

Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Summary		
Organisation: UNICEF	Date:	February 2011
Description of Organisation		
<p>UNICEF has a mandate to advocate for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, to meet children's basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. Its strategic plan covers five areas: i) young child survival and development; ii) basic education and gender equality; iii) HIV/AIDS and children; iv) child protection; and v) policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights. In humanitarian situations UNICEF is also the cluster lead for nutrition, water and sanitation and hygiene, education (co-lead) and has a substantive role in the health and protection clusters.</p> <p>UNICEF works in more than 190 countries. Management and administration of the organisation takes place at headquarters in New York. There are seven regional offices. Its specialised offices include the supply division, based in Copenhagen, which provides the majority of vaccines for children in developing countries. UNICEF also operates the Innocenti Research Centre in Florence and offices in Japan and Brussels which assist with fund-raising and liaison with policy makers.</p> <p>There are 36 National Committees for UNICEF. These independent, local non-governmental organisations provide support to UNICEF, including through promoting children's rights and raising funds.</p> <p>UNICEF is headed by an Executive Director at Under Secretary General level. Tony Lake was appointed to the post in 2010.</p> <p>UNICEF's Executive Board consists of 36 UN member states from across the UN's five regional groups. Each board member has equal voice and voting rights. The board establishes policies, approves programmes and decides on administrative and financial plans and budgets. Members are elected for three-year terms. The UK is currently a member.</p> <p>In-country, UNICEF delivers development and humanitarian assistance and also supports the development of national plans, capacity building and influencing national policies of host governments.</p> <p>In 2009 UNICEF's total core income was \$1.06bn, of which \$383m (36%) was from the private sector and UNICEF National Committees. In addition UNICEF receives \$2.19bn in non-core resources. DFID's core funding for UNICEF in 2009 was £21m, but total UK funding was £135m, mostly through support for UNICEF projects at a country level. 100% of core funding is counted as ODA.</p>		

<p>Gender Policy Evaluation. It has strengthened its collaboration with other MOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Through UNGEI (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative) it plays a significant advocacy role for girls' education and promotes sex-disaggregated data. - UNICEF has taken a long time to make progress on gender performance and internal accountability for gender. - Data are disaggregated by gender in many cases, but this has not yet been systematically applied to address gender disparities in service delivery. = Good recent progress but scope to do more to deliver gender results. <p>2c. Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNICEF has committed to support the implementation of various actions plans adopted at all the major UN conferences. All of its programmes and projects have to complete an environmental impact assessment (EIA). - UNICEF does not have an overall climate change policy in place. - We found no evidence that UNICEF measures climate or environmental impact. = While EIA is mainstreamed, UNICEF does not have any climate specific policies in place. 	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>3. Focus on Poor Countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Assessed centrally by comparing the multilateral's country by country spend with an index that scores developing countries based on their poverty need and effectiveness (the strength of the country's institutions). UNICEF spends more than 66% of its resources in the countries that are in the top quartile of the index. This includes significant spending in the large poor countries that come out near the top of the index. 	<p>Strong (4)</p>
<p>4. Contribution to Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + At a country level UNICEF has significantly improved its performance and can demonstrate results on the ground. + UNICEF now has a greater focus on results and is rated highly for its results-focussed country programming approach. - UNICEF struggles to aggregate development results to an organisational level. - Effectiveness of UNICEF's response in acute emergency situations is a concern. = UNICEF can demonstrate results at a country level but struggles to show results at a global level. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>

Organisational Strengths	Score (1-4)
<p>5. Strategic & Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNICEF has a clear mandate and the governing body is effective. There has been progress on evaluation. - UNICEF has a results framework in place. However this is weak at output level. - There are concerns about HR issues and, particularly, the ability of UNICEF to deploy the right staff to humanitarian emergencies. - There are concerns about the management response and follow up to evaluations. = UNICEF needs to make progress in some key areas of strategic and performance management. 	<p>Weak (2)</p>
<p>6. Financial Resources Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNICEF has clear criteria for allocating core resources and has good processes in place for audit, risk and accountability. + UNICEF is committed to better financial management and is in the process of rolling out a new financial system. - Concern over the level of UNICEF's cash balances and the lack of a system to manage project performance. = UNICEF has clear financial allocation criteria and processes. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>
<p>7. Cost and Value Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNICEF's Executive Director has acknowledged that value for money is a key area that the organisation needs to address. + There is good country level evidence for value for money. + UNICEF has reduced its administration to programme ratio and is playing a leading role in reviewing procurement within the One UN country offices. - UNICEF does not comprehensively report on the cost efficiency of its operations and it is hard to assess cost efficiency gains from UNICEF's field operations. = UNICEF is taking positive steps to improve cost control, building on some good work at country level. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>
<p>8. Partnership Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNICEF works well with partner governments and other development partners. + UNICEF has a good track record of working effectively with civil society partners at country level on development, and is building the capacity of local partners. + At a global level UNICEF is working towards having 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>

<p>stronger partnerships with CSOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are still some concerns over UNICEF's inconsistent approach to working effectively with other UN agencies and leadership on Delivering as One. - UNICEF's effectiveness in working with NGOs/CSOs in humanitarian emergencies remains variable. = UNICEF generally works well with partners. 	
<p>9. Transparency and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + UNICEF has a financial disclosure policy in place for staff working on procurement and a 'Whistleblower Protection Policy'. + All programme documents are published. + UNICEF's board has good representation from across the membership. - UNICEF does not currently have a transparency policy. - We found no evidence that UNICEF proactively encourages transparency and accountability in delivery partners. - UNICEF does not publish full information on all its projects. = While it has good accountability processes UNICEF is some way short of best practice in transparency. 	Weak (2)
Likelihood of Positive Change	
<p>10. Likelihood of Positive Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The new Executive Director has publicly committed to improve UNICEF's effectiveness and demonstrate better value for money. UNICEF has developed an Action Plan to implement the General Assembly resolution on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolution. - To date progress on organisational and humanitarian reform has been slow. - The governing board appears resistant to major reforms around humanitarian issues and Delivering as One. - We have yet to see whether the Executive Director's commitments can translate to better delivery and management. = Despite the appointment of a strong new Executive Director, based on past progress with reform, Executive Board resistance and institutional bureaucracy, we cannot predict substantive change in key areas of UK concern in the near future. 	Score (1-4) Uncertain (2)