

# STRATEGIC CHOICES FOR UNICEF

## EVALUATION OF UNICEF

SERVICE DELIVERY

CAPACITY BUILDING

EMPOWERMENT

E X E C U T I V E S U M M A R Y 1 9 9 2

# **Strategic Choices for UNICEF**

- **Service Delivery**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Empowerment**

## **Evaluation of UNICEF**

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SYNTHESIS REPORT 1992**

**Prepared By:**

**Poul Engberg-Pedersen, COWiconsult, Copenhagen, Denmark**

**Sheila Dohoo Faure, Goss Gilroy Inc., Ottawa, Canada**

**Ted Freeman, Goss Gilroy Inc., Ottawa, Canada**

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## **List of Acronyms**

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IFI	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
NYHQ	New York Headquarters
UCI	Universal Child Immunization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
WSC	World Summit for Children

# **Executive Summary: Findings and Recommendations**

## **1.0 Introduction**

UNICEF faces a series of strategic choices if it is to sustain the achievements of the past decade and to enhance its effectiveness as a multilateral agency with a specific mandate for children and women. These choices and their implications are the subject of much which follows. Nonetheless, two important points must be made at the outset:

- 1) UNICEF is facing key strategic choices to a large extent because of its evolution as an effective, field-oriented and operationally skilled agency for international development. Within the UN system it has exhibited a strong comparative advantage in operational effectiveness and has achieved important successes in the support of Universal Child Immunization. The organizational strengths of UNICEF which contributed to these successes need not be reduced or denied in making the choices which have become the focus of this Evaluation.
  
- 2) In evaluating UNICEF, it is necessary to focus on what it has not done and has not been able to achieve as well as its accomplishments. In some areas, the Evaluation has concluded that UNICEF should do more, or invest more resources of all types in meeting the commitments it has made to its various constituencies. It is clear, however, that the sum total of financial, human, and "intangible" resources available to UNICEF is not limitless. For each of the areas in which the Evaluation's results indicate that UNICEF can and should do more, there must exist a corresponding area in which the commitment of resources can be reduced if the results of the Evaluation are to be useful. Identifying such areas is the task of all levels of the organization, including the Executive Board, as well as of its partners at national and international level.

The theme running through the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation is the need for UNICEF (and its sponsors) to make more explicit strategic and operational choices at a global, regional and country programme level. When strategic choices are implicit, important programme opportunities for children and women are missed, and the organization cannot be held fully accountable for its operations. Only through open, systematic and transparent processes, within the primacy of country programming, will UNICEF be able to ensure proper trade-offs, consistent with its mandate and objectives, appropriate to the needs and capacities of each developing country and practical within the capabilities of UNICEF and its partners.

Sections 2.0 to 4.0 of the Executive Summary describe UNICEF's programme strategies, external cooperation and management. Section 5.0 examines the strategic choices facing UNICEF as it approaches the year 2000.

## **2.0 UNICEF's Programme Strategies**

### **2.1 Three Intervention Strategies**

UNICEF benefits as an organization from its capacity to use a mixture of intervention strategies in the programming and implementation of its development cooperation and emergency response at country level. In its **Medium-term Plan for the Period 1992-1995**, UNICEF presented a list of 12 "basic strategy components" which, however, are a mixture of objectives, strategies, planning instruments and tools. This gives the organization maximum freedom during operations, but it has costs in the form of weak transparency and insufficient use of strategic analysis for priority-setting and programming.

The Evaluation findings point to three basic intervention strategies that cover the bulk of UNICEF's programming activities, across sectors and in both development cooperation and emergency response:

- 1) **support to the delivery of specific social services** through a series of well-defined technical interventions which are aimed at reaching the largest possible number of beneficiaries ("going-to-scale"), which often are implemented through vertical structures but which increasingly UNICEF seeks to integrate in service packages;
- 2) **capacity building for sustained programme delivery**, with a focus on systems development in government, organized training and other forms of capacity building, management support at all levels of government, and public participation in operations and maintenance, including through cost-sharing; and
- 3) **empowerment of target group members**, through transfer of knowledge and skills; promotion of target group organization and public participation; advocacy on human rights (of children and women); and alliances with organizations of civil society which represent the interests of target group members and are accountable to them.

Over the past decade, UNICEF has placed increasing emphasis on support to public service delivery, aimed at rapid achievement of global goals, in particular Universal Child Immunization (UCI) by 1990. This was logical for an agency which had its starting-point

in the provision of supplies in a field with hundreds of millions of marginalized beneficiaries in urgent need of basic services.

UNICEF's use of the second intervention strategy (capacity building) has so far been limited. Implementation support has been the primary concern, aimed at securing effective management of UNICEF-supported programme operations. The use of the third intervention strategy (empowerment) has been stronger in the form of advocacy and alliance-building than in direct empowerment of children and women to address and solve their own problems through organization, access to resources and participation in decision-making.

The three intervention strategies are not mutually exclusive. For example, support to the delivery of public services should be organized so as to promote capacity building and empowerment of the beneficiaries. This is seen in, for example, some UNICEF-supported water supply and sanitation programmes, where women through community groups take charge of local decisions on the use of the services and facilities provided.

The choice of intervention strategy expresses the priority given to different programme objectives and concerns:

- 1) The provision of supplies for the delivery of public services can meet some basic needs of children but does not in itself guarantee their human rights.
- 2) Building capacity for sustained programme delivery by institutions of developing countries can enable these to meet basic needs and to guarantee human rights.
- 3) Empowering children and women enables them to meet basic needs and especially to achieve their rights as human beings.

In this sense, the three strategies are alternative, but not mutually exclusive, approaches to the design of programme interventions supported by UNICEF.

## **2.2 UNICEF's Global Programme Objectives and Strategies**

### *Two Directions*

Important decisions in recent years by UNICEF's constituents in the international community have tended to pull the organization in two different directions for the 1990s.

On the one hand, the 27 goals included in the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children (WSC), endorsed by the Executive Board, represent a substantial expansion in the demands on UNICEF to support achievement of specific global goals and targets. This is an extension of the focus in the 1980s and is seen in the quantitative formulation of most of the WSC goals: reduction of rates; access to facilities; elimination of deficiencies; eradication of diseases; dissemination of knowledge and supporting services; and expansion of activities.

On the other hand, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the WSC Declaration and several resolutions of the Executive Board have broadened the agenda for UNICEF activities to include child development and protection, systems development especially in primary health care, and empowerment of the target group, in particular women. These international legal instruments include provisions that lead directly to the 27 goals, as well as provisions on human rights etc. that require interventions of a more structural nature.

The two types of programme objectives complement each other. Children and women need fulfilment of their basic needs as well as rights and opportunities to participate fully in society. UNICEF's *advocacy* has addressed both types of programme objectives, whereas its *programme operations* have focused on selected elements of basic needs fulfilment.

The UNICEF Executive Board and Secretariat should cooperate to define more clearly the organization's **operational role** in relation to the basic needs and human rights objectives. For example, promotion of women in development (WID) requires programmes that meet both the practical and the strategic gender needs of women. Meeting the latter requires activities that address all three roles of poor women: reproduction, production, and community management. So far, UNICEF has focused on women in their reproductive role as mothers.

### *Country Programme Objectives*

UNICEF should have the capacity to support a country-specific combination of programme activities aimed at both types of objectives (basic needs and human rights). Hence, UNICEF must be able to combine elements of its three basic intervention strategies in individual developing countries. The country programme should remain the framework for priority-setting on the use of UNICEF's human and financial resources.

As a first step, all UNICEF Representatives should be requested to review their current country programmes, to establish the balance between the three basic intervention

strategies, both in total and for the key sector programmes. In future, all **country programme recommendations** should include a summary assessment of the proposed mix of intervention strategies (service delivery/capacity building/empowerment) by programme sector in the country in question.

Emphasizing the primacy of the country programme for priority-setting must not imply that UNICEF loses the **common purpose and commitment** permeating all levels of the organization to an extent which is unusual for a UN agency. This advantage of having clear global objectives (including goals and targets) and strategies should be widened to comprise both types of programme objectives (basic needs and human rights) and hence all three intervention strategies. UNICEF's headquarters and Regional Offices should pay more attention to programme development in support of the capacity building and empowerment strategies.

However, the tendency to promote so-called "flagship goals" by UNICEF's management must be contained and replaced with innovative programming by headquarters for all three intervention strategies. As a matter of priority, the Programme Division at UNICEF headquarters should undertake reviews of three types of impact on the organization's commitment to the three intervention strategies:

- Do UNICEF's present sector-specific **standard programme designs** allow an emphasis on all three intervention strategies in health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education, etc.?
- Is there a tendency for programmes financed mainly by **supplementary funding** to be based on implicit choices between the three intervention strategies?
- What is the impact of UNICEF's **global funds and programmes** on the choice of intervention strategy within country programmes? The recent restructuring of the global funds and programmes, which has improved the transparency in their management, should be followed-up by an evaluation of the impact of the individual global programmes at country level.

### 2.3 The Scope of UNICEF Programme Interventions at Country Level

#### *Country Strategies*

UNICEF's key cooperation partner at country level is and must be the national government. Compared with other multilateral and bilateral agencies, UNICEF enjoys a

close partnership with selected government departments (health and other social sectors). However, UNICEF's country programming process has often become too **process-oriented**. The reason is that it also serves two otherwise highly legitimate purposes: facilitation of cooperation with government through transfer of institutional ownership of the process to the government; and social mobilization and alliance-building with a diversity of national and local partners.

As a result, a **fundamental assessment** of the appropriateness of UNICEF's past and current intervention strategy in a given country has been subdued as a prime objective of the country programme cycle. UNICEF should revitalize the strategic elements of its country programming, for example through the above-mentioned review of the use of the three intervention strategies in individual country programmes.

One such strategic element concerns UNICEF's "choice" of partner institutions in the central governments of recipient countries. Although it must respond to government requests, UNICEF should better exploit the room-to-manoeuvre for choosing partners in government. For example, there is a link between the choice (and mix) of intervention strategies and the choice of partner institutions:

- With an emphasis on support to the delivery of public services, UNICEF would concentrate on operations support to a few central government departments, including their subsidiary bodies at sub-national levels of government.
- Capacity building for sustained programme delivery requires more UNICEF cooperation with planning and finance ministries and with the policy-making, planning and personnel divisions of the selected social sector departments.
- The strategy emphasizing empowerment of target group members requires human rights advocacy at central level, but a shift in primary partner institutions towards a network of social sector institutions at all levels of society.

UNICEF should improve its awareness of these different partnership opportunities. It should more actively screen and support the national and local institutions that are accountable to children and women in both rural and urban areas.

### *Integration and Sustainability*

Considerable improvement has taken place in the **integration** into national institutions and the **sustainability** of UNICEF-supported service delivery programmes. The reason is

that UNICEF in many countries has been very effective in attracting the attention of the government partners to the particular programmes supported by UNICEF. Attention by the implementing partner means in this context: provision of "counterpart funds", to live up to the commitment expressed by the national institution in the signing of the project agreement; political, legal and administrative facilitation of this project (as opposed to other perhaps equally important projects); and assignment of the most qualified and experienced staff to this particular programme, again in order to live up to the requirements of the donor agency.

The risk is that such integration leads to distortion of the policy and programme priorities of the national institutions. UNICEF should be much more aware about the implications of its own effectiveness in mobilizing attention (political, human and financial resources) to "its" particular programmes. The most constructive approach available to UNICEF in this context is to engage itself more in broader systems development; sector-wide policy-making; and capacity building in the partner institutions as such, i.e. not only in those structures that implement the UNICEF-supported programmes.

In terms of **institutional and financial sustainability**, UNICEF should broaden its concern to three levels: the continuation of the individual, UNICEF-supported programmes; the effect of UNICEF-supported programmes on the availability of resources for other essential initiatives by the national implementing institutions; and the sustainability of the full sector programmes and services.

#### *Capacity Building and Empowerment*

UNICEF involvement in sector-wide institutional and financial issues is the implication of greater emphasis on the **capacity building** intervention strategy. As a start, UNICEF should evaluate its performance and experience in the institutional development efforts that go beyond implementation support. Based on the limited experience examined under the present Evaluation, UNICEF should at least:

- improve its monitoring and follow-up of the **quality and relevance** of the training implemented especially at local levels;
- make more conscious decisions in the unavoidable trade-offs between long-term capacity building and achievement of operational targets;
- work for a clearer link in each implementing institution between its authority for planning, for decision-making and possibly for fund raising;

- expand its efforts to involve local level politicians and make them accountable for social development; and
- ensure greater consistency in the capacity building approach across sectors and programmes supported by UNICEF.

Finally, irrespective of the future weight given to the empowerment strategy, UNICEF should, as a matter of urgency, clarify its understanding of **community participation** and **empowerment**. This must be followed by dissemination and application of a common approach throughout the organization. The impressive staff interest in community participation has resulted in a diversity of community participation efforts:

- getting the intended beneficiaries to accept, use and demand the public services and facilities being offered;
- making use of volunteers during the implementation of programmes, especially extension services and mobilization in health and nutrition;
- involving the target group, preferably women, in the selection of sites for, for example, water supply and sanitation facilities;
- involving the intended beneficiaries in operations and maintenance of the facilities provided to them; and
- increasing cost-sharing for sustainable delivery of public services at community level.

Although positive, these efforts are spread too thinly to reflect an organizational commitment and strategy. Furthermore, it is often an implicit assumption in programme design that the intended beneficiaries, in particular women, have spare time and resources available for active community participation. The weakness of gender analysis in UNICEF (as in other development agencies) contributes to this often erroneous assumption. It also reflects a too simplified perception of communities as harmonious units. UNICEF should strengthen its targeting within communities in accordance with differences in gender, social class and access to resources.

UNICEF should acknowledge that the above forms of community participation do not necessarily lead to **empowerment**. In most of its activities, UNICEF aims at only the first of three key elements of empowerment programmes:

- Transfer of information and knowledge and provision of skills;
- Support to various forms of organization of the target group; and
- Facilitation of target group participation in societal decision-making.

Transfer of knowledge or participation in programme processes may not be sufficient to empower target group members to defend their interests, demand their rightful share of development resources and benefits and participate in societal decisions. Within this wider understanding of empowerment, which is included in the women's chapter of the Medium-term Plan for 1992-1995, UNICEF's achievements are limited. There is a need for the Executive Board to determine whether empowerment as a programme objective and as an intervention strategy should be given higher priority in UNICEF.

#### **2.4 The Contents of UNICEF Programme Interventions at Country Level**

UNICEF plans to allocate (by the year 2000) its funds by sector as follows: approximately 25% to health; 10% to nutrition; 20% to water supply and sanitation; 25% to education; and 20% to other programmes, including children in especially difficult circumstances and women-specific programmes. Based on the recommendations of the present Evaluation, there is a need for a limited reallocation of priorities, with more funds being allocated to women-specific programmes. In addition, the possible success of UNICEF's recent nutrition strategy may warrant more resources for nutrition programmes. Since the Evaluation has not covered all UNICEF sectors, it is not possible for the Team to recommend which sector(s) should accommodate these increases through matching reductions.

The findings of the four self-contained Sector Reports (on health and nutrition; water and sanitation; women in development and community participation; and emergency response) shall not be repeated here. The above recommendations have pointed to a number of cross-cutting measures that are needed to improve UNICEF's performance in all sector programmes. Here, only a few sector-specific recommendations are included.

Within **health**, UNICEF should review its role in relation to two strategic options: a reorientation of programmes towards the overall health of the target group, i.e., a concern for other health factors than absence of disease and reduction of mortality; and/or an acknowledgement that UNICEF's comparative advantage lies in the reduction of the effects of specific, preventable killer diseases. The appropriate combination of these two options should be determined by the Executive Board for the organization as a whole, and especially by the governments and UNICEF in the context of country programming.

Within **water and sanitation**, UNICEF should aim at a better mix of three strategies: providing appropriate, low-cost water supply and sanitation facilities to as many target group members as possible; working to link water supply, sanitation, personal hygiene and the general health of the target group; and using water and sanitation as an entry-point in area-based, multi-sector programmes aimed at empowerment. Again, the appropriate mix should be determined at country level, but with stronger support from headquarters and regional offices for all three strategies.

On **women in development and gender issues**, UNICEF should undertake a major effort to put human, financial and institutional resources behind its "mainstreaming" strategy. At present, gender aspects are neglected in many sector programmes, and women-specific programmes are given low priority precisely with a reference to the mainstreaming strategy. The emerging focus on the girl child is essential, but not sufficient. There is a need for extensive training in gender analysis for development and emergency staff throughout the organization. While continuing its efforts in women-specific advocacy and capacity building, UNICEF should strengthen its attention to women-specific programmes that address women in their roles as mothers, productive workers, and community managers.

On **emergency response**, UNICEF should also clarify (and combine) its use of the three basic intervention strategies. This should be related to two different strategies for integration of emergency work: the identification of an emergency sector which may be integrated with, or independent of, the operations of other sectors; and the inclusion of emergency preventive or mitigating factors in the design of its country programme of cooperation. These integration strategies should be applied especially in disaster-prone countries. Thus, UNICEF should have a role in emergency prevention that goes beyond the increasing coordination of the emergency relief activities of the UN system.

### **3.0 UNICEF's External Cooperation**

#### **3.1 A Favoured and a Critical Partner to Government**

UNICEF's primary partner in any country is the national government. Indeed, UNICEF is a **favoured** partner of the government of developing countries because of its general effectiveness in providing supplies and equipment, facilitating financial assistance, and providing programme advice in often neglected sectors. Despite the human rights elements of its mandate, UNICEF has tended to concentrate its support on activities that are both "above politics" (e.g., advocacy on child survival as a moral imperative) and

"below politics" (including policy-making at the programme operations level). UNICEF has operated at these two levels with impressive skill.

The broadening of the scope for children and women-oriented activities by the international community through the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the WSC Declaration and, for example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) implies a need for an international organization to act also as a **critical partner**<sup>1</sup> to member states, with the obligation to monitor and address violations of these expressions of international law and policy. UNICEF may also serve this critical partner function by arguing strongly for specific forms of programming which serve to advance human rights in such areas as protection of child labourers, and protection of children in especially difficult circumstances. The UN member states, including the UNICEF Executive Board, should decide whether UNICEF should move more in the direction of critical partnership, at the risk of the organization losing some of its operational effectiveness.

### **3.2 Partnership Roles and the Choice of Programme Strategies**

The way in which UNICEF interacts with national governments varies according to the strategic emphasis chosen for a country programme. UNICEF programmes in the case study countries were pursuing a mix of intervention strategies ranging from almost pure support to service delivery to an emerging focus on empowerment. As a result, each showed different sets of activities in its favoured and critical partnership role with governments; activities and approaches which had grown organically out of programme arrangements rather than from an explicit and verifiable strategy for balancing the needs and opportunities for external cooperation.

UNICEF should make much more explicit the strategic decisions it makes at country level regarding its cooperation with actors outside the national government. It should include in its programme planning processes an assessment of the constraints and capabilities of other actors and of the extent to which the national government is willing to work with these actors. In situations requiring advocacy for the role of sub-national governments, local and international NGOs, and organizations of civil society, UNICEF should have a specific strategy in the country programme for creating the necessary space. It should also

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the term "critical" partner is used here to refer to a partner willing and able to point out deficiencies in the actions and commitments of governments with regard to the needs and rights of children and women rather than to an essential partner. This second sense of the word critical would apply to all UNICEF's roles as a partner to governments.

relate the programme intervention strategy chosen to an explicit plan for cooperation with non-state actors.

### **3.3 Cooperation Arrangements With Other Partners**

UNICEF has a number of partnership roles it can play that result from its somewhat unique capacity to be both a critical and favoured partner to national governments. These roles include **promoting innovative social programming** in the development of programmes and projects with external organizations; **alliance building and social mobilization** through the formation of coalitions of state and non-state actors to participate in programmes and in communications; and, **advocacy** to influence the policies and priorities of the national government, donor agencies, UN organizations and international financial institutions.

The Evaluation examined UNICEF's cooperation arrangements with six distinct groups of organizations to assess the extent to which it was effective in the areas of innovative social programming, alliance building and social mobilization, and advocacy.

#### ***Sub-national Governments***

UNICEF at country level has established a pattern of contact with sub-national governments by using staff who liaise with national sector ministries; by establishing sub-national field offices; by developing area-based programmes which provide a meeting-point between national and sub-national levels of government; and by supporting capacity building initiatives. UNICEF has used its role in technical programme dialogue and in advocacy in some countries to support the process of decentralization and to support the role of sub-national governments in the delivery of important services to children and women.

If country programmes are to realize the positive gains in programme efficiency and effectiveness that may result from an increased role for sub-national governments UNICEF should:

- place greater emphasis on its capacity for innovation in programming by arriving at new methods for capacity building at sub-national level that rely on **alliances** with universities, research institutes, large NGOs and agencies of the national government;

- where warranted, concentrate its support to programmes in regions (within countries) where systems for providing services are weakest and conditions for children and women are the worst;
- continue and even increase its advocacy for the role of sub-national governments in social development and the delivery of services; and,
- where the country programme strategy warrants it, strengthen its own decentralized field office structures in order to support a strategy focusing on capacity building with sub-national government agencies.

### *Civil Society*

The extent of UNICEF's programme cooperation with national and international NGOs (as well as with labour unions, women's organizations, peasants associations, media outlets, the private sector and other organs of civil society) varies greatly from country to country. In most countries UNICEF cooperates with NGOs to increase the coverage and cost effectiveness of programme delivery and to improve the effectiveness of efforts at social mobilization. It has not used its capabilities in most of the countries studied during the Evaluation to create the necessary space for maximum effectiveness in collaborating with civil society, especially for effective implementation of the empowerment component of the country programme strategies. In order to make more effective use of the potential of programme partnerships with civil society in developing countries UNICEF should:

- support **innovative** mechanisms for planning country programmes that allow for the participation of national and international NGOs and organizations representing the interests of children and women in the development of the situation analysis and the country programme (as was done in Bangladesh) ;
- work to **build alliances** among national NGOs and groups in civil society committed to community participation and empowerment strategies in programme development and delivery; and
- **advocate** with national governments to allow civil society to play a role not only in UNICEF-supported programmes, but in national social development generally.

UNICEF's efforts in this area can have the effect of **demonstrating to national governments** the ways in which an alliance with civil society can increase the effectiveness of services that governments are committed to deliver.

## *UN Agencies*

**In cooperation for development**, the Evaluation examined UNICEF's cooperation with UN agencies in the areas of: cooperation on policies; inter-agency dialogue on technical matters; and (in a more limited way) direct cooperation on programmes through such mechanisms as the harmonization of programme cycles and criteria, and the pursuit of joint programming.

Cooperation on the development of a concerted UN policy position appears to be more easily achieved by UNICEF and other UN agencies at a global level than at the level of country programmes. While UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and UNDP have been able to issue joint policy letters on such topics as family planning, they seldom present a united policy front on the same issues at country level.

Similarly, although the pattern changes from country to country and region to region, UNICEF does not benefit as much as it could from technical dialogue with other UN agencies (in particular WHO).

There were few examples of direct programme cooperation in the case study countries. UNICEF's requirement for operational independence, which results from its decentralized authority structure and the predominance of the country programming process, is made even more important by its multiple partnership linkages. UNICEF and the other UN agencies gave many examples of the differences in their organizational structures, programme approval criteria, rules for defining beneficiaries and target group members, and in their relations with national governments which made direct programme cooperation problematic.

UNICEF's attitude to closer cooperation/coordination with other UN agencies is contradictory at different times and at different levels in the organization. On one hand New York headquarters (NYHQ) participates fully in the efforts of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and other committees to pursue harmonization of programme cycles and the establishment of a "single voice" for the United Nations at country level. On the other hand, both NYHQ and country offices are very concerned that UNICEF retain its operational independence and access to its own sources of financing.

**In cooperation for responding to emergencies**, efforts by UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP to define appropriate operational roles have met with varying levels of success. The two case study countries in which UNICEF was involved in responding to large scale emergencies do not provide a large enough sample to permit generalization. The Mozambique case,

however, pointed out problems in overlapping mandates and activities among UN agencies that can result from different degrees of agency integration with the national government, especially in the absence of a more effective mechanism for inter-agency coordination. It will be important to address these issues in the future in close collaboration with the newly-established Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA).

### *Bilateral Donors*

UNICEF's most common relationship with bilateral donors at country level revolves around the **supplementary funding** process. This relationship presents difficulties for UNICEF in maintaining a cohesive country programme and strategy. Since it is easier to get funding for some components of a programme than others, to attract donors UNICEF may tend to package projects in line with the donors' own objectives and strategies in the development field. This can sometimes interfere with UNICEF's ability to develop and fund a comprehensive and integrated programme.

However, the supplementary funding process provides essential resources for UNICEF-supported programmes. It also involves UNICEF in a reporting relationship with bilateral donors and supports a reasonable level of both policy and technical dialogue among UNICEF, key bilateral donors, and the line ministries of governments. This dialogue can have the effect of improving UNICEF's accountability and sometimes provides for exchanges of experience on innovative programming techniques.

UNICEF should continue to use the mechanism of supplementary funding to augment its general resources while at the same time carefully monitoring the effect of donor priorities on the strategic direction and content of country programmes. It should also work with experienced donors on the development of innovative modes of programming.

### *National UNICEF Committees*

While playing an important role in providing supplementary funding to a number of country programmes visited, some national committees of UNICEF have also shown a willingness to provide support to especially innovative social development programmes. In general, however, the influence of national committees on UNICEF's operational programmes is limited.

### *International Lending Institutions*

In cooperating with the World Bank and, to a lesser extent, regional development banks, UNICEF has not been able to fully exploit the apparent opportunities for promotion of **innovative social programming** and the **extension of its command over resources** which truly effective cooperation with these agencies could lead to. If UNICEF were able to develop both the mechanisms and internal culture which would permit greater programme collaboration with these agencies, it would be able to transfer its capacity for innovation, either through a demonstration effect of the programmes it supports or through the dialogue with bank technical experts which would take place in the regular course of programming.

UNICEF does, however, play an **advocacy** role for children and women with international lending institutions. At the global level, the role which UNICEF has played in advocacy for "adjustment with a human face" has been translated into both the assessment of impacts of structural adjustment and specific social programmes at the country level, although the impact of these social programmes is not yet known. UNICEF's influence over the policies of International Financial Institutions at the country level appears to be somewhat limited by the very large financial programme resources of the IFIs and by UNICEF's desire to remain free to criticize overall IFI policies on structural adjustment, a freedom it might lose if it were involved in balancing competing demands for national resources.

UNICEF should continue to seek ways to develop effective mechanisms for direct programme cooperation with the World Bank and with regional development banks. It should encourage Representatives at country level to engage in programme cooperation with these agencies in support of programmes important to children and women in order to extend UNICEF's influence over national investment decisions and to exercise its comparative advantage in innovative social programming.

### **3.5 Summary: External Cooperation**

In summary, UNICEF has developed a broad range of cooperation arrangements with agencies other than the national government. It has also used its capacity for advocacy and its ability to be a critical partner to government in a number of the case study countries; but it has not developed an explicit means of arriving at a strategy for external cooperation and assessing the extent to which it should push the limits of its relationship with national governments in order to secure more effective links to other actors. Perhaps

as a result of this, in a number of case study countries UNICEF could do more in the development of country programmes to advocate for linkages to external actors.

UNICEF could improve the quality and relevance of the country programme development process by increasing the participation of actors other than UNICEF and the national governments involved. There is scope for increased levels of participation by national and international NGOs and by other agencies and groups representing the interests of target group members. Participation by a wider range of organizations at country level in the process of situation analysis and programme development will be especially important if UNICEF places greater emphasis on an empowerment strategy of programme intervention in the future.

In its cooperation arrangements with all the groups of partners examined, UNICEF has demonstrated a need to retain its autonomy so that no one group of relations should dictate the nature of others and thereby reduce its capacity to support programmes which are beneficial to the target group. This is especially important given its role as a critical partner to government with a mandate for promoting the human rights of children and women.

As well as developing explicit criteria and processes for developing a strategy for external cooperation at country programme level, UNICEF should seek to clarify what kind of cooperation arrangements will allow it to retain the necessary autonomy to work with its most effective potential partners while entering into important alliances for **technical and policy dialogue, innovative social programming, and influence over increased financial resources.**

#### **4.0 Management and Governance at UNICEF**

The Evaluation addressed a number of issues regarding the management and governance of the agency. In large part, these issues can be grouped under two headings:

- UNICEF's organizational capacity to develop and implement (along with its partners) effective development programming; and
- UNICEF's accountability to those who approve the country programme and allocate resources (the Executive Board), those who provide resources to UNICEF (the sponsors), the governments of developing countries as its primary partners, and the target group of children and women.

## 4.1 Organizational Capacity at Global and Country Levels

### *UNICEF's Organizational Capacity*

Organizational capacities of UNICEF at country and global levels include its programme cycle, organizational structure, human and financial resources and authority levels.

The **country-based programming cycle** is the backbone of UNICEF's operations and the assessment of other organizational capacities focuses primarily on the organization's capacity to preserve and strengthen the relevance and integrity of this programming cycle.

A primary condition for the success of country-based programming is the existence of a decentralized organizational structure. Although regional offices play a supporting role for country offices, the balance of professional and managerial staff at UNICEF is heavily weighted toward the headquarters and country office level. The role of regional offices remains ambiguous due to their lack of access to programmes and lack of an agreed model for their responsibilities. The overall structure of UNICEF therefore, consists of a large well-staffed headquarters with strong formal and informal linkages to country offices which are themselves well staffed and capable of planning and implementing country programmes. Regional offices, in comparison, are very small and situated outside the key lines of functional authority in UNICEF.

With the exception of the field support staff at HQ, the internal organizational structure of UNICEF's headquarters, regional and field offices is sectoral and, while this is logical given the current organization of UNICEF's programmes, it hinders efforts to establish a common organizational understanding of, and priority for, cross-sectoral strategies and goals - a problem which was noted with respect to women in development, community participation, capacity building and empowerment.

A key capacity for development programming is access to adequate human and financial resources. For the most part, UNICEF has been able to assemble strong teams of professional staff at country level, although weaknesses were noted in the areas of specialists in human resource development and management for capacity building programming, in ethnology and sociology for community-based programming, in sanitation education for water and environmental sanitation programmes and in gender sensitivity for women in development programming.

The **multiple sources of funds** available to UNICEF for allocation to country programmes provide the country offices with an essential form of programming flexibility but also

impose a number of constraints to programme design and delivery. In addition to the programme funds available to the country office, UNICEF's **administrative budget** covers the costs of international and local personnel in core posts as well as general operating and capital expenses. However, the allocation of costs to administration is based on an implicit definition, but not a clear conceptual statement, of what constitutes "administration" at UNICEF. The administrative budgets, and consequently the administrative cost ratios, do not reflect all costs which might be considered as administrative. UNICEF needs a mechanism for reflecting the costs of having a UNICEF capacity at the country level to support the development and management of a programme of cooperation, as opposed to supporting specific programme activities. A similar mechanism needs to be developed for reflecting the administrative costs at headquarters and at regional offices.

Representatives have sufficient **authority** to effectively implement a country programme approved by the Executive Board, and to modify that programme in order to respond to changes. With two exceptions, the elements of authority held by headquarters are not excessive given the responsibility of the Secretariat for overall organizational effectiveness. The first exception is headquarters' role in the creation and allocation of Global Funds which appear to have an impact on the balance of authorities between headquarters and the field which is greater than their absolute value would suggest. The second is the stream of directives and instructions from headquarters which appears at times to supersede the country planning process and makes it difficult for the Representative to determine the real priorities of the organization and to "opt out" of priorities which, while they may be valid at a global level, may not be valid at the country level.

### *Challenges to UNICEF's Organizational Capacity*

There are challenges facing UNICEF with respect to its organizational capacities based on current practices. If the essence of country-based programming is to survive, the **authority** of the Representative to design and implement a programme of cooperation suited to the needs of the country must be maintained and strengthened. As a result, a more adequate way must be found to communicate organizational priorities to country level to ensure that Representatives have a clear sense of the top priorities for the organization.

The effectiveness of current programmes of cooperation is sometimes hampered by issues related to **country programme design**. The first is occasional weakness in the country office's ability to understand and integrate the socio-cultural context of the country. A greater understanding of the context within which the programme is operating could be

achieved by including appropriate social scientists in the country office staff and, where appropriate, hiring more national staff. The second is the current focus on traditional UNICEF sectors which are not always appropriate in the country context. There must be increased dialogue on cross-sectoral issues such as women in development, community participation, social mobilization and empowerment.

The flexibility obtained through multiple sources of funding should be maintained. In spite of the constraints which supplementary funding imposes on the country programme, the ingenuity of UNICEF in developing programmes and allocating funds has meant that the organization is able to take maximum advantage of all available funding. The inadequacy of the current administrative budgets to reflect real administrative costs must be addressed. UNICEF needs to develop a clear statement of what constitutes "administration" in a multilateral development organization and develop more sophisticated systems for reflecting the costs associated with administration.

If UNICEF is to increase its capacity to choose and implement intervention strategies, it is essential that the choice be based on an accurate and comprehensive analysis of the situation including both the problems facing children and women and potential solutions. The planning process needs to be modified to include explicit criteria for selecting strategies and to challenge UNICEF to assess all options, including the capabilities and priorities of current and potential partners, and to include this in the Situation Analysis.

Since the selection of a programme intervention strategy cannot be made at a global or regional level, the level of the organization which has the most fully developed knowledge of the country should have the authority to develop and recommend an overall strategic emphasis for the programme. If country offices are to retain sufficient authority to meet this challenge, the need to improve the system of selecting and communicating organizational priorities to country level becomes even more acute.

Increasing UNICEF's capacity to be a critical partner, while still maintaining its role as a favoured partner of national governments, presents special challenges to UNICEF's organizational capacity. The country programme development process, staff qualifications and financing options must encourage innovative programmes. This implies a need for different types of staff skills to improve UNICEF's understanding of the complex dynamic of interests and alliances at the community level; and that flexible funding options are retained to allow UNICEF to "shop" for funding from donors likely to support innovations in social programming.

## 4.2 Accountability

### *Current Profile of Accountability and Challenges to Current Practices*

There are **constraints** to UNICEF's capacity to be accountable for all aspects of its operations. The high degree of **integration** between UNICEF's programme activities and those of its partners, especially national governments, makes it difficult, but not unreasonable, to hold UNICEF accountable for overall programme impacts. The fact that UNICEF has different **sources of income** complicates the accountability mechanisms while, at the same time, making it even more critical that UNICEF have transparent accountability mechanisms. That UNICEF is both a **critical and a favoured partner** of national governments means that it has to exploit ambiguities in the relationship between advocacy and programme support even though ambiguity is the enemy of transparency. This situation is made more acute by the **decentralized structure** of UNICEF and its programmes.

In spite of these constraints, however, the weaknesses in UNICEF's accountability mechanisms must be addressed. In being accountable for the **country programme design**, UNICEF must ensure that its documents adequately reflect the intervention strategies selected, the criteria used in the selection and the assessment of the likely success in implementing the chosen strategy. This does not necessarily mean "more" information but rather "better" information. The current lack of transparency makes it difficult for the Executive Board to get a clear picture of the programme being approved or how the programme will change to respond as the country situation evolves.

In general terms, UNICEF's systems for accounting for the **use of funds** have been effective. However, UNICEF needs to develop a clearer link between the programme and administrative budgets, a clear definition of administrative and programme support costs and a more effective accounting for the use of Global and Inter-regional Programme funds.

Systems for accounting for **UNICEF inputs** to specific programmes and projects work well. Although it is difficult for UNICEF to capture the input costs from national and sub-national governments and NGOs, in addition to its own input costs and those of other donors, UNICEF needs to assess the feasibility of capturing the full range of costs for selected programmes in order to contribute to the development of cost-effectiveness data.

The **outputs** of UNICEF-supported programmes at country level are monitored in quantitative terms to assess progress against specific objectives; however, UNICEF needs

to place more emphasis on the quality of programme outputs and to demonstrate the links between the outputs and expected effects of the programme using logical frameworks for country programmes.

It is at the level of accounting for the **impacts and effects** of UNICEF-supported programmes that a gap exists in UNICEF's accountability systems. Although UNICEF is an agency with complex partnership arrangements and goals which cross sectors and in which the problem of accounting for impacts and effects is difficult, more emphasis must be placed on addressing the impacts and effects of programmes and on evaluating country programmes. This emphasis can be enhanced by the development of a clearer and stronger role for headquarters and regional offices in ensuring that evaluation is an integral part of country programme management and in playing a challenge function to ensure that country office staff address strategic-level issues in evaluations.

One measure of the effectiveness of UNICEF-supported programmes can be found in improvements in national **indicators of health and well being** for children and women and UNICEF has supported national governments in tracking and analyzing these types of data at a national as well as a sub-national level. However, as these data do not measure the effect of UNICEF-supported programmes, their utility as an accountability tool is limited. The development of a logical framework which presents the causal links between UNICEF-supported programmes and the indicators being monitored, would enhance the usefulness of this data.

### *Challenges to UNICEF Accountability*

Challenges face UNICEF regardless of the external cooperation roles it chooses to play or the specific intervention strategies it adopts. There is a need for greater transparency in country programme documentation which should include more objective assessments of the effectiveness of previous country programmes or strategies and be designed to reflect the changes in intervention strategies which occur as a result of the changing situation in the country. The use of a logical framework analysis to reflect the links between UNICEF-supported activities and those of the government at a country-wide level, would allow UNICEF to show the links between government- and UNICEF-initiated activities and overall programme impacts and would require a realistic assessment of the likelihood of achieving programme objectives. UNICEF needs to become a "learning institution" - a process which requires both a recognition of the value of monitoring and evaluation information in the programme development and management process and greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation at country level, particularly with respect to the overall country programme and intervention strategies. The development of cost-

effectiveness information on selected UNICEF activities must be favoured and the organization needs to review and improve the way in which it defines and captures administrative costs.

The clarity of programme documentation is particularly important if the **capacity to choose and implement intervention strategies** is to be enhanced. The documents must clearly explain the roles of UNICEF, government and other partners in achieving goals and objectives. Monitoring and evaluation processes and systems must be capable of assessing the effectiveness of the chosen strategic mix. The organization must have strong processes for reviewing the effectiveness, including failures, and future directions of the strategic emphasis chosen and the programmes designed and implemented to support it.

In its **critical partner role**, systems for accountability must deal with the extent of UNICEF's shared responsibility and differentiate between those elements UNICEF can control or manage and those which it cannot, but for which it must accept some element of shared responsibility. In support of innovative social programming, monitoring, evaluation and timely reporting to track progress and effectiveness of large and fairly stable programmes must be supported. Alliance building requires UNICEF to involve partners at all levels of society in the assessment of programmes and their effectiveness, including, particularly, organizations committed to advancing the rights of target groups.

#### 4.3 Governance

Governance in the UN system involves four levels of decision-making: **politics and legislation** which involves essentially the establishment of an overall mandate, policy, and structure; **policy-making and priority-setting** which encompasses the identification of priorities, determination of the organization's scope and medium-term plans, the allocation of resources and coordination with other UN agencies; **operational governance** which includes the interpretation of the mandate and policy set by higher bodies, giving direction to executive management and the approval of country programmes including the allocation of resources to these; and, **executive management** involving providing leadership to the organization, developing and presenting programme options to higher bodies and reporting on performance.

However, in the current system these levels tend to overlap and the distinction between operational governance and executive management is often blurred as governing bodies become involved in "micro-management". At UNICEF, the Executive Board is formally charged with both policy formulation for UNICEF and with determining programmes and allocating resources to meet the agency's mandate. In spite of the formal mandate, in

actual operations, the Executive Board may find itself engaged in decisions spanning the full range from overall politics and legislation within the UN system to more detailed executive management.

As a result of UNICEF's country-based programming process and decentralized structure, it is difficult for the Executive Board, with its limited time and the limited information presented by the Secretariat, to play an important role in the review and approval of country programmes. In approving the country programmes, the Executive Board requires a strong understanding of, and insight on, the development situations faced in the countries in which UNICEF operates and the programmes and strategies appropriate to address them. Programme and resource allocation information is both projected and recorded along sectoral lines and reflects sector-specific goals in spite of a growing demand for UNICEF to act on cross-sectoral priorities. Information as it is currently presented makes it very difficult for the Executive Board to assess the resource requirements for new priorities or to monitor the extent to which they are reflected in programmes.

If UNICEF moves to improve its capacity to choose and implement a mix of intervention strategies, the country programme information currently provided to the Executive Board will be insufficient to identify either the strategic mix chosen or the criteria used in the choice. In order to be able to assess the choice of programme strategies at country level, the Executive Board would need to receive information on country programmes which includes a greater strategic content as well as the time, in dialogue with the Secretariat, to develop an informed understanding of the strategies chosen. The importance of the Executive Board having a strong understanding of the countries and the problems faced by children and women becomes more acute.

The Executive Board must provide clear and understandable guidance to the executive management of UNICEF on the global priorities of the agency and the basic principles which underlie its support to programmes, through engaging in informed dialogue with the Secretariat on programme priorities as well as principles for making strategic choices.

The need for UNICEF to be both a favoured and a critical partner to national governments may place the relationship between the Secretariat and some members of the Executive Board under considerable strain. On these occasions, it will be critical that the members of the Executive Board have sufficient knowledge of the country situation and the actions of UNICEF to provide the appropriate political support and to defend UNICEF's right and obligation to play the roles expected of it. In order to support UNICEF in this role, the Executive Board must provide political support to the executive

management of UNICEF and to the organization as a whole when pursuit of global priorities and objectives leads to conflict with national authorities.

## **5.0 Strategic Choices for UNICEF**

### **5.1 Programme Objectives and Intervention Strategies**

The Evaluation has noted an under-utilization of two of the three basic intervention strategies available to UNICEF: capacity building and empowerment. This has had two results: 1) An insufficient assessment of the overall role and impact of UNICEF in individual developing countries; and 2) Missed programme opportunities in relation to the human rights objectives under UNICEF's mandate that have been given greater emphasis through the WSC Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There is a direct link between UNICEF's programme objectives, its intervention strategies, its relations with national governments and other partners at country level, its ideal structure and capacity in country offices and headquarters, and its ideal form of governance. Taken together, these components constitute an effective **intervention model**. The Evaluation has examined three possible intervention models for UNICEF towards the year 2000, which take their starting-point in three different priority objectives for UNICEF programmes:

- 1) meeting the basic needs of children and women through service delivery;
- 2) strengthening national programmes for children through capacity building; and
- 3) guaranteeing the rights of children and women through empowerment.

This is summarized in the Figure below. A summary description of the three models is given below.

### Three Intervention Models available to UNICEF during the 1990s

From Mandate to Model	UNICEF's Mandate Priorities for the 1990s: World Summit for Children & Convention on the Rights of the Child		
Priority Emphasis Within the Mandate	Focus on the basic needs of children and women. Priority to achievement of the 27 goals of the WSC Plan of Action.	Focus on the sovereignty of national governments to determine the use of UNICEF resources at country level.	Focus on the human rights of children and women. Priority to UNICEF's normative role.
Intervention Strategy	Service delivery	Capacity building	Empowerment
Outputs and Activities	Going-to-scale with programme outputs	Development of sustainable systems	Mobilization and organization
Partnership with Government	UNICEF as a favoured partner	Continuity in UNICEF cooperation	UNICEF as a critical partner
Selection of Programme Partners	Line departments as implementing partners	Few partners at all levels of government	Building alliances with government and civil society
Coordination Within the UN	Technical dialogues with other UN agencies	Coordinated country programmes and strategies	Policy dialogues with other UN agencies
Country Office Roles	Mainly programme managers	Managers and social scientists	Also political and cultural expertise
Headquarters Roles	Mainly technical specialists	Also institutional development	Political backstopping
Governance: Board Structure	Small, specialized and frequent	Small, specialized, less frequent	Large, focused on the mandate

The Figure shows that all three intervention models can be accommodated within UNICEF's present mandate. There is a need, however, for the Executive Board to clarify the mandate with respect to **women** as a particular target group for UNICEF. The extent to which UNICEF should deal with the triple role of women (reproduction, production, and community management) in its own right or primarily as a means in relation to children is quite uncertain at present.

The three intervention models are not mutually exclusive. They show the extent of the institutional demands on UNICEF. The challenge is to combine elements of the three

models in the most effective way in accordance with the **programme priorities** established by the Executive Board and by national governments in the context of country programming.

### **1. Meeting Basic Needs through Service Delivery**

If UNICEF's programme priorities are to be the urgent fulfilment of the basic needs of children and women, support to the delivery of specific services will become the predominant intervention strategy. It aims at reaching as many beneficiaries as possible, i.e. going-to-scale in programmes with national coverage targets. UNICEF plays the role as favoured partner to the social sector line departments of central government. It needs to engage in technical dialogues with other UN agencies, such as WHO, UNFPA, FAO and ILO, in order to improve the design of its programmes and the effectiveness of implementation structures.

In this model, UNICEF's country offices are staffed with programme managers who are able to "get things going" also under difficult conditions of programme implementation. Since UNICEF would support effective programmes with a standard design around the world, its headquarters requires technical specialists to cover its priority programme sectors: health, water and sanitation, basic education, etc.

Finally, there is need for a small Executive Board, meeting frequently, and composed of representatives of member states with sufficient programme knowledge to be able to lead a dialogue with the Secretariat on programme design.

### **2. Strengthening National Programmes for Children through Capacity Building**

This model acknowledges the sovereignty of national governments to determine, through the country programme, the use of UNICEF's human and financial resources in accordance with nationally determined needs and priorities. UNICEF focuses on capacity building and systems development within its broad mandate, which first and foremost requires continuity in its assistance. Since capacity building is a demanding and long-term effort, UNICEF must concentrate on relatively few partner institutions, which however can be found at all levels of society and among both government institutions and NGOs.

The emphasis on the country level under this model implies a need for UNICEF to ensure coordination with other UN agencies, including UNDP, in the selection of partner institutions and the design of capacity building assistance. The country programmes and strategies of the UN agencies would have to be better coordinated than is the case today.

The structure of UNICEF differs from the service delivery model in two respects. Firstly, programming responsibility must be even further decentralized to the country office: capacity building requires a country-based choice of partners and design of process support packages which cannot be made from headquarters. Secondly, both the country offices and headquarters require expertise in institutional development. The Executive Board should preferably be smaller and more specialized than at present, but it would not need to meet as frequently as in the case of the service delivery model, due to the decentralized nature of the capacity building model.

### **3. Guaranteeing the Rights of Children and Women through Empowerment**

With an emphasis on the human rights elements of UNICEF's mandate, UNICEF needs to work more directly with institutions that are directly accountable to the target group. Facilitating the organization of target group members and their participation in societal decision-making requires from UNICEF more qualitative and structural interventions. Furthermore, on behalf of the international community UNICEF must - as a critical partner - monitor the adherence of national institutions to their international obligations with respect to the rights of the child.

In relation to other UN agencies, this model would require maximum room-to-manoeuve for UNICEF in the implementation of its specific mandate, but a closer dialogue on all aspects of human rights advocacy as a reflection of the increasing UN involvement in human development issues.

The UNICEF Representative would, under this model, need staff at the country office specialized in political science, anthropology etc., as well as strong backstopping from both UNICEF headquarters and the Executive Board. The latter should focus on interpreting the mandate of the organization and on setting overall policies. This would require a large, high-level Board.

#### ***Mixing the Intervention Models***

Selecting the most appropriate mixture of the three intervention models is a political choice. The following criteria must be considered in this strategic choice.

- 1) The Executive Board must give clearer priorities on UNICEF's global programme objectives for the 1990s. The balance between fulfilment of basic needs and guaranteeing of the broader human rights (of children and women) must be clarified. If UNICEF is to address the structural problems facing the target group, there would

be a need for the organization to move from support to service delivery towards the capacity building and empowerment strategies.

- 2) UNICEF must, as a global organization, have a structure and a professional capacity to support an emphasis on all three basic intervention strategies at country level. Any one of the three strategies can be emphasized within a given single country programme. All three strategies fall clearly within UNICEF's mandate, and the final choice of strategy must be made at country level.
- 3) The strategy mix at country level must be decided within the framework of the country programming process, i.e. in close cooperation with governments and other partners at country level. Criteria to be used for the choice of strategy mix include:
  - the needs in the country at a given time;
  - the capacities of potential partner organizations;
  - the activities of other development actors, including other donors;
  - sector- and programme-specific differences; and
  - opportunities and constraints for cross-sectoral, integrated approaches.
- 4) The final choice of strategy must be made explicitly in the design of individual UNICEF-supported programmes in individual countries. Thus, a country programme will often give different priority to the three strategies in different sectors and programmes.

## 5.2 Strategic Choices on Sector-specific Programmes

The four Sector Reports of the present Evaluation illustrate how UNICEF through paying more attention to the **capacity building** and **empowerment** strategies will be more effective in reaching programme objectives that differ slightly from the ones which tend to be given priority in most country programmes at present. This may be summarized as follows:

In **health and nutrition**, UNICEF would be more involved in addressing the underlying and the structural causes of ill health and malnutrition. These relate to the quality and control of health services; maternal and child care; household food security; and the political, economic, social, and ideological structures that determine the health of the target group.

In **water supply and sanitation**, UNICEF would be more involved in meeting the integrated needs of the target group for clean water, safe sanitation, personal hygiene and other preconditions for good health. UNICEF would also be able to promote more vigorously the use of water and sanitation facilities as an entry-point for empowerment of, especially, women, particularly through area-based, multi-sector programmes.

With respect to **women in development**, UNICEF would be able to address more effectively all of the practical / basic needs of women (within health care, nutrition, education, income and employment, water and sanitation, etc.) as well as their strategic gender needs and interests (access to resources, participation in decision-making, etc.). These concern the triple role of women in reproduction, productive work and community management.

With respect to **emergency response**, greater emphasis on capacity building and empowerment would enable UNICEF to focus more on strengthening the capacity of institutions and people to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters, especially in disaster-prone countries.

### **5.3 Strategic Choices in External Cooperation**

The three intervention models differ with respect to the balance between UNICEF's roles as a **favoured** and a **critical partner** to government. The emphasis on human rights and empowerment underlines UNICEF's position as a guardian of international agreements on moral and political objectives and standards for children.

All three intervention models require that UNICEF actively pursue the three partnership roles in its cooperation with governments and other partners at country level: promoting innovative social programming; alliance building and social mobilization; and advocacy. The actual choice of partners will differ between the three intervention models. The capacity building model is the most government-focused, whereas the empowerment model sees UNICEF in the broadest possible alliances with national institutions, including both government and civil society.

With respect to UNICEF's **cooperation with other UN agencies** at country level, UNICEF must retain considerable autonomy in programming and operations to safeguard its capacity to combine intervention models and strategies in accordance with national needs and priorities. Of the four possible forms of increased UN integration at country level, two could be expected to have negative and neutral effects on UNICEF's effectiveness, while two are likely to have positive effects.

- 1) An increase in the **integration of programmes** among UN agencies at country level may hold potential for improved effectiveness of the system as a whole but could weaken UNICEF's decentralized programme planning and implementation structures and reduce its operational effectiveness.
- 2) An increase in the **financial integration** of UN agencies at country level, if it involved creation of a single UN programme with funds channelled through a single UN office, would hamper UNICEF's efforts to implement prudent but flexible financial arrangements for support of NGOs, limit its operational flexibility, and undermine its capacity to be a strong advocate for children and women.
- 3) In contrast, the emergence of UNDP's human development initiative and the general emphasis being placed by more UN agencies on social development holds out the promise that increased **policy and strategy coordination** would have a positive effect on UNICEF's partnership roles.
- 4) **Increased technical dialogue** among UN agencies could clearly have a positive effect on UNICEF's role, especially under the service delivery intervention model.

In summary, from the point of view of UNICEF, **greater policy coordination and increased technical dialogue** within the UN system appear effective under all three intervention models. Except in the area of emergency response, efforts at more integrated programming, including financial integration, are apt to have a negative impact on UNICEF's partnership roles at country level.

The same applies to UNICEF cooperation with **multilateral development banks**. However, operational partnerships and joint programming with the World Bank could be desirable if the institutional arrangements permit each agency to be true to its own objectives and organizational imperatives while gaining from the capacities and resources of the other.

#### **5.4 Management and Governance**

All three intervention models give priority to **country programming** as the mechanism for the setting of priorities and the combination of intervention strategies. Similarly, all models require improved **accountability** in terms of greater transparency in strategic choice and greater precision in budgeting and reporting. While the Executive Board must be the primary target for UNICEF's accountability systems, these must be directed more

explicitly to the national governments under the capacity building model and to the target group and its representatives under the empowerment model.

The summary description of the three intervention models showed that each model requires different UNICEF capacity, in terms of the **staff expertise** at country offices and headquarters. Greater emphasis on capacity building and empowerment requires increased staff capacity in institutional development, policy analysis, sociology and ethnology. Continuation of the service delivery focus requires sufficient technical expertise, especially at headquarters, to interact with professional colleagues on the design and monitoring of effective programmes. Under all three models, the role of UNICEF's regional offices would increasingly be to support explicit strategy choices and to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of UNICEF operations at country level.

The strategic challenge facing UNICEF from a management and governance perspective is to adopt an organizational identity which can effectively encompass **operational and specialized** elements of its mandate (support to service delivery and capacity building) and the **human rights** element. As long as UNICEF has these two strong elements in its mandate, it must seek capacities, accountability systems and governance options which, while not being optimized for either function, are sufficient to encompass them both. A compromise solution might have the following characteristics:

- 1) The Executive Board should be smaller and more effective, with sufficient continuity in membership to permit informed enquiry by Board members into the choice of intervention model both globally and at country level; but also with sufficient representation of all groups of member states to ensure consensus on the balance between basic needs fulfilment and human rights in UNICEF's global objectives.
- 2) The interaction between Executive Board and Secretariat should be upgraded to the programming policy level. This requires essential improvements in the strategic and evaluative content of the material being presented to the Board.
- 3) UNICEF should - within the UN system - have sufficient operational and financial autonomy for programming to be able to implement at country level the policies that have been adopted by the Executive Board. Within UNICEF, this may require more frequent transfer of staff between headquarters and field offices.
- 4) Headquarters should include a reasonably strong cadre of specialists focusing on support to country programmes and research on intervention methods. The

programme clusters should cover both sectors and cross-cutting issues such as gender, empowerment, human rights policies and institutional development.

- 5) Regional offices should focus on support to monitoring and evaluation functions as well as regional factors in strategic choice.
- 6) The country offices should have staff skills to match the mix of intervention models which is appropriate in a given country at a given time. This requires maximum flexibility in the transfer of international staff among country offices - and between headquarters and the field - in accordance with changes in country-specific needs. The country Representatives should have personal qualifications to be both programme managers and political advocates.