ou une ou plusieurs de ses composantes) dans chacun des contextes où il a été introduit.



Institutionnaliser le MoRES

19. L'analyse de l'expérience du MoRES d'un point de vue institutionnel a été une source enrichissante d'apprentissage pour l'UNICEF en particulier sur la manière de mettre en œuvre de nouvelles priorités de l'organisation, des programmes stratégiques ou des transitions institutionnelles.

Analyser ce qui a bien fonctionné et ce qui a échoué lors de la mise en œuvre d'une initiative impliquant d'importants changements institutionnels comme le MoRES peut potentiellement donner des informations précieuses que non seulement l'UNICEF mais aussi d'autres organisations peuvent utiliser à l'avenir lors de la mise en œuvre de nouvelles initiatives similaires.

20. Le MoRES a été positionné et conçu de façon à susciter un élan considérable en faveur de cette approche au sein de l'UNICEF.

Des progrès non négligeables ont été accomplis pendant la phase d'élaboration du MoRES, en particulier en faisant naître un fort sentiment d'urgence dans l'organisation autour de son élaboration et sa mise en œuvre, et en favorisant la mise en place d'une coalition capable de guider et d'appuyer le MoRES.

21. La manière dont le personnel perçoit le processus d'élaboration du MoRES représente encore un obstacle à l'adhésion unanime de l'approche.

Tandis que le développement conceptuel et le positionnement du MoRES ont créé un réel élan au sein de l'UNICEF, la manière dont certains membres du personnel le perçoivent montre que les choses auraient pu être mieux faites. On a constaté que des questions non résolues relatives à l'élaboration du concept et d'une vision claire persistent. De plus, l'application d'un processus plus participatif englobant le personnel de première ligne et de terrain, ainsi qu'une structure de gestion plus claire aurait d'avantage favorisé l'adhésion au sein de l'organisation.

22. Le déploiement du MoRES n'a pas été coordonné de manière efficace dans les étapes

initiales, ce qui a limité son appropriation.

De nombreux rapports indiquent que les mécanismes de mise en œuvre, de communication et de consultation n'étaient pas bien rôdés, surtout au début ; même s'ils ont été améliorés, on estime qu'ils ne sont toujours pas optimaux.

23. Malgré les difficultés, on a constaté un niveau élevé d'engagement positif au niveau des pays concernant le MoRES.

Le déploiement initial à une relativement grande échelle et la flexibilité accrue qui a permis au personnel de pays d'apporter des innovations autour du MoRES font que cet engagement s'est maintenu.

24. La généralisation du MoRES à plus grande échelle au sein de l'UNICEF est en cours.

L'intégration et l'alignement du MoRES avec les systèmes existants, et vice-versa, se font progressivement.

25. L'UNICEF reconnaît l'importance des partenariats lors de la mise en œuvre du MoRES.

Des efforts importants sont déployés pour faire participer les gouvernements et dans certains cas, les partenaires donateurs au niveau des pays. Ces efforts sont soutenus par un travail inter-organisationnel au plus haut niveau de l'UNICEF, du PNUD et de l'UNFPA. Toutefois, il semblerait que les méthodes de généralisation et d'alignement avec d'autres systèmes n'aient pas été prévues au stade de la conception du MoRES – ce qui, combiné à des délais de mise en œuvre courts, a dans certains cas impliqué que les partenariats avec les institutions des Nations Unies et d'autres partenaires du développement au niveau national commencent tout juste à être établis.

26. Une future évaluation de l'impact global du MoRES en tant que système sera très difficile dans l'avenir.

Cela s'explique essentiellement par des problèmes liés au manque de clarté concernant la conception du MoRES, par la pénurie de données disponibles et par le fait que toute analyse contre-factuelle sera très difficile à réaliser.

SECTION 3 : CONCLUSIONS

De manière générale, l'équipe qui a réalisé l'évaluation est arrivée à la conclusion que le MoRES a bousculé l'UNICEF de manière parfois positive et parfois moins positive, et que l'objectif, lors de la phase de généralisation, est de s'appuyer sur les éléments qui aident le mieux l'UNICEF à s'acquitter de son mandat et de sa mission en faveur des enfants. Les conclusions ci-dessous sont destinées à aider à atteindre cet objectif.

27. Conceptuellement, le MoRES est pertinent pour favoriser le recentrage sur l'équité, fournissant à l'UNICEF les moyens opérationnels de respecter son engagement stratégique à redoubler les efforts pour répondre aux besoins des enfants les plus désavantagés.

L'UNICEF connaissait les besoins urgents des enfants désavantagés avant le recentrage sur l'équité et la mise en œuvre du MoRES. Cependant, ce recentrage a permis d'attirer l'attention de l'organisation sur la persistance des privations dont souffrent les enfants les plus désavantagés. L'UNICEF doit aussi mieux comprendre la nature des obstacles qui s'opposent au développement équitable, et des solutions à apporter, tout en réitérant l'importance de disposer de données probantes – ainsi que d'une argumentation logique et éthique – sur lesquelles fonder les efforts déployés pour atteindre les enfants qui vivent en marge du développement. Le MoRES a répondu à ce besoin.

28. Toutefois, de manière plus pratique, la pertinence du MoRES pour chaque pays ne peut être établie sans analyse politique et économique du contexte spécifique dans lequel les privations endurées par les enfants désavantagés s'inscrivent. L'hypothèse fondamentale qui sous-tend le MoRES est que la production de données plus précises se traduira en programmes mieux ciblés et en fin de compte renforcera l'équité. Toutefois, il apparaît déjà que la disponibilité des ressources et la volonté politique sont

également des facteurs décisifs. L'évaluation a révélé que l'amélioration des données ne conduit pas nécessairement à des meilleures prises de décisions.

29. La pertinence du MoRES dépend aussi de la mesure dans laquelle le MoRES tient compte du contexte politique, institutionnel et de développement dans lequel il opère. Le contexte politique et institutionnel variable dans lequel l'UNICEF opère est fondamental pour déterminer quels sont les éléments du MoRES qui s'appliquent et s'ils ont de bonnes chances de faire une différence. Au niveau institutionnel, il est particulièrement important de tenir compte non seulement des systèmes gouvernementaux mais aussi du mandat institutionnel lorsqu'on cherche à ajouter de la valeur à l'existant par la mise en œuvre de l'approche MoRES.

30. L'approche MoRES n'atteindra pas tout son potentiel (en termes d'efficience ou d'efficacité) tant que l'UNICEF n'apportera pas plus de clarté sur ce qu'elle est réellement et comment il convient de l'appliquer. En tant que réponse opérationnelle au besoin de recentrage sur l'équité, l'approche MoRES est prometteuse pour permettre l'atteinte des résultats. Pour ce faire, il doit cependant y avoir une compréhension claire et commune sur ce qu'est le MoRES et comment le présenter et l'appliquer le plus efficacement possible.

31. La complexité du MoRES en tant qu'initiative a eu des répercussions sur son efficience. La prise en compte des préoccupations liées à un « nouvel outil » et la nécessité de devoir faire face aux défis techniques qu'il impose ont requis du temps et de l'argent. Le MoRES a été présenté comme un système complexe et dynamique. Il en a résulté des difficultés en termes de compréhension, de mise en œuvre et d'acceptation. Cela a conduit à des inefficiences opérationnelles et a réduit l'efficacité potentielle du MoRES. Les bureaux de pays, tout comme les partenaires gouvernementaux, ont eu



du mal à comprendre le MoRES et certains problèmes techniques non négligeables ne sont à ce jour toujours pas résolus.

32. L'efficacité et l'impact probable du MoRES ne seront pas démontrés tant que le MoRES n'aura apporté les preuves de sa capacité à faire reculer les inégalités et pourquoi. Les bureaux de pays ont fait un bon travail en adoptant les éléments du MoRES qui, dans chaque contexte particulier, ont une réelle valeur ajoutée potentielle. Cependant, une meilleure compréhension de quelles composantes du MoRES fonctionnent le mieux, dans quels contextes et dans quels domaines, dans la perspective d'atteindre des résultats rapides en matière d'équité constitue un élément central pour renforcer le consensus autour de MoRES et favoriser sa généralisation dans les meilleures conditions.

33. Trouver des ressources pour le MoRES est une question clé en ce qui concerne sa viabilité – En effet, l'UNICEF n'a pas les moyens de combler toutes les lacunes systémiques dans les pays où il intervient ni de financer l'adaptation de tous les programmes. Le MoRES a permis d'identifier des points faibles importants en termes de planification et de systèmes de suivi dans les nombreux pays où il a été mis en œuvre, ainsi que des capacités techniques insuffisantes pour permettre une gestion fondée sur les résultats. Pour combler toutes ces lacunes, il faudrait réaffecter des ressources importantes, ce qui entraînerait potentiellement des retards sensibles dans la mise en œuvre des projets d'appui aux enfants, car il faut du temps pour que ces systèmes une fois améliorés, aient un impact affiné qui se traduise en résultats pour les enfants.

34. La cohérence entre le MoRES et les systèmes et mécanismes internes de l'UNICEF n'est pas totalement achevée. La généralisation du MoRES au sein de l'UNICEF n'est pas encore achevée. Bien qu'un travail important ait été entrepris récemment, l'intégration

totale et l'alignement du MoRES avec les systèmes en vigueur à l'UNICEF, et vice-versa, sont toujours en cours de réalisation.

35. La collaboration de l'UNICEF avec la famille des Nations Unies est utile lorsqu'elle porte sur la valeur ajoutée des éléments du MoRES et sa cohérence avec d'autres initiatives. L'UNICEF a commencé à faire des progrès en recommandant certains éléments du MoRES à d'autres institutions des Nations Unies, au niveau du siège, et, dans certains cas, au niveau du pays. Ce processus sera mieux consolidé s'il bénéficie d'un soutien continu au niveau central et si les éléments clés du MoRES sont promus, et si les synergies au niveau du pays sont identifiées, plutôt que d'encourager la mise en œuvre du MoRES en tant que système complet.

36. L'expérience du MoRES permet de tirer des leçons importantes sur la manière d'améliorer la coordination des mécanismes de changement à l'UNICEF. L'UNICEF s'est rallié à l'appel à l'action que constitue le MoRES et la manière dont les bureaux de pays ont tenté de faire preuve de souplesse et de faire fonctionner le MoRES témoigne de leur engagement, de leurs capacités et de leur créativité.

SECTION 4 : RECOMMANDATIONS

Les recommandations ci-dessous se fondent sur les conclusions figurant dans ce rapport et les rapports des études de cas qui l'appuient :

37. Recommandation 1 : Continuer à donner la priorité à l'équité ; l'UNICEF devrait souligner que le but principal de MoRES est de soutenir le recentrage de l'organisation sur l'équité à travers notamment l'engagement central de produire des données robustes. En général, beaucoup de choses peuvent être accomplies grâce au MoRES s'il est entrepris comme une approche qui vise à encourager des prises de décisions axées

sur l'équité et basées sur des données solides, plutôt que comme un système intégré (UNICEF). Le MoRES doit être compris non pas comme un système unique (qui convient à tous), mais plutôt comme une approche qui a) débute avec l'intention d'accélérer les progrès en faveur de l'équité pour les enfants, b) tient compte du contexte local – en particulier du paysage politique et institutionnel comme point de départ, avant de c) détermine la valeur ajoutée que représente le MoRES, en tant qu'approche fondée sur des données factuelles et d) établit quelle est la stratégie de partenariat idéale pour atteindre ce but.

- 38. Recommandation 2 : Élaborer une stratégie de généralisation fondée sur une vision conceptuelle plus claire et sur les constats énoncés dans le rapport d'évaluation formative.** La stratégie de généralisation devrait a) reconnaître l'importance de produire des données solides concernant les inégalités aux niveaux national et décentralisé, et d'évaluer les implications financières en matière de capacités de suivis plus fréquents ; b) présenter le MoRES comme une approche plutôt que comme un système ; c) inclure une meilleure orientation et des systèmes plus perfectionnés de gestion des connaissances qui soutiennent l'application des éléments du MoRES ; d) confier la responsabilité de l'adaptation des éléments du MoRES aux niveaux régional et de chaque pays de façon à ce qu'ils soient adaptés aux contextes et répondent aux exigences sectorielles; e) introduire un plan de financement et de développement des capacités pour les partenaires, les bureaux de pays et les bureaux régionaux ; et f) s'assurer que la chaîne de responsabilité appropriée soit en place aux différents niveaux de la structure de gestion de l'UNICEF (siège, bureaux régionaux et bureaux de pays) avec des rôles et responsabilités clairement définis.
- 39. Recommandation 3 : Résoudre les difficultés techniques associées aux mécanismes et outils du MoRES.** Certains éléments du MoRES représentent une valeur ajoutée non négligeable – même transformatrice

– lorsqu'ils comblent des lacunes dans des systèmes en vigueur ; on pense en particulier au fait d'encourager un suivi renforcé et l'analyse des obstacles et des goulots d'étranglement (niveau 3 au niveau approprié de décentralisation). Toutefois, dans tous les contextes, des problèmes techniques subsistent, ce qui indique l'importance d'une orientation renforcée et de revues périodiques.

- 40. Recommandation 4 : Élaborer une stratégie de dialogue politique au niveau national afin de renforcer les liens (remontée d'information) entre les obstacles/goulots d'étranglement identifiés localement et l'accès aux ressources nécessaires pour les éliminer.** Parfois la participation du gouvernement à l'élimination des obstacles/goulots d'étranglement est limitée par les capacités et les ressources disponibles. Par ailleurs, une planification et des cycles financiers complexes/fragmentés dans de nombreux pays, ainsi que des budgets très centralisés créent des obstacles additionnels vu qu'il est difficile de réaffecter rapidement les ressources.
- 41. Recommandation 5 : Évaluer le MORES en tant qu'approche qui soutient l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre du Plan Stratégique et des Programmes de Pays, plutôt que d'entreprendre une évaluation autonome (d'impact) du MoRES.** Prêter attention surtout aux résultats à atteindre pour les enfants les plus désavantagés et à l'accélération de la réduction des inégalités.
- 42. Recommandation 6 : La direction de l'UNICEF devrait tenir compte de l'expérience de la mise en œuvre du MoRES (et d'autres initiatives) pour faciliter la gestion et la mise en œuvre de futures grandes initiatives de changement institutionnel au sein de l'organisation.** La mise en œuvre du MoRES au sein de l'UNICEF a permis de tirer des leçons très importantes sur la manière dont les mécanismes du changement portant sur les priorités de l'organisation peuvent être appliqués avec succès.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 describes the **objectives and scope** of the formative evaluation of UNICEF's Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES), the primary purpose of which is to support continuing efforts across UNICEF to articulate, develop and mainstream the MoRES approach by learning from experience. An issue-based **framework for the evaluation** is presented that highlights the need for analysis at three levels: conceptual, introduction/management and implementation/national roll-out. The chapter explains the two evaluation approaches that have been adopted – a **theory-based and a case study-based approach** – and explains the methodology involved in each, as well as their limitations. The main phases of the evaluation are outlined: desk research, case study-based field work, and final report preparation and validation of findings. The chapter includes an outline of the **report structure** and describes how findings will be organised using standard international evaluation criteria.

1.1 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the formative evaluation of UNICEF's Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES). MoRES is defined by UNICEF as 'a conceptual framework for effective planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and managing for results to achieve desired outcomes for the most disadvantaged children'.¹ As this definition implies, MoRES was developed to address a range of problems recognised by UNICEF as inhibiting progress towards equity and has been a flagship initiative to support the *refocus on equity* launched in 2010.² The evaluation has sought to explore the relevance of MoRES to this equity refocus and to analyse its application across a range of country contexts.

The formal operationalisation of MoRES started in 2012, in 27 countries (referred to within UNICEF as *workstream one countries*). The initial roll-out was followed in 2013 by a phase to mainstream MoRES globally and with partners. It was at this pre-scale-up juncture that UNICEF determined to prioritise and conduct an evaluation of MoRES and to locate this within the wider context of the equity refocus. For this reason, the evaluation study is forward-looking, conceived as formative³ and focused on operational learning rather than on summative issues, such as accountability and outcomes. It has been undertaken at the same time as the MoRES mainstreaming phase, with an emphasis on the experiences generated by the workstream one countries.

The terms of reference (ToR) for the evaluation state that the primary purpose is 'to support continuing efforts across UNICEF to articulate,

¹ MoRES Evaluation Terms of Reference.

² The hypothesis is that because MoRES is the key approach to accelerate equity, the formative evaluation will shed light on improving the approach and show its potential to achieve the equity refocus objectives of UNICEF.

³ A formative evaluation is defined as an evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of a project or programme (OECD, Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, 2010).



develop and mainstream the MoRES approach by learning from experience’. Analysis is required at three levels: (1) the conceptual level (*does MoRES make sense?*); (2) the introduction/management level (*was MoRES communicated and co-ordinated well?*); and (3) the implementation/national level (*what happened during roll-out?*). Specifically, the evaluation is required to impartially and systematically provide clear findings and conclusions on the five key issues presented in Table 1, which cover both experience to date and a look to the future. Overall, the perspective of the report is strategic, aiming to

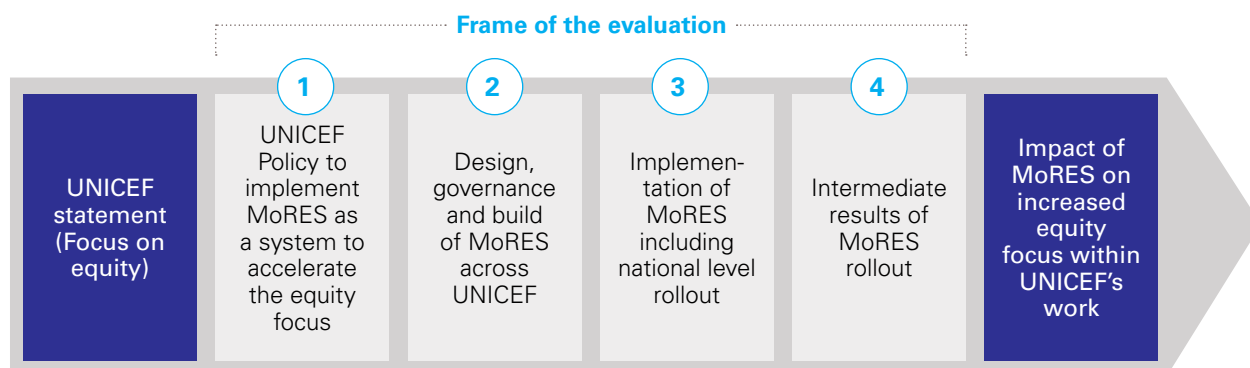
provide high-level insights and direction rather than in-depth technical guidance.

The inception report for this formative evaluation, set out an approach and methodology for capturing lessons relating to these issues within four study components, specifically: the policy relevance, development, roll-out and early results of MoRES, as framed in Figure 1. These components of the evaluation broadly relate to issues 1-4 in Table 1; the fifth issue, evaluability, requires a look ahead to the medium- and long-term evaluation of MoRES and is also covered in this report.

TABLE 1 Key Issues to be addressed by the MoRES formative evaluation

Key issue	Broader description of this issue
1. Conceptual clarity with regard to the equity agenda	<i>The conceptual clarity of UNICEF’s equity agenda and objective, as required to assess the relevance of the MoRES approach to the wider equity agenda of UNICEF.</i>
2. Definition, development and current status of the MoRES approach	<i>The definition, development and current status of MoRES tools and methods, including the substantive analytical underpinnings, and the role of MoRES in UNICEF’s equity agenda.</i>
3. Early lessons on implementation	<i>Lessons on the factors promoting or constraining the implementation of MoRES and its potential to achieve better programme outcomes and impact.</i>
4. Lessons on the capability of MoRES tools and methods	<i>Lessons from experience on the substantive capability of the MoRES tools and methods to identify and address deprivation.</i>
5. Evaluability	<i>The extent to which it is possible to measure and evaluate the future performance of the MoRES approach and attribute results expected from its implementation in the medium and long term.</i>

FIGURE 1 Boundaries of the evaluation: the four components of evaluation



From the outset, the evaluation team has been mindful that the utility of this report will depend on the credibility of findings and conclusions as perceived by UNICEF; further, that any recommendations should respect the priority intent of UNICEF, which is that MoRES should support progress towards better results for the most disadvantaged children. In this regard, the formative nature of the evaluation is of particular importance and has informed the choice of approach to evaluative enquiry and shaped the structure and presentation of the evaluation findings at the end of each chapter, as well as the conclusions and recommendations that are contained in the final chapter.

1.2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation team has used two approaches to address the evaluation questions: **a theory-based approach and a case study approach.**

The **theory-based approach** allows for a reflection on MoRES in terms of its relevance to equity (findings are presented in Chapter 2). The approach also enables the conceptual questions posed for the evaluation to be addressed; it includes: an examination of the concepts underpinning the MoRES system; the identification of the elements that make up the system; and articulation of the MoRES theory of change (ToC). Fundamentally, this approach helps to clarify the underlying problems that MoRES is trying to solve and the results chain that it is intended to generate (findings are presented in Chapter 3). This part of the study involves an initial but extensive review of UNICEF documents and of other secondary data sources to produce a preliminary ToC for MoRES; this

ToC was then verified and elaborated through analysis of the information provided through interviews with key stakeholders at UNICEF Headquarters and in Country Offices.

The **case study approach** involves testing the ToC underpinning MoRES against ‘field evidence’; this has been achieved by recording and analysing what has actually happened in relation to MoRES in selected countries (findings presented in Chapter 4). Seven countries were selected for in-depth study⁴ in order that MoRES could be examined in a range of contexts. Each study involved documentary review, a short field visit, and key informant interviews and focus group discussions.⁵

Twelve further countries were selected for a more light touch and remote examination.⁶ ToR were developed for each type of study to ensure a degree of standardisation of approach and these were shared with the country office in advance of the visit.⁷ The criteria used to select countries included level of engagement with MoRES, sectoral engagement and patterns of deprivation in-country.

The selection process was conducted during the inception phase and led to the identification of a set of case study countries that together cover a range of contexts and represent a maturity of experience with regard to MoRES. A country report for each in-depth study has been produced, constructed in two parts and issued in a separate volume to this final report.

Part I of each case study report records the country-level experience as presented to the evaluation team through documentation and during the evaluation visit; and Part II analyses this recorded experience, in line with the key

⁴ Selected countries are Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe.

⁵ Visits were of four to five days’ duration.

⁶ The light-touch studies covered Afghanistan, Egypt, Georgia, Haiti, Malawi, Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and involved desk review and telephone interview (desk review only for Philippines and Zambia because of constraints on CO staff time).

⁷ Full case study and light-touch ToR were approved by and are available from the UNICEF Evaluation Office.



elements of MoRES as described in Chapter 3.⁸ Given the small sample size, it has not been possible to draw statistically robust conclusions from the case studies; however, the evaluation team believes that the case studies are illustrative of the application of MoRES and generalizable in terms of its potential added value.

In line with good evaluation practice, the ToR requires that the questions and framework of analysis for the evaluation should be informed by standard international evaluation criteria.⁹ In response to this, evaluation findings for the case studies are also presented in Chapter 4 in relation to fundamental questions regarding the following criteria:

- The **relevance** of MoRES: is MoRES relevant to equity in general and to country and sectoral needs in particular?
- The **efficiency** of MoRES: is MoRES an efficient way to operate? What is the level of effort and resource implications of implementing MoRES?
- The **effectiveness** of MoRES: is MoRES effective? Is it being taken up and scaled up?
- The **sustainability** of MoRES: is MoRES sustainable? Is there buy-in to MoRES?
- The potential **impact** of MoRES: will MoRES impact on equity? Are there any early signals that equity outcomes will improve? Will MoRES make a difference to equity?

In addition to questions relating to concept (Chapter 3) and implementation (Chapter 4), the ToR also ask questions relating to the introduction and management of MoRES. These questions are born of a recognition that the MoRES experience may have as much to do with the **institutional context** in which it has been rolled out as with the underpinning concepts and country context.

To help understand this institutional context, the evaluation team has reviewed a number of organizational change models¹⁰ and case histories that document the successful introduction of strategic shifts within complex organizations. This has helped organise and explain information gathered on the institutional change processes and experiences associated with MoRES to date (findings are presented in Chapter 5). Semi-structured interviews¹¹ contributed significantly to this part of the evaluation.¹² These were conducted during the inception phase with a wide range of stakeholders involved in MoRES and based on a schedule developed prior to interview and framed by the evaluation questions set out in the ToR. Interviews were recorded and tagged to enable synthesis and analysis.

Great care was taken to ensure that interview records were not accessible to anyone outside the core evaluation team and that the tagging process was done in such a way as to avoid risk of the attribution of any comment to an individual.¹³ Again, in line with the ToR direction

⁸ This two-part structure to each report represents a change to that suggested in the inception report where it was proposed that the Part II analysis should be organised as a single synthesis report. The change was made in consultation with the Evaluation Office in New York and did not change the key purpose of the case studies, which has been to generate evidence of what actually has happened in relation to MoRES in a selection of countries and contexts.

⁹ OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance; the five key criteria are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationofdevelopmentassistance.htm>

¹⁰ Change Models developed by Kotter, Lewin and Burke-Litwin among others.

¹¹ Although a **structured interview** has a rigorous set of questions that prevents digression, a semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored.

¹² Schedule is attached as Annex VI; a related schedule to support interviews with stakeholders during country visits is also included.

¹³ The workplan set out in the inception report also made provision for a web survey to allow the evaluation to incorporate the views of a wider range of respondents. During the course of the evaluation, it was agreed with the UNICEF Evaluation Office that the added value of the survey would be limited in relation to the resource cost implied by its implementation and the web survey was dropped.

to frame findings against standard evaluation criteria, findings in Chapter 5 are organised to respond to questions which relate to:

- The coherence of MoRES – does MoRES fit with existing systems and tools?
- The co-ordination of MoRES – was MoRES well-managed in terms of development and roll-out?

The **evaluability of MoRES** is also considered in Chapter 5.¹⁴

1.2.2 Evaluation Limitations

The evaluation methodology has been shaped and to some extent constrained by a number of limitations.¹⁵

Firstly, the number of case studies has been limited by the time and resources available and so, as already mentioned, should not be seen as a representative sample from which robust data can be gathered.

Secondly, there is no reasonable basis for including a counterfactual among the case studies – because the contextual variations between countries is such that it would be impossible in the time available, to isolate the MoRES effect from other influencing variables.

Thirdly, MoRES is evolving and has been applied and supported differently over time and space, making direct comparisons between country experiences problematic.

Finally, MoRES is only at an early stage of application, having been rolled out in 2012, its full effects will not yet be apparent; for this reason, at this stage, the evaluation of MoRES is focused on process and qualitative evidence rather than final results.

Despite these limitations, there is still significant potential in the evaluation process because by studying the application of MoRES in a range of contexts and from a variety of starting points, lessons learned can influence further roll-out.

One significant **change to the ToR** agreed jointly with the UNICEF Evaluation Office early in the assignment was that it would be inappropriate to attempt to generate findings and draw conclusions on the applicability of MoRES in humanitarian settings from the very limited number of experiences from which the evaluation team would be able to draw (only one case study country fell into this category). Humanitarian contexts demand a very particular approach to monitoring and decision-making that affects focus (what to monitor), frequency (how often to monitor) and participation (who collects data), among other factors. It was agreed that a more dedicated assessment is required to cover MoRES in humanitarian contexts.

1.2.3 Presentation of Findings

In terms of **findings, conclusions and recommendations**, key evaluation findings are summarised at the end of each chapter and respond to evidence collated within the chapter as these relate to the issues raised in the ToR. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in the final chapter of the report (Chapter 6). Conclusions relate back to the evaluation findings recorded at the end of each chapter, interpreting these from a formative perspective. On the basis of these conclusions, the report goes on to present recommendations to decision makers which are intended to be strategic, practical and feasible.

¹⁴ Originally, it was envisaged that this should be submitted as a separate report. However, during the process of the assignment it was agreed with the Evaluation Office that there would be greater utility to UNICEF if the evaluability findings could be incorporated within the main report.

¹⁵ Although not listed here as a limitation, it is worth noting that although unanticipated at the outset, one of the challenges faced by the evaluation team related to poor labelling, version control and dating of UNICEF documents: it was often not clear whether MoRES documents were think pieces or policy, draft or final products, at proposal or approved status or who had produced them and when.



Supporting material is annexed to the report (Table 2), alongside a bibliography; these annexes are not referenced in the text, but the chapter to which they best relate is noted in the table below.

1.2.4 Phases of the Evaluation

The evaluation has been conducted in three phases:

- 1. Desk-based phase¹⁶ (June-August 2013):** to examine concepts, systems, ToC, introduction and management of approach; this phase included interviews with over 70 stakeholders and the preparation of an inception report.
- 2. Case study phase (September 2013-March 2014):** to examine MoRES at the national level, involving desk study of key documents;

face-to-face and remote one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions; field visits; stakeholder feedback and verification sessions, preparation of individual case study reports.

- 3. Final report preparation and validation (March-July 2014):** to produce a synthesis of findings and a deeper analysis linking concepts to practice; this phase has included the preparation of the final report and workshops to discuss findings and recommendations. The report will be finalised after a series of validation workshops to be conducted regionally through webinars and in New York with the MoRES Steering Committee. This will provide the evaluation team with an opportunity to secure feedback prior to report finalisation.

TABLE 2 Material annexed to the MoRES evaluation report

Annex	Contents	Chapter relevance
I	Terms of reference (ToR)	All
II	Country selection criteria	Relates to the methodology described in Chapter 1
III	Unpacking MoRES	Builds on analysis in Chapter 3
IV	MoRES concept-based theory of change (ToC)	Builds on analysis in Chapter 3
V	MoRES concept analysis	Builds on analysis in Chapter 3
VI	Timeline of events in the roll-out of MoRES	Relates to the analysis in Chapter 5
VII	Evaluability assessment of MoRES	All chapters but this specifically relates to Chapter 5
VIII	List of MoRES Evaluation Interviewees	All chapters but this specifically relates to analysis in Chapter 5.

¹⁶ As standard practice for an evaluation of this nature, the team undertook a risk assessment, which was incorporated as part of the inception report and highlighted the potential risks associated with quality of documentation, diversity of case studies, access to stakeholders and UNICEF reputation.

SUMMARY

The objective of the formative evaluation of MoRES is to support continuing efforts across UNICEF to articulate, develop and mainstream MoRES by learning from experience. MoRES is defined by UNICEF as *'a conceptual framework for effective planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and managing for results to achieve desired outcomes for the most disadvantaged children'*. The evaluation has been undertaken at the same time as the MoRES mainstreaming phase, with an emphasis on learning from the experiences generated by countries in which MoRES has been applied. The evaluation is conceived as formative, strategically focused on operational learning and adaptation rather than on issues of accountability and outcomes.

The evaluation has used two approaches to address the evaluation questions raised in the terms of reference: a theory based approach and a case study approach. The theory-based

approach has included an assessment of the relevance of MoRES and the identification and examination of the core elements of MoRES. This approach has been used to enable a better understanding of the problems MoRES seeks to address, the ToC that underpins MoRES and the chain of results that MoRES is designed to generate. The case study approach has enabled the recording of what has actually happened in relation to MoRES in a number of countries to test and validate the theory of change underpinning MoRES and to synthesise and confirm results.

The evaluation has also included institutional change management analysis, to enable reflection on both the governance and management arrangements supporting the roll-out of MoRES. A large number of UNICEF stakeholders were interviewed and have contributed significantly to evaluation findings.



CHAPTER 2: UNICEF'S FOCUS ON EQUITY

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 looks at MoRES in the context of **UNICEF's refocus on equity**. The chapter explores what equity means to UNICEF and provides evidence of how a commitment to equity was central to UNICEF's mandate before the refocus on equity and the introduction of MoRES. The chapter explains the origin and the rationale for the equity refocus, **describes how equity-focused monitoring was introduced and evolved to become MoRES**, and looks at the institutional consequences to date.

2.1 DEFINING EQUITY

Equity for children is fundamental to UNICEF's mandate and mission. UNICEF's current Strategic Plan states that 'Equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism.'¹⁷ Equity for children should not be understood to mean the same as equality. An equity focus does not envisage a world without differences – for example, in levels of income, health and education.

Rather, the ambition is to eliminate unfair and avoidable circumstances that deprive children of their rights. Generally, inequities are the result of resource deprivation for certain population groups when these same resources are available to others. This disparity is 'unfair' or 'unjust' when its cause is because of social context, rather than biological factors. Thus, although the concept of equity is universal, the causes and consequences of inequity vary across cultures, countries and communities, and inequity is rooted in a complex range of political, social and economic factors.¹⁸

2.2 UNICEF'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

UNICEF has a long history of commitment to equity. Before UNICEF'S refocus on equity was launched in 2010, UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2006-2009 (MTSP)¹⁹ included implicit and explicit references to equity. This MTSP notes that priority areas for investment 'reflect the operationalization of the UNICEF human rights based approach, focusing on the most marginalized children and poorest families'. Building on this, key results areas, targets and indicators listed within the report refer to equity in terms of 'disparities', and the 'marginalized' or 'vulnerable'.²⁰

A review of country programme documents (CPDs) and annual reports²¹ available for the same period indicates that although equity considerations were only loosely incorporated within CPDs, most countries had applied at least a light equity lens in their 2009 annual reporting:²² for example, the 2009 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) annual report notes that the education programme has a 'special focus on

¹⁷ The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, *Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged*.

¹⁸ UNICEF: *Evaluation for Equitable Development Results, 2012*.

¹⁹ *Investing in children: the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit agenda*.

²⁰ For example, Key result area 1: Improve children's developmental readiness to start primary school on time, especially for marginalized Children; Key result area 2: Reduce gender and other disparities in relation to increased access, participation and completion of quality basic education; Key result area 5: Children and families identified as vulnerable are reached by key community and government services aimed at reducing their marginalisation.

²¹ The only available CPDs (from the countries included in the evaluation) prior to the 2010 equity refocus are: Nicaragua 2008-2012; Zimbabwe 2007-2011; Nepal 2008-2010; Afghanistan 2010-2013.

²² 2009 annual reporting of all 19 countries under review.



the most vulnerable children and youth'; and the 2009 Georgia and Indonesia annual reports note that child protection initiatives aim to develop a 'protective environment for the most vulnerable children and reduce their marginalization'.

A rich array of other equity-related interventions and activities conducted by UNICEF also indicate that equity was a focus at the national level long before the introduction of MoRES. For example, a *Child Deprivation Index* had been developed and applied in Nepal and Indonesia to both locate most disadvantaged groups and record the nature of their multiple deprivations;²³ the equity focus in Nicaragua formed part of UNICEF's work with WHO and the Ministry of Health for some 20 years before the introduction of MoRES; mapping of deprived populations in Bangladesh was done prior to the introduction of MoRES and a Child Equity Atlas was produced jointly by Bangladesh institutions with UNICEF assistance.

2.3 THE FOUNDATION OF UNICEF'S EQUITY REFOCUS

Building on the commitments described above, the equity refocus in 2010 significantly sharpened UNICEF's attention on the needs of the world's most disadvantaged children. It was launched under the premise that equity-focused programming is not only right in principle, but right in practice. This was the message of a flagship publication *Narrowing the gaps to meet the goals*,²⁴ which made the argument for focusing UNICEF's effort on equity (with regard to child and maternal health) as both strategically sound (right in principle) and cost effective (right in practice), basing this on the proposition that the benefits of focusing on the most disadvantaged children would outweigh the additional cost of reaching them.²⁵

'A new UNICEF study has arrived at a surprising and significant conclusion: an equity-based strategy can move us more quickly and cost-effectively towards meeting Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 – reduce child mortality and improve maternal health – than our current path, with the potential of averting millions of maternal and child deaths by the 2015 deadline.'

Narrowing the gaps to meet the goals, 2010

The results of the *Narrowing the gaps* study demonstrated how national burdens of disease, under-nutrition, ill health, illiteracy, and many protection abuses are concentrated in the most impoverished child populations. The study found that if these children are reached with essential services through an equity-focused approach to child survival and development, there is great potential to accelerate progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments to children. The study also found that an equity-focused approach could bring vastly improved returns on investment by averting far more child and maternal deaths and episodes of under-nutrition and markedly expanding effective coverage of key primary health interventions.²⁶ The paper suggested five key policy considerations: identify the most deprived children and communities; invest in proven cost-effective interventions; overcome barriers and bottlenecks and barriers; partner with communities; and maximise the impact of available resources.

The refocus was also supported by another paper published in 2010, *Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with Equity*, which set out

²³ Nepal and Indonesia Case Studies.

²⁴ http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Narrowing_the_Gap_to_Meet_the_Goals_090310_2a.pdf

²⁵ It should be noted that this was presented as a proposition to be proved since it had not yet been tested.

²⁶ Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks: A Tool for Performance Based Planning of Health and Nutrition Services for Achieving Millennium Development Goals. Developed by R. Knippenberg, A. Soucat, W. Vanlerberghe.

in further detail the background to the moral imperative for focusing on equity: economic growth has not translated into a reduction in inequity; issues faced by poor and marginalised groups often remain hidden; and global trends such as urbanisation are putting more pressure on maintaining equitable child rights and development.²⁷

Since the 2010 study, UNICEF has published a number of other reports to support the refocus on equity:

1. A report in 2012, *Strategies to improve health coverage and narrow the equity gap in child survival, health, and nutrition*, focused on strategies to improve health coverage and suggested that inequity can be reduced by increasing coverage of proven low-cost interventions.²⁸
2. Related research in 2012 on the cost effectiveness of UNICEF's equity approach²⁹ suggested that: *'...with the same level of investment, disproportionately higher effects are possible by prioritizing the poorest and most marginalized populations, for averting both child mortality and stunting. Our results suggest that an equity-focused approach could result in sharper decreases in child mortality and stunting and higher cost-effectiveness than mainstream approaches, while reducing inequities in effective intervention coverage, health outcomes, and out-of-pocket spending between the most and least deprived groups and geographic areas within countries.'*
3. In 2013, the paper *Approaches towards Inequality and Inequity: Concepts, measures and policies* explored the relationship between equity, equality and fairness,

determining that an equitable distribution needs to be fair, but does not necessarily need to be equal. This paper suggested a number of operational approaches to equity, including: that UNICEF should focus on measurement of outcomes rather than processes; that horizontal measurements and comparisons of equity (i.e. between similar individuals or groups) are more important than vertical ones (that a group is better off than it previously was); and concludes by noting that *'an institution like UNICEF cannot by itself bring about equity'*, but rather needs to be better at understanding factors that contribute to reducing inequity and how to measure this.³⁰

4. Also in 2013, *Tackling Structural and Social Issues to Reduce Inequalities in Children's Outcomes in Low- to Middle-Income Countries*³¹ set out a 'social determinants approach' to understanding equity – seeking to surface the underlying social causes, structures and drivers that lead to inequity. This paper reflects a core equitable principle that life chances should not be constrained by factors that are out of the control of the individual. This paper suggests, that there is a strong argument that a focus on the most excluded is economically sound in terms of reducing long-term costs caused by ongoing inequity.³²

Together, this research has introduced or emphasised a number of fundamental drivers for change across UNICEF countries and sectors: firstly, that a **focus on equity** makes sense from a moral, a strategic and a cost perspective; secondly, that aiming for **full coverage with low cost interventions** (to ensure access to a range of services such as immunisation, water supply, sanitation) can improve equity; and thirdly, that

²⁷ http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Progress_for_Children-No.9_EN_081710.pdf

²⁸ [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(12\)61423-8/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(12)61423-8/fulltext)

²⁹ *The comparative cost-effectiveness of an equity-focused approach to child survival, health and nutrition: a modelling approach*. Carlos Carrera et al. *Equity in Child Survival, Health and Nutrition 2*. The Lancet, vol. 380, Oct 2012.

³⁰ <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/707>

³¹ <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/708>

³² However, it is worth noting that the two papers referenced above, issued by the Office of Research are discussion papers with the purpose of stimulating debate rather than establishing corporate positions.



'There can be no true progress in human development unless its benefits are shared – and to some degree driven – by the most vulnerable among us – the equity approach is not only right in principle, it is right in practice.'

UNICEF's Executive Director, Tony Lake, addressing a high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, Tokyo 2011

UNICEF needs to be better at identifying and measuring **factors that inhibit or contribute to a reduction in inequity**.

The strategic importance of this work for UNICEF is captured in the latest UNICEF Strategic Plan (SP) 2014-2017, which headlines the equity focus with its title: *Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged*. This was approved by the UNICEF Executive Board during the second regular session of 2013.³³ Within the document, UNICEF makes clear that its 'equity strategy, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families, translates its commitment to children's rights into action'. The new SP explicitly introduces a common language and frame around equity; it also underlines the refocus on

equity as the main mechanism for the realisation of children's rights and the core mandate of UNICEF.

2.4 MoRES AND THE EQUITY REFOCUS

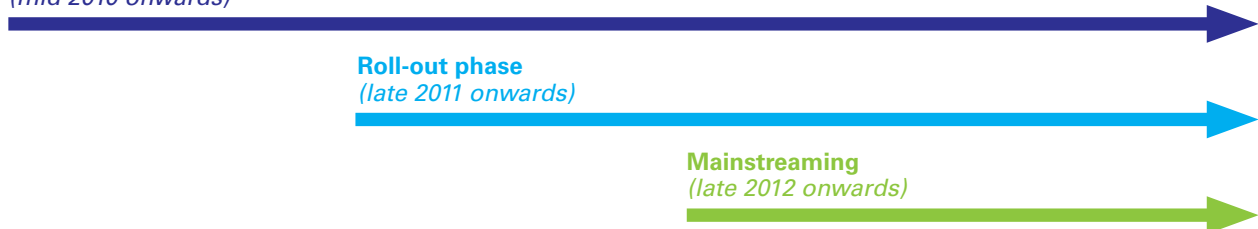
MoRES is in many respects UNICEF's primary operational response to its strategic commitment to a refocus on equity.

The fundamental premise on which MoRES rests is that UNICEF has not yet, to the fullest extent possible, approached its programming and policy work from an equity and deprivation perspective. Key events in the evolution of MoRES in UNICEF can be broadly divided into three phases: the process of conceptual development in response to the equity refocus, the initial roll-out phase, and a period of mainstreaming, which is ongoing.

Conceptual development began in 2010, though the key early initiative was the introduction of a monitoring 'cup' in 2011.³⁴ This was designed to help explain how to operationalise the equity refocus and referred to four levels of monitoring. UNICEF's core message at this time was that there was a need for better evidence-based decision-making at all stages in the programme cycle if inequity was to be reduced.

FIGURE 2 Phases of MoRES roll-out

Conceptual development
(mid 2010 onwards)



³³ <https://intranet.unicef.org/iconhome.nsf/dc7049ce64c55331852575f6000761e7/74b65be9179cf10985257bde007d5c47?opendocument>

³⁴ Articulated in Technical Note I: Monitoring the Equity Approach, September 2011.

Further initial concept development took place during the summer of 2011, when a cross-sectoral working group was convened to refine the approach, a process that culminated in the development of a *determinants framework*. This framework proposed 10 generic determinants representing the key conditions required for effective coverage of any given package of services, care practices or behaviours.

Following, and contemporaneous to, the articulation of the concepts of MoRES in various technical notes and concept notes during the end of 2011 and start of 2012,³⁵ a process of sensitisation began within UNICEF, commencing with orientation processes at various meetings and trainings at the end of 2011. In September 2011, UNICEF released a briefing note on *Monitoring the Equity Approach*, which affirmed that sharpening the focus on equity would mean: scaling up programmes that target inequities; a more deliberate focus on management for results, based on clear indicators and targets; and robust data collection systems and routine analysis of programme performance in the field.

By the start of 2012, clear plans were put in place to manage and roll out the approach over the next two years. The approach now had a name

– MoRES – and the Global Management Plan³⁶ articulated goals in relation to MoRES, outlined the management structure³⁷ and detailed three streams of work for the implementation process,³⁸ the first of which was the roll-out of MoRES to the first tranche of UNICEF country offices, in the 27 ‘workstream one’ countries. From late 2012, the implementation focus became more orientated towards mainstreaming MoRES, whereby MoRES approaches and activities were integrated in to existing systems and management structures.

The analysis within this chapter suggests that the equity refocus aligns with UNICEF’s overall commitment to child rights and that MoRES has been introduced to operationalise the equity focus (and therefore a rights-based approach) in a more evidence-based way. From this perspective, the equity refocus combined with MoRES represents a potent blend of strategic and operational intent. Chapter 3 of this report further unpacks the concepts underpinning MoRES; and Chapter 4 explores the roll-out of MoRES in more detail to determine what can be learned from experiences to date and to consider what this means for the future roll-out of the MoRES approach.

³⁵ Technical Note I: Monitoring the Equity Approach, September 2011; Technical Note II: Level Three monitoring of Strategic Result Areas (SRAs): Explaining the concept and future work plan, DRAFT 31 October 2011; Concept Note: Assessing Social and Cultural Factors and Bottlenecks Related to UNICEF’s Strategic Result Areas Principles, Methods and Tools to Promote Equity (DRAFT).

³⁶ The Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) Two-year Global Management Plan (PowerPoint).

³⁷ Steering Committee (SC); Coordination and Technical Team (CTT); Field Reference Group (FRG); Secretariat.

³⁸ 1) Assist the self-selected COs that will have a functioning, decentralised monitoring system in place for one or more SRAs by July 2012; 2) Support the roll-out of MoRES in all UNICEF COs; 3.) Mobilise partner participation in MoRES.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The equity refocus in 2010 significantly sharpened UNICEF's attention on the needs of the world's most disadvantaged children. It was launched under the premise that equity-focused programming is not only right in principle, but right in practice. This was the message of a flagship publication '*Narrowing the gaps to meet the goals*',³⁹ which made the argument for focusing UNICEF's effort on equity as both strategically sound (right in principle) and cost-effective (right in practice), basing this on the proposition that the benefits of focusing on the most disadvantaged children would outweigh the additional cost of reaching them.

MoRES implementation in UNICEF can be broadly divided into three phases: the process of conceptual development, the initial roll-out phase, and a period of mainstreaming, which is ongoing. The conceptual development phase started from mid-2010 onwards and was focused

on defining the key MoRES approaches and tools. The implementation phase, which really took off from late 2011, was centred on piloting of MoRES in 27 workstream one countries. The mainstreaming stage, which started in late 2012 and is still ongoing, is focused on integrating MoRES systems and approaches into UNICEF standard processes.

Overall, UNICEF's refocus on equity, combined with the introduction of MoRES, represents a potent blend of strategic and operational intent. UNICEF's current SP states that '*Equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism.*' The equity refocus aligns with this overall commitment to child rights; while MoRES offers the opportunity to operationalise a rights-based approach in a more evidence-based way.

³⁹ http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Narrowing_the_Gap_to_Meet_the_Goals_090310_2a.pdf



CHAPTER 3:

THE MONITORING RESULTS FOR EQUITY SYSTEM



CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 provides a detailed **conceptual analysis of MoRES as a system**, beginning with how MoRES is defined and recognising that there is no consensus within UNICEF on the purpose of MoRES. To better understand MoRES, the chapter considers the rationale for MoRES in terms of the problem it has been designed to address and the **systems gaps MoRES seeks to resolve**. These gaps are matched against MoRES activities elaborated within a MoRES results chain. From this analysis, the key **elements of the MoRES system** are identified. Each element is examined to define and explore its conceptual underpinnings and to surface any operational assumptions on which it is dependent.

3.1 DEFINING MoRES

There is no clear consensus within UNICEF on what MoRES actually is and where its added value lies. Many staff members interviewed made the case that MoRES was, and is, all about equity, though a significant minority did not mention equity at all. Similarly, although for some staff the emphasis of MoRES is on strengthening monitoring, for others it is fundamentally about improving programming. There is not yet a clear and universal agreement within UNICEF about whether MoRES is a monitoring system or a programming tool, or both.

Within the evolving literature, MoRES has been defined as 'an approach to strengthen programming and achieve results for the most disadvantaged children... (which) reconfirms UNICEF's commitment to promote the use of data and evidence in advocacy and programming'⁴⁰ and as 'a conceptual framework for effective planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and managing for results to achieve desired outcomes for the most disadvantaged children'.⁴¹

Initially, the framework was presented as a cup with four levels, which complement and feed

into each other (Figure 3, pg 42). Although this early visual representation of MoRES has now been abandoned,⁴² the notion of four levels survives and, though these have been variously defined in documentation, essentially they focus on the following:

Level 1: needs or situation assessment/prioritisation – this level looks at the quality of analysis of child deprivation within country situation analyses and at the alignment of policies, strategies and plans to the findings of this analysis; specific attention is given to understanding causes of deprivation and barriers and bottlenecks to their removal;

Level 2: UNICEF programme/advocacy delivery – this level focuses on UNICEF inputs and outputs, whether relating to programme or advocacy initiatives;

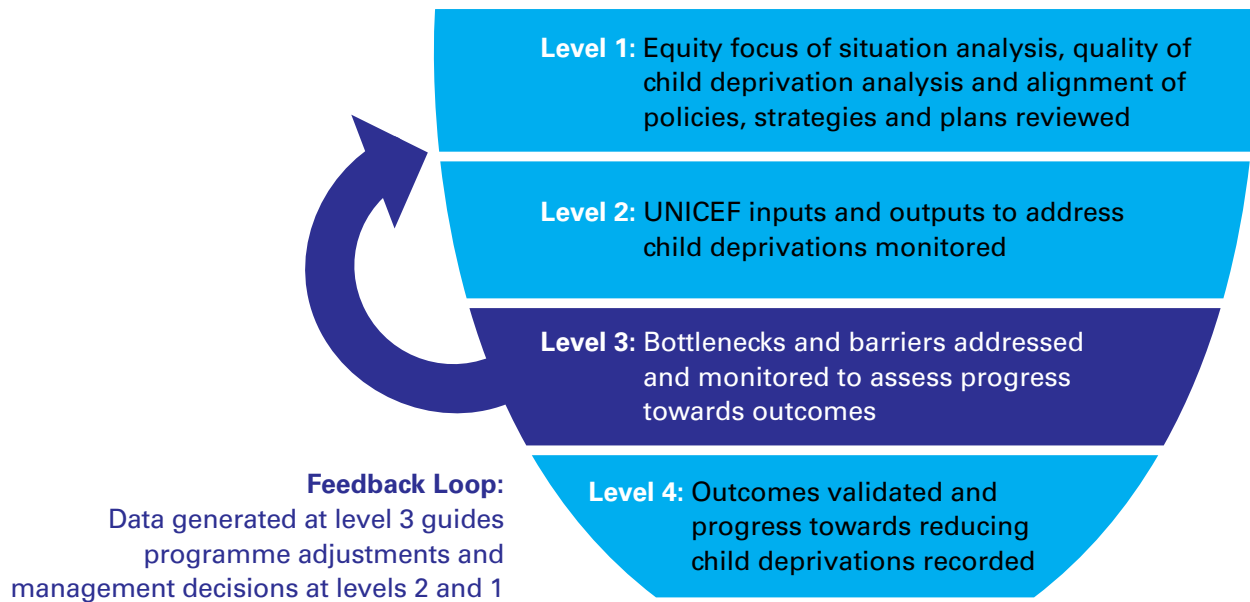
Level 3: interim outcomes – this level focuses on the early indications of the removal of barriers and bottlenecks and progress towards enhanced equity;

Level 4: impact on equity – this level focuses on coverage and impact on equity.

⁴⁰ <https://intranet.unicef.org/dpp/MoRE.nsf/79273ed1bd5ad0cd85257059005a0cd3/8a8cb7bb5e5156c985257ae1006e7ee2?OpenDocument>

⁴¹ MoRES Evaluation Terms of Reference.

⁴² According to many UNICEF stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation.



The relationship between the four levels in this framework has always been presented as dynamic and iterative. The feedback loop or ‘handle of the cup’, as shown in Figure 3, is intended to indicate that the monitoring functions at each level not only verify performance but also inform management decisions (so Level 3 feeds back into Level 2; Level 2 feeds back into Level 1). Thus, MoRES is a complex system (rather than a linear model) with components designed to be applicable across many sectors and contexts. It is also intended to be

flexible, allowing multiple entry points depending on context, because it is recognised that rolling out MoRES is dependent on the ‘timing of key national, sectoral, agency-specific and other relevant processes’.⁴³

Table 3 page 43 expands the information provided within Figure 3 and summarises the key activities associated with each level of MoRES and the feedback loop, based on information located in the MoRES documentation referenced in this chapter.

⁴³ Briefing Note, Enhanced Programming and Results through Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES), February 2012.


TABLE 3 Key activities associated with the four levels of MoRES

Level	Key activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key deprivations at country level • Identify groups among whom/areas where these deprivations persist • Identify high-impact interventions required to mitigate these deprivations • Identify and analyse system-wide determinants of desired outcomes • Identify and analyse system-wide barriers and bottlenecks to the achievement of desired outcomes • Prioritise national-level programme responses to remove identified barriers and bottlenecks
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track agency-specific inputs and outputs using UNICEF monitoring systems • Generate evidence of programme delivery against barriers and bottlenecks • Use accurate information for timely management responses and improved reporting • Generate evidence of agency contribution towards barrier and bottleneck removal
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which childhood deprivations and which affected groups to monitor and at what level • Select priority tracer interventions to monitor if appropriate • Define indicators and information sources (building on and strengthening existing systems and using innovative technology) • Identify and analyse barriers and bottlenecks at the appropriate level of decentralisation
Feedback loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement corrective actions for programme management, as well as adjust policies, strategies and plans.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine for which childhood deprivations and which affected groups data will be collected • Define key outcome or impact indicators and information sources required and include in national surveys and other data sources • Analyse outcome data on deprivations • Report findings

3.2 THE RATIONALE FOR MoRES

A key rationale for MoRES is the premise that UNICEF has not, to the *fullest possible extent*, approached its programming and policy work from an equity and deprivation perspective. More specifically, MoRES activities imply that: (1) the design of tools and analytical frameworks for situation assessments, programming and monitoring could be strengthened if they were better informed by a consideration of equity; (2) there could be more systematic analysis of barriers and bottlenecks (to service delivery for the most deprived children); and (3) more frequent monitoring of progress towards enhanced equity, which could be used to inform

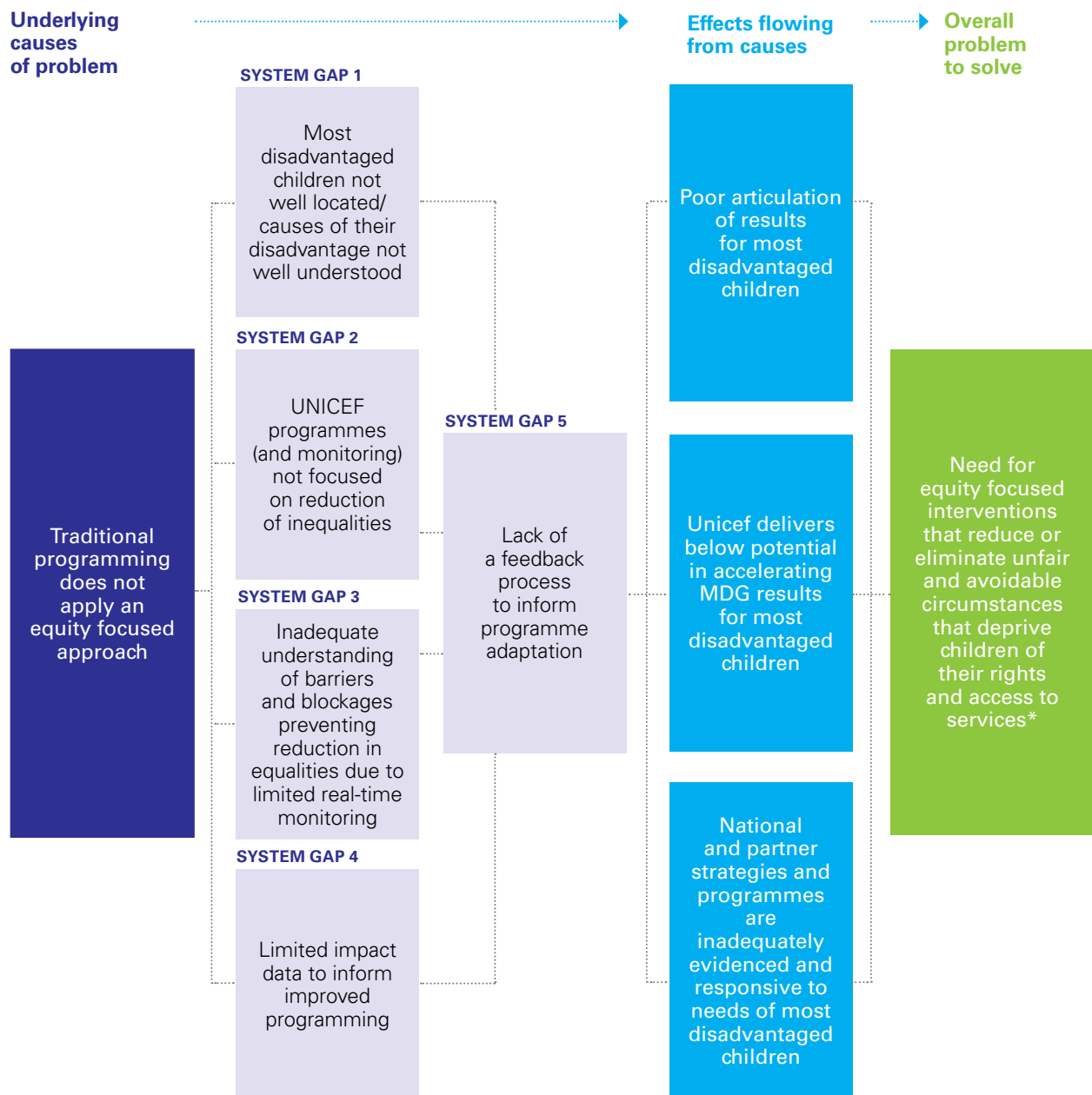
programmatic changes. What this adds up to in practice is an opportunity for UNICEF to realise untapped potential to narrow survival and development gaps for children. Figure 4 presents these key underlying problems (and, by association, opportunities) in graphical form.

Although there are multiple gaps represented in the above schema, the five key problems or *system gaps* that have provided the conceptual underpinnings for the development of MoRES appear to be:

1. Insufficient attention at the country level to evidence-based analysis and prioritisation processes which align strategies with the needs of the *most deprived children*;

2. Dominance of a traditional programming approach meaning that the wider determinants of inequity (enabling environment factors) are not taken into account;
3. Insufficient focus within programming on key barriers and bottlenecks relating to the most disadvantaged children;
4. Insufficient evidence and understanding of what happens between programmatic outputs and changes in final impacts;
5. Ongoing programming and resource allocation not adequately informed by real-time data on programme performance.

FIGURE 4 Underlying problem analysis for MoRES



* So that all children across geographical, economical and social spectrums have access to education, health care, sanitation, clean water, protection and other services necessary for their survival, optimal growth and development. (Source: UNICEF, Re-focusing on Equity: questions and answers, November 2010)



3.3 THE MoRES RESULTS CHAIN

Based on the problem analysis, the ToC underpinning MoRES is that if the systems gaps can be addressed there will be a positive impact on equity. A *results chain* based on this theory is presented in Figure 5, pg 46, and sets out how it is anticipated that MoRES activities will lead to new institutional practices that generate better evidence of the situation of disadvantaged children and the results of programme interventions on this situation, which in turn will enhance decision-making to achieve accelerated progress towards the reduction of inequities.

A reflection on the read across between these activities and the problem analysis suggests that if MoRES is to be successful it will need to be a system that, depending on the context, helps UNICEF and partners: to define and, on this basis, locate disadvantaged children; to better understand the causes of their deprivation and the solutions that are most likely to lead to positive results (high-impact interventions); to identify and deal with the barriers and bottlenecks that lead to enduring inequity; to define credible indicators and to build adequate data sources that generate information that can be used to strengthen programmes that deliver results.

3.4 THE MoRES SYSTEMS APPROACH

The analysis above and indeed the name itself suggests that MoRES has been developed on the basis that an equity-focused integrated system is needed to resolve critical analytical, targeting, monitoring and decision-making shortcomings in traditional programming. In practical terms, MoRES builds on the notion that equity-focused decisions cannot be successfully made without robust data management systems and a commitment to act on the information that they generate.

The MoRES system has been presented as consisting of four levels and a feedback loop, which are broadly responsive to the five system gaps associated with traditional programming listed and presented in Figure 4 page 44. However, there are no clear and direct connections between the levels of MoRES – for example, Level 1 data gathering (situation analysis, potentially at a decentralised level) and MoRES Level 4 (impact assessment at the national level) or Level 2 (internal UNICEF systems) and Level 3 (government/national). Given that each of these levels embraces a number of operational priorities and processes, this evaluation finds that *defining the elements of MoRES*, with a focus on priority and process, is a better way of articulating MoRES than by describing levels of a system.

These key elements that lie at the heart of MoRES have been determined by unpacking the levels of MoRES based on information gathered through documentation review and interview; these elements are presented in Figure 6, pg 47. This suggests that the system includes 10 elements that work together towards enhanced equity. These are: (1) a policy to focus on equity; (2) a policy to focus on key deprivations; (3) situation analysis informed by the equity and deprivation focus; (4) the use of a Determinants Framework⁴⁴ (representing the key conditions required for effective coverage of any given package of services, care practices or behaviours⁴⁵); (5) identification of the barriers and bottlenecks to achievement of determinant conditions; (6) the identification of intermediate outcomes; (7) monitoring at the appropriate level of decentralisation; (8) evidence-based programme adjustment (based on feedback); (9) national ownership and scale-up; (10) MoRES advocated and understood as a system.

⁴⁴ Ten determinants fit into one of four categories: enabling environment, supply, demand and quality.

⁴⁵ Workstream One: Monitoring Results for Equity (MoRES) Progress Report, October 2012.

FIGURE 5

A theory of change-based results chain for MoRES

Results Chain

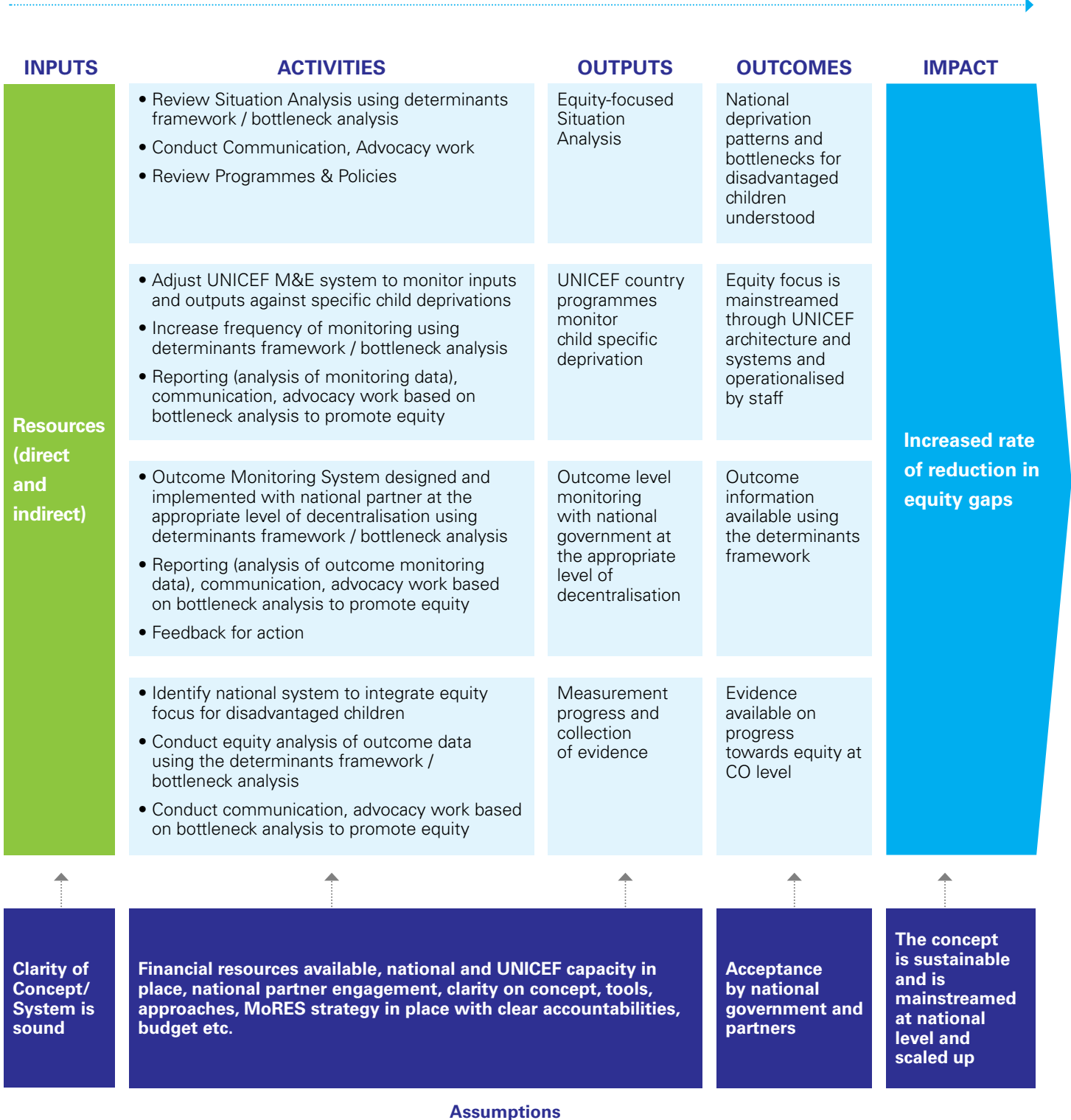




FIGURE 6

The 10 elements of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES)

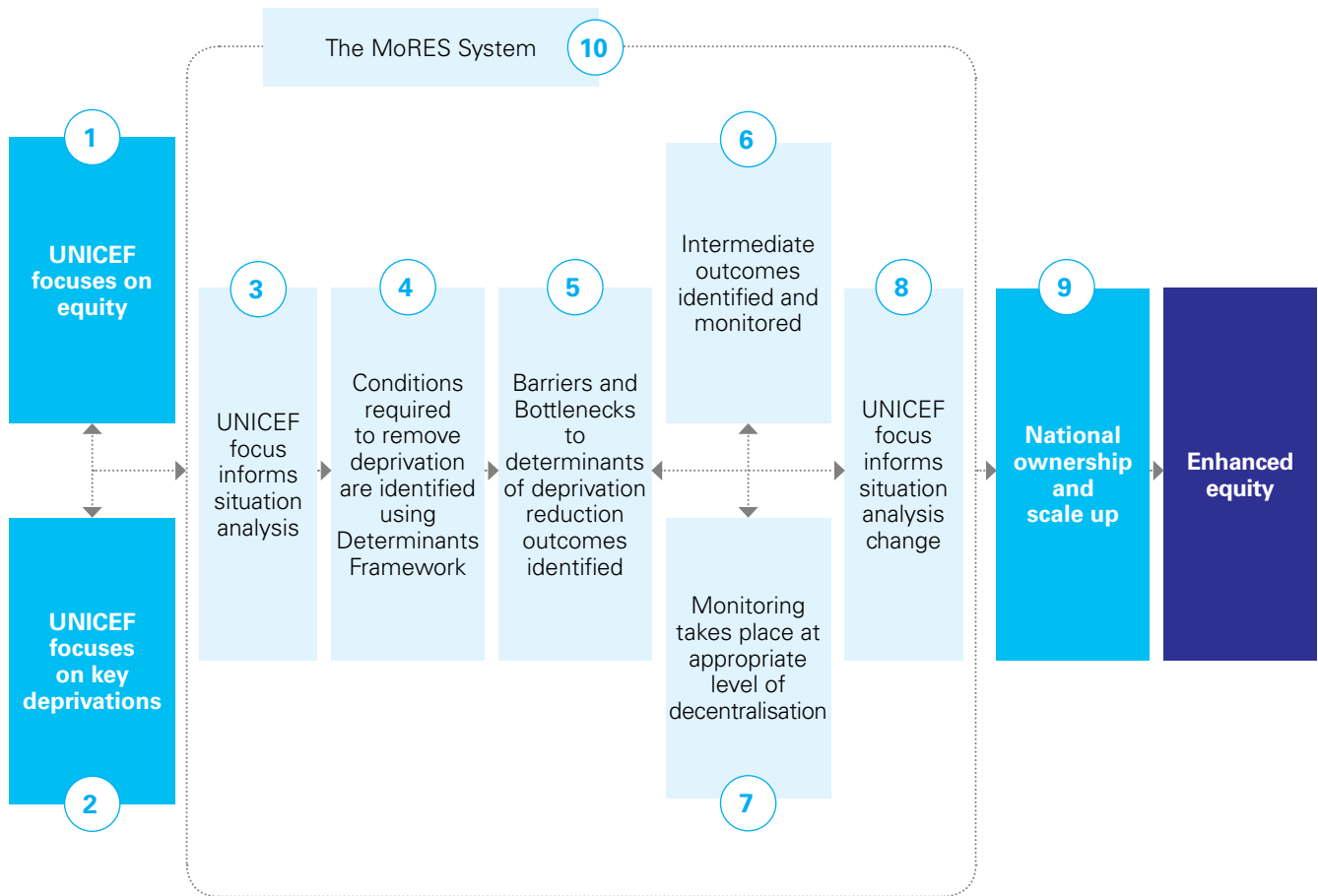


Table 4, pg 48, provides a definition for each element of MoRES, with the key conceptual underpinnings and dependencies associated with each presented alongside. Some of the most important concepts underpinning MoRES and included in this table are: the premise that focusing on the most deprived children is the most cost-effective approach to equitable service delivery; that the key conditions required for deprived children and their

families to benefit from any given service can be defined; that focusing attention on the most constraining factor (with regard to the determinants) can have a significant effect on development outcomes; that more frequent monitoring can lead to programme adjustment in line with local needs; and that government and partner buy-in can be secured to ensure sustainability and scale-up.

TABLE 4

The Elements of MoRES

Element	Conceptual underpinning	Dependencies
<p>1. Focus on equity:</p> <p><i>All children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism.</i></p>	<p>Focusing on equity is right in principle – it aims to accelerate progress towards realising the human rights of all children, i.e. the universal mandate of UNICEF. Focusing on equity is right in practice – there is evidence that focusing on the most deprived is the most cost-effective way to deliver services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity consistently defined; • Partners are convinced by the evidence supporting cost-effectiveness of an equity approach.
<p>2. Focus on key deprivations:</p> <p><i>In-depth analysis is needed of the most critical deprivations in a particular country context and in terms of which specific regions/ groups are most affected by these deprivations.</i></p>	<p>'Action for equity rests on the foundation of knowledge about the children and population groups that are most deprived and the reasons underlying their exclusion.'i – i.e. 'the what and the who'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiently robust or disaggregated data available at country level to accurately identify key deprivations and the groups affected.
<p>3. Situation analysis</p> <p><i>Focused studies, joint analyses with partners or contributions to common UN assessments.</i></p>	<p>Level 1 analysis is intended to verify the quality of situation analysis in relation to the determinants of deprivation and confirm that strategies are appropriate to overcoming barriers and bottlenecks and thus achieving the intended results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation Analysis (SitAn) designed and conceptualised as a joint exercise with government and other stakeholders – with buy-in from these external actors.
<p>4. Determinants framework</p> <p><i>Determinants represent the necessary conditions for outcomes to be achieved, and to which contributions from UNICEF and partners can be identified.</i></p>	<p>The framework contains 10 generic determinants that represent the key conditions required for deprived children and their families to benefit from effective coverage of any given package of services, care practices or behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determinants framework applies to all sector and contexts and is specific enough.
<p>5. Barrier and bottleneck analysis</p> <p><i>To implement the equity-focused approach it is crucial to identify barriers and bottlenecks that constrain the achievement of desired programme outcomes for disadvantaged children, and subsequently identify evidence-based strategies and innovations to overcome these issues.</i></p>	<p>Barrier and bottleneck analysis assumes that if energy is concentrated on the most constraining factor (with regard to the determinants) it can be expected that this alone will have a positive impact on further overall development – and consequently that working and living conditions should be directly improved. The effect of any strategy/programme will be constrained by any remaining barriers and bottlenecks that exist on previous determinants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sources to identify barriers and bottlenecks available; • Possible to judge relative weight of bottlenecks; • Possible to decide what the root cause of a specific barrier and bottleneck is.



The Elements of MoRES (cont'd)

Element	Conceptual underpinning	Dependencies
<p>6. Monitoring of intermediate outcomes</p> <p><i>The missing link between routine monitoring of inputs and outputs and low-frequency monitoring of high-level outcomes/impact, to provide data on progress and allow course correction as needed.</i></p>	<p>More regular data collection (e.g. using innovative real-time monitoring techniques) can be used to generate data on progress – for example, in addressing barriers and bottlenecks – and inform course corrections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate periodicity of data collection clear.
<p>7. Monitoring at the appropriate level of decentralisation</p> <p><i>A recognition that the need for change may be at national or sub-national level and is specific to context; therefore, in order for planning to be evidence-based, data that relate to the appropriate level of decentralisation and disaggregation should be used to inform planning.</i></p>	<p>Decentralised and disaggregated data collection is required to ensure that local-level planning is based on local-level needs. However, some barriers and bottlenecks are best addressed at central level and so monitoring must be targeted at this level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level at which to conduct monitoring is clear (below district level)? • Data collection systems, particularly at decentralised level, are adequate.
<p>8. Regular adjustment to programming</p> <p><i>Course correction: more regular adjustments to programme interventions and feedback into policies, strategies and plans.</i></p>	<p>More regular adjustments to programming can help to ensure that programming is matched to evidence on current needs and progress towards dealing with barriers and bottlenecks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in: adjustments to programming attract commitments from multiple actors and appropriate and timely resources.
<p>9. National ownership and scale-up</p> <p><i>Gaining buy-in of government (and partners), in order that MoRES is embedded into national systems</i></p>	<p>It is recognised that for MoRES to be sustainable, there needs to be involvement of government and partners and that this may require investment in the initial phase to gain engagement and buy-in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity: national capacity is sufficient or support and resources from UNICEF or others is available to support scale-up.
<p>10. MoRES as a system</p> <p><i>Four-level approach articulates the concepts and their application as a system with multiple entry points.</i></p>	<p>The levels of MoRES are closely linked – ‘each provides information for monitoring at the next level and at the same time assesses/validates actions of the preceding level to allow for timely adjustments and refinements in programme strategies.’ All levels are necessary to impact on equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All levels of MoRES can be implemented.

3.5 CONCEPTUAL ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS

Analysis of MoRES documentation suggests that MoRES evolved from concepts articulated by Tanahashi in his 1978 paper on 'Health service coverage and its evaluation'.⁴⁶ However, despite its origins in the health sector, there was a clear emphasis during its conceptual development on the need for MoRES to be applicable across all UNICEF programmes and to consider both service delivery and the enabling environment. The engagement of staff from different sectors during the development of MoRES functioned to increase buy-in (in effect creating MoRES 'champions' within sections) and also to ensure that MoRES was applicable and implementable.

However, the language used in much of the MoRES documentation still suggests that MoRES builds on a service delivery perspective of equity. For example, the determinants framework includes notions of *supply* and *demand* and *quality*. Arguably, this is because UNICEF has historically viewed the manifestations of inequity in the form of barriers to social services, particularly health and nutrition, water and sanitation. However, MoRES has also surfaced the need to move beyond a service delivery focus within programming to include a consideration of the *enabling environment*.

Further to this traditional perspective on equity, UNICEF's traditional approach to programming for equity provides an important basis for understanding why the elements that describe core processes within MoRES have been identified. UNICEF traditional practices evolved from a perspective on programming that focused on UNICEF inputs and outputs in the short term, and impact on children at the national level in the longer term. This created a 'missing middle',

which is addressed by MoRES through the monitoring of intermediate outcomes and the targeting of barriers and bottlenecks and barriers that sustain deprivations.

It is not clear, on the basis of the technical guidance available, how the MoRES system operates in different contexts, nor how the system engages with existing systems and stakeholders external to UNICEF. Since Country Offices were at different stages of programme implementation when MoRES was introduced, there is allowance for alternative entry points. However, the implication of MoRES as a system is that that all elements need to be applied to achieve full impact, that its conceptual underpinnings are sound and that challenges specific to each context can be overcome. Given that the approach requires multi-stakeholder engagement, a further assumption is that all parties will accept the approach and that it will be sufficiently mainstreamed (including across UNICEF) to have impact at scale. This requires an adequacy of resources and capacity, guidance and commitment (a further assumption).

Overall, the analysis of MoRES from a conceptual perspective suggests that MoRES responds to problems associated with UNICEF's historic approach to programming and has introduced new activities that are relevant to the resolution of these problems. However, it is less clear whether each element or the combination of elements is necessary or indeed sufficient in all contexts.

In the next chapter, the experiences of 19 country offices are examined to determine the extent to which these confirm that MoRES is a coherent system and that the conceptual underpinnings and assumptions associated with MoRES are valid.

⁴⁶ Tanahashi refers to the author of a paper published in the bulletin of the World Health Organization in 1978 (*Health Service Coverage and its Evaluation*. Bulletin 56(2)295-303) and the model therein which describes dimensions of effective health coverage as the basis for identifying and analysing health system barriers and bottlenecks.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

MoRES is the operational response to UNICEF's strategic commitment to a refocus on equity. MoRES is based on the premise that equity cannot be achieved without a deliberate commitment to management for results based on equity objectives and indicators.

The fundamental premise on which MoRES rests is that UNICEF has not, to the fullest extent possible, approached its programming and policy work from an equity and deprivation perspective. In practice, this is an opportunity for UNICEF to realise untapped potential to enhance protection and to narrow protection, survival and development gaps for children.

MoRES is based on the rationale that an equity-focused system is needed to resolve critical analytical, targeting, monitoring and decision-making shortcomings in historic programming. Although originally presented as four levels and a feedback loop within a cup, the system can be better understood to be composed of interconnected elements, all of which relate to equity and each of which can be explored on the basis of its conceptual underpinning and assumptions. The system is integrated rather than linear, allowing for multiple entry points.

An analysis of the concepts underpinning the elements of MoRES suggests that it presents UNICEF with a number of opportunities. Firstly, by focusing more attention on evidence-based analysis and prioritisation at the country level, UNICEF could be in a position to better align strategies with the needs of the most deprived children. Secondly, by recognising the dominance of the historic service delivery focus, wider determinants of developmental impacts could be taken into account. Thirdly, an additional focus within programming on key barriers and bottlenecks to development could lead to their removal. Fourthly, evidence and improved understanding of the dynamic between outputs and final impacts could contribute to timely programme adjustment. Finally, ongoing programming and resource allocation could be better informed by more regular data gathering on programme performance.

It is not clear, on the basis of technical guidance available, how the system operates in different contexts. The technical documentation does not allow for a stand-alone assessment of whether the system is coherent, how the system engages with existing systems and stakeholders external to UNICEF, and whether the conceptual underpinnings and assumptions on which MoRES is based are sound. This analysis will require a comparison between the theory of MoRES and MoRES in practice.



CHAPTER 4: Mores IN PRACTICE



CHAPTER 4

This chapter summarises **experiences at the country level** based on the 19 case studies referred to in Chapter 1. It describes how countries engaged with and integrated MoRES into their ongoing programmes of work, exploring **how the MoRES theory played out in practice**. Country-level experience is examined with regard to each of the key **elements of the MoRES approach** as described in Chapter 3. The extent to which MoRES has been adapted to suit different contexts is highlighted. The chapter surfaces and examines the **main assumptions associated with MoRES** to highlight some of the challenges these represent to implementation. Findings from across the case studies are drawn together at the end of the chapter using the evaluation criteria frame of questions presented in Chapter 1, to highlight what findings suggest in terms of the **relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and likely impact** of MoRES. The chapter closes with a summary of key findings.

4.1 THE CASE STUDY APPROACH: FROM MoRES IN THEORY TO Mores IN PRACTICE

The rationale for the case study approach has been described in Chapter 1; recording and examining experiences in a range of country contexts allows for testing and validation of the conceptual framework supporting the MoRES ToC.⁴⁷ In total, seven countries were selected for in-depth study (which included a visit) – Bangladesh, Nicaragua, DRC, Indonesia, Morocco, Nepal and Zimbabwe – and 12 further

countries for a remote lighter-touch study (that included telephone discussions).⁴⁸

Each of these case studies was selected because of the learning opportunity offered to the evaluation and country-specific questions were developed in advance of the visit or telephone calls based on documentation studied. The approach adopted was designed to record experiences rather than measure or assess performance. Given the small number of studies and the wide variety of contexts, it was not anticipated that it would be possible to generate statistically robust findings from the studies.

⁴⁷ The key purpose of the MoRES country case studies was: *to generate evidence of what actually has happened in relation to MoRES in a selection of countries and contexts and how this context exerts influence on MoRES. The rationale for this was that there will be utility in this evidence since it will enhance understanding of how MoRES has been operationalized in-country, generate evidence of what effect MoRES has had on UNICEF and development partners and programmers in country and provide perception data on the views of in-country stakeholders with regard to MoRES, its implementation and future development.* Country selection criteria were: Level 1: deprivation patterns have been analysed (including patterns of deprivation and approach type for going to scale); country has used Determinants Framework to support Situation Analysis; evidence of partner engagement in Situation Analysis; Level 2: MoRES has been applied in more than one sector; evidence of coordination with partners in programming; scope of programmers (to cover policy/advocacy, service delivery, humanitarian); Level 3: Level 3 monitoring has been undertaken (including changes to programme implementation as a result); evidence of partner involvement in Level 3 programming; Level 4: Level 4 monitoring has been undertaken in more than one of countries selected.

⁴⁸ The light touch studies covered Afghanistan, Egypt, Georgia, Haiti, Malawi, Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and involved desk review and interview (desk review only for Philippines and Zambia due to constraints on CO staff time).

Results for each in-depth study have been recorded in individual two-part reports. Part I of each report presents a record of the CO experience of MoRES as presented to, or understood by, the evaluation team, including a summary of when and how MoRES was introduced. Part II is more analytical and reflects on this experience in three ways: firstly, using the frame of the elements of the MoRES system as set out in the conceptual analysis in Chapter 3; secondly, against the key assumptions also identified during the conceptual analysis (Table 5 in Chapter 3); and thirdly, using a cause-effect model that describes the assertions and assumptions on which MoRES is based from the perspective of implementation.

From a sectoral perspective, each case study includes examples of the application of MoRES within a variety of sectors, although the evaluation team has not attempted to provide full details of all sectoral applications in these countries (given the time constraints). Table 5 below provides a brief guide to the sectoral examples provided in each of the full case study reports.

Full reports for the seven in-depth studies have been issued as a separate volume to this report.

4.2 VARIATIONS IN THE APPLICATION OF MoRES: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Early interviews with HQ stakeholders plus preliminary reading alerted the evaluation team to the fact that the implementation of MoRES manifested itself differently in the countries in which it was introduced. These variations were understood to include:

- The entry point for MoRES has varied according to where the country was in the programming cycle;
- Not all levels of MoRES have been operationalised in each country;
- MoRES has not been applied to all sectors in each country;
- Different sectors have used different tools for similar purposes;
- The relative emphasis on different parts of the determinants framework in the analysis has varied according to the setting;
- There has been implementation at different geographical levels within countries – for example, some countries have carried

TABLE 5 Case Study Sectoral Examples⁴⁹

Country	Health	HIV	Education	Adolescent Development	Child Protection	Early Childhood Development	Nutrition	WASH
Bangladesh	••		••		••		••	••
DRC	••		••		•			
Indonesia			•		•	••		
Morocco	••		••		••			••
Nepal	••	•	••	••		•	•	••
Nicaragua	••		••		••			
Zimbabwe	••		••		••			••

•• Significant roll-out recorded • Some roll-out or planned roll-out recorded

⁴⁹ For emphasis: this is a table which reports recorded examples only, it should not be understood to imply that COs have worked only in the sectors indicated.



out barrier and bottleneck analyses at the district level, others at a central level;

- Level 3 monitoring has in some counties used existing government data collection systems, whereas elsewhere, existing information systems have been complemented with additional surveys or new approaches to real-time monitoring.

On this basis, although the evaluation was expected to cover all four levels of MoRES, there was an expectation that the study would find a range of processes in operation within each of these levels and that there would be some generic lessons to learn, but also some context-specific ones.

Furthermore, it was also clear from the outset that MoRES had been and continues to be a dynamic concept, flexing not only with context but as concepts evolved, were tested and adapted. On this basis, it was anticipated that early applications might differ significantly from later applications in any one country.

For these reasons, the evaluation anticipated that MoRES would potentially be variously understood across the countries studied and so it would be important to allow each country to 'tell their MoRES story' without imposing definitions, concepts and models that might not be recognised. This proved to be a useful approach and has led to each country report being presented in two parts: firstly, as a record of experience based on information provided by country stakeholders or within country-specific documentation; and secondly, in a more structured way based on the analytical framework, described in Chapter 3, organising findings using the elements of the MoRES system and the associated implementation pathway.

4.3 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CASE STUDY FINDINGS

A number of shared findings and highlights can be extracted from the first part of the case study reports.

The official launch of MoRES was in 2012, following discussions and agreements reached in 2011; however, because of differences in the timing of country programme cycles, the entry point for MoRES varied across the countries. For example in Nepal, the launch of MoRES immediately preceded the launch of the Country Programme and so informed its content (Level 1); in Indonesia, the next situation analysis was not scheduled until 2014 and so it made greater sense that the entry point here was level 3 monitoring; in Morocco, the Country Programme had been prepared at the same time as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) discussions⁵⁰ (before MoRES was formally introduced) so Level 1 MoRES was introduced at the sectoral level (youth and child protection). Key factors enabling a successful launch across the countries are reported as: a visit by the Executive Director; visits by a MoRES technical team; technical support from the regional office; the building of consensus and compacts across the region; strong local leadership; and additional funds for monitoring.

Depending on context, MoRES has been understood in a range of ways closely linked to need. For example, the case studies suggest that MoRES is seen to have *met gaps in planning capacity* in Nepal; addressed the need for better accountability from service providers towards citizens in DRC; and *refocused efforts towards reaching the most marginalised* in Nicaragua. This explains why ownership has been created in different ways. This finding is corroborated to some degree by how the

⁵⁰ The UNDAF is the strategic programme framework for the UN Country Team (UNCT). It describes the collective response of the UNCT to the priorities in the national development framework – priorities that may have been influenced by the UNCT's analytical contribution. Its high-level expected results are called UNDAF outcomes. These show where the UNCT can bring its comparative advantages to bear in advocacy, capacity development, policy advice and programming for the achievement of MD/MDG related national priorities. In Morocco, the CO reports that the MoRES approach promoted the same form of analysis that they had used during this phase.

term MoRES has translated across countries. MoRES in translation demonstrates a range of interpretations: for example, MoRES is called *aborodh* (blockage) in Nepal, level 3 MoRES is called *MAA-Monitorage Amélioré pour l'Action* (Improved Monitoring for Action) in DRC and MoRES is recast as *'restoring rights'* through evidence-based planning and programming (not just monitoring) in Nicaragua.

COs report that MoRES was not introduced onto a blank canvas, but rather has built on a range of existing initiatives across the countries studied. For example, on *Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks* in Nepal; the *Tanahashi model* in DRC and Bangladesh; the *IC-EBP (Investment Case for Evidence-based Planning)* in Indonesia; and *DIVA (Diagnose, Intervene, Verify, Adjust)* in Zimbabwe. In whatever way MoRES has been translated, it appears generally true that UNICEF COs have perceived presenting MoRES as a 'new UNICEF idea' to be inadvisable, since it reduces ownership by national government and other partners.

In terms of sectoral application, MoRES has been applied in a number of sectors across the countries studied. Generally, MoRES has been rolled out initially in one key sector (often where one of the above approaches has already been in operation) and on a pilot and decentralised basis, after which it has been rolled out to other sectors (often in the same geographical locations). So, for example, MoRES was initiated in and spread from the education sector in Morocco, from child survival and development in Indonesia, and from the health sector in Nepal and DRC. Data from a survey of work-stream one countries found that all sections in UNICEF were implementing MoRES to a greater or lesser extent – ranging from 31% of countries implementing MoRES in WASH to 77% in education, including ECD.⁵¹ This was validated by interviews with section staff at

HQ, who noted that initial resistance is giving way to acceptance and ownership, as sections are developing tools and approaches to make MoRES work in their sector

Given its origins in the health sector, the perception from some key informants interviewed during this evaluation was that MoRES, and the associated tools and methods, may fit more naturally in health than in other sectors.

Firstly, it was noted that some components, most particularly frequent (especially real-time) monitoring, are arguably more appropriate to programmes in which UNICEF is engaging at the service delivery level, where change can be demonstrated more frequently than might be expected at the policy/advocacy level.

Similarly, the selection of tracer interventions and the definition of indicators is more straightforward in sectors such as health and education, where UNICEF is often engaging in service delivery and tracer interventions have already been identified. UNICEF also generally has stronger government counterparts in health, a longer history of engagement, and there are often more robust Health Management Information Systems at the country level. Lastly, in health, there is robust evidence of 'what works' – i.e. evidence-based interventions that can be implemented to solve an identified deprivation. In sectors like child protection, this evidence base is only emergent.

4.4 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS BASED ON THE KEY ELEMENTS OF MoRES

This section of the report synthesises the experiences of the 19 case study countries and presents key findings through the prism of seven of the key operational elements that lie within the Monitoring Results for Equity System, and as presented in Figure 5:⁵² 1) Situation Analysis;

⁵¹ *Accelerating Results for Deprived Children through Level Three Monitoring, Work-stream One Country Report, 2012.*

⁵² The evaluation has not assessed UNICEF's policies to focus on equity and key deprivations, nor evaluated in detail the scale-up through government systems, because these three elements lie outside of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (see Figure 5).



2) Determinants Framework; 3) Barrier and Bottleneck Analysis; 4) Monitoring Intermediate Outcomes; 5) Monitoring at Appropriate Level of Decentralisation; 6) Regular Adjustment to Programming; 7) MoRES as a system. Examples from the case studies are provided in the text and key findings are presented in bold. A brief case history taken from one of the country case studies is included at the end of each element-focused analysis.

Enhanced Situation Analysis

UNICEF's commitment to equity and deprivation analysis predates MoRES. In many case study countries, MoRES arrived after the situation analysis on which their current country programme was based had been conducted. For example, Bangladesh and Morocco had country plans dated 2012-16 and Nepal 2011-13. These countries and others can demonstrate that they had already considered which deprivations to target when locating and identifying disadvantaged children and indeed some already had developed or identified tools to assist with this process. These include the *Child Equity Atlas* in Bangladesh, a composite index of deprivation; the *Child Deprivation Index* in Nepal, Indonesia and Afghanistan; and the *Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index* in the Philippines, among others.⁵³

In other countries, national governments already had a clear commitment to equity and it was necessary to frame MoRES as contributing to ongoing initiatives rather than introducing something new. For example, in Haiti a National Living Standards Survey was already underway to help identify the location of most deprived groups; in Nigeria, Vision 20:20 aimed to translate economic growth into equitable social development; in Zambia, a Ministry of Health *of the Poorest Population* project was already underway.

MoRES has energised country offices in their commitment to focus on equity. Some countries report that MoRES improved Situation Analysis (SitAn). For example, in Zimbabwe the focus on equity was prominent prior to the introduction of MoRES and there was already a process similar to MoRES in operation (called *Diagnose, Intervene, Verify, Adjust – DIVA*), but the CO reports that MoRES was instrumental in standardising the approach to barrier and bottleneck analysis and encouraging programme focus on areas of deprivation. In DRC, the CO reports that MoRES revitalised the Tanahashi approach in the health sector.

In other cases – for example, Moldova – the timing of the introduction of MoRES meant that the approach could inform the Country Programme Document 2013-17 and is reported as having significantly strengthened and sharpened the equity focus. In another example, DRC CO reports that MoRES led to a shift from one SitAn to *rolling sector SitAns*, which are now thought of as *living documents* that aim to establish flexible and locally appropriate priorities that respond dynamically to beneficiary needs.

Equity-focused situation analysis requires more than national-level statistics; it requires data gathering at the local level. Initially, Level 1 MoRES was generally understood to be a whole country planning exercise and indeed in some countries it is (e.g. DRC where the vast majority of children are vulnerable), but the roll-out of MoRES soon made clear that national plans that focus on equity require locally specific SitAn. Without this, it is impossible to fully understand the nature of highly localised deprivation against which appropriate strategies can be developed.

Situation analysis at the appropriate level of decentralisation represents a critical contribution by MoRES from the perspective of locating the most disadvantaged children. Local-level

⁵³ Other tools may be useful in this regard – for example, the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis tool (MODA) produced by the Office of Research, which builds primarily on MICS and DHS data.

SitAns present fewer challenges in countries that are well-advanced in terms of sub-national data-gathering systems – such as Indonesia. Here, data are available that allow deep insight into the extent to which national summary data mask locally specific inequities.

However, where such systems are absent, the demand for a more equity-focused SitAn has resulted in significant demands to enhance local data-collection systems for evidence-based planning and has surfaced the potentially substantial resource implications of conducting Level 1 analysis at the local level. For example, in Zimbabwe, disadvantaged districts were identified for accelerating results in child survival, development and protection; however, UNICEF's initial lead in the education sector resulted in these districts being referred to as 'UNICEF districts', suggesting that the implications of ownership had not yet been fully absorbed.

There is a particularly difficult, ethical challenge in reaching local consensus on prioritisation in some countries. Here it is not easy to advocate a focus on particular groups within society

Child deprivation in Nepal

The Nepal CO had already identified which key deprivations to consider when locating and identifying disadvantaged children prior to the introduction of MoRES (as part of the country analysis for UNDAF). A Child Deprivation Index based on a set of indicators covering health, education and food security as key areas of deprivation had been developed and utilised to this end. As a result, 15 failing districts had already been identified. The added value of MoRES was that it endorsed what had already been achieved, encouraged a new reflection on barriers and bottlenecks, as well as objectives and energised the office further in its commitment to focus on equity.

Source: Nepal Country Case Study Report. 2014

(even children) or on specific aspects of poverty or exclusion, because deprivation is almost universal and serious for all groups. For example, district officials in Nepal explained how difficult it is to make choices between providing birth centres, toilet facilities, centres providing midday meals for most deprived children and support for victims of child abuse.

Officials in Nepal also specifically pointed out that in districts of high poverty choosing one age group above all others might not be acceptable in a context where the community has a right to decide. High-quality data is needed to justify targeting in this regard and there is little available and limited resource to gather it – particularly in the face of competing needs. There are also technical challenges in determining whether uniformity of need can be inferred from sample-based monitoring and who has the skills to establish an appropriate sampling approach.

In most countries, MoRES has been focused within specific sectors because many countries were already conducting thematic SitAns (for example, health in Zimbabwe). However, approaches to measuring equity have varied across countries, with some placing significant emphasis on coverage statistics – as the clear equity aligned outcome – and others on a broader range of parameters. For example in Bangladesh, UNICEF is advocating decentralised planning to help meet the shortfalls in coverage such as in the case of immunisation, which fails to reach deprived groups representing 20% of the child population, whereas in many case study countries the principle of coverage is not mentioned.

There is evidence that in some countries MoRES has encouraged cross-sectoral working because it refocuses attention on the child and not the sector as the focus of concern. For example, in DRC the rolling sector SitAns include the identification of cross-sectoral working priorities, based on common barriers and bottlenecks. Similarly in Bangladesh a cross-sectoral situation analysis identified key deprivations



of the rights of the children and tracer interventions were identified to measure effective coverage of high impact interventions across five sectors of health, nutrition, WASH, education and child protection. However, this shift has raised questions around how to reach judgments on priorities for a child exposed to multiple deprivations, and raises issues around how this would translate to a government-owned approach within the context of institutional and budgetary boundaries, where the control of resource is based on institutional purpose.

Application of the Determinants Framework

The determinants framework (DF) has been used at national, sectoral and sub-national (for example, district) levels with multiple stakeholder engagement in several countries. For example: indicators based on the determinants are being incorporated into national and local plans in Nicaragua (except WASH); the DF is reported to have added value to current approaches to barrier and bottleneck analysis by making the process more systematic and broadening the discourse on issues to be addressed in Peru; and the Morocco CO has used all 10 determinants in the education sector. The application has been easier where there was already some familiarity with the Tanahashi model (for example, in DRC, Uganda and Bangladesh), though the origin of the Tanahashi model in the health sector has raised concerns over its wider application to other sectors.

A considerable body of new data and evidence has been generated through the application of the DF. However, there is a question over whether all 10 determinants are needed; for example, in Aceh Timur in Indonesia the 10 determinants were reduced to five (human resources, funding, methods, facilities and enabling environment). Some countries report that there are barriers that do not fit the framework; for example, DRC found that the barrier to integrated planning arising from a disconnect between administrative boundaries for health

Access to learning in Morocco

The DF has been used to identify the general and specific conditions for successful access and learning at pre-school, primary school and lower secondary school levels. The process has meant that for the first time schools have identified and analysed their own problems. It has created transparency and accountability at the community level and has re-established confidence in schools, and improved relationships between schools and community as parents see better results for their children. There is an increased sense of voluntarism at the community level, and more mobilisation of local stakeholders.

Source: Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation of conditions of equitable access to school and learning at local level through implementation of the school project Morocco MoRES, July 2012.

and education was difficult to locate within the framework; and accessibility was added as an additional determinant in Afghanistan. Some COs found it difficult to robustly apply the 10 determinants to all sectors – for example for child protection in Morocco.

There is widespread uncertainty across the COs and government partners on a range of technical issues associated with the DF. Key among these are: whether effective coverage is the starting point for determinants analysis (or is a perspective that best applies to a service delivery context); identifying the correct weighting that should be applied to each determinant as the basis for prioritisation (in Zimbabwe a system of prioritisation of determinants using a traffic light system has been introduced); how to identify appropriate time-sensitive indicators for each determinant; whether indicators are also needed for barriers/bottlenecks and solutions; whether it is necessary or possible to include indicators for all determinants within government systems; and whether this might impose data-collection burdens on already

overstretched systems; whether determinant indicators are the appropriate basis for identifying solutions to deprivations across a range of sectors and contexts.

For example, in Nepal, district officials reported different views on how much weight to apply to each determinant and/or associated barrier/bottleneck; how to identify appropriate solutions; how to identify appropriate indicators for each determinant; and how many to include in government systems for regular data gathering. Elsewhere, in Zimbabwe for example, although the DF has been successfully applied across a range of sectors, the approach to indicator identification (and frequency of review), issues of time sensitivity and the prioritisation process with regard to barriers/bottlenecks were all listed as aspects of the DF that needed to be better understood.

Application of Barrier and Bottleneck Analysis (BBA)

There is strong and widespread ownership and understanding of the concept of barriers and bottlenecks. There is significant experience of the application of the Barrier and Bottleneck Analysis (BBA) process across sectors and evidence of a real sense of empowerment at the local level as a result of the analysis. For example, in Morocco, BBA provided head teachers – for the first time – with the information required to better understand barriers to school attendance and out-of-school children.

In some cases this is because BBA was already a significant part of ongoing approaches; for example, the CO in Indonesia had been using BBA as part of an *Investment Case – Evidence Based Planning Approach* (IC-EBF), and in Peru, BBA was already part of the Government of Peru's *Theory of Constraints* approach.

Particularly significant analysis has been undertaken in the health sector, where the Tanahashi approach was first applied. For example, in Bangladesh, the CO has committed to a substantive data-collection effort. Here a detailed workplan has been developed involving collection of data against levels of coverage for tracer interventions,⁵⁴ analysis to determine the key barrier/bottleneck (as most limiting factor) and identification of corrective actions.

These activities are resource-intensive and time-consuming and raise questions over sustainability and regularity with which data collection and barrier and bottleneck analysis can be performed, given that barriers/bottlenecks are dynamic. There is evidence of BBA being fully institutionalised in some COs; for example, in Zimbabwe where BBA has been integrated into the programme cycle from annual workplans down to weekly planning meetings.

There are significant technical challenges associated with the BBA approach. The rationale for focusing on one barrier/bottleneck is not well accepted because there is little to suggest that establishing equal weighting across barriers/bottlenecks as proposed in the Tanahashi model is achievable across sectors. Furthermore, the practicalities of identifying and assessing a single tracer intervention to represent a complex system are challenging for some sectors (particularly child protection, where it is felt that the focus on birth registration has been based on the accessibility of data rather than the representative nature of this as a tracer).

There has been some difficulty in reaching consensus on priorities in several countries and confusions over what the fundamental barriers/bottlenecks are; for example different participants in workshops in Afghanistan had different levels of understanding and diverse priorities when discussing priority barriers/

⁵⁴ The notion of a tracer intervention is based on the concept that if good, or improved, coverage of a particular intervention (a tracer) can be demonstrated, then this is a sign of the adequate or improved functioning of the system that it was chosen to represent.



bottlenecks. Costs of the process are reported to be prohibitive in several of the countries assessed, including Malawi and Moldova, where costs associated with systems development for scale-up have been recognised as potentially very high.

Often local problems require solutions that can only be generated from the centre and it is unclear how local officials or communities can influence such change. For example, in Zambia key barriers to maternal and new-born survival require policy change and resourcing from the centre, but there is no mechanism for feeding back findings to the national level (a feedback loop from local staff to central level decision-makers).

Better standards for nutrition in Bangladesh

Data generated by pilots in two unions in Bangladesh highlighted barriers/bottlenecks resulting in zero levels of iron-folic acid (IFA) supplementation. The barriers/bottlenecks were different in the two unions and UNICEF used these data as a way to raise awareness at the national level of the need for a more nuanced understanding of the issues involved in IFA supplementation. This led to detailed analysis of barriers/bottlenecks to effective coverage of IFA supplementation conducted jointly with communities and the implementation of corrective actions. According to UNICEF reports, the proportion of pregnant women consuming an adequate dose of IFA tablets during pregnancy has since increased from 13% to 21% among 3,927 mothers. At the national level, the data have also been used to set up discussions with the government and the Micronutrient Initiative to hold a national technical workshop on improving effective coverage of IFA (November 2013).

Source: MYCNSIA project monitoring reports 2013

There are some convincing examples from several of the case studies of reductions in barriers/bottlenecks since the introduction of MoRES in 2012; for example, in Senegal management problems associated with the storage of local vaccine supplies have been removed; in Georgia a pre-school policy is being developed with UNICEF support; and a range of policy initiatives are being introduced in Zimbabwe, including elimination of health sector user fees and adoption of a national cash transfer programme (though it can be argued that some of these were commenced prior to the introduction of MoRES); in DRC level 3 monitoring has helped influence policy making at the central level in the shape of the introduction of a family health kit approach to health service delivery.⁵⁵

Monitoring of Intermediate Outcomes (IO)

The focus on Intermediate Outcomes offers the potential to bridge the gap between conventional output and impact monitoring. However, there appears to be no universal agreement on how intermediate outcomes should be defined; for example, IOs are framed around barriers/bottlenecks in Morocco; in Nicaragua, the IOs included in local plans relate to determinants; and in Bangladesh IOs are framed with regard to tracer interventions and the level of effective coverage.

Where UNICEF is promoting the absorption of new indicators into local monitoring systems, change is taking time. This is particularly the case where government systems are weak. For example, in Zimbabwe, data are largely gathered through UNICEF systems and using programme resources, but with a gradual shift to district government and institutions as capacity is strengthened.

⁵⁵ See the DRC case study prepared for this evaluation for further details.

Zinc uptake in Indonesia

Level 3 monitoring in Aceh Timur highlighted the importance of zinc uptake and the problem that parents were not using zinc because of the belief that this would make their children ill. The key barrier/bottleneck was identified as a lack of capacity among midwives to conduct appropriate counselling with parents. The programmatic response developed in conjunction with district staff was to roll out an improved training approach for midwives focused on more targeted and supportive counselling. In parallel, a simple pro-forma was developed for midwives to use to track their own experiences in the counselling process (allowing for real-time monitoring and adaptation of approach). The early results of this approach are reported as a 40% increase in coverage of effective counselling (from a very low baseline) and, as a result of this, a marked and significant increase in zinc uptake. This result is potentially significant because there is already compelling (global) evidence that improved zinc uptake has a direct impact on morbidity and mortality levels among children; it is arguable that this MoRES-driven approach is showing potential to improve equity results.

There is a need for more clarity over whether IOs should be monitored to generate real-time data. In Nepal, a methodological framework organised around five different data-gathering methodologies has been developed, on the basis that type and frequency of monitoring will be determined by the nature of the indicator itself. However, in some countries, IOs are understood to be indicators against which real-time data should be delivered (data delivered immediately after collection) and there are good examples of innovation by UNICEF teams to meet this challenge; for example, sentinel monitoring is being used in Malawi to monitor access to basic social services, and the Community Health Information Tracking System has been introduced in the Philippines.

Capacity issues affect the quality of data and dictate the frequency of monitoring.

In Senegal, there are issues over data availability because data in the health sector are largely centralised and incomplete or inaccurate and, even where systems exist, there is little capacity for statistical analysis. In Moldova, decentralised monitoring is dependent on partner cooperation; similarly, as indicated above, although many indicators have been incorporated into line ministry Management Information Systems (MIS) in Zimbabwe, government resources at the district level are presently sparse, and so monitoring is largely undertaken with programme funds or through UNICEF monitoring processes and tools. In Nigeria, questions have been raised by the CO with regard to how often the barrier and bottleneck analysis and indicators selected for monitoring should be reviewed. The CO in Peru has raised questions over whether some indicators should be monitored less frequently than others (for example, social norms).

Results against IOs look most convincing (in terms of potential impact on equity) where IOs represent solutions to barriers/bottlenecks that have been very specifically and locally linked to a key deprivation. For example, a light survey in Indonesia revealed that parents were not using zinc supplements; this prompted a new initiative to change behaviours, which in turn led to marked increase in zinc uptake. This case required very short-term and real-time monitoring around a specific issue, rather than long-term changes to data-gathering systems.

Monitoring at the appropriate level of decentralisation

Sometimes the appropriate level of decentralisation is 'central'; in others a 'whole country' response will focus attention on only a few districts. The appropriate level for data-gathering has proven to be an important question for both Level 1 and Level 3 MoRES and there are technical challenges in determining what this level should be (for example,



how much disaggregation is feasible). Level 3 monitoring is not about monitoring only at the local or community level – and there has been considerable confusion in this regard, level 3 is about collecting data to determine if barriers and bottlenecks have been removed wherever they happen to be.

Further to this, in countries where the locus of deprivation is in some districts only (for example, Nepal), a focus on these areas makes sense and should still be considered to be a national response to resolving childhood deprivation and inequity. Where capacity to monitor locally exists, enhanced data access can be very empowering, such as in Morocco, where new collaborations have been generated between parents and schools.

Preventing Mother to Child Transmission in Bilwi, Nicaragua

The analysis of determinants of HIV transmission from mother to child was used to draft municipal plans in September 2013 and a planning document and spreadsheet for recording performance against selected indicators was developed. Quarterly progress revisions at the municipal level suggest that corrective actions are being taken to remove identified barriers/bottlenecks; for example, leading to an increase from 50% to 100% of community networks operating effectively to locate pregnant women and facilitate testing. It is reported anecdotally that more pregnant women are now being tested for HIV and syphilis, and a traffic light system for barriers/bottlenecks is promoting healthy competition around changing barriers/bottlenecks from red to green. Related activities have focused on training, teamwork at the local level and improving co-ordination.

Source: MoRES Nicaragua case study, 2014

There is evidence that the introduction of appropriate tools for decentralised monitoring is important if the approach is to be workable (for example, the use of *Lot Quality Assurance Sampling* in DRC and *Rapid Convenient Assessment* in Indonesia), but MoRES works best when a local system is already in place and can be adjusted to provide the information required for programme adaptation (Système National de l'Information Sanitaire – SNIS in DRC; U-Report in Uganda).

Limited capacity at the local level can be a constraint – as in Nepal where there is almost no experience of results-based management within government at the district level – and there are some contexts where capacity at the local level is virtually non-existent because of conflict – for example Afghanistan. Building systems where they do not exist or quality-assuring data where systems are doubtful can be prohibitively expensive to take to scale or to support in the long term.

Regular adjustments to programming

There is some evidence of corrective actions being implemented as a result of level 3 monitoring. For example, in Bangladesh, more front-line workers have been appointed in the health sector and reminder tools for mothers have been introduced to improve nutrition. There is evidence of adaptation in Zimbabwe also; here the CO has successfully advocated various policy reforms, though this may also be linked to leverage associated with transition funding.

It is too early to say that evidence-based adjustment is now routinely happening as a result of Level 3 monitoring and most countries report little or no response in terms of programme adjustment, despite enhanced data-gathering.

Resourcing is a key operational and sustainability issue. What is already clear is that resources and the autonomy required to make local adjustments to local programmes are not always available; for example in Nepal,

where resources controlled at the local level are minimal. Here, there is a dependency on centralised disbursement of funds, government budget calendars and cycles and the scope for resource shifting within these frameworks is limited. Here and in other countries, there is an expectation that UNICEF will step in to stop gaps; for example, in Bangladesh, where there has been an expectation from government and community that UNICEF funds will be available to finance corrective action.

There are encouraging examples of adjustments to programming being made that require no new resource, as in the Indonesia example above, where zinc uptake was improved through enhanced counselling with no additional resource required. Such cases represent interesting examples of the potential to

achieve enhanced equity through efficiencies rather than further resourcing. Little has been said in MoRES guidance to date about how programme adjustments can be made on the basis of resource shifting.

Overall, the assumption that better data lead to better decisions requires testing in each context. COs report, that it should not be assumed that local-level monitoring leads to local-level decision-making. It is most commonly the case that those who perform the data analysis that determines the need for programme adaptation are not those who would need to make decisions in response to this evidence if budgetary allocations are to change. Such decision-making may be as much to do with political will as hard evidence. Most of the case study COs, including the light-touch COs, reported no substantive evidence of a dynamic, regular feedback of evidence into programming.

Health Kits in the DRC

A process called *Monitoring Amélioré pour l'Action* (Improved Monitoring for Action) or MAA in DRC equates to Level 3 MoRES. Piloting of this approach in five health zones in collaboration with the Ministry of Health led to the identification of barriers/bottlenecks, the implementation of corrective actions at the community level, and to the refining of zonal operational plans to better respond to local beneficiaries' needs. More specifically, UNICEF reports that MAA helped identify the lack of commodities and financial barriers as major barriers/bottlenecks to the utilisation of health services. As a result, the country programme supported the government in developing a *family kits* approach, in which families were provided with essential drugs, supplements and basic commodities. The approach also includes coupons/vouchers for health services to help overcome financial barriers. The family health kit approach was integrated as part of the DRC's MOH's MDG 4 and 5 Acceleration Framework and launched as part of "A Promise Renewed".

Source: MoRES DRC case study, 2013

MoRES as a system

Across the countries studied, MoRES implementation can be said to be insufficiently advanced to allow conclusions to be reached on the effectiveness of MoRES as a system. From the group of countries studied within this evaluation, Zimbabwe provides a good example of the introduction of MoRES as a system in more than one sector. This may be because systems are under construction and there are significant resources available to leverage change. Several case studies suggest that the impact of MoRES is likely to be greater where financial systems and decision-making have been decentralised, allowing processes to be sustained at the local level where deprivation is most felt.

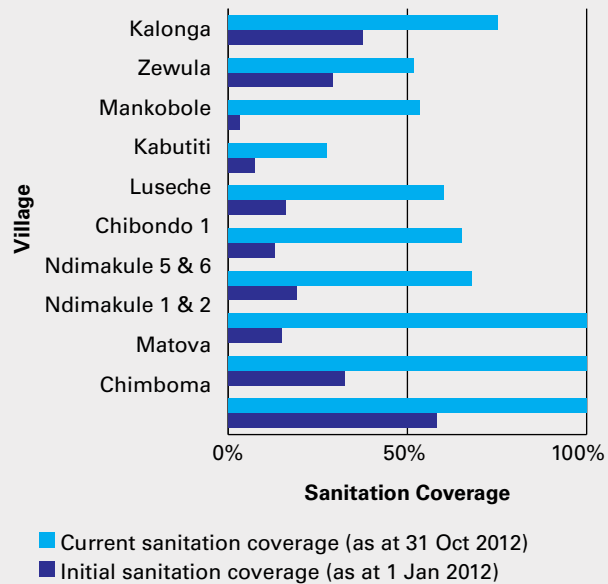
However, there is clear evidence in all countries that the institutional landscape has been a primary and preliminary consideration for the CO before any element of MoRES has been introduced. Integration with existing systems is considered to be vital; the corollary of which is that the creation of new systems is best avoided.



MoRES in a rural WASH pilot in Binga and Hwange, Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (ZimCATS) project aims to eliminate open defecation and create open defecation free (ODF) villages through Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS). Barriers/bottlenecks were identified and ranked as either low, moderate, or significant, and indicators were developed to measure barrier/bottleneck reduction. Spreadsheet tools were developed to track progress at all levels; i.e. village (completed by SAGs), ward (completed by field officers and extension workers), and district (completed by district officers and WASH committees). Data were also collected through joint field monitoring visits (UNICEF, government and implementing partners) to project sites. Progress monitoring fed into MoRES reporting in VISION, and decision-making on best strategies to remove barriers/bottlenecks. At the district level, reporting was undertaken on a monthly basis, which allowed for rapid appraisal and action to be undertaken to identify and address barriers/bottlenecks. The government was already familiar with the methodology and the tools used for barrier and bottleneck analysis. They were highly involved in the review of indicators at mid-year and end of year and very much in favour of aligning monitoring with government and ministry systems. Some 26 out of the 72 targeted villages were declared ODF by the end of 2012. The latrine coverage in the remaining villages almost doubled (see graph below for coverage data from selected villages), and one village has managed to sustain its ODF status for more than 3 months.

Sanitation coverage before & after the ZimCATS project



The elements of MoRES are easier to track and connect than levels. In all countries, elements of MoRES are currently being implemented in more than one sector and across several districts (or equivalent). However, the case studies demonstrate that no country presents evidence that all the elements of the system are necessary, function effectively together, are relevant in all sectors and are having any impact yet on equity.

There is evidence that MoRES can contribute throughout the programme cycle (for example, in the education sector in Morocco) but it is too early to say that these changes will translate

into improvements in equity. More commonly, COs have had to work out how to select and introduce specific elements of MoRES into an already complex planning and data-gathering environment. Finding a fit has been time-consuming everywhere and the challenge has been to ensure that *fitting MoRES* does not slow things down.

There is little evidence that the levels of MoRES are strongly connected. Across the case studies MoRES Level 2 appears to relate to UNICEF-specific systems only, unlike the other levels. Furthermore, at this stage, there is no clear evidence that changes introduced at Levels

1 or 3 will be monitorable through Level 4 approaches. Evaluation with a specific focus on the target groups MoRES is seeking to assist is currently missing from the MoRES system.

In all country cases where elements of MoRES are already in place, there is good evidence that MoRES has refocused emphasis and energy on equity. In these cases (in Indonesia, for example), MoRES has influenced and shaped the current space around planning, monitoring and reporting.

4.5 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF ASSUMPTIONS

The above analysis of the experience of countries implementing MoRES against each of the main elements has surfaced a number of cross-cutting assumptions that underpin MoRES implementation at the country level. The degree to which these assumptions hold will be critical in determining the overall performance of MoRES. The following section presents headline findings based on inferences that can be drawn from the case studies with regard to these cross-cutting assumptions.

Assumption 1: Existing tools to identify the most deprived children are adequate and a standard definition and measure of inequity is not required. This represents an important assumption. Potentially, there is scope for agreeing on an index for measuring child deprivation if definitions and understanding are broadly consistent. This could be based on those in use in a number of the countries studied (for example the *Child Deprivation Index* in Nepal or the *Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index* in the Philippines). The tools used to locate disadvantaged children and measure the extent of their deprivation should be more closely examined to determine consistency and universality of application. Linked to the analysis of deprivation is the notion of coverage and whether this represents a useful indicator of equity or is too closely tied to a service delivery perspective.

Assumption 2: Targeting of resources to segments of the population is acceptable to governments and partners. Most countries accept the need to prioritise support for the most disadvantaged children; but there are some cases where deprivation is so universal that the needs of the wider population cannot be overlooked by government.

Assumption 3: The MoRES system and its elements are technically coherent and robust. This does not stand up well to scrutiny. Two examples: some countries have added, combined or reduced the number of determinant in the DF; the use of tracer interventions appears to be easier in the health sector where the connections within complex systems are better understood and tracer interventions have already been identified.

Assumption 4: Local technical capability will be sufficient to implement MoRES. Across all case studies, there have been technical challenges in the application of MoRES and short-ages in terms of staff time and government staff availability to undertake the range of activities required by MoRES. There is uncertainty about how to undertake a number of key MoRES activities; for example, how to identify root cause barriers/bottlenecks (specifically, when to stop asking the “why” question to determine the primary cause of a constraint).

Assumption 5: MoRES can work with local data-gathering systems and the data they generate. The case studies have shown that there is variable dependence on local systems; and variable degrees of data accuracy, especially at the local level. Judgment needs to be made locally with regard to the need for support for system building and/or use. Data systems, sampling methodologies and quality assurance limitations vary on a case by case basis and require local judgment in terms of levels of support needed.

Assumption 6: MoRES is affordable and cost-effective. Across the case studies, the resource limitations of governments and, as a result, the



resources that need to be committed by UNICEF, are perceived as a barrier to the scale-up of MoRES, the implementation of corrective actions, and the sustainability of the process. There are some significant government capacity and resource issues impacting on MoRES: for example, in relation to staff turnover and the quality of government information systems. These issues have been flagged up as a challenge to the implementation of MoRES almost universally.

Assumption 7: Partnership is essential to scale-up and buy-in can be secured at a range of levels and locations. Levels of ownership, for example of monitoring, are to some extent constrained by resources and capacity (as described above), but also arguably because of questions over the evidence underlying the approach. Some COs highlight the need to show evidence of successful implementation elsewhere, or demonstrate why MoRES is better than any other framework, before governments will take it up. This need for proof of concept has explicitly informed the introduction and implementation process in some countries. UNICEF is constrained by the need to get buy-in at different levels of decentralisation, and in different sectors against a backdrop of a range of other processes and priorities already in play.

Assumption 8: There is political will to redirect resources based on enhanced evidence relating to deprivation. Autonomy at the local level is limited in some countries; local decision-makers may have very little control over their resource (either because budgets are centralised or because the bulk is spent on salaries). Scale-up process will be different in countries where authority has been decentralised; there is little evidence at present that MoRES as a whole is seen to be affordable.

4.6 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS AGAINST EVALUATION CRITERIA

This final section of the case study analysis reflects upon the findings using the framework of evaluation criteria-based questions highlighted in Chapter 1.

4.6.1 Relevance: Is MoRES Relevant to Country and Sectoral Needs?

MoRES is arguably a neutral approach since the system is essentially a set of tools; it is the commitment to equity that ensures that the MoRES tools are used for equity analysis. For this reason, it has been understood across COs that it is the refocus on equity that should remain the key driver with MoRES or elements of MoRES being applied to this end.

There is good evidence that MoRES is perceived to be relevant to health sector interventions and taken up in this sector. This is perhaps not surprising given the origins of several elements of MoRES within this sector. Other sectors also provided good examples of elements of MoRES being applied, though the country studies identified sectors where the relevance of key elements of MoRES were still deemed to be unproven, particularly child protection.

There are reasonable questions to ask over whether the approach overall is born of a service delivery perspective within the health sector and so naturally aligns to an approach to development which has a strong supply side focus. Note that this is not to say that improved services in the health sector do not require a significant shift in the demand for services also – as is acknowledged by the inclusion of these demand side variables in the determinants framework – but rather that it is easier to generate demand through supply in this sector than in others. If so, this would explain why MoRES has been applied in the health sector to improve heavily supply side dependent interventions, such as immunisation more than in less clearly supply side interventions such as in the child protection sector, for example, where

the focus is more on creating changes in attitudes and behaviours. This would have implications for relevance across contexts and sectors.

Some of the key elements of MoRES have been derived from or built on existing and well-established approaches and processes used by UNICEF at the country level. As a result, there is a relatively high level of reported relevance of some of the key elements of MoRES. Two examples: firstly, in countries where the SitAn has taken place, the application of a 'MoRES lens' is reported to have been very relevant, helping to bolster the overall analysis; secondly, there is strong and widespread ownership and understanding of the concept of barrier and bottleneck analysis (BBA), because BBA was a significant part of ongoing approaches in many countries prior to the introduction of MoRES.

The relevance of 'new' elements of MoRES is less clear. Two examples: firstly, the determinants framework, though relevant in some countries with a high degree of traction within UNICEF and country partners (including national and local governments), has produced mixed evidence regarding its overall applicability or utility elsewhere; secondly, in several countries there were reported difficulties around the practicalities of identifying a single tracer intervention in complex systems and the validity of assessing only this single 'tracer intervention' as a way of identifying performance.

One of the most significant issues with respect to the relevance of MoRES relates to the 'feedback loop'. In particular, there are challenges where the locus of problem analysis and decision-making are different. The country studies highlighted a number of cases where the application of MoRES approaches at the local level may result in data that are not relevant to local-level decision-making. For example, many COs reported serious constraints to responses born of resource shortages, fixed budget allocation cycles and lack of political will among decision-makers. It is most commonly the case that those who perform the data analysis that determines the need for programme adaptation

are not those who would need to make decisions in response to this evidence if budgetary allocations were to change.

In most cases, COs were selecting which key elements of MoRES to introduce based on their assessment of need and utility. With respect to the relevance of *MoRES as a system*, although there are one or two countries where MoRES has been implemented and has introduced changes using all elements, or at 'all four levels' and across all sectors, in the vast majority of countries only certain elements of MoRES have been introduced (usually associated with Level 3), and only one or two sectors had really introduced MoRES as the overarching approach.

4.6.2 Efficiency: What is the Level of Effort and Resource Implications of Implementing MoRES?

MoRES has absorbed considerable time and resources since it was introduced and represents a significant transfer of effort across the organization. Main costs have been associated with putting data-collection and analysis systems in place and financing adjustments to programmes based on the data these systems generate. However, the case studies also highlighted some encouraging examples of adjustments to programming being made that require no new resources and these represent interesting examples of the potential to achieve enhanced equity through efficiencies rather than further resourcing.

Significant costs have been associated with the production of local-level SitAn data surfacing the potentially overwhelming resource implications of conducting Level 1 analysis at the local level. However, in countries where the locus of deprivation is in some districts only, there is good evidence that the use of MoRES analysis has helped focus resources on these areas and, as such will, result in a more efficient approach to national response to resolving childhood deprivation and inequity.



There are also some significant government capacity and resource issues impacting on MoRES: for example, in relation to staff turnover, technical skills and the quality of government information systems. These issues have been flagged up as a challenge to the implementation of MoRES almost universally. Costs of the BBA process have been prohibitive in several of the countries assessed – especially at the local level. The financial implications (and opportunity cost) associated with repeat monitoring and ongoing analysis at the local level have required careful consideration before being promoted. Even in countries where data-collection systems are well developed, there are still capacity issues in relation to the analysis and use of the data. The result is that UNICEF often has to support the monitoring process. This can be expensive, but brings with it the opportunity for country offices to advocate to governments for better data.

A key efficiency concern relates to the complexity and, in some cases, lack of clarity around the tools and approaches proposed in MoRES. Here there is evidence that the level of effort that CO stakeholders have had to expend on understanding and interpreting MoRES has been high and has carried a significant opportunity cost. In some cases, it is not yet clear that issues have been resolved; for example, there is ongoing uncertainty at the country level whether systems should be measuring determinants, intermediate outcomes, barriers/bottlenecks or the delivery of solutions.

MoRES has encouraged cross-sectoral working at the country level because it refocuses attention on the child and not the sector as the locus of concern. There is some evidence that resulting programming in these countries will be more efficient in terms of, for example, avoiding duplication of effort. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the approaches introduced by UNICEF fit with the institutional requirements of the countries in which the organization operates.

4.6.3 Effectiveness: Is MoRES Being Taken Up and Scaled Up?

The lack of a significant body of emergent evidence to demonstrate that the crucial feedback loop is functioning is of concern. Although there is some good evidence of programme adjustment based on revisions to the SitAn and some early evidence of corrective actions being implemented as a result of level 3 monitoring, generally there is insufficient evidence to support an overall finding that evidence-based adjustment is now routinely happening as a result of MoRES. This may be because it is too early in MoRES roll-out to find widespread significant evidence of programme adjustment.

There are significant unresolved issues around who pays for programme adaptation. There is evidence that UNICEF may find itself covering the costs of programme adjustments in the absence of any other funds; in these cases, there is a danger that stakeholders will conclude that this is a rather complex process for the allocation of UNICEF resources.

There is widespread uncertainty across the COs and government partners on a range of technical issues associated with key elements of MoRES. These have undoubtedly undermined the effectiveness of MoRES to date. For example, with the DF, there is evidence of a lack of clarity about a number of key issues relating to its deployment and there was a prevailing sense that if this element of MoRES was simpler, buy-in and adoption might be greater.

Similarly there is a high degree of confusion about the tracer intervention concept and its application in key sectors, and take-up of this element has been less than would have been expected. Finally, the question over whether MoRES requires the identification of indicators of determinants, barriers/bottlenecks or solutions and which and how to include these in existing systems has reduced the effectiveness of MoRES.

Enhanced data access can be very empowering.

There are numerous examples of appropriate tools for decentralised monitoring being effectively deployed by programme implementers. Crucially, these examples were all generated in cases where the capacity to monitor locally already existed, because new approaches worked best when a local system was already in place and could be adjusted to provide the information required for programme adaptation.

Overall, a key issue relating to effectiveness is the concern over the assumption that better data lead to better decisions. This requires testing in each context, because political will cannot be taken for granted. There is currently little to suggest that better evidence alone leads to enhanced equity.

4.6.4 Sustainability: Is MoRES Sustainable: is There Buy-In to MoRES?

UNICEF staff, across the organization, have consistently highlighted resource shortfalls as a key constraint to the ongoing implementation of MoRES. This has, for the most part, been supported by evidence from the country visits – generally in relation to the resources required for data collection in countries where existing information systems are not sufficient to meet the needs of decentralised monitoring and the resources required to support programme adaptation.

Across the case studies, the resource limitations of governments and, as a result, the resources that need to be committed by UNICEF, are perceived as a barrier to the scale-up of MoRES, to the implementation of corrective actions, and to the sustainability of the process. Some COs highlight that they would not have been able to implement MoRES even at the current pilot scale without the additional funds provided from HQ, and emphasise that ongoing resourcing will be required if they are to continue implementing and promoting MoRES .

There is a risk that MoRES may become too demanding for governments to own and implement, given the presently limited availability of government resources in many case study

countries. Evidence from the country case studies also underscore the importance of government and partner buy-in. The case studies show that there is at least some engagement of national governments with MoRES (or component(s) of MoRES) in each context in which MoRES has been introduced. Most commonly, there is evidence of involvement with specific processes or *elements* of MoRES, such as barrier and bottleneck analyses and the identification of corrective actions – rather than with a level of MoRES or MoRES as a *system*.

However, there is also evidence of technical confusion and capacity shortfalls linked to the assumption around minimal awareness levels relating to results-based management – both within UNICEF and across partnerships. Given the crowded space that UNICEF occupies in many countries, it is a testament to the operational intelligence of the UNICEF COs that each has found a way to apply MoRES.

However, there is currently limited evidence that this engagement translates, or will translate, into ongoing commitment by national governments to MoRES in the shape of resource allocation. This suggests uncertainty over whether the implementation of MoRES would be sustained if UNICEF were not driving the process.

4.6.5 Impact: Will MoRES Make a Difference to Equity?

It is relatively early in the implementation of MoRES to look for signals that equity outcomes will improve as a result of MoRES. The country studies have highlighted some evidence of improved equity targeting – at both the national and local levels – as a result of situation analysis in a number of countries. In addition, there are a number of good examples that show how barrier and bottleneck analysis and results-based management processes have improved as a consequence of the introduction of MoRES. In these cases, it seems reasonable to assume that improved equity-focused targeting will result, and indeed there are a few examples of programme adaptation where IOs represent solutions to barriers/bottlenecks that have been very specifically linked to a key deprivation.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

MoRES has enhanced motivation and conviction regarding the refocus on equity. MoRES has helped operationalise the equity focus (including the mapping and analysis of deprivations), which was critical to UNICEF before MoRES was introduced. There is compelling evidence that Level 1 analysis has helped shape national programmes towards equity targets in some countries.

There is widespread support for equity across governments and partners. In many countries, MoRES has been introduced on 'fertile ground': a number of the national governments of countries studied in this evaluation were noted to have an equity focus that pre-dated MoRES, and/or there had previously been studies conducted on patterns of deprivations or vulnerability within country. However, there is some discomfort with focusing on the most disadvantaged children in areas where poverty levels are generally high.

Context makes a difference, particularly in terms of the scale and scope of deprivation challenges, level of local autonomy and accessibility to local areas (especially in fragile countries). A variety of entry points have been used to suit the varied contexts in which MoRES has been applied. The variable institutional context in which UNICEF operates is a fundamental consideration in determining which elements of MoRES apply and how.

Although the robustness of existing systems for planning and monitoring may vary according to the country context, MoRES is almost never being introduced on to a 'blank page.' The quality of existing data-gathering systems is a significant factor in the applicability and affordability of MoRES, as is the capability level and stability of local government staff.

Compatibility with existing approaches and systems is a facilitating (or limiting) factor. Where MoRES has introduced new approaches,

this has presented COs with process and technical challenges that relate to the demands on UNICEF and government resources and capacity. It has been especially challenging to translate the MoRES approach into forms that meet the varying needs of governments and local stakeholders, who in many cases have established ways of doing things.

The implication that MoRES is a system that works rather than a way of thinking that might add value to systems and processes already in operation has created challenges for COs in terms of its presentation to government and partners and its application across a variety of contexts. MoRES is received well by national governments and partners when presented as a commitment to support evidence-based decision-making for enhance equity using or building on existing systems.

There has been a considerable transfer of effort to MoRES across UNICEF and MoRES has required heavy investment of UNICEF time and human resources. COs have made a concerted effort to implement MoRES and have been flexible and adaptable in their approach. They have been conscious of and conscientious with regard to the need to integrate elements of MoRES with existing systems. UNICEF COs have had to be very strategic in their approach to implementing MoRES, in order to promote acceptance and adoption of MoRES, (or elements of the approach), by national governments and partners. There is evidence from all COs that they have been at least partly successful in this introductory process. Strategies that have assisted in securing ownership include:

- **Rebranding MoRES:** MoRES has been reframed to align with country-level priorities, rebranded to appeal within the context, or has not been introduced as a system but rather as key principles;

- Demonstrating early proof of concept: clear consideration has been given to the need to demonstrate results in order to gain government buy-in, informing aspects such as the sectors chosen for implementation and the interventions selected for monitoring;
- Making strategic selection of entry points: there are a number of examples where UNICEF COs have shown judicious use of opportunities at the country level to introduce MoRES, particularly in relation to acceptance and ownership.

Implementing MoRES has shown that various MoRES elements have been usefully and productively applied. SitAn at the appropriate level of decentralisation represents a critical contribution by MoRES from the perspective of locating the most disadvantaged children. However, evaluation with a focus on the specific target groups MoRES has been designed to assist is missing from the current frame.

There are unresolved technical challenges that signal a need for stronger guidance. Issues that have raised particular challenges include indicator selection, frequency of monitoring, the use of tracer interventions, the validity of the minimum bottleneck principle and the efficacy of coverage as a cross sector concept and a defining expression of equity.

Although there is considerable evidence of additional data-gathering, there is as yet limited evidence of the feedback loop in operation leading to programme adaptation. This is linked to resource constraints and the political will of national governments. Complex/fragmented planning and finance cycles in many countries and highly centralised budgets further exacerbate the problems.

Government buy-in and investment is a vital consideration for scale-up, requiring that MoRES can demonstrate that it strengthens or adds value to, rather than replaces government systems and processes. Governments generally lack the capacity (human and financial resources) to undertake all MoRES activities. Evidence from the country case studies shows that there is at least some engagement of national governments with MoRES (or component(s) of MoRES) in each context in which MoRES has been introduced. Most commonly there is evidence of involvement in processes, such as barrier and bottleneck analyses and identification of corrective actions. Given the crowded space that UNICEF occupies in many countries, this is a testament to the work of the UNICEF country offices. However, there is currently limited evidence that this engagement translates, or will translate, into commitment by national governments to the process in the shape of resource allocation. This suggests uncertainty over whether the implementation of MoRES would be sustained if UNICEF were not driving the process.



CHAPTER 5: INSTITUTIONALISING MoRES

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 describes and assesses the **way that MoRES has been implemented as a 'change process' across UNICEF** and explores **systemic issues which have arisen in relation to the roll-out of MoRES as a corporate priority**. The chapter focusses on the way in which UNICEF has implemented MoRES and the **organizational and management support that UNICEF provided** to implement MoRES. It looks at this process by reviewing the three main stages of MoRES roll-out to date, namely the **conceptual development**, the **initial roll-out phase**, and a **period of mainstreaming** that is ongoing. In doing this, the chapter addresses issues of **coordination** (i.e. was MoRES well managed in terms of development and roll-out?) and the **coherence** of MoRES (i.e. does MoRES fit with existing systems and tools?). The chapter includes a summary evaluability assessment of MoRES to assist UNICEF in reaching conclusions on the extent to which the impact of MoRES could be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion in the future.

5.1 INTRODUCTION: ANALYSING THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF MoRES

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this assignment posed a number of questions relating to the introduction and management of MoRES. These questions are born of a recognition that the MoRES experience may have as much to do with the institutional context in which it has been rolled out as with the underpinning concepts and country context.

The implementation of MoRES is an example of what is often referred to in the literature as an 'organizational change management initiative'.⁵⁶ Therefore, this chapter focuses on the way in which MoRES, as a major organizational change initiative, has been implemented by UNICEF; considering both how the approach

was introduced and managed, and how it has been integrated with existing systems and structures. A rich source of literature on organizational change has been drawn upon to frame the analysis of the change process⁵⁷ and a number of models have been considered; as well as lessons drawn from change management processes in other development agencies.⁵⁸ This has helped organise and explain information gathered on the institutional change processes and experiences associated with MoRES to date.

In chapter 2, the roll-out of MoRES was broadly divided into three phases: the process of *conceptual development*, the *initial roll-out phase*, and a period of *mainstreaming* that is ongoing. These three phases have been used to structure the analysis in this chapter. In

⁵⁶ Burnes, B. (2004) *Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organisational Dynamics*, 4th edn (Harlow: Prentice Hall).

⁵⁷ The team reviewed multiple change models (for example, the Burke-Litwin model of drivers for change and Lewin's change management model), but concluded that the most appropriate to UNICEF, and more specifically, the context in which MoRES was introduced, were Kotter's '8-steps' model and McKinsey's '7S' Framework.

⁵⁸ Synthesis of lessons learned from Results-based management at UNDP; Results-based management at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland; Implementation of recommendations from the Independent External Evaluation of IFAD; Introduction of a results-oriented approach in the new DFID Business Case; The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).



line with the ToR direction to present findings against standard evaluation criteria, the chapter is also framed to respond to two main questions relating to:

- The **coordination** of MoRES – was MoRES well managed in terms of development and roll-out?
- The **coherence** of MoRES – does MoRES fit with existing systems and tools?

The final part of this chapter looks at the **evaluability of MoRES** and addresses issues relating to the extent to which the overall impact of MoRES can be evaluated in the future.

5.2 ANALYSIS BY PHASE

Phase 1 – Conceptual development

The initial stages of any major organizational change management initiative commonly focus on achieving clarity of the vision for the initiative (defining the purpose of the initiative), identifying the current organizational need for the initiative (often referred to as the process of 'creating a sense of urgency') and galvanising the organization around the initiative (establishing a critical mass of engaged people in the programme).⁵⁹ While not clearly or formally stated in early documentation for the MoRES roll-out, these objectives well describe the 'conceptual development phase' of MoRES.⁶⁰ Specifically there were three related objectives for this phase:

- To position MoRES as one of the key mechanisms through which UNICEF could maximise its contribution to the MDGs and the refocus on equity.

- To create a sense of urgency and demand for MoRES.
- To establish a guiding coalition within UNICEF to take MoRES forward.

There is good evidence that the positioning of MoRES was very successful from an organizational change perspective. From the outset, MoRES was positioned as one of the main vehicles through which the 'equity approach' could be operationalised across UNICEF and was closely associated with the promotion of the broader equity agenda that was a core part of the Executive Director's vision for UNICEF. MoRES was also linked to the drive to make a significant additional contribution to addressing the MDGs in the years leading up to 2015.⁶¹ Thus, MoRES became an organizational priority.⁶² The foundation for the implementation of MoRES as *the* primary way that UNICEF could make a unique and focused contribution to the achievement of the MDGs was provided by the promotion of the equity agenda – as articulated in the 2010 'Narrowing the Gaps' paper and endorsed by subsequent speeches by UNICEF's Executive Director.⁶³

The direct linking of MoRES with the broader equity agenda, and associated push to achieve better results in relation to the MDGs, also contributed to the creation of a strong sense of urgency around MoRES. This sense of urgency was further enhanced by the way responsibility for developing MoRES was allocated. Specifically, a small specialist team was set up in late 2010, explicitly positioned and funded outside regular UNICEF institutional structures. This signalled that the initiative was not business as usual and that the work of this team was a high corporate priority. Similarly

⁵⁹ Kotter, J.P. 1995. Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail. *Harvard Business Review*.

⁶⁰ This assessment is derived from interviews with key personnel and analysis of key process documents

⁶¹ UNICEF, 2010, Narrowing the Gaps to Meet the Goals.

⁶² Evidence from stakeholder interviews conducted in 2013 highlighted that the association between MoRES and the broader equity agenda was clear: many interviewees agreed that MoRES was a key part of the broader equity agenda (and indeed a significant minority of those interviewed felt that the two initiatives were one and the same).

⁶³ Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director First Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board Opening Remarks 7 February 2012.

the creation of a focused development team, made up of staff assigned to the MoRES project from various sections of UNICEF to collaborate on developing and refining key tools (such as the determinants framework), also served to flag the uniqueness of the initiative. People based in UNICEF headquarters over this period report a very significant 'internal buzz' around MoRES at this time. A clear sense of urgency was also engendered by creating very ambitious timelines. The MoRES team, for example, was charged with finalising the determinants framework during an intense period in the summer of 2011 so that MoRES could be linked to the roll-out of VISION later in that year. Such a demanding timetable served to create a very immediate sense of pressure and urgency that was reported by both participants within the development team and their colleagues.⁶⁴

The creation of the 'MoRES development group' has helped to increase cross-sectoral and cross-organizational ownership of MoRES.

The key initial mechanism for engaging a broader group of staff with MoRES was the creation of a cross-departmental and multidisciplinary 'development group' within HQ. The purpose of the core MoRES team and the development group was not only to drive innovation but also to serve to build a coalition that was representative of a number of different sectors, and hence increase the level of ownership of MoRES and galvanise cross-organizational buy-in. Reports from those involved in the process highlight that the MoRES development group was very engaged, taking much from the process back to their areas/departments. In interviews, the majority of those involved highlighted how they valued the opportunity to work

cross-sectorally, and how their involvement had led to better 'ownership' of the concepts underpinning MoRES – despite having some reflections about how the process could have been improved. Participants also flagged that their involvement in the development process enabled them to engage with other colleagues who had not been involved in MoRES and raise awareness – all of which helped to increase the extent of sectoral involvement with MoRES.

There are significant lessons to be learned from the conceptual development phase that will support ongoing roll-out of MoRES and other similar initiatives in UNICEF.

Considerable progress was made during the MoRES conceptual development phase; in particular, in relation to positioning of MoRES, creating a strong sense of organizational urgency around its development and roll-out, and starting to build a guiding coalition to support MoRES. These are significant achievements – especially in light of the well-documented obstacles to change within large and complex institutions⁶⁵ – and are a powerful testament to the incredibly hard work that the team associated with MoRES' development put in over this initial period. However, this formative evaluation has also identified a number of more negative issues that arose during this process:

- 1. Creating false urgency.** This issue describes a situation where a 'false sense of urgency' around an initiative is created with often quite negative consequences.⁶⁶ The main danger is that a sense of urgency necessarily raises very high (and even unrealistic) expectations around an initiative and can mean that if these expectations are not met (or are even

⁶⁴ Key informant interviews.

⁶⁵ For example, constraints of context, capacity, resources, and organizational structure and bureaucracy have been highlighted as challenges to transformation processes within UNICEF and the UN system (Blanchfield, L. 2011. United Nations Reform: U.S. Policy and International Perspectives; Dalberg and UN Global Change Management Support Team. 2009. UN Delivering as One: Report on Change Management Support to Pilot Countries; Quesnel, J.S. 2002. A Roadmap to Change Management In Support Of UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan – Report Of The Ad Hoc Task Group; UNDP. 2006. Institutional Reform and Change Management: Managing Change in Public Sector Organizations – A UNDP Capacity Development Resource).

⁶⁶ Kotter, J.P. 1995. Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail. *Harvard Business Review*.



perceived to have not been met) scepticism can quickly emerge. There is some evidence that this may be happening with MoRES; for example, in a number of interviews with staff it was highlighted that while MoRES had promised much they felt that it had yet to deliver tangible results. Similarly some staff highlighted that delays in key products promised from MoRES (such as guidance notes) had resulted in them feeling increased scepticism about the overall process.

2. Backlash from those not involved. Significant organizational change initiatives – if not handled inclusively – can create a situation of ‘not invented here’ within sections of the organization not closely involved with the change process.⁶⁷ In some respects, this danger was mitigated in UNICEF by the creation of the multi-disciplinary and multi-departmental development team. However, the stakeholder interviews highlighted quite large variations in levels of ownership and engagement of staff. A significant minority of people expressed a level of antipathy – and even antagonism – towards MoRES.

3. Lack of engagement with front line/field staff. Perhaps more significantly, the ‘not invented here’ syndrome was highlighted as a very real concern in relation to the engagement of UNICEF field staff. There is strong evidence – from interviews with both field staff and people based in UNICEF headquarters – that, initially at least, MoRES was very much perceived as an HQ based initiative. Frontline staff reported that they had very limited engagement in the early stages of the conception of MoRES, representing for some both an organizational failing (in terms of getting buy-in) but also a “*missed opportunity to infuse MoRES with diversity*” from an early stage.

4. Issues around management of the MoRES development team. There is some evidence that the initial management of the MoRES development process could have been much better, and that this led to (perhaps avoidable) levels of frustration with the process. Examples provided by staff included lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, issues with failure of the MoRES management team to follow due process (for example, the process of seconding people to the development team and dealing with the funding of resource gaps), unrealistic demands on staff time and work being changed or overruled in a non-transparent manner.

Issues such as these are, in many respects, intrinsic to a process of initiating any major organizational change in a large institution like UNICEF. However, it is important to recognise that there are very real dangers in initiating change processes quickly and that mitigating actions need to be implemented in order to maintain momentum and in some cases (re) engage disaffected staff.

Phase 2 – Roll-out

The roll-out phase of MoRES was centred on the ‘piloting’ of MoRES in ‘workstream one’ countries. The aim of this phase, as articulated in the *Two-year Global Management Plan* circulated within UNICEF in early 2012, was for an initial group of country offices to “*have a functioning, decentralised monitoring system in place for one or more Strategic Results Areas (SRAs) by July 2012*” and for UNICEF to be able to monitor, analyse and report on progress, and document lessons learned.⁶⁸ The intention was that workstream two would follow – with all country offices applying MoRES to one or more SRAs by December 2012. Thus, the first phase of countries was intended to function as a demonstration of feasibility to inform later implementation.

⁶⁷ Nicholas J. Webb, Chris Thoen, 2010, *The Innovation Playbook: A Revolution in Business Excellence*, John Wiley and Sons, 2010.

⁶⁸ The Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) Two-year Global Management Plan (slides), circulated in a Global Broadcast message in April 2012.

The initial introduction of MoRES to workstream one countries during 2012 was crucial in driving forward the implementation of MoRES in UNICEF and functioned to sustain momentum of the roll-out process. While not without their challenges, the tight timelines for introduction and the intensive process of the country visits to promote MoRES facilitated rapid uptake of at least some elements of MoRES. This is evidenced by the findings from the country studies conducted for this evaluation, as well as from the 'Accelerating Results for Deprived Children through level 3 monitoring' report and various regional update presentations produced during 2012. Headquarters staff interviewed described intense visits to countries to introduce and communicate the concepts of MoRES. To a greater or lesser extent, this process supported countries to implement MoRES through hands-on, in-person training by members of the team responsible for developing the system.

The idea of flexible entry points, and initial emphasis on level 3 monitoring also facilitated implementation, by facilitating the achievement of short term wins. These wins were important in keeping momentum and allowing staff to see immediate benefits. Implementing level 3 monitoring (prior to level 1 re-programming) demonstrated the intrinsic value of course corrections based on better evidence. While there were clearly challenges inherent in this process, the rapid and intense nature of the introduction of MoRES in workstream one countries has helped broaden the coalition supporting MoRES as well as fuel the sense of momentum.

The formalisation of management structures has led to the better integration of MoRES into UNICEF's day-to-day operations. As an integral part of the roll-out phase, more formal management structures were put in place for MoRES in early 2012.⁶⁹ This was a necessary step for a number of reasons. Firstly, the 'MoRES team' that developed the concept did not have the

capacity to support the roll-out process across the whole of UNICEF. Secondly, the creation of the management structures for MoRES functioned to engage a number of high level UNICEF staff in the implementation process. Thirdly, the different bodies met specific needs of the change management process – in terms of supporting wider communication (Field Reference Group), responding to requests for support from the field (Coordination and Technical Team) and providing strategic oversight (Steering Committee).

The Regional Offices (ROs) played a key part in facilitating and supporting the roll-out phase. Many of the Country Offices (COs) contacted as part of this evaluation referenced support received from ROs during the implementation of MoRES. In terms of the introduction of MoRES to country offices, while it was the view of some UNICEF staff that the headquarters' teams had not engaged ROs fully during roll-out, or that lines of communication between HQ, RO and CO had been unclear, others noted the joint HQ/RO missions that functioned to sensitise country offices to MoRES and its principles. Similarly, examples of early support available to countries were noted in the form of RO-convened workshops, the development of tools to complement those circulated by headquarters, and attempts to define a common, regional understanding of MoRES and strategies for its implementation. Regional Offices collated valuable evidence to serve as lessons learned relevant for the wider roll-out of MoRES, including that MoRES needed to be simple, practical and flexible to avoid being too resource intensive; that incorporation into national systems would be crucial to success; that clarity on what data were needed was critical but that data collection must translate into action to be meaningful; and that connecting MoRES with internal UNICEF systems and processes would be an important step in terms of institutionalising benefits. It is also clear from the documentation and evidence from case studies that

⁶⁹ The Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) Two-year Global Management Plan (slides), circulated in a Global Broadcast message in April 2012.



ROs continue to be proactive with regards to the ongoing implementation of MoRES, for example through establishing a multi-disciplinary MoRES steering group to guide the process, consolidating learning and sharing documentation and innovations across countries, and supporting country offices in mainstreaming MoRES at different points in the programme cycle. There was some sense from stakeholders interviewed that UNICEF could increase its efforts to engage Regional Offices more systematically in processes linked to MoRES, as part of the ongoing mainstreaming efforts.

The roll-out of MoRES has achieved a number of the objectives that are often recognised as essential in a change management process; namely, communicating the vision, empowering staff, and generating short-term wins to keep momentum. However, the roll-out process was clearly not without issues or challenges:

1. Weaknesses in communication. One of the most consistent messages on the MoRES experience is that internal communication was poor during the early roll-out of MoRES. In terms of the management of the channels of communication, there does not appear to have been a systematic communication strategy. Field staff also expressed confusion over the multiple lines of communication between headquarters, regional offices and country offices; and the lack of a focal point for the field within headquarters was also highlighted as a particular issue.

2. Lack of clarity of concepts. Linked to the issue of communication is the lack of a clear consensus within UNICEF on what MoRES actually is. As highlighted in Chapter 3, there is not yet a clear and universal consensus within UNICEF about whether MoRES is a monitoring system or a programming tool, or both. While some staff felt that the situation had improved, the perception of a number of staff is that issues around clarity of concepts have not yet been fully resolved.

3. Ineffective/inappropriate management structures. Although the management structures set up for MoRES were responding to the

specific needs of the roll-out process, it is unclear that these bodies were as effective as they might have been – there were some references in interviews to irregular meetings, questions over whether the Field Reference Group was the best forum for engaging with the field, and by 2013, confusion over whether the Steering Committee was still in existence or whether its functions had been subsumed into other structures.

4. “Flying while fixing the plane” – MoRES as an evolving concept that is being adjusted along the way. There were multiple references in stakeholder interviews to the continuing evolution of MoRES, even while it was being rolled out. The perception of some staff interviewed was that this process was necessary in order to achieve change in UNICEF. However, equally, the view from some country offices was that constant redefinitions combined with the high speed and process of roll-out and the pressure to show results within six months, meant that they did not have time to consolidate their thinking, gain buy-in from government and partners, and plan a more comprehensive implementation strategy.

5. Lack of engagement with the field. The process of concept development and roll-out was perceived by some people to have been top-down and headquarters driven, with a lack of engagement with the field. To a certain extent, this was mitigated by the management structures put in place during early 2012 and the Nairobi consultation process (see box). However, the Field Reference Group has now been disbanded. Similarly, while the Nairobi meeting clearly generated dialogue that informed later implementation – for example recommendations around mainstreaming – it is unclear to what extent this consultation process has been repeated or whether there is a systematic approach to incorporating feedback from the field. The need to share lessons learned between countries, regions and headquarters was highlighted as a priority by a number of the UNICEF staff interviewed.

The Nairobi meeting in August 2012 was an important milestone in the roll-out of MoRES and in many respects served to mitigate one of the perceived limitations of the earlier development and roll-out process – functioning to provide a forum for countries and regional offices to feedback into the process. The meeting was attended by teams from all regional offices, twenty of the workstream one countries, and headquarters. Progress from workstream one countries was reviewed and shared and there were discussions on how to use these experiences to inform concrete ways to integrate or mainstream MoRES into all UNICEF country offices. The conference resulted in a recognition of the need to communicate a common understanding on what constitutes ‘MoRES’ across UNICEF, the importance of country ownership, the need for attention across all programme areas, an emphasis on taking MoRES beyond UNICEF, and consideration of MoRES in humanitarian contexts. One of the key recommendations was ‘the integration/mainstreaming of MoRES into all aspects of the UNICEF planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.’

Phase 3 – Mainstreaming

Towards the end of 2012, following the Nairobi consultation, the organizational emphasis around MoRES shifted from workstream one countries to ‘mainstreaming’ of MoRES.⁷⁰

There are two key focus areas for the process of mainstreaming MoRES. The first component is essentially *internal* to UNICEF and has been centred on the mainstreaming into existing UNICEF processes, systems and management structures. The second type of mainstreaming is *external* to UNICEF and is focused on mainstreaming MoRES within the wider UN family.

The mainstreaming of MoRES into internal processes and systems has been promoted in three ways: mainstreaming through integration of processes and tools, mainstreaming through increasing flexibility to implement MoRES at the country level, and mainstreaming of MoRES management structures.

1. The integration into existing processes and tools has been the primary mechanism through which MoRES has been mainstreamed into UNICEF’s core business. While some good progress has been made, full integration has not yet been achieved.⁷¹ From the outset, MoRES was intended to be integrated into existing UNICEF systems and processes. Indeed, one of the initial drivers for the very rapid development of MoRES was an attempt to ensure that MoRES coincided with the planned launch (in January 2012) of UNICEF’s new enterprise management system, VISION.⁷² Similarly there have been ongoing efforts to incorporate guidance of MoRES into the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual (PPPM).⁷³ However, by the end of 2012 it was clear that a more concentrated effort was needed in order to better integrate MoRES into existing UNICEF systems, and vice versa. At the HQ level, for example, MoRES was still seen by many as an ‘add on’ to ongoing work and, even in workstream

⁷⁰ DRAFT Mainstreaming the MoRES approach (Monitoring Results for Equity Systems), 10 September.

⁷¹ It is important to recognize that development of coherent guidance, integration of MoRES into the PPP and VISION, etc. have been part of ongoing MoRES mainstreaming work plan which has been undertaken during the period of this evaluation. For example the mainstreaming work was reinvigorated in the third quarter of 2013 and, according to this plan, guidance will now be available in July 2015. Over this period further progress has been made with integrated MoRES into VISION and this is planned to be rolled out in August 2014, along with training materials which have been developed and integrated into PPP training materials.

⁷² VISION is an integrated management system which consists of a single Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and a web-based Performance Management System. It is used to view information, including performance reports, across all levels in UNICEF. The concept of VISION (which replaced ProMS) was to serve as an improved vehicle to enhance UNICEF’s results focus through reporting and, for example, aimed to allow UNICEF to better present annually updated profiles of performance at intermediate result level by programme area and country.

⁷³ The PPPM is UNICEF’s key ‘user guide’ document designed to provide up-to-date guidance on UNICEF programme operations for use by Country Offices (COs), Regional Offices (ROs) and with other UN and external partners and counterparts.



one countries, the level of alignment and integration of MoRES processes with pre-existing UNICEF systems and processes (and vice versa) was not fully complete.

Three main ‘integration approaches’ have been deployed (either explicitly or implicitly) to date. The first approach is to continue to focus on *better embedding MoRES into existing systems and processes*. The second approach is to *better articulate how MoRES builds on, or interfaces with, other existing initiatives and approaches within UNICEF*. The third approach

is one of ‘*incorporation*’ whereby activities (either innovative or existing) are incorporated into MoRES guidance and approaches.

Below, in table 6, is a summary of the issues that emerge from a consideration of each of the three ‘integration strategies’. This analysis highlights that all three integration strategies have made some significant progress in terms of better embedding MoRES into UNICEF activities. However, in some important respects there is more work to do and it would be premature to conclude that complete integration has been achieved.

TABLE 6 MoRES integration approaches

Integration approach	Examples	Issues raised
Making explicit how existing processes can be fully embedded into MoRES and vice versa	<p>Integration of MoRES into VISION</p> <p>Integration of MoRES into the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual (PPPM)</p> <p>Integration of MoRES into PROS for Annual Reviews, Mid-Term Reviews and new Country Programme Document development, as well as UNICEF’s 2014-2017 Strategic Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of MoRES through VISION provides incentive to take data quality seriously. • Country case studies highlighted that MoRES had yet to be completely incorporated in reporting and analysis through VISION reporting. • Initial implementation of MoRES linked to Strategic Result Areas (SRAs), and the shift to focus on Intermediate Results (IRs), has resulted in some confusion, and challenges remain, for example linked to indicator selection. • MoRES is covered in the PPPM and does not appear as an add-on; however, analysis identified some areas where the incorporation of MoRES could be developed or clarified. There is a need to ensure that MoRES is not a “programming approach that sits on top of an already comprehensive programming approach.”
Articulating how MoRES builds on, or interfaces with, other initiatives and approaches within UNICEF	<p>Situating MoRES within the Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP)</p> <p>Using MoRES to better promote Results-based management (RBM)</p> <p>Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) overlaps with MoRES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoRES and the HRBAP are compatible – prior to MoRES, the equity focus was addressed as part of the HRBAP in ensuring that human rights apply to all children. However, there is a persistent lack of clarity in some staff around the interaction between the two. • In relation to RBM, there has been a good level of success in terms of demonstrating how elements of MoRES can be deployed as a tool to better achieve RBM. • Similarly, where MBB has been rolled out in countries, case studies highlighted how MoRES was able to build on the work already done or advocate for principles of MBB.
Incorporation Integrating existing UNICEF activities into MoRES	<p>Inclusion of Real-time Monitoring for the Most Vulnerable (RTMMV) as a key L3 MoRES tool</p> <p>Use of Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) as a key L3 MoRES tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of key monitoring ‘tools’ such as RTMMV and LQAS has highlighted how MoRES can provide a conceptual ‘shell’ for utilising innovative approaches and tools. In some cases there have been issues relating to attempts to ‘retrofit’ existing approaches into MoRES (e.g. RTMMV) and in other cases there has been a reported reluctance to ‘dilute’ or undermine approaches by subsuming them into MoRES.

2. The second main internal mainstreaming approach that has been recently deployed has been the increased emphasis on a high level of flexibility for countries themselves to identify how, and in what way, MoRES can be integrated into their ongoing work. This recent approach appears to have enabled good innovation at country level. As highlighted in chapter 4, a finding of the in-depth country studies was that UNICEF COs recognise that “there cannot be a one size fits all rule for the application of MoRES.”⁷⁴ Flexibility has resulted in a number of countries taking greater ownership of MoRES and finding different ways to integrate the approach into their ongoing processes, with resulting emergent examples of significant efforts being made to actively mainstream MoRES into UNICEF country programmes.⁷⁵

3. The third approach to mainstreaming that has been deployed has been the recent integration of MoRES management and leadership into existing management structures in UNICEF HQ. While too early to assess the success of this approach, it clearly represents a necessary positive step. The ‘re-integration’ of the headquarters team that was responsible for the conceptualisation and roll-out of MoRES across the workstream one countries, into Programme Division (which was announced in May 2013) seems to be a necessary step to mitigate the confusion around focal points for MoRES within headquarters and emphasises that MoRES is now UNICEF’s ‘core business’.

A parallel mainstreaming focus has been the external promotion of MoRES to partner governments and other UN agencies. As

highlighted in the quote below, this has been an explicit objective since early 2012:

“MoRES can be one of the important ways we support the priorities and programmes of our partner governments. And, in our partnerships with our sister UN agencies, it can strengthen our ability to Deliver As One. If agencies working in each area monitor more closely their collective results, it will encourage them to plan and act in closer collaboration – deepening the focus of Deliver as One where it should be: on results.”
Anthony Lake Executive Board; 2012

There are two closely related ways in which UNICEF has worked to achieve mainstreaming of MoRES outside UNICEF. The first is to work at the central level with UN agencies globally to position MoRES as a key standard approach for UN country teams’ support to governments – e.g. through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).⁷⁶ The second approach is to directly encourage UNICEF COs to seek to ‘promote’ MoRES to UN agencies in country as a way to coordinate their work with governments.

At a central level, there is an acknowledgement of the importance of cross UN agency collaboration and a common commitment to equity approaches to work towards the Millennium Development Goals.

UNICEF is not alone in its commitments to equity; the UNICEF refocus on equity launch coincided with the 2010 United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was convened to adopt a global action plan to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs. This plan took the shape of an MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF), designed

⁷⁴ Briefing note, Enhanced Programming and Results through Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES), February 1 2013.

⁷⁵ Two good examples of this are Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

⁷⁶ The UNDAF is the strategic programme framework for the UNCT. It describes the collective response of the UNCT to the priorities in the national development framework – priorities that may have been influenced by the UNCT’s analytical contribution. Its high level expected results are called UNDAF outcomes. These show where the UNCT can bring its comparative advantages to bear in advocacy, capacity development, policy advise and programming for the achievement of MD/MDG related national priorities.



to systematically support countries to focus on disparities and inequalities by particularly responding to the needs of the most vulnerable⁷⁷ and to identify and analyse barriers and bottlenecks and prepare solutions to achieving the MDGs. The UNICEF focus on equity and the United Nations' Development Group (UNDG) MAF are mutually reinforcing⁷⁸ and UNICEF continues to collaborate with other UN agencies (particularly UNDP and UNFPA) to ensure that institutional approaches and offers of support to governments are based on common principles and practices.⁷⁹

MoRES and the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF)

MAF is a tool to support governments in efforts to accelerate progress towards identified MDG targets developed by UNDP and endorsed by UNDG. Conceptually MAF is a flexible yet systematic way of identifying, analysing and prioritising barriers/bottlenecks that are limiting the impact of interventions. MAF supports design of national policies and action plans, and in practice MAF has been shown to be most effective when there is national ownership and strong political commitment around the identified off-track MDG.

There are significant overlaps with MoRES and MAF: both concepts share a common purpose and approach – a complementary focus and conceptual framework (barrier and bottleneck approach); however, MAF focus on national policies while MoRES focuses on decentralised implementation and monitoring.

At a headquarters level particularly, it is clear that there is recognition of the overlap and potential synergies between MoRES and the MAF and that considerable effort has been put into achieving policy cohesion across UN bodies in this area. This was well illustrated in the joint letter from the Executive Director/Principals of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA that was distributed, in January 2013, to 'Delivering as One' (DaO) countries that were implementing MoRES and/or MAF, emphasising the need for country teams to focus on finding synergies between the two approaches. The letter also referenced Standard Operating Procedures for DaO, which call for a 'joint approach to monitor development barriers/bottlenecks to accelerate results, especially for the most vulnerable and deprived population groups.' While this letter serves to reinforce the importance of collaboration within UN Country Teams, and there has been some encouraging progress at country level, in most cases is still too early to draw firm conclusions on the level to which MoRES has been integrated into either UNDAFs or government systems.

Evidence from the case study countries studied as part of this evaluation on the integration and collaboration with other UN and multilateral agencies on MoRES is mixed. It is clear that UNICEF country offices recognise the value of partnerships to the implementation of MoRES – many are partnering with national organizations for data collection processes, and there are a number of examples that demonstrate the potential for cross-agency collaboration on MoRES.⁸⁰ However, arguably, this was not considered early enough in the implementation process and in a sufficiently systematic way – the perception from many of the UNICEF staff interviewed was that MoRES had been

⁷⁷ http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg_goals/acceleration_framework/

⁷⁸ Programme, Policy and Procedure Manual, Programme Operations, 2012.

⁷⁹ UNICEF UN Coherence Newsletter, Issue 5, February 2013.

⁸⁰ For example, other donors funding the roll-out of MoRES, as in the case of Haiti; collaboration with partners to increase the geographic scope of implementation, as in Zambia and DRC; or UNICEF working with partners to find common ground in terms of approaches to equity, real-time monitoring or local level planning, as in the case of Bangladesh and Malawi.

conceived as a UNICEF approach, which had not taken sufficient account of the need to reconcile with other systems. This is supported by some of the early guidance which was framed as to 'mobilize partner support for MoRES.' A survey of workstream one countries in 2012 found that 100% of countries were partnering with governments, but only 38% were partnering with other UN agencies and 60% with other development partners.⁸¹ The evidence from the case studies conducted as part of this evaluation similarly suggests that the drive for collaboration or integration from the top has not always translated to the national level – with resulting issues for gaining government buy-in (given the quantity of other systems), sustainability (given that UNICEF cannot fund MoRES implementation *ad infinitum*) and potential impact.

It is clear that, while there is evidence of progress in mainstreaming, the integration and alignment of MoRES with existing systems, and vice versa, is a work in progress for UNICEF, with a number of key ongoing issues:

1. The need to resource continuing mainstreaming efforts. The key message from analysis of mainstreaming with internal UNICEF systems is that, while some good progress has been made, this aspect of MoRES mainstreaming is still very much an ongoing effort and further work is required. For example, there is a need for one set of coherent guidance on MoRES, a need for clarity on the interface between MoRES and the HRBAP, and the full integration of MoRES within VISION. In some cases, MoRES has not yet been comprehensively integrated (for example, the PPPM) and in other cases there is possibly a hint of opportunism – whereby existing approaches have been 'squeezed' in to the MoRES framework.⁸²

2. The lack of a clear strategy for mainstreaming. Perhaps one of the main overriding concerns relating to the attempts to mainstream MoRES

is in relation to the overall *lack of clarity* of how integration should be strategised. The categorisation used in the analysis above was developed for the purposes of this evaluation. However, UNICEF has yet to develop a clear and documented approach on how the mainstreaming of MoRES through integration of systems could be systematically strategised and articulated (for example, approaches to be deployed in relation to different processes and tools) and as such there is a concern that, to date, the approach taken has been one that is more ad hoc and reactive than systemised.

3. Balancing flexibility with clarity. One downside of increased flexibility at country level has been that this approach has potentially exacerbated the level of confusion around how MoRES fits with existing UNICEF processes and tools. In some cases the emphasis on flexibility was perceived by staff as covering for lack of adequate guidance and clarity on how to actually operationalise MoRES.

4. Mainstreaming into UNICEF's culture. There is a need to ensure that MoRES is mainstreamed into UNICEF culture and becomes 'core business' – there is still a perception from some staff that MoRES is just the current organizational priority and will be replaced by a new one in due course. This represents a barrier to the comprehensive commitment of UNICEF staff to MoRES, or at least elements of MoRES – with downstream implications for implementation, advocacy to partners, and the potential for MoRES to impact on equity.

5. The need for long term resourcing for MoRES implementation. Chapter 4 has highlighted that, in many countries, resources are a substantive constraint to the implementation of MoRES at country level. The costs to UNICEF are exacerbated in cases of low government resources and/or capacity. Workstream one

⁸¹ Undertaken as part of the collation of the Accelerating Results for Deprived Children through Level 3 Monitoring, Work-stream One Country Report, 2012.

⁸² For example, the use of LQAS.



countries received funding from UNICEF's '7%' discretionary fund'⁸³; however, this is not a sustainable approach to resourcing as the number of countries increases, and may perpetuate negative perceptions of MoRES' longevity.

5.3 EVALUATING MoRES IN THE FUTURE

As MoRES becomes more mainstreamed within UNICEF's core business and elements of it are integrated into the wider UN system, UNICEF will need to consider if and how to assess its contribution to organizational performance, to the equity agenda and to other targets. The evaluation team has considered the 'evaluability' of MoRES within this assignment and has considered the extent to which the impact of MoRES could be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion in the future. The assessment has considered the evaluability of MoRES from three perspectives; intervention design, data availability and institutional context.

In terms of intervention design for MoRES, the high level of complexity inherent in the design of MoRES means that there will always be significant concerns about the degree to which it can be fully evaluated in terms of impact.⁸⁴ The overall 'intervention design' for MoRES is complex and multifaceted with many critical assumptions and linkages with external processes. While this report has attempted to clarify the MoRES design (for example, in making explicit the 'elements' of MoRES), there is not yet an organization wide consensus on this.

While there is significant information available to support a future impact evaluation of MoRES, a number of major gaps remain. The nature of the intervention means that experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation designs are unlikely, so there is a far greater need to generate information on process and the changes in outcomes of interest, along with other plausible external explanations for observed changes in these outcomes on a case study basis. In addition the scarcity of accurate costing data for MoRES 'inputs' – both financial, but especially in terms of personnel time – means that conducting a reliable cost-effectiveness analysis of MoRES as a system will be very difficult.⁸⁵

It is not possible to draw a firm conclusion in terms of the future evaluability of MoRES in relation to the institutional context. The key issue here is the extent to which UNICEF as an institution will, in the future, prioritise the implementation of a major impact evaluation of MoRES. It may be that the organization will put a very high priority on generating a more thorough understanding of the overall impact of MoRES (for example, in relation to achievements in terms of the equity agenda). However it is perhaps more likely that the evaluative focus will be on the way elements of MoRES have contributed to the achievement of the new UNICEF strategy.⁸⁶

The key conclusion in terms of evaluability is that there will be very significant – and perhaps insurmountable – issues with trying to assess or evaluate the impact of MoRES as a 'single entity' or system in the future. Specifically, the assertion that MoRES is in fact comprised of a

⁸³ Budget Approximation for MoRES (2012-2013).

⁸⁴ Evaluability in this area can be increased by a) putting in place clear processes to ensure stakeholder validation of the MoRES intervention design (as, for example, articulated in chapter 3) and b) further elaborating and unpacking the critical stages in the MoRESToC with particular emphasis on identifying key assumptions and contextual requirements for MoRES to be successful.

⁸⁵ The level of evaluability in this area can be increased by putting in place robust data collection processes to allow measurement against key indicators identified. This will also be important in relation to generating data on assumptions and contextual/influencing factors. The fact that there is no clear way in which control groups can be identified means that design options for an impact evaluation are significantly constrained.

⁸⁶ The EO will need to re-look at objectives for such an evaluation and carry out an utilisation focused assessment of who will be interested in the evaluation findings and the degree to which findings will leverage influence above and beyond, for example, this formative evaluation.

number of key 'elements' which can be implemented in different ways in different contexts – and, critically, do not all need to be implemented together – means that a better way to approach evaluation of the impact of MoRES might be to focus on evaluating specific elements of MoRES. Alternatively, as MoRES mainstreaming continues, it may make greatest sense to absorb the evaluation of MoRES into core evaluation processes, such as the evaluation of the CPDs at country level and the Strategic Plan globally.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the MoRES experience from an institutional perspective has created a rich source of learning for UNICEF on how to successfully roll out corporate priorities, strategic programmes or organizational transitions. Unpacking and analysing what has worked and what has not in relation to a major organizational change initiative like MoRES can potentially provide invaluable insights which can be drawn upon, not only by UNICEF but by other similar organizations, to support future similar initiatives.

MoRES was positioned and developed in a way that facilitated considerable momentum around the approach within UNICEF. Significant progress was made during the development phase of MoRES; in particular, in relation to positioning of MoRES, creating a strong sense of organizational urgency around its development and roll-out, and starting to build a guiding coalition to support MoRES. These are considerable achievements – especially in light of the well documented obstacles to change within large and complex institutions – and are a powerful testament to the incredibly hard work that the team associated with MoRES' development put in over this initial period.

Perceptions among some staff concerning the MoRES development process still represent a barrier to universal buy-in. While the conceptual development and positioning facilitated significant momentum within UNICEF, perceptions among some staff indicate that it could have been done better. More particularly, there were issues around the refinement and development of a clear concept and vision. The strong sense of urgency that was created around the MoRES roll-out may have raised high expectations around the initiative, leading to potential questioning by some staff. A more participatory process involving frontline and field staff, as well as a clearer management structure, would have strengthened organizational buy-in.

The roll-out of MoRES was not coordinated well in the early stages and this has been damaging to the MoRES 'brand'. Implementation, communication and consultation processes were widely reported to be inadequate in the early stages in particular and, while they have improved, they are still not perceived as optimal. There have been significant – and potentially critical – problems with the roll-out phase and this has resulted in a very high level of expressed discontent amongst stakeholders with respect to the way MoRES has been rolled out. The main reasons for this seem to relate to the lack of a clear communications or engagement strategy and an ongoing focus on continuously developing and refining the actual system, while rolling it out. The approach of rapidly rolling out MoRES in 27 workstream one countries and using largely the same team that led the development of MoRES were also significant contributory factors to the problems experienced in this phase.

Despite the challenges, there is a very high level of positive country engagement with MoRES. The relatively large scale roll-out and increasing flexibility that has been afforded to country staff to innovate around MoRES means that this engagement has continued.



The drive to 'mainstream' MoRES internally within UNICEF is still a work in progress. While some significant work has been done recently, and there is evidence of progress in mainstreaming, the integration and alignment of MoRES with existing systems, and vice versa, is still a work in progress for UNICEF. In terms of integration, the evaluation found evidence of a range of different 'approaches' that have been deployed (either explicitly or implicitly) by UNICEF to better integrate MoRES into existing systems and these have achieved different levels of success. It was not clear, however, that these approaches together make up a coherent and planned 'integration strategy' for MoRES.

UNICEF recognises the importance of partnership in the implementation of MoRES, and there are clear efforts to engage governments, and in some cases donor partners, in the processes at country level. This is backed up by support for

cross-organizational working at the top levels of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. However, arguably, methods of integration and alignment with other systems were not considered at an early stage in the conception of MoRES –this, combined with the short timelines for implementation during early roll-out, has in some cases meant that partnerships with UN agencies and other development partners at country level are only at a nascent stage.

Evaluating the overall impact of MoRES as a system in the future will be very difficult. This is mainly due to issues with ongoing lack of clarity in the MoRES design, lack of data availability and the fact that generating any coherent counterfactual will be very challenging. On this basis it is reasonable to anticipate that there will be very significant challenges associated with a future assessment, or impact evaluation, of MoRES.



CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CHAPTER 6

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the evaluation team concludes that the introduction of MoRES has “shaken” UNICEF in a number of positive and sometimes not so positive ways and that the aim of the mainstreaming phase now should be to take from the experience that which most supports UNICEF to meet its mandate and mission for children. The following conclusions are intended to help meet that aim.

1. Conceptually, MoRES is *relevant* to the refocus on equity, providing UNICEF with an operational means to act on its strategic commitment to do more to meet the needs of the world’s most disadvantaged children. The urgent needs of disadvantaged children were known and recognised by UNICEF before the refocus on equity and the implementation of MoRES. However, the refocus on equity served to draw the organization’s attention to the persistence of deprivations for the most disadvantaged children. It also required UNICEF to better understand the nature of, and solutions to, the barriers to equitable development and signalled the need for an evidence base – as well as a logical and ethical case – on which to build enhanced efforts to reach children living beyond the margins of development. MoRES responded to this need.

The 2010 refocus on equity was a UNICEF-wide call to action. It created renewed, sharpened and more determined intent across the organization to operate with greater purpose and effect on behalf of the world’s most disadvantaged children. Inevitably, such a refocus raised questions about how this enhanced effect could be achieved, challenging the organization to consider whether there were gaps in its own knowledge, particularly of the location of the most marginalised children; of the nature and reason for the persistent deprivations to which they are exposed; and of the interventions that would support their development. It called for a reflection on what needed to change, how to break through the barriers preventing

benefits reaching the ‘hardest to reach’ children and whether new approaches were needed to enhance or accelerate progress. MoRES was a response to these questions but was never presented as an immediate and comprehensive solution. Rather, MoRES evolved as an approach, shaped by a commitment to meet the challenge presented to the organization by the refocus on equity. MoRES represents UNICEF’s conviction and preparedness to do more to locate, understand, support and retain focus on the urgent needs of the world’s youngest and most disadvantaged people.

2. The *relevance* of MoRES to individual countries cannot be established without some political and economic analysis of the specific context in which deprivations for disadvantaged children endure. The fundamental assumption on which MoRES is based is that generating better data will result in better targeted programmes and ultimately enhanced equity. However, there are early indications that resource availability and political will are also decisive factors. Overall, the relevance of MoRES can only be determined once the incentives which drive behaviour within the political context in which its potential benefits are offered are fully understood.

In many ways UNICEF’s own programme management systems are the origins of the premise on which MoRES is based. A traditional focus on input-output monitoring plus impact surveys had created a data gap that MoRES in its early manifestation sought to address. ‘Early MoRES’ focused on the missing middle – or intermediate outcomes – and the barriers and bottlenecks that might prevent their realisation. In this way, the first version of MoRES represented an approach that would provide UNICEF with ‘early warning’ data that would signal whether programmes were likely – or not – to be effective. However, given that MoRES acts in partnership and not in isolation and through government systems rather than its own, the need to encourage wider engagement

and ownership (of what was being referred to as 'level 3 monitoring') soon became apparent. As did the realisation that, while an enhanced evidence base might be sufficient for UNICEF to act with greater effect on behalf of children, this might not be sufficient for national governments and partners – not least because of their wider mandates and limited resources. This is borne out by experience to date, which suggests that even when a considerable body of new and robust evidence on which to base programme adaptation is available, such changes are rarely made unless UNICEF finances them. This may be due to a lack of resource, but can also relate to a lack of political will. The inference from the evaluation case studies is that an evidence-focused approach, while necessary, may not be sufficient to realise the higher ambitions of MoRES: politics and economics as well as information play a major role in how decisions are made.

3. The *relevance* of MoRES is determined by the extent to which MoRES takes account of the political, institutional as well as the development context in which it operates. The variable political and institutional context in which UNICEF operates is a fundamental consideration in determining which elements of MoRES apply and whether they are likely to make a difference. A finding of the evaluation is that better data do not always lead to better decision making. Institutionally, it is also particularly important to acknowledge not only government systems but also institutional mandate when seeking to add value through MoRES initiatives.

Government organizations with which UNICEF partners are almost always sectorally focused, suggesting that a single sector focus, rather than a child-centric one, might be the most pragmatic basis for providing support. That said, there is clear evidence that a strong situation analysis, particularly at the appropriate level of decentralisation, provides UNICEF and its partners with a sound basis not only for both programming and advocacy but for presenting evidence on the needs of the child across a range of deprivations. Sitting 'outside MoRES'

– at least in the initial guidance – was the notion of scale-up through government rather than UNICEF systems; from the perspective of sustainability, this need for scale-up also raises critical issues around administrative structures (mandates, level of decentralisation), ownership, existing systems, technical capability and affordability. COs have been most successful when they have shaped MoRES to fit within the institutional context of mandated government ministries, departments and agencies, each of which are 'constrained' by single sector authority and resource limitations.

4. MoRES will not deliver its full potential (*efficiently or effectively*) until UNICEF is clearer about what MoRES 'is' and how it should be applied. As the operational response to the refocus of equity, MoRES conveys a significant promise to deliver results. For this to happen, there needs to be a clear and common understanding of what MoRES actually 'is' and how it can best be presented and implemented.

Consensus within UNICEF on the overall definition and purpose of MoRES has not yet been reached and there remain significant clarification issues with regard to how MoRES is presented and understood across the organization. Breaking MoRES down into its key constituent elements and unpacking the conceptual underpinnings of each of these elements may be a better way of helping to achieve this clarity and allow stakeholders to better understand the opportunities presented by the different elements proposed.

5. The complexity of MoRES as an initiative has created challenges to *efficiency*. Managing concerns over a "new" system and dealing with technical challenges has absorbed time and money. MoRES has been presented as a complex and dynamic system. This has created challenges in terms of understanding, implementation and buy-in, leading to inefficiencies in operation and lowering the potential effectiveness of MoRES. COs and government partners alike have struggled to understand MoRES and significant technical challenges remain unresolved.



An overarching complexity challenge relates to the framing of the commitment to evidence-based decision-making as a named system – MoRES. This has branded the initiative as a UNICEF one in many countries and presented COs with a problem in terms of building government and partner ownership and buy-in. Experience now suggests that it makes most sense to add elements to existing country systems rather than introduce (or even name) new ones. Many of the key elements of MoRES – including situation analysis, barrier and bottleneck analysis and household surveys (MICS) were already well-tried ways of working for UNICEF and partners prior to the introduction of MoRES. Building on and enhancing what was already working makes sense – but the implication of the new approach called MoRES is that the new *combination* of innovative and improved elements is important. This remains unproven: in terms of the elements of MoRES, it is clear that some still require testing, refinement and enhanced guidance to ensure that the basis for their applicability and their application are sufficiently tested and understood. Priorities here are the notion of coverage in countries where service delivery is not the main aim; the application of the determinants framework, particularly in fragile and conflict affected states; the idea of the tracer intervention in sectors where complex systems are not well understood; and the concept of a minimum bottleneck and the linked notion of bottleneck weightings. Furthermore, despite the complexity of ‘the system’, experience to date suggests that not all the elements for evidence-based targeting are present in the current MoRES system. For example, there is no guidance or tool to help identify ‘proven interventions,’ although they are mentioned in MoRES documentation. Further, it is not clear that all of the elements of the system work as predicted – for example, the MoRES feedback loop does not seem to lead easily to programme adaptation for a range of resourcing, administrative and political reasons (as explained above). All that said, there are some important elements to MoRES which add significant value when they fill a gap in existing systems, particularly barrier

and bottleneck analysis. No country is a blank canvas and it makes best sense to work with, and strengthen, existing systems rather than replace them. The elements of MoRES (which can be added to and enhanced over time) can provide a rich source and efficient way to add value when used selectively.

6. The effectiveness and likely impact of MoRES will remain unproven without better evidence of where and how MoRES has and has not delivered meaningful early signals of reduced inequity – and why. COs have done well in adopting the parts of MoRES which are likely to add most value in their contexts. However, better understanding which elements of MoRES work best, in which contexts and in which sectors from the perspective of rapid results for equity, lies at the heart of securing best value from the commitment made to MoRES to date and will support the most meaningful roll-out.

Overall, given the range of contexts in which MoRES works, it is arguable that MoRES as a system is *less than the sum of its parts* – not necessarily because all the parts are not necessary to the theory of change, but because many of the parts are already in place and owned (and ownership is key to sustainability) and because context matters in terms of what can be absorbed at what pace and at what cost. In all contexts, however, the efficacy of the feedback process in terms of programme adaptation requires close observation to confirm that evidence-based decision-making can be achieved through the provision of improved evidence alone. Better knowledge management arrangements are needed to tap the significant experience being gained at the country level. Communication and advocacy tools would also be helpful to support roll-out and partnership building.

7. Resourcing for MoRES is a key sustainability issue – UNICEF cannot afford to resolve all systems gaps in the countries in which it works nor pay for the adaptation of all programmes. The introduction of MoRES to date has helped identify considerable weaknesses in planning and monitoring systems

across many of the countries in which MoRES has been implemented as well as weak technical capabilities with regard to results based management. Resolving all of these shortfalls as a means to an end would represent a significant diversion of resources and potentially lead to a serious delay in reaching children, since such systems improvements take time to translate into benefits for children.

However, monitoring systems play a critical role with regard to evidence gathering which can lead to consciousness raising and resource allocation. COs are already adept at making strategic investment decisions based on the likely benefit of systems upgrading on a country-by-country basis – local or regional autonomy to make these decisions is an important aspect of accountability for results. However, COs are also aware that governments and partners alike, quite reasonably, are concerned about making commitments to new processes which are not yet proven. Dealing with proof of concept challenges (through piloting) before promoting scale-up is vital. In contexts where enhanced systems and evidence make no difference, more thought needs to be given to what to do to bridge the gap between evidence and action. In all contexts, it is important that the focus remains firmly on equity and not simply on systems building.

8. Coherence of MoRES with internal UNICEF systems and processes has not yet been fully achieved. The drive to ‘mainstream’ MoRES internally within UNICEF is not yet complete. While some significant recent work has been done to date, the full integration and alignment of MoRES with existing UNICEF systems, and vice versa, is still a work in progress for the organization.

In terms of internal integration of MoRES, the evaluation found evidence of a range of different ‘approaches’ that have been deployed (either explicitly or implicitly) by UNICEF to better embed MoRES into existing systems. These approaches have achieved variable levels of success to date. However, it is not clear that these approaches together make up a coherent

and planned ‘internal integration strategy’ for MoRES. The lack of such a strategy has had an opportunity cost in terms of duplication of staff effort and this should be addressed.

9. UNICEF’s collaboration within the UN family is helpful when focused on the added value of elements of MoRES and its coherence with wider initiatives. UNICEF has begun to make good progress in promoting elements of MoRES to other UN agencies, both at HQ level and, in some cases, at the country level. This process will be better consolidated if there is continued support from a central level, with a focus on proving and promoting the key elements of MoRES and identifying synergies at country level, rather than driving the implementation of MoRES as an entire system.

From a *process perspective*, the most important proof of concept requirement appears to be the degree to which enhanced evidence around barriers/bottlenecks leads to improved decision-making (the feedback loop in operation) and from an *outcome perspective*, the most important focus appears to be whether the conditions faced by children identified in the situation analyses have improved (and how and why). Enhanced evidence in both these regards would provide a sounder basis for cross UN collaboration.

10. The MoRES experience offers an important opportunity to learn significant lessons about improving the coordination of change processes in UNICEF. UNICEF has rallied to the call to action represented by MoRES and the attempt by COs to flex and adapt to make MoRES work is testimony to their commitment, capability and creativity.

From a management perspective, the evaluation has documented how the implementation of MoRES as a ‘change management’ process has been particularly impressive in terms of creating a sense of urgency around the initiative in the conceptual development phase, galvanising workstream one countries during roll-out and deploying innovative mainstreaming strategies. However, although the positive



intent driving MoRES is unquestionable and the learning by doing approach understandable, there is evidence that communication could have been better, inclusion greater, systems links made sooner and coordination enhanced. A 'develop then mainstream' strategy from the outset would have been helpful. Building MoRES while rolling it out has created significant challenges for the organization.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions presented within this report:

Recommendation 1: Maintain the focus on equity; UNICEF should emphasise that the primary purpose of MoRES is to support UNICEF's refocus on equity through a central commitment to generating robust evidence.

Overall, most can now be achieved through MoRES if it is rolled out as a commitment to encourage equity-focused decision making based on robust evidence, rather than as an integrated (UNICEF) system.

This is not to say that there has not been real value in the 'conceptual phase' of MoRES, which has sought to identify a potential system for evidence-based decision making towards equity. It has highlighted the interconnectedness of processes and identified gaps and weaknesses in both systems and evidence across a range of countries and contexts. The approach has also helped UNICEF recognise what is working in these contexts and to surface the importance of local ownership. Critically, it has also shown that evidence is not always enough to drive better equity-focused decisions.

Based on these experiences, MoRES should be understood not as a one-size fits all system but as an approach that a) begins with an intent to accelerate progress towards equity for children, b) recognises local context – particularly the political and institutional landscape as its starting point before c) determining what MoRES as an evidence based approach can add in terms

of value in order to d) establish the priorities and the potential costs of introducing a new approach and programme adaptation as the basis for e) determining what the ideal partnership strategy is to achieve this.

An additional advantage of moving away from a closed system to an approach is that over time the 'equity focused approach' could include new elements to enhance progress with regard to its primary purpose: accelerated progress towards equity for disadvantaged children.

Recommendation 2: Develop a mainstreaming strategy based on the enhanced conceptual clarity and findings produced by the formative evaluation report.

The mainstreaming strategy should a) recognize the importance of generating robust data based evidence for equity gaps at national and decentralised levels and assessing the financial and capacity implications of more frequent monitoring; b) communicate MoRES as an approach rather than a system; c) include enhanced guidance and systems for knowledge management which support the application of the elements of MoRES; d) devolve responsibility for the adaptation of the MoRES elements to fit context and sector requirements to the regional and country levels; e) introduce a resourcing and capacity plan for partners, country offices and regional offices; and f) ensure that appropriate accountability mechanism are in place at various levels within the UNICEF management structure (HQ, RO and CO) with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

MoRES has evolved since its roll-out. The evaluation finds that good progress has been made on integrating MoRES with both internal and external systems but that further substantive work is needed before MoRES is fully understood and mainstreamed. However, an overarching concern of the formative evaluation has been a lack of a clear strategy for integration especially of a subject of such corporate importance. A key pre-requisite for this is that guidance should improve before elements of MoRES can be appropriately advocated to

governments and partners and jointly explored to determine whether or not they add value to processes already in place (recommendation 3). An additional concern is the absence of a long term resourcing and capacity building strategy at HQ, RO or CO level that integrates MoRES. While UNICEF's own capacity needs to be further improved, the limited capacity and resources of national governments currently represent a constraint to the implementation of MoRES. It is therefore very important to address them if meaningful results are to be achieved in the long term (recommendation 4). As indicated in the findings and conclusions of the evaluation the main streaming strategy should ensure that programme, monitoring and evaluation approaches and tools used by UNICEF prioritise the refocus on equity but should not promote MoRES as a system to achieve this (recommendation 5). The strategy should give due importance to data based evidence for equity gaps, the quality of guidance, continuous learning and knowledge management, adaptation of the elements of MoRES to the national context and clarifying accountability mechanisms for various levels of the UNICEF management structure at HQ, RO and CO with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and levels of autonomy.

Recommendation 3: Resolve the technical challenges associated with MoRES processes and tools.

There are some elements to MoRES which add significant – even transformational – value when they fill a gap in existing systems, particularly the focus on enhanced monitoring and barrier and bottleneck analysis (level 3 at the appropriate level of decentralization). However, across all contexts, there remain technical challenges to resolve which signal a need for stronger guidance and continuous review. All elements of MoRES could also be better delivered if the guidance available was improved; this should include examples of good practice, lessons learned from early implementation, and simple data gathering tools that can be shared and understood by a range of stakeholders. The outstanding technical challenges identified within this report should be clearly resolved in

guidance. UNICEF COs should avoid promoting processes which are either unclear or unproven. Knowledge management improvements could add significantly to organizational learning and performance. Communication and advocacy tools would also be helpful to support roll-out and partnership building.

Experience to date suggests that elements of MoRES will always need some adaptation according to country and sector. Context analysis is a vital prerequisite to decision-making regarding the provision of support for enhanced evidence gathering within specific countries. Political, economic and institutional considerations all matter. The quality of existing data gathering systems, the robustness of data gathered, the levels of local technical capability and the flexibility of local decision makers to adapt programmes to new priorities should all be considered and may be dependent on the availability of both resource and political will. To this must be added the consideration that UNICEF is rarely the only 'player' offering advice and new approaches to governments, which can easily become overwhelmed or immune to both.

Recommendation 4: Develop a policy advocacy strategy at national level for stronger links (a feedback loop) between locally identified barriers/bottlenecks and access to the resources required to remove them.

Sometimes the participation of the government in resolving barriers/bottlenecks is limited by capacity and resources. Furthermore, the complex/fragmented government planning and finance cycles in many countries and highly centralized budgets create further barriers, since resources are not easily or readily reallocated. There is a critical misunderstanding over the difference between real-time monitoring and more frequent monitoring and a disconnect between more regular monitoring for programme adaptation (real-time or otherwise) and government planning cycles which tend to be annual, fixed and the main driver of resource allocation. Thus, although there is considerable evidence of additional data gathering as a result of MoRES, there is as yet only limited evidence



of the feedback loop in operation leading to programme adaptation. Therefore, the greatest value can be gained from MoRES if it is accompanied by policy advocacy strategy to the government at various levels and to other donors that support national governments for stronger links (a feedback loop) between locally identified and evidence based barriers/bottlenecks and access to the resources required to remove them.

Recommendation 5: Evaluate MoRES as an approach which supports the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan and Country Programme, rather than conduct a stand-alone (impact) evaluation of MoRES. Focus on the results to be achieved for the most disadvantaged children and the accelerated reduction in equity gaps. In either case, it is important that UNICEF adapts robust approaches to (impact) evaluation.

This report has set out issues around the evaluability of MoRES and considerations to be made should UNICEF decide to conduct an overall summative evaluation of MoRES. Given the 'whole organization' effect that MoRES is having, this might constitute a significant task. Two options are possible: to mainstream MoRES within standard evaluations (Country Programmes or the Strategic Plan) or focus on key elements of MoRES to see which has an impact on equity and how.

For the former option, the formative evaluation has clarified the concepts underpinning MoRES, has identified the elements which make up MoRES and has elaborated a results chain towards equity. The next step is to ensure that results in the short and long term are identified and that the organization moves towards stronger management and measurement of results for equity using elements of MoRES. MoRES was designed to operationalize the equity objective. The Strategic Plan 2013 – 17 has integrated equity as key consideration in programming and MoRES to support greater focus on strengthening more frequency in monitoring systems and identification of barriers and barriers/bottlenecks faced by the most disadvantaged children and

families. Furthermore, Country Offices have used MoRES to enhance country programme plans. Therefore, the overall measurement of results for equity is best obtained by the evaluation of the Strategic Plan and Country Programmes with the design of the evaluation constructed to find how elements of MoRES have contributed to results.

If the latter option is pursued, the elements of greatest interest might be (from a process perspective) to secure a better understand of the degree to which enhanced evidence around barriers/bottlenecks leads to improved decision-making (the feedback loop in operation) and secondly (from an outcome perspective) whether the conditions faced by children identified in local level situation analyses have improved (and how and why). These elements of MoRES could be examined across a range of countries to assist UNICEF in learning how results vary according to context and why. A third possibility is to focus on a few selected case countries to see how MoRES works in each context.

Whichever option is selected, the current plan to conduct an overall summative evaluation of 'MoRES as a system' should be reconsidered and be replaced with an approach which is both feasible and robust.

Recommendation 6: UNICEF management should use the experience of MoRES roll-out (and evidence from other initiatives) to inform the management and implementation of future major organizational change initiatives within UNICEF.

The experience of implementing MoRES within UNICEF has generated some very important lessons on how major change processes involving corporate priorities can be implemented successfully. There are both positive aspects to the experience (e.g. the success in creating urgency around the initiative and the drive to support in-country roll-out) but also areas of critical learning (e.g. the need for clear communications and engagement/mainstreaming strategies to be in place from the outset).

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