EVALUATION OF UNICEF’S CLUSTER LEAD AGENCY ROLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION
Evaluation of UNICEF’s Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action
Final Report


United Nations Children’s Fund
Three United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017

December 2013

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The cluster approach is an important vehicle to ensure adequate coordination of humanitarian response. Introduced in 2005 within the wider context of humanitarian reform, the cluster approach is organized along a two-tiered structure involving roles and responsibilities at both global and country levels. UNICEF serves as Global Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) for three Clusters: Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and, as co-CLA with Save the Children, for Education. In addition, UNICEF is Focal Point Agency for Child Protection area of responsibility (AOR) and co-Focal Point Agency with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the Gender-based Violence (GBV) AOR. UNICEF is the organization with the most clusters and AORs under its remit, and its cluster coordination accountabilities are enshrined in the organization’s Core Commitments for Children in emergencies (CCCs).

The UNICEF Evaluation Office commissioned a global evaluation of UNICEF’s CLA role to generate credible evidence for results achieved or not achieved by UNICEF in exercising its CLA role. By taking a forward-looking view while drawing on lessons from the past, this evaluation serves the dual purpose of promoting learning and accountability. The evaluation focuses on UNICEF’s fulfilment of its CLA role, not the wider results achieved by the clusters and their partners. Rather, the evaluation focuses more narrowly on UNICEF’s management of its own CLA responsibilities.

Conducted by Avenir Analytics and Everywhere Humanitarian Response and Logistics Services, the evaluation was staged in three phases: the inception phase, the data collection and analysis phase, and the reporting phase. In the inception phase, in addition to exploring scoping issues and an action plan for conducting the exercise, the evaluation team undertook a rapid evaluability type of assessment to develop a logic model to be used to measure UNICEF’s cluster performance. In the data collection and analysis phase, the evaluation employed a mixed-method approach to derive the best perceptual and documentary evidence. Data collection took place at global and country levels, with emphasis on eight country case studies: Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Haiti, Nepal, the Philippines, South Sudan, the State of Palestine and Tajikistan.

The evaluation found that partners believe UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are broadly effective. Human resources, institutional support and leadership are the primary factors influencing UNICEF effectiveness as a CLA. There is evidence to credit UNICEF-led clusters for having positive effects on geographic and thematic coverage. Roles and responsibilities are reportedly clearer at country level than at global level. The evaluation found, however, that global and country cluster coordinators clearly make substantial efforts to establish shared responsibilities by developing workplans, and other mapping of capacities and activities. UNICEF’s policies and systems have increasingly integrated the CLA roles, but CLA performance monitoring systems remain limited. There are clear indications that consolidation under the Global Cluster Coordination Unit (GCCU) is beginning to yield positive results. Investments in UNICEF surge capacity arrangements have been positive and should be further enhanced. UNICEF has also implemented its CLA role in an increasing number of contexts in response to demand for coordination services, and the organization should maintain and build on its strengths in partnership and coordination.
On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to thank Brian Majewski for his leadership in conducting the evaluation, and the evaluation team consisting of Hetty van Doorn, Mark Slezak, Natalia Gomez-Tagle Leonard, Ian Heigh, Kurt Wilson and Paule Heredote. I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our colleagues in UNICEF headquarters, in particular Ted Chaiban, Dermot Carty and Gwyn Lewis, and to colleagues in the UNICEF regional offices and country offices that were involved in the evaluation in Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Haiti, Nepal, the Philippines, South Sudan, the State of Palestine and Tajikistan, as well as their government partners, for their contribution to the data collection.

In addition, I would like to extend our thanks to the many external partners and individuals that contributed their time and inputs to this evaluation. Lastly, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Evaluation Office, including Robert McCouch, Erica Mattellone, Tammy Smith, Mathew Varghese and Dalma Rivero for their support and guidance to the evaluation team, which has been exemplary throughout the process.

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Director
Evaluation Office
UNICEF New York
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<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>area of responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>APSSC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Shared Services Center</td>
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<td>CAR</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
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<td>CAP</td>
<td>Consolidated Appeal Process</td>
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<td>CC</td>
<td>cluster coordinator</td>
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<td>CCCs</td>
<td>Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action</td>
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<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
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<td>CHF</td>
<td>Common Humanitarian Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEE-CIS</td>
<td>Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Cluster Lead Agency</td>
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<td>CLARE</td>
<td>Cluster Lead Agency Role Evaluation</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>child protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPWG</td>
<td>Child Protection Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development, United Kingdom</td>
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<td>DHR</td>
<td>Division of Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAPRO</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>EMOPS</td>
<td>Office of Emergency Programmes</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
<td>Emergency Relief Coordinator (United Nations)</td>
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<td>ESARO</td>
<td>Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>gender-based violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Global Cluster Coordinator</td>
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<td>GCCU</td>
<td>Global Clusters Coordination Unit</td>
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<td>GenCap</td>
<td>Gender Standby Capacity Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Humanitarian Coordinator</td>
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<td>HCT</td>
<td>humanitarian country team</td>
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<td>HRBA</td>
<td>human rights-based approach</td>
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<td>IAHP</td>
<td>Interagency and Humanitarian Partnerships Unit</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>ICVA</td>
<td>International Council of Voluntary Agencies</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>international non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>ISDR</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENARO</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa Regional Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDMA</td>
<td>National Disaster Management Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORE</td>
<td>Other Resources–Emergency (resources directed to emergency programmes and humanitarian relief)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORR</td>
<td>Other Resources–Regular (resources earmarked to specific projects and initiatives)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCA</td>
<td>Programme Cooperation Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Programme Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Resident Coordinator</td>
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<td>REA</td>
<td>Regional Emergency Adviser</td>
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<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>Regional Office</td>
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<td>RRT</td>
<td>rapid response team</td>
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<td>SCHR</td>
<td>Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>Special Service Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Temporary Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>TACRO</td>
<td>The Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>terms of reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNEG</td>
<td>United Nations Evaluation Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCARO</td>
<td>West and Central Africa Regional Office</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation Question
The evaluation of UNICEF’s Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) role in humanitarian action has primarily sought to address the following overarching question:

*How well does UNICEF carry out its CLA role and what should it do for the future?*

The evaluation was commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office (EO) and was conducted from January through June of 2013 by independent evaluators from Avenir Analytics. Based on the terms of reference (ToR) (*see Annex 1*) the evaluation sought to generate credible evidence regarding the results achieved or not achieved by UNICEF in undertaking its CLA role.

Objective
The objective of the evaluation was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the performance of UNICEF as a CLA and area of responsibility (AOR) focal point at global and country levels.

The evaluation sought to generate evidence regarding the results achieved or not achieved by UNICEF in undertaking these roles. It is primarily intended for use by UNICEF senior management to make improvements in how it undertakes its CLA and AOR roles within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster system.

The evaluation is anticipated to serve the dual purposes of learning and accountability. Its primary emphasis is forward-looking – seeking to enhance learning by drawing lessons, identifying opportunities and providing information for UNICEF to improve its capacities, systems and approaches for exercising its CLA and AOR roles.

Rationale for the evaluation
The IASC initiated the cluster approach in 2005 to enhance coordination during emergencies in the context of broader humanitarian reform. The approach was intended to improve humanitarian response by increasing predictability, accountability and partnerships across actors.

Together, the five clusters and AORs – led or co-led by UNICEF – represent responsibility for approximately one third of the IASC cluster system. To undertake these responsibilities, UNICEF has invested significant time and resources. As an institution, UNICEF needs to understand how it is performing as a CLA and how it could improve. During the evaluation inception phase, six uses of the evaluation output were identified through consultation with internal and external stakeholders:

1. Provide a benchmark for measuring CLA performance.
2. Contribute to ongoing UNICEF planning processes (office management plans, the medium-term strategic plan and cluster work planning).
3. Provide UNICEF with unfiltered critiques and information on how partners view its implementation of the CLA role towards improving its approaches.
4. Contribute to influencing the IASC on unresolved cluster system issues.
5. Share information with partners regarding good practice and capacity required.
6. Provide evidence on UNICEF performance to key internal and external stakeholders, including donors.
Evaluation approach and methodology

Design
Based on the terms of reference developed by UNICEF's Evaluation Office, over 100 lines of enquiry were reviewed and further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation. Questions were organized to look at UNICEF's ability to meet performance criteria based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee criteria, namely, relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness (further split into predictability, accountability and partnership), efficiency, coherence, coverage and sustainability.

Seventy-two indicators were developed to measure how well UNICEF is performing in its CLA roles and to identify patterns suggesting areas for future improvement. Eight countries were selected by the Evaluation Office for case studies to reflect the diversity of capacity levels and operating contexts where UNICEF clusters are operating. These were Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Haiti, Nepal, the Philippines, South Sudan, the State of Palestine and Tajikistan.

Data collection instruments were designed to allow the evaluators to collect information from multiple sources for each of the 72 indicators and to allow for triangulation. The data collection instruments supported face-to-face and remote interviews, focus groups, online surveys, observation and formal documentary research. Interview guides and surveys were translated into French and Spanish to facilitate participation.

The output of the evaluation design was an inception report. This was presented to the Evaluation Office, to internal and external focus group members for feedback, and it was approved before data collection began.

Data collection
Data collection took place through six country visits and in-person visits to Copenhagen, Geneva and New York, as well as remote interviews and desk research over a period of three months with a team of eight evaluators. The evaluators collected data from more than 1,000 people, including 282 UNICEF staff and 779 staff from partner organizations, as well as 790 documents. Data were captured in the form of original notes then summarized per interview, focus group or observation against each of the evaluation indicators. The output of this stage was a deep repository of data for each case study and at global level.

Data analysis
The data from the more than 1,000 reference points were synthesized by group and location. The results were summarized for each case against the indicators, consolidated into 33 outcome and capability factors, and then a quantitative measure was applied to provide an overall indication of how well UNICEF meets the key outcomes and evaluation criteria.

Per case findings and global findings were analysed and synthesized to produce overall preliminary findings. These findings were then organized based on emergent trends and major issues under the following five key areas related to how well UNICEF carries out its CLA role and what it needs to do for the future:

- External coordination performance
- Internal CLA performance
- Human resources performance
- Scope and boundary issues
- Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency
Findings, analysis and potential recommendations have been presented to case study country offices and regional offices, as well as global UNICEF staff and partners in participatory workshops (in person and online) before the report was completed.

Findings, analysis and recommendations

The findings have been analysed against the future likely requirements of the key stakeholders.

Recommendations were then developed related to improvements UNICEF can make to strengthen implementation of CLA roles.

The outputs are (i) a set of points that describe how well UNICEF is carrying out its CLA role and what it is not doing so well, and (ii) a set of recommendations that link directly to the identified weaknesses that, if implemented, will facilitate the required improvement.

Findings

Findings for key area 1: External coordination performance

External coordination performance was reviewed against three essential elements:

1. Overall effectiveness
2. Coverage
3. Partnership

The main findings were:

- **Partners believe UNICEF is broadly effective at exercising its country cluster coordination responsibilities** across surveys, interviews and focus groups. This is supported by other recent evaluations. Stakeholders noted UNICEF generally does the best that can be expected within the complex country and overarching coordination contexts.

- **Human resources, institutional support and leadership are the primary factors influencing UNICEF effectiveness as a CLA** according to data from interviews, focus groups, surveys and the document review.

- **UNICEF clusters are having positive effects on geographic and thematic coverage** according to surveys, interviews and focus groups. Subnational coordination structures have been established, although concerns were noted about their financial and staffing sustainability. Clusters and AORs have had positive effects on thematic coverage through increased operations research and advocacy, particularly in the Education Cluster and Gender-based Violence (GBV) AOR.

- **The partnership aspects of UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are stronger at country level than for Global Clusters.** Country-level partners agree UNICEF adheres to principles of partnership, while Global Cluster/AOR members raised concerns particularly regarding transparency. Roles and responsibilities are reportedly unclear among global survey respondents, although documents and observation show Global Cluster Coordinators (GCCs) making significant efforts to develop shared responsibility. Country-level partners had questions regarding UNICEF representation of clusters at humanitarian country teams (HCT) distinctly from its institutional interests.

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Findings for key area 2: Internal CLA performance

Internal CLA performance was reviewed against four key elements:

1. Establishment of the Global Cluster Coordination Unit (GCCU)
2. Policy and performance monitoring
3. The role of regional offices
4. The comparative advantages of UNICEF

The main findings were:

- The evaluation found clear indications that the consolidation of Global Cluster staff under the GCCU is beginning to yield positive results across all of UNICEF’s cluster operations. More than 70 per cent of UNICEF staff surveyed and the majority of staff interviewed in case-study countries stated that they had seen moderate or substantial improvements in global coordination and leadership as a result of the GCCU’s creation, despite this organizational change being only one year old.

- UNICEF’s policies and systems have increasingly integrated the CLA roles but CLA performance monitoring systems remain limited. Country office reporting under the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring Toolkit\(^2\) is voluntary and limited to a series of “yes/no” questions regarding inputs and outputs, rather than quality and outcomes. The role of regional offices related to CLA responsibilities remains unclear. While the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) articulate a coordination mandate, they have not been translated into clear responsibilities and accountability mechanisms at regional level. Based on previous evaluations\(^3\) and internal documents\(^4\) this may stem from a more systemic confusion within UNICEF on roles, accountabilities and authorities between headquarters, regional offices and country offices. This is significant because regional offices are the only formal link in UNICEF’s accountability chain between country offices and headquarters.

- UNICEF’s CLA roles were found to broadly match its comparative advantages in programming. However, Global Cluster members question UNICEF’s programme strengths and ability to leverage its coordination skills and capacities.

Findings for key area 3: Human resources performance

Human resources performance was reviewed against two key elements:

1. Surge capacity and recruitment systems
2. Cluster coordination capacity development

The main findings were:

- Surge capacity and recruitment systems for clusters have improved since 2010, as evidenced by the difference in findings between evaluations of the Haiti\(^5\) earthquake and Horn of Africa\(^6\) responses. Management of surge capacity systems remains fragmented, however, and there is no overarching strategy.

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• **Double-hatting** (the practice of performing several organizational functions) remains prevalent and diminishes effectiveness. Even in ongoing emergency situations or active clusters, only 28 per cent of staff work full time on cluster activities.

• **Cluster coordinator capacity development is limited** to classroom-based awareness training, and no systematic efforts are in place to build awareness and consistency of practice among country office representatives.

**Findings for key area 4:**

**Scope and boundary issues**

Scope and boundary issues were reviewed against two key elements:

1. The scope of UNICEF’s cluster responsibilities
2. The operational role of UNICEF’s clusters and AORs

The main findings were:

- **The effects of clusters on lasting coordination and national response capacity systems is limited** by a lack of guidance on transition, decentralized authority and funding, and an unclear role for clusters in capacity-building.

- **Clusters are increasingly filling gaps beyond emergency coordination.** Indicatively, of the 34 UNICEF clusters active in 20127 only 14 are operated fully in line with the IASC cluster objectives and guidelines (time-bound and emergency-focused). Ten of the remaining 20 may have been correctly activated, but are currently operating as long-term sectoral development coordination mechanisms. The others were activated in place of sectoral development coordination, with no formal IASC activation.

- **This is cluster “scope creep” and significantly affects UNICEF’s ability to perform well as a CLA in terms of relevance, predictability, partnership, efficiency and sustainability.**

**Findings for key area 5:**

**Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency**

Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency were reviewed against three key elements:

1. Cost-effectiveness and value for money
2. Linkages with other internal and external initiatives
3. Co-leadership arrangements

The main findings were:

- **Staff and partners strongly perceive that the outcomes of cluster work justify their organization’s investment.** In surveys, 83 per cent of UNICEF country staff and 84 per cent of country partners stated that cluster outcomes justify their investment. This needs to be critically reviewed against the findings in key area 4.

- **Cross-cluster coordination was found to be insufficient, and integrated programming approaches remain the exception rather than the rule.**

- **Co-leadership arrangements have generally improved since 2012, although some challenges remain due to members’ expectations and capacity imbalances.**

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Conclusions and recommendations

Key area 1: External coordination performance
UNICEF strengths in cluster coordination performance, coverage and country level partnership practice should be maintained and replicated. The key areas for improvement are (i) weaknesses in cluster coordinators’ abilities to identify gaps and solve problems, (ii) challenges in UNICEF representation of cluster members at HCTs and (iii) a lack of clarity on coordination roles and responsibilities externally with partners.

The key recommendation is to develop a “cluster-ready” initiative with regional offices and/or the GCCU, using globally developed capacity assessment and enhancement tools. In short, this means increasing the preparedness of country offices in high-risk areas so they can activate and disengage from the appropriate cluster mechanism when necessary. This ensures that clusters provide effective and efficient support to vulnerable communities within the humanitarian system.

Key area 2: Internal CLA performance
UNICEF’s positive efforts to consolidate cluster support under the GCCU and integrate the CLA role into its policies should be maintained and built upon. The key areas for improvement are (i) a lack of clarity on internal coordination responsibilities and roles, (ii) unclear regional office roles and (iii) no systematic approach to ensure country representatives consistently implement CLA roles.

The key recommendation is to strengthen management systems to support the CLA role, including performance measurement, strengthened regional office roles and better connecting country representatives to a global CLA strategic management effort.

Key area 3: Human resources performance
Investments in UNICEF surge capacity arrangements have been positive and should be further enhanced. The main areas for improvement are (i) a fragmented human resources approach and the lack of a career path for coordination staff and (ii) the fact that staff capacity development for cluster work is limited to classroom-based basic awareness training across the organization.

The major recommendation is to develop an integrated strategy for surge capacity and a UNICEF-wide effort for developing coordination staff.

Key area 4: Scope and boundary
UNICEF has implemented its CLA role in an increasing number of contexts in response to demand for coordination services. The most important area for improvement is in the lack of organization-wide cluster guidance and the inconsistent application of IASC policies, which makes it difficult to meet divergent stakeholder expectations.

The primary recommendation is to establish UNICEF policy and guidance to clearly interpret and articulate CLA policy (coherence) and disseminate it to ensure consistent application (fidelity), with focus on the most critical emergency situations, and management of stakeholder expectations.

Key area 5: Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency
UNICEF should maintain and build upon its strengths in perceived partner value and co-leadership arrangements. The key area for improvement is over-investment in use of clusters at field level to fill gaps
in long-term sectoral or humanitarian coordination.

The key recommendation is to mitigate the use of clusters in inappropriate scenarios by developing models and tools for non-cluster coordination, including transition points for country offices, and to establish clarity on the role of clusters for national capacity-building to ensure efficient and fit-for-purpose coordination approaches.

**Key success factors**

Some of the evaluation findings and recommendations are similar to those found in the following documents:


The following six actions can be taken to support successful implementation of the evaluation recommendations:

- Engage senior leadership across UNICEF.
- Implement recommendations as a package.
- Engage partners in developing strategies for the future.
- Engage IASC bodies in discussions based on the evaluation.
- Organize discussions with donor organizations to discuss how their funding shapes CLA implementation.
- Engage national governments before and at the beginning of cluster operations to establish and agree clear scope and transition points.
Table 1: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key area</th>
<th>Findings - what UNICEF is doing well</th>
<th>Findings - what UNICEF is doing less well</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **External coordination performance** | • High perception of overall effectiveness.  
  • Increasingly robust cluster coordination services.  
  • Strong country-level partnership performance. | • Weaknesses in global partnership performance.  
  • Lack of clarity on coordination roles and responsibilities: internally across units and externally with partners.  
  • Gaps in cluster coordinators’ abilities to identify gaps and solve problems.  
  • Challenges in UNICEF representation of cluster members at HCTs. | UNICEF is increasingly effective at cluster coordination, but it needs to address lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities with partners, variance in partner expectations and gaps in coordinator abilities to ensure continued improvement. | Develop a “cluster-ready” initiative to increase country office preparedness for cluster activation in high-risk countries. |
| **Internal CLA performance** | • CLA role well integrated at the broad policy level.  
  • Improvements in coordination and leadership due to creation of GCCU.  
  • Initial efforts to develop CLA strategy and information management function.  
  • Broad match between UNICEF comparative advantages and CLA roles. | • Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities internally across units.  
  • Unclear regional office roles and no systematic approach to ensure country representatives consistently implement CLA roles. | UNICEF has instituted positive changes in its global approach to managing the CLA roles, but has not yet established the clarity on roles and responsibilities across internal units and ensured a chain of accountability that would enable consistency and quality across country offices. | Strengthen UNICEF-wide management systems to support the CLA role, including strengthening the role of regional offices and better connecting country representatives to a global CLA strategic management structure. |
| **Human resources performance** | • Significant improvement in cluster surge capacity with increased ability to deploy coordinators in a timely fashion. | • Fragmented HR approach and lack of a coordination career path.  
  • Continued prevalence of double-hatting reduces effectiveness.  
  • Capacity development limited to basic awareness | UNICEF’s ability to rapidly deploy coordinators has improved but continued fragmentation, lack of an integrated HR strategy, continued prevalence of double-hatting and limited approach to coordinator capacity development reduce | Develop an integrated strategy for human resources surge capacity and UNICEF coordination staff development. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Scope and boundary issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency</strong></th>
<th><strong>Increase coherence</strong> (interpretation and articulation) and then <strong>fidelity</strong> (understanding and consistent application) through <strong>UNICEF CLA policy and practice.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Active participation in IASC and Transformative Agenda work and global efforts to clarify cluster policies and guidance. | • High by staff and partners that outcomes justify investments.  
• Investment in CLA role not excessive.  
• Co-leadership arrangements have generally improved since 2012. | Increase coherence (interpretation and articulation) and then fidelity (understanding and consistent application) through UNICEF CLA policy and practice. |
| • Lack of organization-wide cluster guidance and inconsistent application of IASC policies.  
• Lasting effects on coordination and national response capacity limited by lack of guidance on transition and national capacity building, decentralized authority and funding.  
• Clusters increasingly filling gaps beyond emergency coordination. | • Much investment at field level in long-term sectoral coordination contexts.  
• Cross-cluster coordination is insufficient and integrated programming approaches remain the exception rather than the rule. | Increase coherence (interpretation and articulation) and then fidelity (understanding and consistent application) through UNICEF CLA policy and practice. |
| Cluster "scope creep" significantly affects UNICEF's ability to perform well as a CLA in terms of relevance, predictability, partnership, efficiency and sustainability. | Overall UNICEF investment in implementing its CLA role is not excessive and staff and partners agree cluster outcomes justify their investments, but investments in clusters to fill gaps in long-term sectoral coordination offer opportunities for cost savings or realignment. | Increase coherence (interpretation and articulation) and then fidelity (understanding and consistent application) through UNICEF CLA policy and practice. |
| Mitigate the use of clusters in inappropriate scenarios by developing models and tools for non-cluster coordination, including transition points for country offices, and establish clarity on the role of clusters, if any, for national capacity-building to ensure efficient and fit-for-purpose coordination approaches. | | Increase coherence (interpretation and articulation) and then fidelity (understanding and consistent application) through UNICEF CLA policy and practice. |
RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

L’interrogation de l’évaluation

L’évaluation du rôle de l’UNICEF en tant qu’organisme chef de file pour les Groupes sectoriels (CLA - Cluster Lead Agency) dans l’action humanitaire a principalement cherché à répondre à la principale question, qui peut se formuler de la manière suivante :

Avec quelle efficacité l’UNICEF remplit-il son rôle de CLA et qu’est-ce que l’organisation doit envisager à l’avenir ?

Cette évaluation a été commandée par le Bureau de l’évaluation de l’UNICEF et a été menée de janvier à juin 2013 par des évaluateurs indépendants du cabinet Avenir Analytics (voir Annexe 1). Se fondant sur les termes du mandat qui avait été défini, l’évaluation a cherché à établir par le recueil de données factuelles crédibles quels résultats l’UNICEF avait obtenus ou n’avait pas obtenus dans son rôle de CLA.

Objectif

L’objectif de l’évaluation était de juger, aussi systématiquement et objectivement que possible, les résultats obtenus par l’UNICEF comme CLA et point focal de Zone de responsabilité (area of responsibility - AOR) au niveau mondial et au niveau de différents pays.

L’évaluation a cherché à établir de manière factuelle et crédible les résultats obtenus, ou pas, par l’UNICEF en assumant ces rôles. Cette étude est destinée en priorité aux cadres supérieurs de l’UNICEF, afin de leur permettre d’améliorer la manière dont l’organisation joue ces rôles de CLA et d’AOR au sein du système de clusters du Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC).

L’évaluation devrait jouer un double rôle, enseignement et responsabilisation. Sa perspective dominante est prospective – il s’agit de chercher à renforcer l’apprentissage en tirant des leçons de l’expérience, d’identifier des perspectives favorables et de fournir à l’UNICEF les informations dont il a besoin pour améliorer les capacités, les systèmes et les méthodes auxquels il fait appel dans ses rôles de CLA et d’AOR.

Raison d’être de l’évaluation

Le Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC) a lancé la politique des clusters en 2005 pour renforcer la coordination pendant les situations d’urgence et dans le contexte d’une réforme plus globale de l’action humanitaire. Cette méthode était destinée à améliorer les interventions humanitaires en renforçant l’étude prospective des catastrophes humanitaires pour les rendre plus prévisibles, ainsi qu’à renforcer les partenariats entre les différents acteurs et leur obligation de responsabilité mutuelle.

Pris ensemble, les cinq clusters et les AOR – gérés ou cogérés par l’UNICEF – assument environ un tiers des responsabilités dans le système de clusters du Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC). Pour endosser ces responsabilités, l’UNICEF a investi temps et ressources en quantités importantes. En tant qu’institution, l’UNICEF a besoin de savoir avec quelle efficacité elle joue le rôle de CLA et comment il peut l’améliorer. Pendant la phase initiale de l’évaluation, des consultations avec des parties prenantes internes et externes ont permis d’identifier six usages qui

8 (Appelés aussi cluster, le mot que nous utiliserons dans ce document)
pouvaient être éventuellement faits des résultats de l’évaluation :

1. Fournir une base de référence pour jaugez l’action de la CLA.
3. Fournir à l’UNICEF une évaluation critique non filtrée et des informations sur la manière dont ses partenaires voient la façon dont il joue son rôle de CLA afin de lui permettre d’améliorer ses méthodes de travail
4. Contribuer à influencer le Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC) concernant les questions non résolues qui se posent au système des clusters.
5. Échanger avec les partenaires des informations concernant les bonnes pratiques et les capacités requises.
6. Fournir des éléments factuels sur les résultats obtenus par l’UNICEF à des parties prenantes clé, internes aussi bien qu’externes, dont les bailleurs de fonds.

**Technique d’évaluation et méthodologie**

**Conception**

À partir des termes du mandat mis au point par le Bureau de l’évaluation de l’UNICEF, plus de 100 lignes de recherche ont été examinées et encore affinées pendant la phase préliminaire de l’évaluation. Les questions ont été organisées de façon à examiner la capacité qu’a l’UNICEF de satisfaire à des critères de résultats basés sur ceux du Comité d’aide au développement de l’Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (CAD/OCDE), c’est-à-dire pertinence et adéquation, efficacité (divisé entre questions de capacité de prévision, de responsabilité et de partenariat), effi cacité, cohérence, couverture et viabilité (pérennité).

Soixante-douze indicateurs ont été mis au point pour mesurer l’efficacité avec laquelle l’UNICEF joue ses rôles de CLA et pour identifier des tendances susceptibles de suggérer de futures améliorations. Huit pays ont été sélectionnés par le Bureau de l’évaluation pour mener des études de cas afin de refléter la diversité des niveaux de capacités entre pays et des contextes dans lesquels opèrent les clusters de l’UNICEF. Ces pays sont le Burkina Faso, le Salvador, Haïti, le Népal, l’État de Palestine, les Philippines, le Soudan du Sud et le Tadjikistan.

Les instruments de collecte des données ont été conçus pour permettre aux évaluateurs de recueillir des informations de sources multiples pour chacun des 72 indicateurs et pour pouvoir procéder à des « triangulations ». Ces instruments de collecte de données ont été utilisés pour des entretiens en face-à-face et des entretiens indirects à distance, pour des discussions en groupe de contrôle, des sondages en ligne, des observations et une recherche documentaire conventionnelle. Les guides d’entretien et les questions d’enquête avaient été traduits en français et en espagnol pour faciliter la participation.

Le produit de la phase de conception de l’évaluation à été un rapport préliminaire qui a été présenté au Bureau de l’évaluation et à des personnes ayant participé aux discussions en groupes de contrôle, certaines faisant partie de l’UNICEF, d’autres venant de l’extérieur. Le rapport leur a été présenté afin de recueillir leurs réactions et leurs contributions et pour approbation avant le début de la collecte des données.
Collecte des données
La collecte des données a été entreprise par une équipe de huit évaluateurs au cours de six visites dans les pays concernés et de déplacements en personne à Genève, New York et Copenhague, ainsi que par des entretiens à distance et une recherche documentaire. Les évaluateurs ont recueilli des informations auprès de plus de 1000 personnes, dont 282 membres du personnel de l’UNICEF et 779 membres du personnel d’organisations partenaires, ils ont également consulté 790 documents. Les données ont été recueillies sous forme de notes originales qui ont ensuite été synthétisées par entretien, groupe de contrôle ou observation en fonction des indicateurs d’évaluation définis. Le produit de cette phase du travail d’évaluation a été un important fonds de données constitué pour chacune des études de cas ainsi que pour le travail d’évaluation au niveau mondial.

Analyse des données
Les données obtenues à partir des plus de 1000 points de référence ont été synthétisées par groupe et par localisation géographique. Les résultats ont été résumés pour chaque cas en fonction des indicateurs regroupés sous 33 facteurs de réalisation et de capacité; une mesure quantitative leur a ensuite été appliquée pour fournir une indication globale sur le degré auquel l’UNICEF satisfait aux critères clés de réalisations et d’évaluation.

Les constatations tirées de chaque cas et celles relatives au niveau mondial ont été analysées et synthétisées pour obtenir des constatations préliminaires globales. Celles-ci ont été ensuite organisées sur la base des tendances émergentes et des questions clés figurant dans les cinq rubriques principales suivantes qui indiquent la mesure dans laquelle l’UNICEF joue avec efficacité son rôle de CLA et ce que l’organisation doit faire à l’avenir :

- Résultats concernant la coordination externe
- Résultats concernant le rôle interne en tant que CLA
- Résultats dans le domaine des ressources humaines
- Questions d’ampleur et de limites de l’action
- Rapport coût-efficacité, optimisation des ressources et efficience

Les constatations, les analyses et les propositions de recommandations ont été présentées au Bureaux de pays des États ayant fait l’objet des études de cas ; aux personnels de l’UNICEF à travers le monde et aux partenaires impliqués dans les ateliers participatifs (en personne ou en ligne) avant que l’étude ne soit finalisée.

Constatations, analyses et recommandations
Les constatations ont été analysées en fonction des besoins que les principales parties prenantes éprouveront probablement à l’avenir.

Des recommandations ont été ensuite mises au point en fonction des améliorations éventuelles que l’UNICEF pourrait apporter à ses rôles de CLA. Les réalisations sont (i) un ensemble de points qui décrivent l’efficacité avec laquelle l’UNICEF remplit son rôle de CLA ainsi que les domaines où son action n’est pas totalement satisfaisante ; et (ii) un ensemble de recommandations qui sont directement liées aux faiblesses identifiées et dont la mise en œuvre faciliterait les améliorations requises.
Constatations

Constatations concernant le 1er domaine clé : résultats concernant la coordination externe

Les résultats concernant la coordination externe ont été examinés en fonction de trois critères :

1. Efficacité globale
2. Couverture
3. Partenariats

Les principales constatations sont les suivantes :

- Les partenaires pensent que l’UNICEF exerce globalement avec efficacité ses responsabilités de coordination du cluster dans les pays concernés, opinion exprimée dans les enquêtes, les entretiens comme dans les groupes de contrôle. Ce résultat est conforme à d’autres évaluations. Les parties prenantes ont noté que l’UNICEF faisait du mieux qu’il était possible d’espérer dans les situations complexes présentées par les pays concernés et par les problématiques globales de coordination.

- Les ressources humaines, le caractère institutionnel et le rôle moteur de l’UNICEF sont les principaux facteurs qui expliquent l’efficacité de l’organisation dans son rôle de CLA selon les données recueillies dans les enquêtes, les entretiens comme dans la recherche documentaire.

- Les clusters de l’UNICEF ont des effets positifs sur la couverture géographique et thématique, opinion exprimée dans les enquêtes, les entretiens comme dans les groupes de contrôle. Des structures de coordination infra-nationales ont été mises en place, mais on a noté cependant des préoccupations concernant la capacité de leur assurer le financement et le personnel nécessaires de façon durable. Clusters et AOR ont eu des effets positifs sur la couverture thématique en stimulant la recherche opérationnelle et les activités de plaidoyer, particulièrement pour ce qui concerne le cluster éducation et l’AOR relatif à la violence basée sur le genre.

- Les aspects relatifs au partenariat des clusters dirigés par l’UNICEF au niveau des pays sont plus forts qu’au niveau des clusters mondiaux. Les partenaires agissant au niveau d’un pays conviennent que l’UNICEF adhère fiablement aux principes de partenariat, par contre les membres des clusters ou d’AOR de niveau mondial expriment des inquiétudes, particulièrement en ce qui concerne la question de la transparence. Les parties prenantes du niveau mondial ayant répondu à l’enquête ne semblaient pas avoir une conception parfaitement claire des rôles et des responsabilités ; cependant, les documents et l’observation montrent que les coordonnateurs de Cluster mondial (Global Cluster Coordinators - GCC) font des efforts importants pour mettre en place un partage des responsabilités. Les partenaires de niveau national ont exprimé des inquiétudes concernant le fait que l’UNICEF représente les clusters dans les Équipes humanitaires de pays distinctement de ses intérêts institutionnels.

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Constatations concernant le 2e domaine clé : résultats concernant le rôle interne en tant que CLA
Les résultats concernant le rôle interne en tant que CLA ont été examinés en fonction de quatre questions clés :

1. Mise en place de la Cellule de coordination des clusters mondiaux (Global Cluster Coordination Unit - GCCU)
2. Politique et suivi des résultats obtenus
3. Rôle des Bureaux régionaux
4. Avantages comparatifs de l’UNICEF

Les principales constatations sont les suivantes :

- L’évaluation a trouvé de claires indications que le regroupement du personnel des clusters de niveau mondial dans la cadre de la cellule GCCU commence à avoir des résultats positifs pour toutes les opérations de l’UNICEF gérée par des clusters. Plus de 70 % du personnel de l’UNICEF ayant répondu à l’enquête et la majorité de ceux qui ont été interrogés dans le cadre des études de cas de pays ont affirmé qu’ils avaient perçu des améliorations modérées ou bien substantielles dans la coordination et la direction au niveau mondial en conséquence de la création de la cellule GCCU, et ce malgré le fait que cette réorganisation ne date que d’un an.

- Les politiques et les dispositifs de l’UNICEF ont de mieux en mieux intégré les rôles de CLA, mais les dispositifs de suivi des résultats obtenus par les CLA restent insuffisants. L’utilisation du Manuel et du guide de suivi des résultats de l’action humanitaire 10 par les Bureaux de pays est facultative et limitée à une série de questions « Oui/Non » concernant les intrants et les extrants plutôt que la qualité et les réalisations.

- Le rôle des Bureaux régionaux en relation aux responsabilités des CLA reste peu clair. Bien que les Principaux engagements pour les enfants dans les situations humanitaires comportent une mission de coordination, celle-ci n’a pas été traduite en mécanismes de niveau régional assurant clairement le respect des responsabilités et l’exigence de rendre compte de l’action engagée. Sur la base d’évaluations précédentes11 et de documents internes12, on peut avancer que ceci provient d’une confusion plus systémique au sein de l’UNICEF concernant la répartition des rôles, des exigences de compte rendu et de l’autorité entre le siège, les Bureaux régionaux et les Bureaux de pays. Ce fait est significatif, car les Bureaux régionaux sont le seul lien officiel dans la chaîne de responsabilité de l’UNICEF entre les Bureaux de pays et le Siège.

- Les rôles de l’UNICEF en tant que CLA sont d’après cette étude globalement adaptés à ses avantages comparatifs dans le domaine des programmes. Cependant les points forts de l’UNICEF dans ce domaine et son aptitude à tirer parti de son savoir-faire et des ses capacités en matière de coordination sont mises mondiaux.

Constatations concernant le 3e domaine clé : résultats dans le domaine des ressources humaines
Les résultats obtenus dans la sphère des ressources humaines ont été examinés en fonction de deux questions clés :

1. Capacités de montée en puissance (surge) et dispositifs de recrutement
2. Développement des capacités de coordination des Clusters

Les principales constatations sont les suivantes :

- **Les dispositifs permettant d'assurer la montée en puissance (surge) et le recrutement pour les clusters se sont améliorés depuis 2010**, comme le prouve la différence dans les faits constatés par les évaluations entre l'intervention menée en réponse au tremblement de terre d'Haïti\(^\text{13}\) et celle organisée dans la corne de l'Afrique\(^\text{14}\). Cependant, la gestion des dispositifs de montée en puissance (surge) reste fragmentée et ne comporte pas de stratégie globale.

- **Les « doubles casquettes » restent très fréquentes et affaiblissent l'efficacité de l'action.** Même dans les situations d'urgence actuelles ou dans les clusters actifs, 28 % seulement du personnel est engagé à temps plein dans des activités concernant les clusters.

- **Le développement des capacités des coordonnateurs de Cluster est limité** à des sessions de sensibilisation organisées en classe, et aucun effort n'est fait pour mieux sensibiliser les représentants des Bureaux de pays et renforcer l'uniformité de leurs pratiques.

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Constatations concernant le 4\(^\text{e}\) domaine clé : questions d’ampleur et de limites de l’action

Les questions d’ampleur et de limites de l’action des clusters ont été examinées en fonction de deux aspects clés :

1. L’ampleur des responsabilités de l’UNICEF au sein des clusters
2. Le rôle opérationnel des clusters et des AOR de l’UNICEF

Les principales constatations sont les suivantes :

- **Les effets durables des clusters sur les dispositifs de coordination et sur les capacités d’intervention au niveau national sont limités** par un manque de conseils d’orientation sur les questions de transition, d’autorité décentralisée et de financement, ainsi que par un manque de clarté dans la définition du rôle des clusters dans le renforcement des capacités.

- **Les clusters servent de plus en plus à remédier à des carences qui ne concernent pas la coordination dans les situations d’urgence.** Il est révélateur que sur les 34 clusters actifs en 2012\(^\text{15}\), 14 seulement opèrent en complète conformité avec les objectifs et les directives du Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC) sur les clusters qui demandent que leur intervention soit limitée dans le temps et consacrée à une situation d’urgence ; 10 des 20 autres clusters ont sans doute été correctement activés, mais opèrent actuellement comme dispositifs de coordination à long terme du développement sectoriel. Le reste a été activé en lieu et place d’une coordination du développement et des structures.

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sectoriel sans que cette activation ait été officiellement le fait du Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC).

- Il s’agit là d’une « dérive » de l’ampleur des responsabilités assignées aux clusters qui a des conséquences importantes pour la capacité de l’UNICEF de remplir son rôle de CLA de manière satisfaisante, que ce soit en termes de pertinence, de capacité prévisionnelle, d’efficacité ou de viabilité.

Constatations concernant le 5e domaine clé : rapport coût-efficacité, optimisation des ressources et efficience

Rapport coût-efficacité, optimisation des ressources et efficience ont été examinés en fonction de trois critères :

1. Rapport coût-efficacité et optimisation des ressources
2. Liens avec d’autres initiatives internes et externes
3. Dispositifs de co-direction

Les principales constatations sont les suivantes :

- Le personnel et les partenaires considèrent clairement que les réalisations issues du travail des clusters justifient l’investissement qu’y fait l’organisation. Les enquêtes indiquent que 83 % du personnel des Bureaux de pays et 84 % de celui des partenaires nationaux pensent que les réalisations des clusters justifient les investissements qui y sont faits. Ce résultat doit être évalué de manière critique en le comparant aux constatations faites dans le domaine clé n° 4.
- La coordination entre les différents clusters a été jugée insuffisante et les techniques de programmation intégrées restent l’exception plutôt que la règle.
- Les dispositifs de codirection se sont généralement améliorés depuis 2012, bien que certaines difficultés subsistent en raison des attentes des membres des clusters et des déséquilibres de leurs capacités.

Conclusions and recommendations

1er domaine clé : résultats concernant la coordination externe

Les bons résultats de l’UNICEF dans le domaine de la coordination de l’action des clusters, de la couverture qu’ils assurent et de leurs pratiques de partenariat au niveau national doivent être préservés et reproduits. Les points les plus importants sur lesquels une amélioration est nécessaire sont (i) les faiblesses dans les capacités des coordonnateurs de cluster d’identifier les carences et de résoudre les problèmes qui se manifestent, (ii) les problèmes que pose la représentation par l’UNICEF des membres des clusters dans les Équipe de pays pour l’action humanitaire, (iii) un manque de clarté sur les rôles et les responsabilités dans la coordination externe avec les partenaires.

La recommandation principale est de mettre au point une initiative de « prêt-à-organiser » sur les clusters pour laquelle les Bureaux régionaux et/ou la cellule GCCU pourront utiliser les outils d’évaluation et de renforcement des capacités conçus au niveau mondial. En bref, cela signifie améliorer la préparation des Bureaux de pays dans les zones à hauts risques de façon à leur permettre de s’engager et de se désengager des mécanismes de cluster en fonction des nécessités. Ceci assurera que les clusters apportent dans le cadre du système d’action humanitaire un soutien efficace et efficient aux communautés vulnérables.
2° domaine clé : résultats concernant le rôle interne en tant que CLA
Les efforts positifs faits par l’UNICEF pour consolider le soutien fourni par les clusters dans le cadre de la cellule GCCU et d’intégrer le rôle de CLA dans ses politiques doivent être poursuivis et menés plus loin. Les points les plus importants sur lesquels une amélioration est nécessaire sont (i) un manque de clarté dans les questions de coordination et de responsabilité internes ainsi que sur les rôles, (ii) des rôles mal définis pour les Bureaux régionaux, (iii) l’absence d’une approche systématique pour assurer que les Représentants de pays remplissent leur rôle de manière cohérente dans le cadre des CLA.

La recommandation principale est de renforcer les systèmes de gestion pour appuyer le rôle de CLA, y compris dans les domaines de la mesure des résultats obtenus, du renforcement du rôle des Bureaux régionaux et d’une meilleure liaison entre les Représentants de pays et un effort de gestion stratégique au niveau mondial en faveur des CLA.

3° domaine clé : résultats dans le domaine des ressources humaines
Les investissements dans les dispositifs de montée en puissance (surge) de l’UNICEF ont eu des effets positifs et doivent être encore augmentés. Les points les plus importants sur lesquels une amélioration est nécessaire sont (i) une méthode opératoire fragmentée dans le domaine des ressources humaines et l’absence de parcours professionnel défini pour le personnel chargé de la coordination, (ii) une action de développement des capacités du personnel qui est limité dans le domaine des clusters à la formation théorique donnée dans toute l’organisation sous forme d’une sensibilisation de base.

Les recommandations principales sont de mettre au point une stratégie intégrée de développement des capacités de montée en puissance et de faire un effort à l’échelle de tout l’UNICEF pour former un personnel de coordination spécialisé.

4° domaine clé : questions d’ampleur et de limites de l’action
L’UNICEF a été amené à assumer son rôle de CLA dans un nombre de situations croissant en réponse à la demande de coordination des services. Les points le plus importants sur lesquels une amélioration est nécessaire sont de remédier à l’absence dans toute l’organisation d’orientation et de conseils concernant le travail de cluster, et au manque d’uniformité dans l’application des politiques du Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC) qui rend difficile de répondre aux attentes divergentes des diverses parties prenantes.

La recommandation principale est que l’UNICEF définisse une politique et des directives permettant de formuler et d’interpréter clairement les orientations sur le travail de CLA (cohérence) et de les diffuser afin d’assurer une application uniforme (fidélité) en se concentrant sur les situations d’urgence les plus critiques et sur la gestion des attentes des parties prenantes.

5° domaine clé : rapport coût-efficacité, optimisation des ressources et efficience
L’UNICEF doit préserver les points forts que représente sa perception de la valeur des partenaires et des dispositifs de codirection et en tirer le meilleur parti possible. Le point le plus important sur lequel une amélioration est nécessaire est le surinvestissement dans l’utilisation des clusters sur le terrain pour remédier aux carences de la coordination sectorielle et humanitaire à long terme.
La recommandation principale est de modérer le recours aux *clusters* quand les scénarios ne sont pas adaptés en mettant au point des modèles et des outils de coordination ne faisant pas appel à ces *clusters*, y compris des points de transition pour les Bureaux de pays ; il est également nécessaire de clarifier le rôle des *clusters* dans le renforcement des capacités de façon à mettre en place des méthodes de coordination efficaces et adaptées aux objectifs déterminés.

**Les principaux facteurs de succès**
Certaines des constatations et des recommandations de l’évaluation sont similaires à celles que l’on peut trouver dans les documents suivants :


L’application des six mesures suivantes facilitera la mise en œuvre des recommandations de l’évaluation et leur succès :

- Impliquer les cadres supérieurs dans l’ensemble de l’UNICEF.
- Appliquer l’ensemble du train de recommandations.
- Obtenir la collaboration des partenaires pour mettre au point les stratégies futures.
- Inviter les organismes participants au Comité permanent inter-organisations (IASC) à débattre des résultats de l’évaluation.
- Organiser des discussions avec les organisations bailleuses de fonds sur la manière dont leur financement oriente l’action des *CLA*.
- Obtenir la collaboration des gouvernements nationaux avant et au début de la mise en place des *clusters* afin de définir de concert et clairement l’ampleur de leurs responsabilités et les points de transition.
Table 1: Résumé des faits constatés, des conclusions et des recommandations

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<th>Constatations : ce que l’UNICEF fait efficacement</th>
<th>Constatations : ce que l’UNICEF fait moins efficacement</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Recommandations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Résultats concernant la coordination externe</td>
<td>• Bonne perception de l’efficacité globale.</td>
<td>• Faiblesses dans les résultats des partenariats au niveau mondial.</td>
<td>L’UNICEF joue un rôle de coordination de plus en plus efficace dans les clusters, mais doit traiter la question du manque de clarté sur les rôles et les responsabilités avec ses partenaires, les attentes divergentes des diverses parties prenantes et les carences des capacités des coordonnateurs pour assurer des améliorations continues.</td>
<td>Mettre au point une initiative de « prêt-à-organiser » pour améliorer la capacité des Bureaux de pays de se préparer à l’activation de clusters dans les pays à hauts risques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Résultats concernant le rôle interne en tant que CLA</td>
<td>• Rôle de CLA bien intégré au niveau de la politique globale.</td>
<td>• Manque de clarté sur les rôles et les responsabilités de coordination à l’interne entre les organismes composant les clusters.</td>
<td>L’UNICEF a introduit des changements positifs dans sa manière de traiter ses rôles de CLA au niveau mondial, mais n’a pas encore clarifié les rôles et les responsabilités internes entre les organismes composant les clusters, ni mis en place une chaîne de responsabilités qui garantirait uniformité et qualité d’un Bureau de pays à l’autre.</td>
<td>Renforcer les systèmes de gestion globaux de l’organisation pour faciliter le rôle de CLA, y compris par le renforcement du rôle des Bureaux régionaux et en liant mieux le rôle des Représentants de pays à un dispositif stratégique de gestion au niveau mondial du travail de CLA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Résultats dans le domaine</td>
<td>• Améliorations importantes dans les...</td>
<td>• Traitement fragmenté des...</td>
<td>La capacité de l’UNICEF de mettre...</td>
<td>Mettre au point une stratégie intégrée pour...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| des ressources humaines | capacités de montée en puissance (surge) avec un potentiel croissant de déployer des coordonnateurs dans les délais requis. | ressources humaines et absence d’un parcours professionnel défini dans le domaine de la coordination.  
- « Doubles casquettes » restant très fréquentes et affaiblissant l’efficacité de l’action.  
- Développement des capacités limité à des sessions de sensibilisation élémentaires. | rapidement en place des coordonnateurs s’est améliorée, mais la fragmentation persistante, l’absence de stratégie intégrée, la fréquence des « doubles casquettes » et la façon limitée de traiter le développement des capacités des coordonnateurs réduit l’uniformité et la qualité des ressources humaines investies dans les clusters. | les ressources humaines destinées à être mobilisées pour opérer une montée en puissance (surge) et pour la formation du personnel de l’UNICEF travaillant à la coordination. |
| Questions d’ampleur et de limites de l’action | • Participation active aux travaux de l’IASC et sur le Programme de changement transformationnel et efforts au niveau mondial pour clarifier la politique et les directives pour les clusters. | • Absence dans toute l’organisation de travail d’orientation et de conseils concernant le travail de cluster.  
• Manque de cohérence dans l’application de la politique de l’IASC.  
• Effets durables sur les capacités de coordination et de réponse nationales dus au manque d’orientation sur la transition et le renforcement des capacités, ainsi qu’à la décentralisation de l’autorité et du financement.  
• Clusters de plus en plus utilisés pour remédier aux carences ne concernant pas la coordination des interventions d’urgence. | La lente expansion de l’ampleur des responsabilités des clusters affaiblissant la capacité de l’UNICEF de jouer efficacement son rôle de CLA en termes de pertinence, de capacité prévisionnelle, d’efficacité et de viabilité. | Améliorer la cohérence des orientations (formulation et interprétation) ainsi que sa fidélité à ces orientations (compréhension et application uniforme) en référence à la politique et aux pratiques de l’UNICEF dans le domaine des CLA. |
| Rapport coût-efficacité, optimisation des ressources et efficience | • Le personnel et des partenaires jugent nettement que les réalisations justifient les investissements réalisés. | • Investissements importants sur le terrain dans les contextes de coordination sectorielle à long terme. | Globalement, les investissements de l’UNICEF dans son rôle de CLA ne sont pas jugés excessifs, personnel et partenaires pensent Modérer le recours aux clusters quand les scénarios ne sont pas adaptés en mettant au point des modèles et des outils de coordination ne faisant |
• Investissements dans le rôle de CLA jugés non excessifs.
• Dispositifs de co-direction généralement améliorés depuis 2012.

• Coordination entre clusters insuffisante et méthodes de programmation intégrée restant l’exception plutôt que la norme.

que les réalisations justifient les investissements réalisés, cependant les investissements dans les clusters destinés à remédier à des carences de la coordination sectorielle à long terme offrent des possibilités de réaliser des économies ou de procéder à des réalignements pas appel à ces clusters, y compris de points de transition pour les Bureaux de pays ; clarifier le rôle des clusters, dans l’hypothèse où ils en ont un, dans le renforcement des capacités nationales de façon à mettre en place des méthodes de coordination efficaces et adaptées aux objectifs déterminés.
RESUMEN

Pregunta de evaluación

La evaluación del papel de UNICEF como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos sobre acción humanitaria buscaba responder la siguiente pregunta fundamental:

¿Cuán eficientemente desempeña UNICEF su función como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos y qué debería hacer en el futuro?

La Oficina de Evaluación de UNICEF encargó la evaluación, que fue dirigida por evaluadores independientes de Avenir Analytics entre enero y junio de 2013. Sobre la base de los principios de referencia (ver el Anexo 1), se pretendía que la evaluación generara información fidedigna sobre los resultados que UNICEF había obtenido o dejado de obtener en el desempeño de su función como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos.

Objetivo

El objetivo de la evaluación era examinar de la manera más sistemática y objetiva posible la actuación de UNICEF como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos y de ámbitos de responsabilidad en los planes mundial y nacional.

Se aspiraba a que la evaluación generara datos concluyentes acerca de los resultados que UNICEF había obtenido o dejado de obtener en el ejercicio de esas funciones. La evaluación está destinada básicamente a ayudar al personal directivo superior de UNICEF a mejorar su labor de coordinación de grupos temáticos y ámbitos de responsabilidad, en el marco del sistema de grupos temáticos del Comité Permanente entre Organismos.

Se prevé que la evaluación cumplirá dos propósitos: aprendizaje y rendición de cuentas. Se orienta esencialmente al futuro, con miras a mejorar el aprendizaje por medio de las experiencias pasadas, la identificación de oportunidades y la generación de datos que permitan a UNICEF perfeccionar sus capacidades, sistemas y métodos en beneficio de su labor como coordinador de grupos temáticos y esferas de responsabilidad.

Justificación de la evaluación

El Comité Permanente entre Organismos adoptó el enfoque de gestión por grupos temáticos en 2005, con el objeto de mejorar la coordinación durante las situaciones de emergencia, en el contexto del proceso más amplio de reforma de la asistencia humanitaria. Se pretendía que este enfoque favoreciera la respuesta humanitaria reforzando la previsibilidad, la rendición de cuentas y las asociaciones entre diferentes actores.

Los cinco grupos temáticos y ámbitos de responsabilidad que dirige o codirige UNICEF representan aproximadamente un tercio del sistema de grupos temáticos del Comité Permanente entre Organismos. Para hacer frente a esta responsabilidad, UNICEF ha invertido tiempo y recursos considerables. En su calidad de institución, UNICEF debe saber cómo está cumpliendo su función de organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos y cómo podría mejorar. Durante la fase inicial de la evaluación se identificaron seis aplicaciones de las observaciones obtenidas, mediante consultas con interesados internos y externos:

1. Servir de referencia para medir el desempeño en materia de coordinación de grupos temáticos.
2. Contribuir a los actuales procesos de planificación de UNICEF (planes de gestión de oficinas, Plan Estratégico de Mediano Plazo y planificación del trabajo de grupos temáticos).
3. Dar a conocer a UNICEF las opiniones positivas y negativas de sus asociados con respecto a su actuación como coordinador de grupos temáticos, con vistas a mejorar sus métodos.
4. Contribuir a la solución de problemas relacionados con el sistema de grupos temáticos que enfrenta el Comité Permanente entre Organismos.
5. Intercambiar con los asociados información sobre las buenas prácticas y la capacidad requeridas.
6. Suministrar información objetiva sobre el desempeño de UNICEF a los interesados internos y externos más importantes, incluyendo a los donantes.

**Enfoque y metodología de la evaluación**

**Diseño**
Con base en las instrucciones de la Oficina de Evaluación de UNICEF, se examinaron y perfeccionaron más de 100 líneas de investigación durante la fase inicial de la evaluación. Las preguntas se formularon de manera que permitieran conocer la capacidad de UNICEF para cumplir los criterios de desempeño basados en los parámetros del Comité de Asistencia para el Desarrollo de la Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económico, a saber, pertinencia e idoneidad, efectividad (dividida en previsibilidad, rendición de cuentas y asociación), eficiencia, coherencia, cobertura y sostenibilidad.

Se elaboraron 72 indicadores para evaluar la eficiencia con la que UNICEF desarrolla su labor como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos, y para identificar patrones que indiquen la necesidad de introducir mejoras en determinadas esferas. La Oficina de Evaluación seleccionó ocho países que pudieran reflejar en los estudios de casos los diversos niveles de capacidad y contextos operativos en los cuales funcionan los grupos temáticos de UNICEF: Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Filipinas, Haití, Nepal, Sudán del Sur, Tayikistán y el Territorio Palestino Ocupado.

Se diseñaron instrumentos de recopilación de datos, a fin de ayudar a los evaluadores a reunir información de múltiples fuentes para cada uno de los 72 indicadores, así como también para facilitar la triangulación. Esos instrumentos se utilizaron durante las entrevistas personales y a distancia, los grupos de discusión, las encuestas en línea, la observación y la investigación documental. Para facilitar la participación, las guías para las entrevistas y las encuestas se tradujeron al francés y al español.

El producto del diseño de la evaluación fue un informe inicial que se presentó a la Oficina de Evaluación y a miembros de grupos de discusión internos y externos con el ánimo de conocer su opinión. Este informe se aprobó antes de comenzar la recopilación de los datos.

**Recopilación de los datos**
La reunión de los datos se llevó a cabo por medio de visitas a seis países y visitas personales a Copenhague, Ginebra y Nueva York. Así mismo, mediante entrevistas a distancia e investigación documental efectuada durante tres meses por un grupo de ocho evaluadores. Estos últimos reunieron datos procedentes de más de 1.000 personas –incluyendo a 282 funcionarios de UNICEF y a 779 funcionarios de organizaciones asociadas– y 790 documentos. Las notas originales en las que se registraron los datos se resumieron luego por entrevistas, grupos de discusión u observaciones con
respecto a cada uno de los indicadores de la evaluación. El producto de esta etapa fue un depósito de datos por cada estudio de caso y a nivel mundial.

**Análisis de los datos**

La información de los más de 1.000 puntos de referencia se sintetizó con base en grupos y ubicación. Los resultados de cada caso se resumieron en función de los indicadores y se consolidaron en 33 factores de resultados y capacidad. Posteriormente se aplicó una medida cuantitativa para obtener una indicación general de la eficiencia con la que UNICEF cumple los criterios cruciales en términos de resultados y evaluación.

Las observaciones globales y por casos se analizaron y sintetizaron para extraer conclusiones preliminares de carácter general. A continuación, esas observaciones se organizaron sobre la base de nuevas tendencias y cuestiones correspondientes a las cinco esferas clave relativas a la eficiencia con la que UNICEF ejecuta su función como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos y a lo que debería hacer en el futuro:

- **Desempeño en materia de coordinación exterior**
- **Funcionamiento interno del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos**
- **Desempeño en materia de recursos humanos**
- **Cuestiones referentes al alcance y los límites**
- **Rentabilidad, eficiencia y relación entre calidad y precio**

Antes de concluir la elaboración del informe, las conclusiones, análisis y recomendaciones se presentaron a las oficinas de las regiones y los países donde se habían realizado estudios de casos, al igual que a funcionarios de UNICEF alrededor del mundo y a asociados en seminarios participativos (presenciales y en línea).

**Observaciones, análisis y recomendaciones**

Las observaciones se analizaron en función de los posibles requisitos futuros de los principales interesados.

A renglón seguido se formularon recomendaciones sobre aspectos que UNICEF podría mejorar para fortalecer la coordinación de los grupos temáticos.

Los productos son: (i) una serie de observaciones sobre los aspectos positivos y menos positivos de la actuación de UNICEF como coordinador de grupos temáticos y (ii) una serie de recomendaciones asociadas directamente con los aspectos menos positivos que, de aplicarse, facilitarán la introducción de las mejoras necesarias.

**Observaciones**

**Observaciones relativas a la esfera principal 1: Desempeño en materia de coordinación exterior**

Este tema se examinó sobre la base de tres aspectos esenciales:

1. Eficiencia general
2. Cobertura
3. Asociación

Las observaciones más importantes fueron:

- **Los asociados consideran que UNICEF cumple con gran eficiencia sus responsabilidades como coordinador de grupos temáticos a nivel de países**, de acuerdo con encuestas, entrevistas y grupos de discusión. Evaluaciones recientes respaldan este concepto\(^\text{16}\). Los

interesados señalaron que el desempeño de UNICEF suele ser mejor de lo que se puede esperar en los complejos contextos nacionales y de coordinación.

- Los recursos humanos, el apoyo institucional y el liderazgo son los factores que más influyen en la efectividad de UNICEF como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos, según datos de entrevistas, grupos de discusión, encuestas y exámenes de documentos.

- Los grupos temáticos de UNICEF tienen efectos positivos en la cobertura geográfica y temática, de acuerdo con encuestas, entrevistas y grupos de discusión. Se han creado estructuras subnacionales de coordinación, a pesar de que existe preocupación por su sostenibilidad financiera y de dotación de personal. Los grupos temáticos y las esferas de responsabilidad han repercutido favorablemente en la cobertura temática, gracias al incremento de las investigaciones operacionales y a la promoción, particularmente en el grupo sectorial sobre educación y en la esfera de responsabilidad sobre la violencia de género.

- Los aspectos de asociación de los grupos temáticos y los ámbitos de responsabilidad dirigidos por UNICEF son más sólidos a nivel de los países que a nivel de los grupos mundiales. Mientras que los aliados en los países coinciden en que UNICEF observa los principios de asociación, los miembros de los grupos/ámbitos de responsabilidad mundiales se han mostrado preocupados especialmente por el aspecto de la transparencia. Las funciones y responsabilidades no son claras para quienes responden encuestas mundiales, aunque los documentos y la observación evidencian que los coordinadores del grupo temático mundial hacen grandes esfuerzos para compartir las responsabilidades. Asociados en los países expresaron inquietud por la representación por parte de UNICEF de los grupos temáticos en los equipos humanitarios en los países, aisladamente de sus intereses institucionales.

Observaciones relativas a la esfera principal 2: Funcionamiento interno del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos
Este tema se examinó sobre la base de cuatro aspectos esenciales:

1. La creación de la Dependencia de Coordinación de los Grupos Temáticos Mundiales.
2. La supervisión de las cuestiones normativas y de funcionamiento.
3. El papel de las oficinas regionales.
4. Las ventajas comparativas de UNICEF.

Las observaciones más importantes fueron:

- En la evaluación se encontraron claros indicios de que la consolidación del personal del grupo mundial bajo la Dependencia de Coordinación de los Grupos Temáticos Mundiales está empezando a arrojar resultados positivos en todas las operaciones de UNICEF relativas a los grupos temáticos. Más del 70% de los funcionarios de UNICEF encuestados y la mayoría de los funcionarios entrevistados en países donde se realizaron estudios de casos afirmaron que la coordinación y la dirección habían mejorado moderada o significativamente en todo el mundo como resultado de la creación de la Dependencia de Coordinación de los
Grupos Temáticos Mundiales, a pesar de que este cambio institucional se introdujo hace apenas un año.

- **Las funciones de coordinación de grupos temáticos se han incorporado cada vez más en las políticas y los sistemas de UNICEF; sin embargo, los sistemas de supervisión de estas funciones siguen siendo limitados.** Con arreglo a las directrices del Sistema de Supervisión de la Actuación Humanitaria, la presentación de informes de las oficinas en los países es voluntaria y se limita a un conjunto de preguntas que se responden “sí” o “no” y tratan sobre los aportes y los productos, y no sobre la calidad y los resultados.

- **El papel de las oficinas regionales con respecto a las responsabilidades del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos sigue siendo poco claro.** Si bien los Compromisos Básicos para la Infancia en la Acción Humanitaria prevén un mandato de coordinación, no se han traducido en responsabilidades precisas ni en mecanismos de rendición de cuentas a nivel regional. Sobre la base de evaluaciones anteriores y documentos internos, lo anterior podría obedecer a una confusión de índole sistémica en UNICEF en torno a las funciones, las responsabilidades y la autoridad entre la sede, las oficinas regionales y las oficinas nacionales. Lo anterior es importante porque, en la cadena de rendición de cuentas de UNICEF, las oficinas regionales constituyen la única vinculación oficial entre las oficinas nacionales y la sede.

- **Se comprobó que las funciones de UNICEF como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos corresponden ampliamente a sus ventajas comparativas respecto de la programación.** No obstante, miembros de grupos temáticos mundiales ponen en duda las fortalezas de los programas de UNICEF y su capacidad para aprovechar sus habilidades de coordinación.

**Observaciones relativas a la esfera principal 3: Desempeño en materia de recursos humanos**

Este tema se examinó sobre la base de dos aspectos esenciales:

1. Sistemas de apoyo adicional y contratación
2. Desarrollo de la capacidad de coordinación de los grupos temáticos

Las observaciones más importantes fueron:

- **Los sistemas de apoyo adicional y contratación para los grupos temáticos han mejorado desde 2010,** como evidenciaron las diferencias entre las observaciones de las evaluaciones del terremoto de Haití y las respuestas en el Cuerno de África. Sin embargo, la gestión de los sistemas de apoyo adicional sigue siendo fragmentada y no existe una estrategia general.

- **El régimen de dobles cargos sigue siendo común y disminuye la eficiencia.** Incluso en situaciones de emergencia o de grupos temáticos activos, apenas un 28% del personal trabaja en régimen de jornada.

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• El desarrollo de la capacidad de los coordinadores de grupos temáticos se limita a cursos de sensibilización en el aula, y no se han tomado medidas sistemáticas para asegurar la coherencia en la práctica de los representantes en las oficinas de país.

Observaciones relativas a la esfera principal 4: Cuestiones referentes al alcance y los límites
Este tema se examinó sobre la base de dos aspectos esenciales:

1. El alcance de las responsabilidades de UNICEF con los grupos temáticos
2. La función operacional de los grupos temáticos y las esferas de responsabilidad de UNICEF

Las observaciones más importantes fueron:

• Las repercusiones a largo plazo de los grupos temáticos sobre los sistemas de coordinación y la capacidad de respuesta nacional son limitadas. Esto se debe a la falta de directrices sobre transición, descentralización de la autoridad y la financiación, así como también a la falta de precisión sobre el papel de los grupos temáticos desde el punto de vista del fomento de la capacidad.

• Con creciente frecuencia, los grupos temáticos subsanarán deficiencias que van más allá de la coordinación en contextos de emergencia. De los 34 grupos temáticos de UNICEF activos en 2012\(^2\), solamente 14 actúan en completa consonancia con los objetivos y las directrices de los grupos temáticos del Comité Permanente entre Organismos (con plazos concretos y centrados en las situaciones de emergencia). De los 20 restantes, 10 pueden haberse activado correctamente, pero hoy en día operan como mecanismos de coordinación del desarrollo sectorial a largo plazo. Los demás se activaron en lugar de la coordinación sectorial del desarrollo, sin la activación oficial del Comité Permanente entre Organismos.

Observaciones relativas a la esfera principal 5: Rentabilidad, eficiencia y relación entre calidad y precio
Estos temas se examinaron sobre la base de tres aspectos esenciales:

1. Rentabilidad y relación entre la calidad y el precio
2. Relaciones con otras iniciativas internas y externas
3. Acuerdos de codirección

Las observaciones más importantes fueron:

• Tanto los funcionarios como los asociados consideran que los resultados del trabajo de los grupos justifican ampliamente las inversiones de sus organizaciones. En las encuestas, el 83% de los funcionarios de UNICEF en los países y el 84% de los asociados en los países afirmaron que los resultados de las actividades de los grupos temáticos justifican sus inversiones. Esto debe analizarse críticamente sobre la base de las observaciones relativas a la esfera principal 4.

• Se determinó que la coordinación entre los distintos grupos temáticos es insuficiente y que los enfoques integrados hacia la programación siguen siendo la excepción en vez de la norma.
• En términos generales, los acuerdos de codirección han mejorado desde 2012, aunque persisten algunos problemas derivados de las diferencias en las expectativas y la capacidad de los miembros.

Conclusiones y recomendaciones

Esfera principal 1: Desempeño en materia de coordinación exterior
Se deben mantener y replicar las fortalezas de UNICEF en lo que se refiere a la coordinación de los grupos temáticos, la cobertura y las asociaciones en los países. Los aspectos fundamentales que deben mejorar son: (i) las limitaciones en la capacidad de los coordinadores de los grupos para detectar deficiencias y resolver problemas, (ii) las dificultades en la representación por parte de UNICEF de miembros de grupos temáticos en los equipos humanitarios en los países, y (iii) la falta de claridad sobre las funciones de coordinación y las responsabilidades externas con los asociados.

La recomendación primordial es diseñar una iniciativa de “grupos temáticos en paralelo”, que permita a las oficinas regionales y/o a la Dependencia de Coordinación de los Grupos Temáticos Mundiales utilizar instrumentos de evaluación y mejoramiento de la capacidad elaborados en todo el mundo. En breve, esto implica reforzar la preparación de las oficinas de país en zonas de alto riesgo, de modo que puedan activar o separarse del mecanismo de grupos temáticos cuando sea necesario. Además, permite que los grupos proporcione asistencia eficaz y eficiente a las comunidades vulnerables, en el marco del sistema humanitario.

Esfera principal 2: Funcionamiento interno del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos.
Deben aprovecharse y mantenerse los esfuerzos de UNICEF tendientes a consolidar el apoyo a los grupos temáticos, de conformidad con la Dependencia de Coordinación de los Grupos Temáticos Mundiales, y a integrar en sus políticas la función de coordinación de grupos temáticos. Los aspectos fundamentales que deben mejorar son: (i) la falta de claridad sobre las funciones y las responsabilidades en materia de coordinación interna, (ii) la falta de claridad sobre el papel de las oficinas regionales, y (iii) la ausencia de un enfoque coherente que garantice el cumplimiento sistemático de las funciones de coordinación de grupos temáticos por parte de los representantes en los países.

La recomendación primordial es fortalecer los sistemas de gestión en apoyo de la labor de los organismos coordinadores de grupos temáticos, incluyendo la medición de los resultados, el fortalecimiento de la función de las oficinas regionales, y el mejoramiento del nexo entre los representantes en los países y la gestión estratégica mundial de los organismos coordinadores de los grupos.

Esfera principal 3: Desempeño en materia de recursos humanos
Las inversiones de UNICEF en acuerdos sobre aumento de la capacidad han sido positivas y deben incrementarse. Los aspectos fundamentales que deben mejorar son: (i) la fragmentación del enfoque hacia los recursos humanos y la falta de perspectivas profesionales del personal encargado de la coordinación y (ii) el hecho de que el desarrollo de la capacidad del personal para trabajar con grupos temáticos se limite, en toda la
organización, a impartir en el aula capacitación básica sobre sensibilización. La recomendación primordial es formular una estrategia integrada de aumento de la capacidad y diseñar un programa orientado a reforzar la preparación del personal de coordinación en todo UNICEF.

Esfera principal 4: Cuestiones referentes al alcance y los límites
En respuesta a las solicitudes que recibe para prestar servicios de coordinación, UNICEF se desempeña como organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos en un número cada vez mayor de contextos. El aspecto fundamental que debe mejorar es la falta de directrices sobre los grupos temáticos en toda la organización y la falta de aplicación sistemática de las políticas del Comité Permanente entre Organismos, lo que dificulta el cumplimiento de las expectativas divergentes de los interesados.

La recomendación primordial es hacer que las políticas y las directrices de UNICEF interpretan y definen con precisión las políticas del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos (coherencia), y darlas a conocer para garantizar su aplicación sistemática (fidelidad), prestando especial atención a las situaciones de emergencia más críticas y a la gestión de las expectativas de las partes interesadas.

Esfera principal 5: Rentabilidad, eficiencia y relación entre calidad y precio
UNICEF debe mantener y aprovechar las fortalezas que le atribuyen los asociados, al igual que los acuerdos de codirección. El aspecto fundamental que debe mejorar es la excesiva inversión en el uso de grupos temáticos sobre el terreno para subsanar deficiencias en la coordinación humanitaria o sectorial a largo plazo.

La recomendación primordial es reducir la utilización de grupos temáticos en contextos inapropiados, elaborando modelos e instrumentos para las actividades de coordinación no relacionadas con estos grupos –por ejemplo, puntos de transición para las oficinas en los países–, y esclarecer la importancia de los grupos temáticos para el fomento de la capacidad nacional, a fin de lograr métodos de coordinación eficientes y adecuados a los propósitos que se persiguen.

Factores clave de éxito
Algunas de las conclusiones y las recomendaciones de la evaluación son similares a los que se encuentran en los siguientes documentos:


Tomar las seis medidas que se exponen a continuación contribuiría a aplicar exitosamente las recomendaciones de la evaluación:

- Lograr la participación del grupo directivo superior de todo UNICEF.
- Poner en práctica la totalidad de las recomendaciones.
- Promover la participación de los asociados en el desarrollo de estrategias para el futuro.
- Lograr la participación de los órganos del Comité Permanente entre Organismos en debates basados en la evaluación.
- Celebrar reuniones con las organizaciones donantes para examinar la manera como sus aportes determinan la implementación de los organismos coordinadores de grupos temáticos.
- Obtener la colaboración de los gobiernos nacionales antes y al inicio de las operaciones de los grupos temáticos, con el objeto de definir los puntos de transición y convenir su alcance de forma inequívoca.
Resumen de las observaciones, las conclusiones y las recomendaciones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Esfera principal</th>
<th>Observaciones - lo que UNICEF esta haciendo bien</th>
<th>Observaciones - lo que UNICEF debe mejorar</th>
<th>Conclusiones</th>
<th>Recomendaciones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Desempeño en materia de coordinación exterior** | • Existe una alta percepción de efectividad general.  
• Los servicios de coordinación de los grupos temáticos muestran una creciente solidez.  
• Los resultados en materia de asociaciones en los países son positivos. | • Las deficiencias en el rendimiento de las asociaciones mundiales.  
• La falta de claridad sobre los roles y responsabilidades en materia de coordinación: a nivel interno, entre las dependencias y a nivel externo, con los asociados.  
• La deficiente capacidad de los coordinadores de los grupos temáticos para detectar fallas y resolver problemas.  
• Las dificultades en la representación por parte de UNICEF de los grupos temáticos en los equipos humanitarios en los países. | La labor de UNICEF como coordinador de grupos temáticos es cada vez más efectiva, pero debe abordar la falta de claridad sobre las funciones y responsabilidad con los asociados, las diferentes expectativas de los asociados, y las deficiencias en la capacidad de los coordinadores para mejorar constantemente. | Diseñar una iniciativa de "grupos temáticos en paralelo" que mejore la preparación de las oficinas de país para activar los grupos temáticos en los países de alto riesgo. |
| **Funcionamiento interno del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos** | • La función del organismo coordinador de grupos temáticos está bien integrada a nivel normativo.  
• Se han registrado mejoras en la coordinación y el liderazgo gracias a la creación de la Dependencia de Coordinación de los Grupos Temáticos Mundiales.  
• Ha habido esfuerzos iniciales para preparar la estrategia de coordinación de los grupos temáticos y establecer la función de gestión de la | • La falta de claridad sobre los roles y las responsabilidades de las dependencias a nivel interno.  
• La falta de claridad sobre el papel de las oficinas regionales y la ausencia de un mecanismo coherente para garantizar el cumplimiento sistemático de las funciones de coordinación de los grupos temáticos por parte de los representantes en los países. | UNICEF ha introducido cambios positivos en su enfoque mundial hacia la gestión del papel de los organismos coordinadores de los grupos temáticos, pero aún no ha definido claramente las funciones y responsabilidad de las dependencias internas ni establecido una cadena de responsabilidad que favorezca la coherencia y la | Fortalecer los sistemas de gestión en todo UNICEF para apoyar la función de coordinación de los grupos temáticos, incluyendo el fortalecimiento del papel de las oficinas regionales y el mejoramiento de la relación de los representantes en los países con una estructura mundial de gestión estratégica de la coordinación de grupos temáticos. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desempeño en materia de recursos humanos</th>
<th>Cuestiones referentes al alcance y los límites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- La capacidad de refuerzo de los grupos temáticos ha mejorado notablemente, al igual que la capacidad para desplegar coordinadores de manera oportuna.</td>
<td>- La participación activa en el Comité Permanente entre Organismos, en el trabajo de la Agenda Transformativa y en los esfuerzos mundiales para esclarecer las políticas y las directrices de los grupos temáticos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- La fragmentación del enfoque hacia los recursos humanos y la falta de perspectivas profesionales del personal encargado de la coordinación.</td>
<td>- La falta de directrices sobre transiciones, creación de capacidad nacional y descentralización de la autoridad y la financiación repercute adversamente y a largo plazo sobre la coordinación y la capacidad de respuesta de los países.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- El hecho de que el desarrollo de capacidad se limite a impartir cursos básicos de sensibilización.</td>
<td>- La falta de directrices sobre los grupos temáticos en toda la organización y la aplicación inconsistente de las políticas del Comité Permanente entre Organismos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La capacidad de despliegue rápido de coordinadores por parte de UNICEF ha mejorado, pero la continua fragmentación, la falta de una estrategia integrada sobre recursos humanos, la persistencia del régimen de dobles cargos y el limitado desarrollo de la capacidad de los coordinadores reducen la coherencia y la calidad de los recursos humanos de sus grupos temáticos.</td>
<td>- Dar a los grupos temáticos un alcance inapropiado afecta seriamente la capacidad de UNICEF para ejercer de forma adecuada su función como coordinador de grupos temáticos en cuanto a pertinencia, previsibilidad, asociación, eficiencia y sostenibilidad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diseñar una estrategia integrada referente al apoyo adicional en el ámbito de los recursos humanos y al perfeccionamiento del personal de coordinación de UNICEF.</td>
<td>Mejorar la coherencia (interpretación y articulación) y la fidelidad (comprensión y aplicación sistemática) por medio de las políticas y las prácticas de UNICEF en materia de coordinación de grupos temáticos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Rentabilidad, eficiencia y relación entre calidad y precio | • El hecho de que los grupos temáticos subsanan, cada vez con mayor frecuencia, deficiencias que van más allá de la coordinación en contextos de emergencia. | • Los funcionarios y los asociados consideran que los resultados justifican ampliamente las inversiones.  
• Las inversiones en la función del organismo coordinador de los grupos temáticos no es excesiva.  
• Por lo general, los acuerdos de codirección han mejorado desde 2012.  
• Demasiada inversión sobre el terreno en contextos de coordinación sectorial a largo plazo.  
• La coordinación entre los distintos grupos temáticos es insuficiente y los enfoques integrados hacia la programación siguen siendo la excepción en vez de la norma.  
• La inversión general de UNICEF en el ejercicio de su función como coordinador de grupos temáticos no es excesiva, y tanto los funcionarios como los asociados coinciden en que los resultados de los grupos justifican sus inversiones. Sin embargo, las inversiones en grupos temáticos para subsanar deficiencias en la coordinación sectorial a largo plazo podrían llevar a un replanteamiento o a una disminución de los costos.  
• Reducir el uso de grupos temáticos en contextos inapropiados, desarrollando modelos e instrumentos para las actividades de coordinación no relacionadas con estos grupos (incluyendo puntos de transición para las oficinas en los países) y, cuando proceda, esclarecer el papel de los grupos temáticos en el fomento de la capacidad nacional, logrando así que los métodos de coordinación se ajusten a los propósitos que se persiguen. |
1 EVALUATION QUESTION

The evaluation of UNICEF’s CLA role in humanitarian action (CLARE) has primarily sought to address the following overarching question:

*How well does UNICEF carry out its CLA role and what should it do for the future?*

The evaluation was commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office and was conducted from January through June of 2013 by independent evaluators from Avenir Analytics. Based on the terms of reference (see Annex 1), the evaluation sought to generate credible evidence regarding the results achieved or not achieved by UNICEF in undertaking its CLA role.

The objective of the evaluation was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the performance of UNICEF as a CLA and AOR at global and country levels. It is primarily intended for use by UNICEF senior management decision-makers to make concrete improvements in how the organization undertakes its CLA and AOR roles within the IASC cluster system.

The evaluation is intended to serve the dual purposes of learning and accountability and, therefore, has elements of both identifying lessons for improvement and assessing performance. It seeks to measure performance by assessing the results achieved, or not achieved, to date by UNICEF in its lead roles. However, the primary emphasis of the evaluation is forward looking. It seeks to enhance learning by drawing lessons learned and identifying opportunities and options for UNICEF to improve its capacities, systems and approaches for exercising its CLA and AOR roles.

1.1. Rationale for the evaluation

The IASC initiated the cluster approach in 2005 to enhance coordination during emergencies in the context of broader humanitarian reform. The approach was intended to improve humanitarian response by increasing predictability, accountability and partnerships across humanitarian actors.

Together, the five clusters and AORs – led or co-led by UNICEF – represent responsibility for approximately one third of the IASC cluster system. To undertake these responsibilities, UNICEF has invested significant time and resources. As an institution, UNICEF has a manifest need to understand how it is performing as a CLA and how it could improve.

During the inception phase of the evaluation, six uses of the evaluation output were identified through consultation with internal and external stakeholders. These are:

1. Provide a benchmark for measuring CLA performance.
2. Contribute to ongoing UNICEF planning processes (office management plans, the medium term strategic plan and cluster work planning).
3. Provide UNICEF with unfiltered critiques and information on how partners view its implementation of the CLA role in order to improve its approaches.
4. Contribute to influencing the IASC on unresolved cluster system issues.
5. Share information with partners regarding good practice and capacity required.
6. Provide evidence on UNICEF performance to key internal and external stakeholders, including donors.
1.2. Scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation covered all of UNICEF’s efforts to exercise its CLA role, focal point role for the two AORs, and related cluster or AOR coordination roles. The evaluation covers the period from 2010 to 2013, following the IASC Phase 2 Cluster Approach Evaluation in 2010.23

The focus is on UNICEF’s implementation of its CLA role, rather than the impact of each cluster in changing the conditions of the affected population. Emphasis is placed on UNICEF’s effectiveness in serving as a CLA and facilitating humanitarian sectoral coordination through its clusters and AORs, and the ways it could improve CLA functions and coordination performance in the future.

The analysis explored general UNICEF-level issues common to all of the clusters and AORs it leads or co-leads. Global data collection and eight country case studies allowed the evaluation team to collect comparable bottom-up data to synthesize into a global picture for each cluster and across clusters.

1.3. Background and context

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiated the cluster approach in 2005 to enhance coordination during emergencies in the context of broader humanitarian reform24. The approach was intended to improve humanitarian response by increasing predictability, accountability and partnerships across the United Nations (UN), Red Cross/Red Crescent and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Today there are nine sectoral clusters and two common service clusters. To further the goal of improved predictability, the IASC designates CLAs for each of the clusters at a global level. UNICEF is the CLA for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster and the Nutrition Cluster. UNICEF also serves as co-lead agency for the Education Cluster with Save the Children. Within the Protection Cluster (led by UNHCR), UNICEF serves as the focal point agency for two AORs, Child Protection and Gender-based Violence (GBV).

Each cluster or AOR is led at a global level by a Global Cluster Coordinator (GCC) and supported by cluster teams, information managers and agency staff. On a day-to-day basis, the GCCs manage efforts to strengthen system-wide preparedness, to build capacity and to provide support to clusters at country level.

At the country level, clusters are activated by the IASC on the recommendation of the humanitarian Coordinator (HC), in consultation with the humanitarian country team (HCT). When established, a cluster coordinator (CC) is selected to lead and coordinate the country-level cluster in providing operational coordination, and sometimes, emergency planning and preparedness. Country-level CCs often, but not always, come from the organization with global CLA responsibility for the clusters, and may serve in their positions on a full-time basis, or part-time while fulfilling other organizational responsibilities (‘double-hatting’). Cluster/AOR staff members are also drawn from standby partnerships, including as members of rapid response teams (RRTs).

Within UNICEF management of the CLA roles has shifted over time. From 2005 to early 2012 the GCCs were managed by UNICEF Programme Division sector managers, under two separate Deputy Directors. In early 2012 UNICEF decided to consolidate the CLA functions and

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created the Global Cluster Coordination Unit (GCCU) with new reporting lines to a Deputy Director in the Office of Emergency Operations (EMOPS) and co-located all GCCs and their staff in UNICEF’s Geneva office.

The cluster system is inherently dynamic and continues to evolve. The timing of this evaluation is opportune given the current implementation and field-testing of elements of the IASC Transformative Agenda. Furthermore, UNICEF and other CLAs have been rapidly adapting to this changing environment through internal structural changes, mainstreaming of budgets and enhanced internal support.

Previous evaluations
Previous reviews, lessons-learned exercises and evaluations relevant to the CLARE fall into three categories: i) overarching IASC cluster system and CLAs; ii) responses to major emergencies; and iii) a donor review of multilateral aid.

Overarching reviews of the IASC cluster system and individual clusters
Since its introduction, the cluster approach has continuously evolved based on informal and formal learning. In 2005, the IASC established an evaluation process to review implementation of the system. The first phase of the evaluation was completed in 2007 and the second phase in 2010. Together, these evaluations have examined the processes and performance of the cluster system as a whole, providing valuable insights that served as a basis for continued adjustments.

Building on the Cluster 2 Evaluation and lessons from Haiti and Pakistan, in 2011 the IASC initiated an organized effort, known as the Transformative Agenda, to improve the cluster system and to further other elements of humanitarian reform. These efforts have established cross-cluster tools and systems while clarifying expectations of CLAs and cluster participants.

In 2010 a review of the co-leadership arrangement for the Education Cluster at the global level was conducted.

The review states that the Education Cluster was achieving its objective by adding value through appropriate information, tools and training. It noted unresolved challenges in the structure, staffing and resourcing of the Education Cluster. The review found that roles were not mainstreamed into the co-lead agencies, exacerbated by “a lack of clarity over the nature of the arrangement as a full and equitable partnership between the two agencies.”

A 2011 review of Save the Children’s experience of co-leading the Education Cluster with UNICEF revealed significant benefits for all actors stemming from this cooperation. These benefits include: the effective division of co-leadership responsibilities between two capable organizations; greater capacity and accountability to speak out on behalf of children and young people who are denied access to education; and demonstrating that humanitarianism works best when based on a partnership between UN and non-UN actors.

In 2011 and 2012, the Global Logistics Cluster undertook the first comprehensive evaluation of a single cluster, spanning

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27 Save the Children, Lessons in Leadership: Save the Children’s experience of co-leading the Education Cluster, 2011.
global and country efforts from 2005 to 2012. UNICEF served in a co-management capacity for the evaluation, which has been widely disseminated and embraced by the World Food Programme (WFP), the lead agency, and external stakeholders.

**Reviews of major emergency operations**

The response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake and the Pakistan floods served as a major test of the cluster system in large, sudden onset emergencies in complicated contexts.

The 2011 evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Haiti earthquake contained a number of key recommendations and findings related to its CLA role, including:

- UNICEF’s surge staffing infrastructure had been disbanded leading to a flurry of activity to quickly deploy staff for too short periods of time with unclear objectives and reporting lines.
- UNICEF is credited for actively engaging the Government of Haiti in select clusters, which proved vital for a coordinated response.
- Weak leadership capacity (except for WASH) in the first three months due to: the lack of role clarity between heads of programmes and cluster coordinators; inadequate resourcing (information management), and junior coordinators; the lack of orientation of key Haiti Country Office staff on UNICEF’s cluster lead role and how standby partnership on clusters worked; and the need to develop a cadre of highly trained information managers who can be deployed rapidly in any emergency to support programmes or clusters.

A synthesis of cluster lessons learned from UNICEF’s response to the Pakistan floods in 2010 also identified a number of issues related to cluster coordination including:

- Further clarity on cluster/CLA/partner accountabilities is critical.
- Weak communication with donors on performance and progress, and poor management of expectations can result in the undermining of confidence.
- Underestimation of the staffing numbers and staff skills set required to carry out effective cluster coordination, including interpersonal and technical skills and seniority to ‘lead’ clusters.
- Inadequate appreciation and support for information management causes delays in the compilation of and sharing of information, maps, etc. to enable effective coordination.
- Incomplete separation of cluster coordination functions from programme implementation.
- The co-locating of coordination teams was effective, creating ‘economies of scale’ but more emphasis on common cross-cluster services.

The 2012 Horn of Africa lessons learned provided insight into UNICEF’s corporate emergency response, with specific relevance for cluster leadership.

This internal review noted the following key findings relevant to this evaluation:

- Cluster/sector coordination arrangements vary between countries in the Horn of Africa and do not follow the IASC standard cluster approach in any country.
- Subnational coordination, although not always strong, has the potential for

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improving coordinated service delivery. Its improvement requires adaptation at the subnational level to intentionally merge groups of clusters.\textsuperscript{32}

- UNICEF country offices in the region aspire to more intersectoral working within UNICEF. There is potential for improving the effectiveness and value for money of UNICEF emergency interventions by integrating services at the point of delivery, backed up by integrated support from regional and headquarters levels, rather than the individual vertical sector support that tends to prevail currently. This implies a more cohesive approach to UNICEF and cluster support to local government and communities.

A 2012 independent real-time evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the 2011–2012 Sahel Crisis\textsuperscript{33} found that UNICEF’s role as Global Cluster Coordinator for Nutrition gave the organization a central role in building resilience to food security and nutrition crises at the household and government levels. The evaluation found that cluster and inter-cluster coordination systems were weak across the response, with the notable exception of the Nutrition Cluster in Niger. The evaluation recommended that UNICEF improve cluster and inter-cluster coordination arrangements to enhance service delivery, access and coverage.

**Donor review of multilateral aid**

The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) conducted a *Multilateral Aid Review* in 2011, assessing 43 multilateral organizations on a wide range of criteria to determine the value for money demonstrated. Overall the review found that the quality of leadership and partnership behaviour within the cluster system was highly variable.

The UNICEF-specific aid review assessment report highlighted a number of issues that are relevant to this evaluation including:

- Effectiveness of UNICEF’s response in acute emergencies is a concern.
- The importance of human resources and, particularly, the ability of UNICEF to deploy the right staff to humanitarian emergencies.
- UNICEF provides critical support and coordination in humanitarian and emergency situations, and the scale of its operations cannot be delivered by others.
- There are still concerns over UNICEF’s capacity to effectively lead humanitarian clusters on the ground.

The various reviews, evaluations and lessons-learned exercises suggest a mixed trend with variable CLA performance across levels and emergency situations. While these exercises provide valuable insights and inform particular lines of inquiry, none of them constitute an overall systematic assessment of UNICEF’s CLA role.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 39.
2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the evaluation is rooted in the objectives, criteria and sub-questions found in the ToR developed by the Evaluation Office. The following overview of the methodology is detailed in Annex 2.

During the inception phase an evaluability type of assessment was conducted to examine stakeholder relationships, determine data availability and develop a theory of change.

Data collection took place at global and country levels, with emphasis on eight country case studies. Case selection was conducted by the Evaluation Office using a statistical analysis to select a diverse set of country cases that illustrate situations where UNICEF has led clusters or cluster-like coordination (see Annex 3). Ethical safeguards were instituted by ensuring confidentiality of data sources and non-attribution of input.

The evaluation team used a combination of data collection tools and approaches, including key respondent interviews, focus groups, observation, online surveys and desk research and review. Data collection tools were translated into French and Spanish. Over 1,000 people provided information in the data collection phase.

The evaluation examined eight criteria related to UNICEF’s implementation of its CLA roles. These are relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness (split into predictability, accountability and partnership), efficiency, coherence and connectedness, coverage and sustainability. Data collection was designed based on 72 indicators, which were drawn from over 100 questions in the evaluation ToR and were linked to the eight criteria. These indicators were further consolidated into 33 outcome and capability factors to allow for meaningful analysis.
CLARE Methodology

**Research Question**

“How well does UNICEF carry out its CLA role and what should it do for the future?”

**Methodology Design**

**OECD/DAC-Based Criteria:**
- Relevance
- Predictability
- Accountability
- Partnership
- Efficiency
- Coherence
- Coverage
- Sustainability

**72 Evaluation Questions**

**Polling Internal UNICEF Staff and External Partners**

- Copenhagen
- Geneva
- New York
- El Salvador
- Haiti
- State of Palestine
- Tajikistan
- Nepal
- Philippines
- South Sudan
- Burkina Faso

**Data Collection**

- **5 Main Tools Used:**
  - Meeting observation
  - Focus groups
  - Online surveys
  - Desk research
  - Face-to-face interviews

- **Data Collection Tools**
  - Surveys
  - Face-to-face interviews and focus groups

- **UNICEF Staff Polled**
  - Partner Staff Polled

- 617 respondents

- **93 surveys:**
  - 93 respondents

- **189 face-to-face interviews:**
  - 189 respondents

- **222 focus groups:**
  - 222 respondents

- **282 desk research:**
  - 282 respondents

- **Total:** 779 respondents

**Data Analysis**

5 key thematic areas identified for analysis from the answers to the 72 evaluation questions:

- External Coordination Performance
- Internal CLA Performance
- HR Performance
- Scope and Boundaries
- Cost-effectiveness, Value for Money and Efficiency

**Analysis of Findings and Recommendation**

A set of points that describe how well UNICEF is carrying out its CLA role and what it’s not doing as well.

A set of recommendations that link directly to the identified weaknesses, that if implemented will provide the required improvement.
Country case study context
The eight country cases studied for this evaluation represent a diversity of capacity and contextual factors.

These factors are summarized below in Table 2. Further background and context information can be found in the ToR in Annex 1.

Table 2: Country case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CO / CLA Type</th>
<th>Qualitative Description of CO</th>
<th>Country Context Description</th>
<th>Risk Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>CO with Cluster-like Type</td>
<td>In Burkina Faso some &quot;groupes sectoriels&quot; serve &quot;cluster-like&quot; functions. Clusters were proposed in the context of the Sahel crisis in 2011/2012 but the decision was made to keep pre-existing coordination structures that link donors, the national government and humanitarian agencies in place.</td>
<td>Large Medium Moderate</td>
<td>4 Child Protection Education Nutrition WASH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Small CO with Active Clusters</td>
<td>The cluster approach was activated in El Salvador in 2011 in response to national disasters in conjunction with a CERF allocation. El Salvador has one of the highest rates of government funding of cluster coordination posts. A good example of a small CO with modest resources in which</td>
<td>Small Low Low</td>
<td>4 Child Protection Education GBV WASH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>CO with Cluster Deactivation Experience</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>In Haiti the clusters were activated in response to the 2010 earthquake and subsequently the cholera outbreak. Haiti represents an example of a sudden on-set response with a very high number of new actors requiring coordination support, transitioning slowly into recovery. Clusters are slowly phasing-out (the last being the WASH Cluster) with hopes of transferring coordination leadership to the government or national mechanisms.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Nepal is graded medium/high for emergency risk (but low frequency and recently small scale). Nepal is an example of clusters co-led in partnership with government. Clusters were activated in conjunction with a UN special political mission and the RO is also located in Nepal. OCHA is scaling down its presence, and the HC has transitioned to an RC.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>CO Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>CO Supporting Government-Led Clusters</td>
<td>In the Philippines the cluster approach has been institutionalized and it is fully led by government with high capacity. It is also used to bridge emergency and development programmes under a more specific DRR framework.</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>Large CO with Complex Active Clusters</td>
<td>One of the largest UN operations, South Sudan has a robust inter-cluster coordination and pooled funding system in which UNICEF leads four clusters in partnership with INGOs. The country and its government are less than 2 years old and remain dependent on international support. In such a large scale, protracted and chronic humanitarian situation, the clusters are large, decentralized and central to humanitarian response. Sudan is also a pilot country for the IASC Transformative Agenda.</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Palestine</td>
<td>CO Partnering with INGOs on Clusters</td>
<td>The cluster approach was introduced in 2008/2009 due to conflict. Ongoing activation is primarily serving protection oriented advocacy needs. A classic example of clusters led by UNICEF and co-led by INGOs that aim to transition to promote national ownership. In addition, it has a high proportion of full time staff dedicated to cluster coordination.</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>CO with Semi-Dormant Clusters</td>
<td>In Tajikistan clusters were introduced in 2008 in response to cold weather. Currently the clusters in Tajikistan are considered dormant or seasonal. They are active during an emergency response and are involved in contingency planning and preparedness during the off season.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After examining the data gathered across cases and types, the evaluation team used a set of assessment criteria to triangulate qualitative and quantitative findings. These unified assessment criteria also served as the basis for assigning a performance rating for each case of the 33 outcome and capability statements. A descriptive justification statement supplemented each rating.

Cross-case analysis was then carried out to identify patterns and trends in the data, and average scores across cases were calculated along with descriptive finding statements.

Draft findings were presented to key stakeholders during five workshops and briefings in mid-May 2013 using webinars, video conferences and face-to-face
meetings. UNICEF regional and country offices, headquarters units and external partners were included in this process, and have contributed significantly to shaping the recommendations.

Limitations
The evaluation was conducted within specific parameters related to scope, timing, resources and data availability that unavoidably create limitations. The overall time frame for the evaluation was six months, which is significantly shorter than similarly scoped global humanitarian evaluations. The ToR for the evaluation established a preference for a broad evaluation of many topics, for many clusters in multiple country contexts rather than deeply examining a few topics, clusters or countries. Given the desired breadth rather than depth of the evaluation scope, and the resources available to carry it out, the results of the evaluation are meant to provide strong indications of performance and influencing factors, rather than conclusive causal impact statements.

Taking this factor into account, the conclusions of this evaluation must be understood in the context of the following:

- The need to direct data collection and analysis to questions related to the broad CLA role precluded in-depth examination of specific cluster performance.
- Country case studies were selected to illustrate different situations and levels of capacity, rather than to emphasize the largest and possibly most cluster-relevant humanitarian situations. The result was that the majority of case studies illustrate cluster activities outside emergency response coordination.
- Focus of resources on country case studies precluded broad interview follow-up with Global Cluster members. And only one Global Cluster meeting took place during the time frame of the evaluation.
- Interviews and focus groups were largely scheduled by UNICEF country offices within the protocols developed during the inception phase. The one-week schedule for country visits precluded most direct observation of cluster activities, and also precluded independent confirmation of findings originating from interviews. UNICEF offices provided contact lists for the online surveys. The lists were drawn up based on different interpretations of what qualifies as a cluster participant and cluster member in different clusters and countries. Therefore, the distribution lists for the surveys sought to maximize the response of organizations, not individuals.
- Elapsed time between some cluster activities and the evaluation meant that detailed feedback by some important informants was limited. Some interviews were carried out by telephone, rather than in person, which may have limited candour or detail in the information provided. This was the case in the Philippines and Tajikistan case studies, where operational limitations necessitated remote contact.
- A lack of consistent understanding about the CLA role among internal and external stakeholders sometimes hampered the evaluators in discussing key concepts and in collecting meaningful data.
- No pre-existing global monitoring and reporting system is in place to allow for measuring performance against a baseline. Similarly, few quantifiable data on cluster activation and performance are available through the IASC.
- Some limitations of data availability were encountered in instances where record-keeping is not systematized and consolidated at a global or country level and is difficult to trace due to staff turnover.
3 KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Following data collection, the evaluation team analysed the data gathered from global and case study interviews, focus groups, documents reviewed and surveys for each evaluation indicator and developed performance ratings and justification statements for each. The result of this analysis was compared and contrasted across cases to identify patterns in the triangulated data. Based on the most frequent and significant patterns and trends in the detailed results five key areas were identified to communicate the most strategic findings of the evaluation. These are:

1. External coordination performance
2. Internal CLA performance
3. Human resources performance
4. Scope and boundary
5. Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency
CLARE Findings

EXTERNAL COORDINATION PERFORMANCE

Reviewed by 3 elements:
- Overall effectiveness
- Coverage
- Partnership

87% of respondents across clusters say UNICEF is ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ effective.

Partners are generally satisfied with UNICEF’s coordination activities, however it is debated if all these activities are relevant.

INTERNAL CLA PERFORMANCE

Reviewed by 4 elements:
- Establishment GCCU
- Policy and performance
- Role of regional offices
- Comparative advantage

70% of UNICEF country staff surveyed say they have seen moderate or substantial improvement in global coordination and leadership.

Whilst UNICEF CLA role broadly matches its comparative advantage, it is not maximised as the cluster responsibility and accountability chain between country, regional and HQ offices is unclear.

HR PERFORMANCE

Reviewed by 2 elements:
- Surge capacity
- Recruitment systems

Surge capacity and recruitment systems have improved since 2010, but fragmented management and double hatting diminish effectiveness.

There is no overarching strategy for cluster human resource planning, career management and skills development.

SCOPE AND BOUNDARIES

Reviewed by 2 elements:
- Scope of the UNICEF cluster responsibilities
- Operational role of UNICEF clusters

Clusters increasingly fill gaps beyond emergency coordination. Of 34 UNICEF clusters active in 2012:

14 were operated fully in line with IASC cluster guidance.

10 were correctly activated but operated as a long term sectoral coordination mechanism.

10 were activated in place of sectoral coordination, with no formal IASC activation.

Limited effects of clusters on long term coordination and national response capacity by lack of guidance on transition, decentralized authority and funding and an unclear role for clusters in capacity building.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Reviewed by 3 elements:
- Value for money
- Linkages with other initiatives
- Co-leadership arrangements

In surveys, 83% of UNICEF country staff and 84% of country partners state cluster outcomes justify their investments.

Minimal cross-cluster coordination was demonstrated.

Co-leadership arrangements have generally improved.
3.1. External coordination performance

External coordination performance was assessed based on three key elements:

1. Overall effectiveness
2. Coverage
3. Partnership

Overall effectiveness

The evaluation found that partners believe UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are broadly effective. Across case studies and clusters, 87 per cent of partners reported in the online surveys that UNICEF is “somewhat” to “very effective” in its cluster coordination responsibilities at country level.

The range across clusters and AORs at country level was between 71 and 90 per cent. These positive views of UNICEF’s cluster leadership are supported in other recent evaluations.

Interviews and focus groups in case countries showed complementary high degrees of partner satisfaction with UNICEF’s overall coordination performance at country level. While partners interviewed identified various points requiring improvement, in general UNICEF’s cluster leadership was consistently rated well, often with accompanying comments that UNICEF does the best that can be expected within the complex country and overarching coordination contexts.

Around 80 per cent of partners also stated that UNICEF country clusters provide “somewhat” effective to “very effective” operational support through needs assessment, advocacy and resource mobilization.

The evaluation of UNICEF’s 2011/2012 response to the Horn of Africa crisis found that cluster leadership received a high approval rating from 78 per cent of survey respondents.34


Figure 1: Effectiveness of cluster
In focus groups, cluster members also gave a positive rating to UNICEF in regard to needs assessment and advocacy. Reflections on the resource mobilization efforts of UNICEF on behalf of cluster members varied by country context, however, with greater satisfaction in places where overall humanitarian funding was more stable and where cluster coordinators were able to help members access funding.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses and interviews illustrate some of the explanatory factors that most influence UNICEF’s CLA performance.

Analysis of open-ended qualitative survey responses shows that human resources, institutional support and leadership are most frequently cited as influencing overall effectiveness – and each of these three factors is noted 8 to 10 times more frequently than technical expertise.

Focus group and interview participants consistently noted similar themes, including strength, e.g., knowledge, experience and soft (coordination) skills of coordinators; UNICEF’s organizational infrastructure; and support of country office leadership for cluster work. The document review further supports the importance of these issues. A 2011 UNICEF synthesis from implementing the cluster approach identified a series of internal and external factors that influence CLA performance.

Among the internal factors, this synthesis stressed the importance of establishing clear internal understanding of leadership accountabilities, effectively managing the separation between programme and cluster coordination responsibilities and increasing internal knowledge of CLA responsibilities to successfully communicate context and results to help manage expectations, not underestimating the staffing requirements for effective cluster coordination and ensuring an adequate pool of staff with “interpersonal skills, technical competence, experience and seniority to ‘lead’ clusters.”

Figure 2: Factors influencing CLA

![Factors Most Frequently Cited “Responsible for UNICEF’s Level of CLA Effectiveness” by Partners](image)

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Coverage
The evaluation found – across case studies, interviews, survey data and documentary evidence – that UNICEF-led clusters are having positive effects on geographic and thematic coverage. Two thirds of partners responding to country surveys said that cluster coordinators succeed in identifying gaps, and only half said that coordinators effectively facilitate problem-solving.

In about half of the case studies, the evaluation team found that UNICEF-led clusters have established subnational coordination structures. In South Sudan all UNICEF-led clusters/AORs have subnational structures in 7 to 10 States, usually with a double-hatting NGO coordinator. In other countries such as Haiti and the State of Palestine just a few critical subnational clusters are maintained. Key informants note that sustaining subnational coordination structures is difficult as it significantly increases costs, there is high turnover of NGO staff assigned to lead subnational clusters, and often subnational presence and capacity of cluster members are limited, leaving fewer organizations to coordinate.

The evaluation of UNICEF’s 2011/2012 response to the Horn of Africa crisis noted that “Subnational coordination, though not always strong, has the potential to improve coordinated service delivery. Its improvement, however, will require the cluster system to be adapted at the subnational level to intentionally merge groups of clusters.”

Transition from and to sectoral coordination mechanisms or other forms of humanitarian coordination is problematic. In some cases, the clusters have overwhelmed or competed with pre-existing coordination structures and weakened them: for example, when the cluster system was activated in the State of Palestine at the time of the Gaza conflict in late 2008.

Prior to activation of the clusters in the State of Palestine a national WASH sectoral coordination mechanism called “e-WASH” was in place. According to numerous internal and external interview participants the WASH Cluster did not manage to complement the activities of the e-WASH and instead resulted in a parallel mechanism. Donors reallocated funding to the WASH Cluster, lessening the capacity of the e-WASH mechanism and reducing the potential to handover coordination if the clusters are deactivated.

In other cases, clusters were replacing sectoral development and humanitarian contingency planning coordination by filling gaps in long-term coordination needs rather than effectively establishing capacity and transferring coordination responsibilities. This was particularly evident in the Nepal case study where clusters have been primarily replacing sectoral development coordination since their activation with additional roles for humanitarian contingency planning. Such dilemmas with long-term coordination needs were also evident to some extent in

the later stages of the activation in Haiti where identifying or building suitable long-term coordination structures for cluster handover has proved difficult.

The Burkina Faso case study provided an example of UNICEF, the national government and partners resisting cluster activation. Many months into the nutrition crisis, some international actors advocated cluster activation. As long-term coordination mechanisms were already in place, and donors, the national government and UNICEF believed these mechanisms were able to meet coordination needs, cluster activation was rejected.

UNICEF leadership has recognized the need for better systems for transition and investment in sectoral coordination mechanisms and have noted to the IASC that this gap needs to be addressed within the IASC and with donors.

Overall, the evaluation found consistent evidence that UNICEF-led clusters include national authorities in their work. In South Sudan government ministries co-chair most cluster meetings. In El Salvador, Nepal and the Philippines the government is considered the official cluster lead with UNICEF cluster coordinators providing support or co-leading clusters.

UNICEF’s strong relationships with national authorities were observed in most case study countries, although these relationships are often focused on long-term development interests. In some cases, the involvement of national authorities has also created some risks to independence. For example, in one case, the evaluation found that the likelihood of civil unrest and conflict scenarios was markedly absent from contingency plans and cluster discussions, reportedly due to government sensitivities. In other cases, however, country representatives and cluster coordinators demonstrated a clear understanding of the need for clusters to maintain independence.

According to global survey respondents and country-level key informants, UNICEF-led and co-led clusters and AORs have had positive effects on thematic coverage.

The evaluators observed particularly focused efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of thematic issues related to gender-based violence and education in emergencies through operations research and evaluation, as well as advocacy and educational efforts. In South Sudan the UNICEF Country Representative effectively advocated throughout 2012 to raise the standing and priority of the Education Cluster in the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) and Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) process, and the country office has undertaken focused operational research to demonstrate the effect of education in emergency work. Additionally, the evaluation found that UNICEF-led clusters and AORs have promoted gender mainstreaming and human rights in their work.

Interviews and focus groups consistently stated that demonstrating accountability to
affected populations is restricted by information management and reporting system limitations, including shortages of capable information management staff, difficulties in collecting information from partners, and difficulties in sustaining the costs of a robust monitoring and reporting system. Interview participants noted that joint accountability with national governments is more difficult as it depends on governments’ capacities and their concepts of accountability.

**Partnership**

Roles and responsibilities are reportedly clearer at country level than at global level: 85 per cent of country partners and 61 per cent of global partners responding to surveys reported that responsibilities and roles are clearly agreed. However, the evaluation team observed and found documentary evidence showing that global and country cluster coordinators clearly make substantial efforts to establish shared responsibility by developing workplans, who, what, where matrices, and other mapping of capacities and activities.

In survey responses, country-level partners also rate UNICEF better than its global partners on adherence to the Global Humanitarian Platform’s principles of partnership.

**Figure 5: Adherence to partnership principles according to partners**

![Graph showing adherence to partnership principles](image-url)
Across Global Clusters, between 49 and 63 per cent of partners stated that UNICEF adheres to each of the principles of partnership. The lowest combined score for global and country-level partners was for transparency.\(^\text{37}\)

At global level, the evaluation also found that UNICEF has increased its level of participation, representation and coherence at the IASC and through collaboration with other CLAs on cluster initiatives since clusters were consolidated under the GCCU.

At country level, the evaluators observed and heard in interviews that UNICEF’s representation of its clusters at humanitarian country teams (HCTs) varies widely depending on the knowledge and interest, as well as competing priorities, of country representatives.

UNICEF representatives and country office staff reported different reporting structures for cluster coordinators – with some coordinators reporting directly to a representative or deputy representative and others reporting to a chief of section. Staff frequently noted that direct reporting lines to a representative can help ensure that cluster issues are clearly communicated to a representative so they can articulate issues to an HCT. Staff also noted that a representative’s ability and willingness to represent these issues depended on their understanding of the CLA role, and that with five clusters or sub-clusters to represent sometimes only the most critical issues can be raised.

External survey respondents questioned UNICEF’s ability to represent the interests of cluster members rather than its own organizational interests. This is further confirmed by the variance shown in the survey responses from country partners regarding the representation of cluster members in HCTs.

\(^{37}\) Transparency is defined by the Global Humanitarian Partnership as, “Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.” This definition was used in evaluation questionnaires.
Some 39 per cent of partners across country case studies said UNICEF is “very effective” in representing their concerns at HCTs as opposed to UNICEF’s own institutional perspective; on average, 41 per cent said UNICEF is only “somewhat effective” and 20 per cent said UNICEF is “not effective.”

Of Global Cluster members surveyed across clusters, 81 per cent said UNICEF participates in the clusters or AORs equally as a member in addition to its coordination roles. However, 19 per cent said UNICEF does not, with particular concerns for the Education, Nutrition and WASH Clusters.

Despite this, documentary evidence supported by interviews, shows that UNICEF is well represented in Global Clusters, though some UNICEF staff noted that their participation has shifted towards playing a more “defensive role” to monitor cluster activities and growth in scope and advocate against growth of clusters beyond their core purpose and UNICEF capacities.

UNICEF’s strong relationships with governments were found to be an asset in the early stages of an emergency, but pose challenges when it comes to deactivation and transition.

In many country cases, governments demonstrated focus on the resource mobilization benefits of clusters, rather than how they can complement and build existing national disaster management systems. It takes time to reorient pre-existing government relationships to work in a cluster system – and convincing governments of the need to transition out of clusters can be difficult.

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38 Global Cluster and AOR Meeting Minutes and Workplans.
Summary findings: External coordination performance
UNICEF is reasonably effective at exercising its country cluster coordination responsibilities. This is most influenced by human resources, institutional support and leadership.

UNICEF-led clusters and AORs have had positive effects on geographical and thematic coverage, but transition to and from other coordination mechanisms and nationally led coordination is problematic.

While the partnership aspects of UNICEF-led clusters and AORs are stronger at country levels than for Global Clusters, UNICEF is not perceived to effectively represent cluster members at country HCTs, in most cases.
3.2 Internal CLA performance

Internal CLA performance was assessed on the basis of four key elements:

1. The establishment of the Global Cluster Coordination Unit (GCCU)
2. Policy and performance monitoring
3. The role of regional offices
4. Comparative advantages of UNICEF

Establishment of the Global Cluster Coordination Unit (GCCU)

The consolidation of the Global Clusters under the GCCU in Geneva in 2012 has demonstrated certain benefits. Over 70 per cent of UNICEF country staff members who were surveyed stated that these changes have “moderately” or “substantially” improved cluster coordination and leadership in the first year of the GCCU.

The evaluation team also observed some economies of scale (in representation and information management), and sharing of good practice across clusters, although this is still ad hoc. Since cluster coordination staff were relocated and consolidated in Geneva, the physical distance between staff in the Programme Division in New York and cluster coordination staff in Geneva has reportedly reduced day-to-day interactions between some programme staff and their cluster counterparts.

Figure 8: Effects of the GCCU on cluster leadership
A few UNICEF headquarters staff also strongly cited concerns that the GCCU is now sometimes operating independently, and this may reinforce cluster growth beyond its intended mandate.

The evaluators found that cross-cluster management approaches for the GCCU were initially under-resourced. Early decision support memos leading up to the transition provided two options for putting a dedicated cross-cluster management structure in place to remedy identified weaknesses in the previous fragmented structure within the Programme Division. When the GCCU was established, a third approach was implemented with Global Cluster Coordinators reporting directly to the Deputy Director of EMOPS in Geneva, who is supported by an Inter-cluster Coordinator.

This has resulted in less than adequate time and attention being devoted to global cross-cluster management. The GCCs meet together with the Inter-cluster Coordinator for basic information sharing, and they attend EMOPS staff meetings. According to interviews with staff, observation and review of GCCU documents have not yet been complemented with focused management of the five global coordinators to ensure sound performance, identifying opportunities to create synergies and sharing good practice. The planned effort to develop a common GCCU, or perhaps CLA, strategy is intended to strengthen these practices. Recently proposed changes to the role and level of the Inter-cluster Coordinator position in the 2012 EMOPS Office Management Plans process are designed to address these challenges.

Consideration of CLA roles in policy and performance monitoring
The 2010 revised Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) explicitly include organizational commitments for cluster and inter-agency coordination. The evaluation found that cluster coordination broadly contributes to UNICEF’s achievement of the coordination elements in the CCCs. However, performance measurement systems linked to CCCs are currently output focused rather than outcome focused, and country office reporting is voluntary, so there is no regular global analysis of coordination performance.

The UNICEF cluster/sector coordination milestone monitoring tool contained within the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring Toolkit focuses on a series of simple “yes/no” questions such as whether a coordinator position is filled and if not for how long it was vacant.

The series of indicators does not seek to measure the quality of personnel, capacities and tools used, or the success of implementation (e.g. resolution of problems, duration of coordinator’s deployments vs. turnover frequency, and partner ratings of coordination performance). There is only a checklist of whether they are in place.

Within UNICEF, a capacity development initiative linked to the CCCs has been launched to provide advice to country offices on implementation, including lessons-learned components on good coordination practice. An ongoing UNICEF-wide effort to strengthen humanitarian performance monitoring also

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41 Humanitarian Performance Monitoring – Toolkit and Guide.

seeks to address some of these weaknesses.

UNICEF-led and co-led clusters and AORs each have a workplan and results framework and have periodically sponsored operational lessons-learned exercises and reviews. The evaluation found, however, that these are not standardized within or across clusters, and their results are not systematically consolidated and synthesized. UNICEF-wide operations reviews, lessons-learned exercises and evaluations often touch on issues related to cluster coordination and CLA practice. A summary of these lessons was created by UNICEF’s Programme Division in 2011.\(^{43}\)

UNICEF knowledge management systems were found to be insufficient to support CLA roles at many levels, with no central archival systems, and significant loss of knowledge and information when turnover or organizational change takes place. For example, when end-of-mission notes and handover documents were requested at headquarters and country office level the evaluation team was mostly told that such documentation was not systematically collected and that the only way to obtain such documentation would be to request it from each individual coordinator.

Although individual clusters and the GCCU were found to be investing in development of information management practices and systems, reported weaknesses in UNICEF-wide knowledge management systems may limit the potential of these efforts.

Many individual clusters and AORs have demonstrated their commitment to learning by following up lessons learned and other assessments of their work, and broad lessons on implementing the CLA role have been documented. Evidence suggests, however, that UNICEF has not absorbed these lessons through implementing necessary adjustments.\(^{44}\) In 2012 and 2013, an IASC working group developed a country-level coordination performance monitoring tool\(^{45}\) with UNICEF input that is currently being piloted in two areas (South Sudan and the State of Palestine). This performance monitoring tool focuses on the collective performance of individual clusters based on the cluster functions outlined in the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level.

The tool is primarily based on qualitative self-assessment of minimum standards and does not include critical CLA measures related to partnership effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and relevance and appropriateness. A concept note on CLA performance measurement is included in Annex 6.

Other than this evaluation of UNICEF’s CLA role, no other overarching CLA performance monitoring system and results framework was found within UNICEF.

The evaluation also found that no global performance indicators have been defined since the initial 2006 IASC guidance note on implementing the cluster approach, which articulated the responsibilities of global CLAs in a few paragraphs.

The role of regional offices
The evaluation team found that the role of the regional offices and regional emergency advisers remains unclear.

While the CCCs articulate a coordination mandate, it has not been translated into clear responsibilities and accountability.

mechanisms at regional level. Many interviewees mentioned that they were unaware of a specific role and that there was no particular engagement on cluster issues at regional level. Regional office staff members also noted ambiguity about their role, accountability and authority to provide support and oversight for cluster work.

The evaluation found some examples in country case studies of regional emergency advisers (REAs) and other regional technical staff providing ad hoc support to country-level clusters, such as help in identifying tools and contacts at headquarters. The Global WASH Cluster has also engaged UNICEF regional emergency WASH advisers “to support roll-out of global WASH cluster tools and implementation of the cluster approach.”

The lack of clarity on regional office roles may stem from a general confusion on roles, accountabilities and authorities between UNICEF headquarters, regional offices and country offices. The 2012 evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Horn of Africa crisis noted that “uncertainties regarding accountability are intrinsic to UNICEF’s decentralized management structure…. Authority is given to the country representative, with regional office and headquarters having some – not quite clear – measure of accountability for country programme outcomes.” The report goes on to state that this confusion becomes more obvious in emergencies because of the “pressure to act quickly and get results.”

The 2011 evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Haiti earthquake noted that questions of accountability and roles between headquarters, regional offices and country offices arose early in the operation but were left unresolved, resulting in a “chain of consultation” rather than a clear chain of command.

In 2010 the UNICEF Programme Division undertook an analysis of internal and external cluster issues. The internal issues analysis noted that the “role of the regional office in terms of strategic oversight and quality assurance for CLA implementation at country office level is currently unclear, and each regional office has engaged with a different approach.”

The evaluation found only one example of organized and systematic regional support: in the temporarily combined UNICEF Asia Pacific Shared Services Center (APSSC). The APSSC combined technical emergency staff from the South Asia and East Asia and Pacific regional offices and developed cluster-related capacity assessment and development tools and approaches. Key informants cited these as providing valuable support to country offices when implementing the CLA role.

A 2011 exercise to document the lessons learned from the experience of the APSSC found “An emergency unit uniquely structured at a regional level around UNICEF’s Global Cluster Leadership Accountabilities is an innovative model which has proven effective in supporting UNICEF’s country offices across regions to deliver on their Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs).”

While these tools and approaches have, to some extent, been adopted by Global

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49 ‘Cluster Issues Matrix: Internal’.  
Clusters, the APSSC was disbanded in 2012, and the two regions no longer provide the same type of cluster support to country offices.

The lack of clarity in the role of regional offices is considered by internal key informants to be a significant gap in UNICEF’s internal CLA performance. Lines of authority between country offices and headquarters run through the regional offices directly to UNICEF’s Executive Director. Key respondent interviews, documentary evidence and observations suggest that many UNICEF country offices and representatives operate in a highly autonomous way, with unclear oversight or performance management from above. The Programme Division analysis of internal cluster issues noted that “At CO level, UNICEF Representatives have a high degree of autonomy.”

As a result, various headquarters divisions and units – including the GCCU – have no direct line of authority to country representatives and their offices. This means that all GCCU and EMOPS efforts to establish consistent and predictable country office approaches to implement the CLA role must currently rely on persuasion, deployments and written guidance to influence a highly decentralized country-driven system. Such efforts have little influence if country office managers are not supportive or open to guidance.

The comparative advantages of UNICEF

The evaluation found that UNICEF’s programme strengths tend to match each of its CLA and AOR focal point roles. That said, UNICEF is self-confident about its programme strengths and believes it is the most suitable organization to serve as a CLA in each of its sectors. In survey responses, significantly more global partners than country partners questioned UNICEF’s strength in programming and coordination. This reserved reaction at the global level significantly differs from UNICEF’s own perceived strengths.

Across clusters, 66 per cent of country partners stated that UNICEF’s programme strengths are stronger than other humanitarian actors in the sectors where it has a CLA role; while only 40 per cent of global partners said its programme strengths are stronger.

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51 ‘Cluster Issues Matrix: Internal’.
Figure 9: UNICEF programme strength compared to other actors

![Figure 9: UNICEF programme strength compared to other actors](image)

Figure 10: UNICEF’s strength in programming supports its CLA roles

![Figure 10: UNICEF’s strength in programming supports its CLA roles](image)
Overall, 47 per cent of global partners responding to the surveys stated that UNICEF’s strength in programming supports its CLA roles across clusters, while 66 per cent of country partners agreed.

Across clusters, 61 per cent of country-level survey respondents agreed that UNICEF is effectively harnessing its coordination skills and capacities to fulfil its CLA roles, while only 36 per cent of global partners agreed. Most key informants stated in interviews and focus groups that cluster coordinators need both technical and coordination skills, although coordinators who have the necessary ‘soft’ (coordination) skills can succeed without deep technical experience, while a coordinator with only technical skills is unlikely to succeed. At country level, programme and coordination strengths were found to be both an asset and a limitation as they were often described by key informants as based on sector development-oriented programmes and relationships, which can detract from cluster coordination independence.

Summary findings:
Internal CLA performance
The consolidation of Global Cluster staff under the GCCU is beginning to yield positive results. This includes economies of scale, for example in information management, quality and coherence of external representation, and informal sharing of good practice across clusters.

The CLA role is increasingly incorporated into broad UNICEF policies and initiatives. Nonetheless, their interpretation is inconsistent, and performance measurement, monitoring and knowledge management remain weak for CLA roles within UNICEF.

The role of regional offices in relation to CLA responsibilities remains unclear, yet regional offices are the only formal link in UNICEF’s accountability chain between country offices and headquarters.

UNICEF’s CLA roles broadly match its comparative advantages in programming, though UNICEF’s programme strengths and ability to leverage its coordination skills and capacities are both questioned by global cluster members.

Figure 11: UNICEF harnesses internal coordination skills and capacities for CLA roles
3.3 Human resources performance

Human resources performance was assessed based on two key elements:

1. Surge capacity and recruitment systems
2. Cluster coordination capacity development

Surge capacity and recruitment systems

Overall, the evaluation found that UNICEF has made significant improvements in its surge capacity systems since 2010.

The evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake\(^52\) found that leadership capacity in UNICEF-led clusters was weak in the first three months of the response with the exception of the WASH Cluster. This evaluation pointed out “slow regular recruitment processes and lack of protocol for scaling up meant that the surge was greatly protracted (up to six months).”

However, improvements in surge capacity systems are evidenced by the positive findings from the evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the 2011/2012 Horn of Africa crisis. This evaluation found that UNICEF successfully provided surge capacity to strengthen the clusters and sectors it leads.

Table 3: 2012 Global Cluster deployment statistics by mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global mechanism</th>
<th># of positions filled/ deployments</th>
<th># of countries</th>
<th>Average deployment duration</th>
<th>Range of deployment duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DHR</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>188 days</td>
<td>Low 80 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High 364 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globally managed standby partner rosters</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>117 days</td>
<td>Low 15 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High 279 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster/AOR RRTs</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37 days</td>
<td>Low 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High 95 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^52\) ‘Independent Review of UNICEF’s Operational Response to the January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti’. 

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The survey conducted for the evaluation found that 81 per cent of respondents agreed that UNICEF successfully deployed its own staff, and 77 per cent agreed that standby partner staffers were deployed successfully and all categories of personnel deployed “were seen to be of high quality.”

Since the GCCU was established in 2012, UNICEF has worked to expand the rapid response teams (RRTs) for clusters that did not previously have a dedicated group of staff available for deployment and operational support. Each cluster and AOR has five RRT members with the exception of the Education Cluster, because of resource constraints. The Division of Human Resources (DHR) emergency unit was re-established in 2010 after being dismantled. It has increased its recruitment of requested cluster positions and started working with the Programme Division to review coordination qualifications for UNICEF global roster members. The evaluation found that three global mechanisms are in place to provide surge capacity and recruitment support to country-level clusters: DHR emergency unit’s systems, globally managed standby partner rosters and the rapid response teams for the Global Cluster and AOR. The 2012 deployment statistics for each of these three mechanisms is shown in Table 3. DHR and globally managed standby partner rosters are the most often-used mechanisms for recruitment and deployment of longer-term cluster staff based on the average duration of deployments. Interview responses show that RRTs are reportedly deployed more often for first-wave deployments until a longer-term candidate can be identified, as well as for technical assessments and advice on setting up coordination systems.

The evaluation found that DHR and globally managed standby partner rosters combined are providing approximately 50 per cent of the demand for country-level cluster coordination staff. The other 50 per cent of country-level cluster coordination positions are being filled by country offices through direct recruitment. The following pros and cons were identified for each type of recruitment mechanism.

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The three global mechanisms are currently managed by three separate groups, and there is no overarching strategy for cluster surge capacity. This fragmentation and lack of strategy has persisted since at least 2010, as evidenced by findings in the 2011 evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Haiti earthquake, which noted: "There has been no centrally coordinated process to develop the roster as a strategic tool for deployment in emergencies, except during a short period from 2006–2008 when the DHR emergency unit existed."\(^{54}\)

Demand prediction – the number of people and skills needed – is difficult given different uses of clusters in many places for prolonged periods of time. As a result, the decision on which mechanism

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\(^{54}\) Independent Review of UNICEF’s Operational Response to the January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti.
to use to fill a cluster coordination position is ad hoc, and often depends on who takes action first based on country office preference (or lack of action). An internal UNICEF effectiveness and efficiency initiative has recently identified that fragmented human resources efforts are a potential area for change.

Another factor influencing surge capacity is that the overall pool of expertise for some sectors is quite limited. Key informants reported in interviews that UNICEF is generally challenged by industry-wide gaps in emergency nutrition, education and gender-based violence personnel, and this affects cluster recruitment and roster capabilities.

Some internal process and procedural impediments also exist in rapid surge capacity deployment. The fast-track recruitment procedures developed by UNICEF in recent years to expedite emergency recruitment and deployment reportedly only apply to fixed-term positions.\(^{55}\) Medical clearance and laissez-passer processing times are noted as impediments to deploying new temporary assignment staff.

Global surge capacity systems primarily recruit people from outside UNICEF on temporary and short-term consulting contracts. This is because cluster coordination is seen as a temporary function, regardless of cluster longevity. These contracts have limited time spans and job security. Fixed-term staff can potentially deploy quickly, but do not have an incentive to serve as cluster coordinators – currently, there is no clear coordination career path within UNICEF, and giving up job security for a temporary assignment is rare. Fixed-term UNICEF staff also noted cultural challenges, such as being labelled as emergency focused, and stated there remains a preference for roles in direct programming rather than in coordination.

Double-hatting remains prevalent among staff who are recruited or assigned directly by country offices across countries. Based on analysis of data from the 2012 EMOPS survey of cluster activity,\(^{56}\) only 23 per cent of UNICEF staff who reported working with clusters or AORs were full time. While the percentage of full-time staff is higher for countries in the midst of an ongoing emergency, even then the figure only reaches 28 per cent. A third of countries with ongoing emergencies have two or fewer full-time staff dedicated to all of the UNICEF-led clusters or AORs. In interviews, key internal and external informants agreed that double-hatting is not satisfactory during emergencies as cluster coordination is a full-time job, and members expect a focused and independent coordinator.

The evaluation found that double-hatting is not an appropriate, relevant or effective staffing solution for key country-level cluster coordination positions in active emergency settings. Partners and staff noted that these positions have full-time responsibilities and need to be dedicated to focus on independently supporting cluster coordination. Analysis of the reported workload demands on cluster coordinators confirms the need for dedicated coordinators.

### Cluster coordination capacity development

Virtually all key informants agreed that predictability of consistent high-quality cluster coordination performance depends highly on the cluster coordinator. Similarly, the evaluation found that the predictability and consistency of quality CLA


\(^{56}\) ‘A Survey of the Operational Status and Staffing of UNICEF-led and Co-led Clusters and AORs in the Field’.
performance depends on the level of understanding of the CLA role, interests and related skills of country representatives and deputies.

Capacity development for cluster coordinators is focused on a limited four- or five-day classroom-style training – with an emphasis on awareness-building rather than e-learning, interactive simulation, mentoring and performance management. Paradoxically, most people who are trained are not deployed often, due to turnover, availability and poor linkages between training lists, rosters and country offices that make decisions on the selection of coordinators. According to country survey responses, approximately 25 per cent of people serving in cluster coordination roles have never received cluster training.

A review of cluster coordinator capacity enhancement was conducted in 2013 for the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO).\(^5\) This review found that “no overall strategy for capacity enhancement for cluster coordinators exists” at global or regional level.

Recent efforts – launched by the GCCU to create a capacity development strategy – are still relatively focused on training, but collaboration with other CLAs in this initiative and recent adjustments suggest the GCCU is now seeking to establish a more comprehensive approach.

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Across country surveys, 62 per cent of partners stated that UNICEF cluster coordinators have the necessary technical skills, and 63 per cent said they have the required coordination skills. This suggests room for improvement in both the selection and capacity development of cluster coordinators.

The evaluation found virtually no systematic efforts across UNICEF to build the understanding, interest and skills of country representatives and their deputies to fulfil CLA roles.

The evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Haiti earthquake noted that “many senior managers, section chiefs and representatives were not trained in clusters and had no experience working with them.” The induction training and orientation for representatives and deputies is, reportedly, only required once in their career.

A high percentage of current representatives and deputies first went through the induction before the cluster system was developed. While the induction course has been revised to include some information on the cluster system, key informants estimated that, with the current system, it would be decades before all deputies and representatives receive the updated training.

UNICEF staff, including representatives, noted that there is no current systematic interaction across country representatives in different locations. No global meetings are held to bring country representatives together to discuss organizational priorities and learning about key responsibilities, such as the CLA role.

Summary findings: Human resources performance
Surge capacity and recruitment systems have improved since 2010, but their management remains fragmented and there is no overarching strategy for cluster human resources. There is no career path that would encourage UNICEF staff to serve in coordination roles. Double-hatting remains prevalent and diminishes effectiveness, even in ongoing emergency situations, where only 28 per cent of staff working on cluster activities are full time.

Coordination performance depends highly on the skills and capacities of cluster coordinators, and overall CLA performance depends highly on the understanding and approaches of country representatives. Capacity development has been limited to classroom-based awareness training. Paradoxically, many people trained are not deployed, and many cluster coordinators have not been trained. The evaluation did not find any systematic efforts to build understanding and consistency of approaches among country representatives and their deputies, despite the critical role they play in implementing the CLA role.

3.4 Scope and boundary issues

Scope and boundary issues were assessed on the basis of two key elements:

1. The scope of UNICEF’s cluster responsibilities
2. The operational role of UNICEF’s clusters and AORs

The scope of UNICEF’s cluster responsibilities

Overall, the evaluation team found that UNICEF faces challenges in implementing its CLA roles due to an evolving and inconsistently understood and applied IASC operating framework.

Policies and guidance are perceived as being ambiguous, while inconsistent use of the cluster system to fill an increasing number of needs beyond emergency coordination have created an environment where expectations are difficult to manage, and new roles and uses of clusters are replicated in other contexts.

While UNICEF-led clusters are broadly aligned with IASC policy, these perceived ambiguities mean that much is left open to interpretation at country level. This has led to a wide variance in practice across countries by UNICEF country offices, HCs and HCTs.

The evaluation UNICEF’s 2011/2012 response in the Horn of Africa found that “Cluster/sector coordination arrangements vary between countries in the [Horn of Africa] and do not follow the IASC standard cluster approach in any country.”

Just 59 per cent of country-level partners stated that UNICEF cluster coordinators understand IASC and cluster-specific tools and guidance, and only 50 per cent said that coordinators use such tools and guidance.

Key informants noted that this is partly related to the utility of existing tools and guidance and partly due to the volume of existing guidance (the number of documents and their overall length). During the evaluation – in focus groups and workshops – stakeholders noted they do not need more guidance but, instead, need to better understand how to use and implement existing guidance.

Although UNICEF was found to be making significant efforts to influence the IASC and to push for resolution on long-outstanding gaps in clarity, very little evidence was found of UNICEF-wide efforts to interpret and guide implementation of IASC policy by country offices.

The evaluation found that the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level, developed in 2012, provides greater clarity but is still being field tested. The reference module still leaves decisions on “the most appropriate coordination mechanisms” – not necessarily clusters – up to HCs, Resident Coordinators (RCs) and HCTs.

This document stresses, however, that IASC principals have called for cluster activation to be more strategic, less automatic, and time limited. They clearly define the activation of clusters as a temporary coordination solution linked to international emergency response. The reference module also calls for reviews every six months to assess the relevance of activation and for supporting nationally

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led coordination mechanisms as the preferred option.

Cluster staff and partners have a widely differing understanding of what the ‘provider of last resort’ concept entails. Many internal and external key informants see UNICEF as sometimes playing a ‘provider of first resort’ role when resources are available, especially in clusters where the vast majority of participants are also UNICEF implementing partners.

The original ‘provider of last resort’ concept was found, in the evaluation, to be largely meaningless given the 2008 revisions to its definition – "depending on access, security and availability of funding" – which can be used to explain almost all operational gaps.

Yet, ambiguities in partner and staff understanding of the concept may result in a significant divergence of expectations and may also challenge partnership management.

UNICEF’s ability to ensure that its CLA responsibilities will result in long-term, lasting, sectoral development and/or humanitarian coordination and enhanced response capacity was found to be limited by a lack of clear guidance on transition and handover, decentralized authority and funding approaches, and a lack of clarity on the role of clusters in national capacity-building.

Country-level clusters are taking different approaches and positions regarding transition and handover, while attempts to hand over to sectoral or other humanitarian coordination mechanisms and national authorities have had limited success.

The Haiti case study provided the clearest examples of attempted handover and transition planning yet shows the challenges for UNICEF of doing so. Due to gaps in the capacity of other actors, the WASH Cluster coordination was prolonged as a transitional capacity-building and preparedness mechanism while the Education Cluster invested in efforts to hand over coordination to national counterparts that did not continue cluster initiatives.

In Nepal the HC has now transitioned to a Resident Coordinator and some clusters have closed but UNICEF led (and co-led) clusters are awaiting a clear agreement on a cluster transition strategy that has been discussed for over two years, partly due to government reluctance to expedite the transition.

The operational role of UNICEF clusters and AORs
The team found that the perceived ambiguity of IASC policy and an inconsistent country-driven, decentralized or bottom-up approach has fuelled cluster “scope creep”; this takes the form of an increasing number of roles, response to smaller and smaller emergencies, and extended activation timelines.

This includes:
• growing use of the cluster system to serve new purposes and fill gaps where long-term coordination systems do not exist, or are perceived to be inadequate;
• activation in areas where there are no large-scale emergency needs;
• prolonged activation after emergency coordination requirements have been met; and
• reluctance and inability to transition coordination responsibilities to governments and sectoral coordination mechanisms.

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The basic drivers of this extended role seem to be primarily linked to external stakeholder interests and include:

- a lack of standard or funded sectoral coordination mechanisms for development and protracted situations;
- gaps in effective recovery coordination mechanisms;
- donor support for a single coordination vehicle and unified funding conduits;
- national governments’ expectations that an emergency designation linked to clusters will result in additional financial resources and support;
- the realignment of national governments’ expectations during emergencies to expect international cluster support, which makes it difficult to shift operating modes when an emergency ends; and
- the role of clusters in national capacity-building before, during and after emergencies, which remains unclear.

The evaluation found evidence in Nepal and the State of Palestine that prolonged use of international clusters creates dependency and undermines the assumption of responsibility by nationally led coordination mechanisms and national authorities (competition and replacement). Some key informants in South Sudan noted concerns that the presumed permanence of clusters there would also enable the government to delay building its own capacity for coordination.

Donor support for unified funding conduits has influenced HCT and global approaches for pooled funding, resulting in a growing administrative and quality control role for clusters in vetting and preparing submissions for the CAP and pooled funding requests through CHFs. This trend was found to put cluster coordinators in a delicate position, as their perceived influence over funding decisions makes maintaining a neutral role more difficult. The administrative burden of these roles, particularly where a CHF is in place, was also found to take time and resources away from operational coordination and problem-solving.

In 2012, 34 UNICEF country offices reported cluster activity, of which 14 have clear, ongoing relevance as active clusters. Analysis based on the IASC ‘Reference Module for Cluster Coordination’ activation criteria of all country offices reporting cluster activity in 2012, suggests that 59 per cent of these contexts no longer have emergency coordination needs. Because the clusters are being used to fill gaps in sectoral development coordination and to respond to emergencies that could be managed by national coordination structures, there is a broad risk of creating dependency and undermining national capacity.

This trend is seen by some stakeholders as a deliberate effort to ‘maximize’ clusters and by others as the result of an unregulated bottom-up approach.

Regardless of its origins, the evaluation found that the activation of clusters beyond emergency coordination significantly affects UNICEF’s global ability to perform well as a CLA in terms of relevance, predictability, partnership, efficiency and sustainability. Furthermore, long-term development coordination for development work requires different coordination skills and approaches than those needed for emergency coordination.

It was found that, where country offices have staff with the skills to meet these long-term coordination needs, UNICEF is not necessarily better equipped for actual emergency coordination, although the assumption that an ongoing cluster is in place may lead others to believe that the system is sufficiently prepared.

Summary findings: Scope and boundary issues
An inconsistent understanding and application of IASC policies and guidance within UNICEF and HCTs has led to an increasing scope and scale of partner expectations that are difficult to manage and support. While UNICEF is increasingly working to improve clarity through the IASC at global level, no UNICEF-wide efforts were found to have increased the consistent country office interpretation and application of policies and guidance. The impact of clusters on long-term, lasting coordination and national response capacity is a lack of guidance on transition, decentralized authority and funding, and an unclear role for clusters in national capacity-building.

Clusters are increasingly filling gaps beyond emergency coordination. This cluster "scope creep" significantly affects UNICEF’s global ability to perform well as a CLA in terms of relevance, predictability, partnership, efficiency and sustainability. Clusters are not designed to fulfil all of these roles over a prolonged period of time, and doing so detracts from their focus on readiness for emergency coordination.

Figure 13: Current rationale for clusters at country level
3.5 Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency

Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency were assessed on the basis of three key elements:

1. Cost-effectiveness and value for money
2. Linkages with other internal and external initiatives
3. Co-leadership arrangements

Cost-effectiveness and value for money

Overall, the evaluation found that UNICEF has identified cost-effective means of implementing its CLA roles and that the coordination services provided through its clusters and AORs are widely perceived to provide good value for money.

In surveys, 83 per cent of UNICEF country staff and 84 per cent of country partners stated that cluster outcomes justify their investment. However, a true measure of value for money would need to compare cost to the operational impact of coordination, which was beyond the scope of this evaluation.62

While these survey data, and complementary interview data, are inherently perceptual, this is nonetheless a significant finding.

Observation during the evaluation showed that, in most cases, UNICEF-led clusters have a diverse and large membership, and belief in value for money in a partnership is critical to sustain the partnership.

In addition to the high overall average ratings of value for money, there is a notable variance across evaluation case studies; partners rate value higher in places where the clusters are focused on emergency coordination.

UNICEF has also leveraged internal and external resources to fulfil its CLA roles effectively. Its clusters and AORs have successfully engaged partners in sharing cluster costs at global level. Approximately 54 per cent of staff and infrastructure costs, and 33 per cent of workplan activity costs, are being covered by partners. With the creation of the GCCU in Geneva, UNICEF has also mainstreamed the cost of cluster coordinator positions, demonstrating a financial commitment to its CLA role.

Table 5: Annual cost of UNICEF-led global clusters and AORs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLA Annual Global Running Costs</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% UNICEF funded</th>
<th>% Partner funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff costs for 3 clusters and 2 AORs (including RRTs)</td>
<td>$9,914,205</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other GCCU staff, equipment and infrastructure</td>
<td>$1,331,275</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,245,480</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Cluster/AOR Workplan Activity Costs</td>
<td>$6,627,385</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,872,865</strong></td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62 The evaluators searched for cross-sectoral operational impact data from different stages of major operations to measure value-for-money measure. No sound sources that cover entire sectors of work across UNICEF-led clusters could be identified.
Basic global running costs per UNICEF cluster appear to be lower than those of other CLAs based on a 2012 analysis of cluster coordination costs by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), although discrepancies in different CLA’s cost frameworks make comparison difficult.

At country level, the 2012 EMOPS survey estimated that UNICEF-led and co-led clusters are costing approximately US$35 million per year at country level, US$10 million of which is being covered by partners. While many UNICEF headquarters staff perceive this total as high, it averages only approximately US$7 million per cluster and AOR, and covers a total of 34 countries – for less than US$1 million per year per country.

Based on the full cost of a UN international staff post, this equates to approximately four to five professional staff per country.

In general, the evaluation found that UNICEF’s investment in its CLA role at global and field level is not excessive and is shared well by partners.

Up to 33 per cent of estimated field coordination costs were found to be in long-term sectoral development coordination contexts rather than large-scale emergency coordination, suggesting some potential cost savings for UNICEF if IASC and UNICEF activation and deactivation clarity can be established, as stakeholders frequently noted that clusters are a “heavier” and more costly form of coordination.

Unrealistic stakeholder expectations and a lack of consistent global efforts to establish where, when and how to use the cluster system were found to pose the greatest challenge to the financial sustainability of the cluster system. The global costs and functions of the GCCU, however, are largely perceived as financially sustainable as long as partners continue their significant support for RRT capacity and other initiatives.

Linkages with other internal and external initiatives
Cross-cluster coordination and integrated programming approaches remain the exception rather than the rule among UNICEF clusters and AORs, and with those sectors or clusters led by other organizations.

Cluster workplans and response strategies are generally siloed. There appears to be little awareness of other vertical interventions in emergency response that target the same affected populations.

The evaluation of UNICEF’s 2011/2012 response to the Horn of Africa crisis noted: “There is potential for improving the effectiveness and value for money of UNICEF emergency interventions by integrating services at the point of delivery, backed up by integrated support from regional and HQ levels, rather than the vertical sector support that tends to prevail currently. This implies a more cohesive approach to UNICEF and cluster support to local governments and communities.”

A few limited instances of integrated cross-sectoral programming approaches were identified, including the Pakistan Inter-Cluster Child Survival Strategy, joint sections of workplans and cross-references in contingency plans, but most evidence suggests little change over time.

64 ‘A Survey of the Operational Status and Staffing of UNICEF Led and Co-Led Clusters and AORs in the Field’.
to improve integrated response approaches.

The focus group discussions brought together partners and staff from different clusters. Stakeholders noted that such meetings rarely take place and that such dialogue across clusters was considered very useful.

The IASC Transformative Agenda integrated-programme cycle, the multi-cluster initial rapid assessment tool and the inter-agency rapid response mechanism were developed, with UNICEF’s input, to address challenges related to integrated cross-cluster programming approaches, but these have yet to be tested in an operation.

Most staff at global and country level reported that clusters and programmes or sectors interact without duplication, though often due to double-hatting. Seventy-four per cent of UNICEF staff at country level stated that clusters enhance programmes, while 11 per cent said they have no effect on programmes, and 15 per cent said they detract from programmes. Reasons cited for the positive effect on programme implementation included:

- Clusters attract and help leverage additional resources
- Clusters serve as an entry point for future programmes
- Staffers view “clusters as one of the development interventions” and, therefore, are not in competition
- The “cluster coordination function enables better programme implementation of all partners, many of whom are UNICEF implementing partners”
- Clusters allow UNICEF “leveraging on activities done by non-implementing partners as non-PCA (Programme Cooperation Agreement) partners will follow the same methodology as if they were (implementing) partners”

Key informants, nonetheless, report some continued confusion about the roles between the Programme Division and EMOPS following the consolidation of cluster staff under EMOPS. This confusion exists about sectoral versus cluster coordination, and who is responsible for emergency preparedness. Staff and partners noted that UNICEF makes some effort to participate in inter-cluster coordination, but that the systems are weak and reliant on individual relationships, both among UNICEF-led clusters and across all clusters.

Within UNICEF, country office practices vary for inter-cluster coordination. Within some, an emergency coordination unit plays a de facto role in convening cluster coordinators, although the emphasis seems to be on basic information-sharing and reporting deadlines (for UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action for Children reports, CHF, CAP, etc.). In others, this role falls to representatives or deputy representatives, or is not systematically ensured.

At global level, UNICEF increasingly demonstrates proactive efforts to contribute to the IASC Transformative Agenda and inter-cluster concepts and ideas. Within the GCCU, however, inter-cluster coordination remains somewhat ad hoc due to weaknesses to date in the cross-cluster management system.

**Co-leadership arrangements**

Co-leadership arrangements in the Education Cluster were found to have improved, while agreements for co-leadership of the Gender-based Violence AOR offer potential for improvements.

At field level, co-leadership generally works well and adds significant value. Co-leadership approaches increase
cluster credibility and help elicit contributions of information from partners.

Key informants reported significant improvements since the 2010 review in the Education Cluster co-leadership with Save the Children.\(^66\) While not all specific recommendations have been implemented, the underlying and critical issues were found to have been addressed. The Education Cluster was also found to have strong links with the International Network for Education in Emergencies, which plays a significant normative guidance role in support of the cluster.

Arrangements between the Protection Cluster and the two UNICEF-led/co-led Protection AORs were found to be more problematic. There are differences between AoRs and clusters in terms of how they work. On an official level, the various Protection Cluster AORs serve effectively as sub-clusters. In practice, the two AORs that are led or co-led by UNICEF have somewhat comparable systems and capacities – just like their fully-fledged cluster counterparts – and their members expect the same support. AORs operate, therefore, under a more complex operating structure, having to maintain their own systems and coordination practices, while also coordinating within the Protection Cluster.

At global and country level, this can result in AORs having less visibility and influence when relationships between coordinators and agencies are weak. The two UNICEF-led or co-led AORs are better capacitated, with full-time global coordinators, than the overall Protection Cluster, further complicating this relationship.

The two UNICEF-led and co-led AORs also demonstrate more characteristics of permanent (and important) thematic coordination mechanisms than many other clusters. Child protection and gender-based violence are cross-cutting issues that pertain to emergency and non-emergency environments (in contrast to emergency education, emergency nutrition or emergency WASH). As such, the characteristics of the two AORs before and after an emergency phase of activation may differ less than those of other clusters, although it is unclear if this is understood within the broader Protection Cluster.

Key informants at global and country levels reported that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) co-leadership with UNICEF of the GBV AOR has been challenging, but agreements now seem to be in place that should lead to UNFPA’s taking a more active lead role at global level. Challenges remain in this arrangement, however, as UNFPA’s field presence/capacity is reportedly weaker than UNICEF’s, and expectations of UNICEF may remain high unless other potential co-leaders step forward.

Summary findings: Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency

UNICEF has found cost-effective means of implementing its CLA roles, including through leveraging significant partner contributions to cluster work. Staff and partners strongly believe that the outcomes of cluster work justify their organization’s investment. Although significant, a true value-for-money measure would require cross-sectoral impact data correlated to coordination. Global and country-level costs were not found to be excessive, but sustainability is threatened by unrealistic stakeholder expectations.

Clusters, AORs and UNICEF programmes interact without duplication and have neutral-to-positive effects on programmes.

\(^{66}\) *Review of the Education Cluster Co-Leadership Arrangement*.
Cross-cluster coordination was found to be insufficient, while integrated programming approaches remain the exception rather than the rule. Co-leadership arrangements have improved within the Education Cluster, and agreements between UNFPA and UNICEF should improve co-leadership of the GBV AOR. Relationships between the Protection Cluster and the two related UNICEF AORs are more problematic as member expectations of the AORs are the same as for other clusters, yet they have more complicated management arrangements and less visibility and influence.
4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the team concluded that examining how well UNICEF has carried out its CLA role depends on two interconnected factors:

1. Is UNICEF implementing its CLA role well? (doing things right)
2. Is UNICEF doing the right things? (applying clusters appropriately, in the right places, at the right time, with the right activities)

This section shows analysis based on the five key areas and concludes with a summary of the analysis.

4.1 Conclusions by key area

Overall, the evaluation found evidence that UNICEF has invested significantly in implementing its CLA role since the beginning of the IASC cluster system and is increasingly implementing its CLA roles well.

The evaluation concluded, however, that UNICEF’s ability to carry out its CLA role well is limited because it is undertaking its activities in more situations and over a prolonged period of time above and beyond the role that activated clusters are designed to play. This cluster “scope creep” stretches resources by spreading efforts and resources over more countries; there are no clear, established priorities that are based on risk; and this limits the ability of global clusters to provide high-quality support.

This cluster “scope creep” is driven by critical internal and external stakeholders, including donors and national governments, their competing interests, and contextual factors such as gaps in non-cluster systems for preparedness and sectoral development coordination. While a significant amount of cluster “scope creep” is linked to how the overarching system has employed clusters (deliberately and through non-action), UNICEF’s own lack of consistency in advocating for cluster rationalization at country level is also a factor.

External coordination performance
UNICEF cluster coordination practices are generally strong and enhance collective accountability and shared responsibility. Partner perceptions that cluster coordinators are not capable of identifying gaps and facilitating problem-solving suggest a weakness, but this is probably driven by the use of international clusters in non-emergency contexts.

The partnership aspects of UNICEF-led clusters seem to be sound at country level, but there are indications of partner concerns about UNICEF partnership practices across many Global Clusters that need to be examined further. Recent global organizational changes to consolidate cluster staff in Geneva have improved the representation of clusters at global IASC meetings, but concerns about country-level representation of members’ interests suggests a lack of understanding by country representatives and a poor appreciation of the CLA role.

UNICEF’s equal participation as a member of Global Clusters is rated lower by partners. Country-level clusters with double-hatting coordinators are also less likely to experience distinct UNICEF participation as a member.

While partners believe that roles and responsibilities are unclear at global level, the evaluation team found that cluster and AOR coordinators are making significant efforts to establish clear roles, and partners bear some of the responsibility for achieving such clarity. Country-level partners rate UNICEF better for adherence to principles of partnership
than global partners, although the principle of transparency is often cited as a weakness at both levels. UNICEF effectively engages national and, sometimes, subnational authorities in cluster work, but this can pose challenges to independence that should be consistently monitored.

UNICEF-led clusters and AORs have had positive effects on both geographic and thematic coverage. Its clusters and AORs frequently participate in joint assessments, but joint operational strategies remain rare.

While subnational mechanisms have been put in place in many countries, they are limited due to resource constraints and staff turnover.

UNICEF has improved accountability to affected populations by increasing gender mainstreaming and human rights approaches in its cluster work.

Nevertheless, limitations in information management and reporting capacity, as well as in national government capacities, have somewhat limited the ability to demonstrate cluster accountability to affected populations.

Internal CLA performance
The consolidation of clusters and AORs under the GCCU in EMOPS is beginning to pay dividends, and may create economies of scale and consistency of good practice.

UNICEF’s comparative advantages in programming and coordination mostly match its designated CLA roles, but questions raised by Global Cluster members about UNICEF’s comparative advantages need further examination.

UNICEF-led clusters and AORs have broadly contributed to meeting the coordination objectives noted in the CCCs, to some extent enhancing overall accountability. However, monitoring systems do not assess quality or appropriateness, and reporting systems are voluntary for UNICEF country offices. The evaluation can serve to inform a potential approach for future UNICEF CLA performance measurement. A concept note on CLA performance measurement is included in Annex 6.

UNICEF’s CLA approach is increasingly well linked to other internal initiatives and partners. Organizational initiatives, policies and procedures developed in the past few years have taken the CLA role into account.

With UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency, the evaluation team believes it is important that UNICEF leaders throughout the organization provide cohesive and coherent leadership. However, the potentially critical role of UNICEF regional offices in supporting country clusters and ensuring consistency of CLA approaches remains undefined. At senior management level, the evaluation found that only the Deputy Executive Director with responsibility for emergency operations is regularly engaged in CLA issues, while no evidence of a CLA strategic leadership group was found.

Confusion remains over sector versus cluster coordination roles at country level, and organizational knowledge management systems are weak and too often reliant on individuals to systematically support the CLA role.
Human resources performance
UNICEF’s human resources and surge rosters to support CLA roles have significantly improved since 2010, but efforts remain fragmented and there is no overall strategy. Surge capacity systems remain challenged by difficulties in predicting and meeting demand when cluster activation and deactivation protocols are inconsistently applied.

High-quality cluster coordination depends on the technical and coordination strengths of cluster coordinators. The capacity development of cluster coordinators has been limited to basic awareness training, with no investment in mentoring, e-learning or simulations. Based on best-practice
research, the elements of a comprehensive cluster capacity development system are shown in Figure 16. A concept note on capacity enhancement is included in Annex 7.

There is no coordination career path within UNICEF, and cluster coordination is seen as a temporary function. As a result, there is little incentive in the current system for UNICEF career staff to consider serving in cluster coordination roles.

The quality and coherence of UNICEF’s implementation of its overall CLA roles depends on the understanding, skills and approaches of UNICEF country representatives and deputies. No systematic investment has been made in developing such capacity.

Figure 15: Elements of comprehensive capacity development

Scope and boundary issues
UNICEF is broadly aligned with IASC policy and guidance but ambiguities in IASC documents and inconsistency in their application have allowed the cluster system to drift in many directions. UNICEF’s organization-wide policies and guidance to operationalize the CLA role are missing, leaving important decisions about interpretation up to country offices and individual cluster coordinators. As a result, up to 59 per cent of country offices reporting cluster activity appear to be operating with a questionable activation rationale and are probably using the term ‘cluster’ to mean sectoral coordination for more development-oriented work.

The concept of ‘provider of last resort’ has become an increasingly irrelevant accountability concept as understanding varies widely among internal and external stakeholders, while caveats related to access, security and funding provide an escape clause applicable in many of the most critical humanitarian situations where gaps and bottlenecks limit assistance. The variance in partner understanding can complicate the management of partner expectations.

While UNICEF is not the final responsible actor for these overarching cluster system issues, given UNICEF’s responsibilities for five clusters and AORs, it does have the responsibility to influence IASC efforts to resolve them. The evaluation team believes UNICEF has an opportunity to develop clear organizational practices that operationalize IASC policy in a way that would lead to greater consistency and help country offices interpret ambiguous system issues.

At global level, UNICEF has increased its contributions to IASC initiatives to clarify and strengthen cluster approaches. Until UNICEF clarifies its institutional positions on the appropriate use of the cluster system at country level, it will not be able

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67 Capacity development systems in place in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were reviewed along with research from People in Aid.
to ensure consistency and stakeholder expectations through advocacy at HCTs.

The evaluation team does not believe that cluster “scope creep” is simply an issue of terminology; using an international cluster tool for long-term (mostly development) coordination and in situations where it is not needed creates demand for support at global level that is difficult to meet. It also further confuses actors on what the clusters are meant to do, and raises myriad expectations about what UNICEF is committed to provide to partners.

While coordination is necessary before, during and after emergencies – and UNICEF has a responsibility to help develop and sometimes facilitate sectoral development and other humanitarian coordination – it is not bound to do so in the same way as when clusters are activated because of its CLA commitments. Criteria for cluster activation and deactivation, under refinement by the IASC, should lead to less cluster “scope creep”, assuming that CLAs apply practices and criteria consistently.

Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency
Internal and external stakeholders strongly agreed that their investment is justified by the coordination outcomes of UNICEF-led clusters and AORs. UNICEF has increasingly harnessed the resources at its disposal to fulfil its CLA responsibilities. At global level, UNICEF-led clusters have been sustained with relatively modest investment, and UNICEF has leveraged partner contributions to support key capacities and initiatives.

Cost-effectiveness is called into question, however, due to questionable activation relevance in 59 per cent of countries reporting UNICEF-led cluster activity. This shows a lack of central direction and control over costs, and it suggests that significant costs are actually directed towards ongoing sectoral development coordination needs rather than emergency coordination.

Inter-cluster coordination remains weak and ad hoc among UNICEF-led clusters and across clusters led by other organizations. There is still little awareness and understanding of the Transformative Agenda at country level, although elements of these reforms are designed to improve inter-cluster coordination.

UNICEF-led clusters are often connected to line ministries and sometimes to disaster management agencies, but linkages to disaster risk reduction and preparedness actors remain unclear and guidance does not exist. Co-leadership arrangements have improved and offer advantages in managing the partnership aspects of clusters and AORs.
5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In a system as decentralized and with as many diverse stakeholders as the cluster system, inertia and fragmentation can be major challenges.

“An object in motion stays in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted upon by an unbalanced force.”

Newton’s First Law of Motion

There are some positive trends in UNICEF performance as a CLA, and the efforts behind these areas of improving performance should be continued. In the areas where UNICEF is doing less well as a CLA additional efforts are required. Some are fully within UNICEF’s control, while others require UNICEF to serve as the “unbalanced force” to effect change within the IASC and HCTs at country level.

The following recommendations have been developed by the evaluation team based on careful consideration of the evaluation findings and additional stakeholder consultations on potential areas for improvement.

The categories for each recommendation complement the themes covered in the findings and conclusions sections of this report, and follow the same order, as the evaluation team believes they are all of equal importance.
CLARE Recommendations

EXTERNAL COORDINATION PERFORMANCE

Key areas for improvement:
- Ability to ID gaps and solve problems.
- Cluster representation at ICTs.
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities.

Develop ‘cluster-ready’ initiative to increase CO preparedness for cluster activation in high-risk countries.

- Common understanding on mobilization of resources.
- Agreed contingency plan with partners and government.
- HR demand prediction data for surge capacity.

INTERNAL CLA PERFORMANCE

Key areas for improvement:
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities across units.
- Clarity on RO roles.
- Consistency in implementation of CLA roles by country representatives.

Strengthen UNICEF-wide CLA management systems. Clarify role of ROs. Connect country representatives to a global CLA management effort.

- Increased leadership.
- Consistency across clusters.
- Better performance management.
- Improved cross-divisional coordination.

HR PERFORMANCE

Key areas for improvement:
- HR approach and coordination career path.
- Capacity development for cluster work beyond classroom training.

Develop integrated strategy for HR surge capacity and UNICEF coordination staff development.

- Coordinators trained are likely to be deployed.
- Better trained cluster coordination staff.
- Better ability to deploy the right staff.

SCOPE AND BOUNDARIES

Key areas for improvement:
- Organization-wide cluster guidance and application of ASL, policies.

Increase coherence and then fidelity through UNICEF CLA policy and practice.

- Appropriate cluster activation and duration of operation.
- Managed stakeholder expectations through consistency in what UNICEF will and will not do an CLA.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

Key areas for improvement:
- Over-investment at field level in long-term sectoral coordination contexts.

Ensure fit-for-purpose coordination approaches by using clusters only in appropriate emergency coordination scenarios. Develop tools for non-cluster coordination including transition points. Clarify the role of clusters for national capacity building.

- No cluster activation to fill gaps in sectoral coordination and preparedness.
- Reduced competition and duplication with sectoral coordination mechanisms and DRR and preparedness actors.
- Increased cost-effectiveness by using the right coordination tool at the right time.
**Recommendation 1: External coordination performance**

Develop a ‘cluster-ready’ initiative to increase country office preparedness for cluster activation in high-risk countries.

This recommendation is meant to increase understanding of country offices, improve contingency planning with partners in high-risk countries and better enable the GCCU to predict surge capacity demands.

**Recommendation 2: Internal CLA performance**

Strengthen UNICEF-wide management systems to support the CLA role, including strengthening the role of regional offices and better connecting country representatives to a global CLA strategic management structure.

This recommendation is meant to increase coherence and consistency, improve performance management and monitoring and improve cross-divisional coordination support.

**Recommendation 3: Human resources performance**

Develop an integrated strategy for human resources surge capacity and UNICEF coordination staff development.

This recommendation is meant to improve targeted training of coordinators, further increase the ability to deploy the right staff rapidly, and improve the quality of coordination staff.

**Recommendation 4: Scope and boundary issues**

Increase coherence (interpretation and articulation) and then fidelity (understanding and consistent application) through UNICEF CLA policy and practice.

This recommendation is meant to focus GCCU operational support on the most relevant emergency situations and help manage stakeholder expectations.

**Recommendation 5: Cost-effectiveness, value for money and efficiency**

Mitigate the use of clusters in inappropriate scenarios by developing models and tools for non-cluster coordination, including transition points for country offices, and establish clarity on the role of clusters, if any, for national capacity-building to ensure efficient and fit-for-purpose coordination approaches.

This recommendation is meant to help maintain partner satisfaction with UNICEF coordination leadership, improve transition to and from sectoral development and humanitarian coordination mechanisms and help avoid duplication with other disaster preparedness and risk reduction actors.
6 KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

UNICEF has the resources and capacity to be a coherent, relevant and fully effective CLA across its five clusters and AORs if the organization fully embraces and implements the recommendations in chapter 5.

Some of the evaluation findings and recommendations are similar to those found in the following documents:


The reason these key recommendations have only been partly implemented appears to be related to:

- the absence of an overall responsible entity
- limited senior management ownership and follow-through
- recommendations not being translated into clear and accountable plans for execution
- challenges in effecting change in the broader IASC system
- difficulty in balancing decentralized authority with required global consistency
- inertia caused partly by a lack of a sense of urgency

The following six actions can be taken to support successful implementation of the evaluation recommendations:

**Senior leadership across UNICEF should be completely engaged.**

This includes fully briefing the headquarters and regional leadership teams and involving them in the process of developing a management response. As explained in the findings and recommendations, the lack of an integrated leadership approach across levels of the organization risks perpetuating disconnects in accountability, with negative effects on relevance, effectiveness, coherence and, potentially, sustainability.

**Implement recommendations as a package.**

Implementing one or just a few of the recommendations while ignoring others is unlikely to significantly affect UNICEF’s CLA performance. The areas for improvement are interlinked, and the underlying performance factors influence other areas of performance. For example, leadership without coherence results in continued confusion and inconsistent practice. Coherence without leadership has the same incomplete results.

**Partners should be engaged in developing strategies for the future.**

The most active members of each Global Cluster, and the most frequent contributing organizations at country level, should be engaged in developing future strategies based on
the evaluation results. As the evaluation illustrates, however, stakeholder expectations vary widely, and UNICEF has the responsibility to use this as an opportunity to lead in shaping partner perspectives. This begins partly by determining how to articulate what UNICEF will and will not do as a CLA in the future.

- UNICEF should engage the IASC principals and subsidiary bodies in discussions on the evaluation findings and recommendations, as well as their implications. As the overall architects of the cluster system, IASC principals and emergency directors should be briefed and engaged by UNICEF leadership in discussions around the evaluation findings and recommendations. In some cases, it will strengthen UNICEF’s advocacy if it first acts to create coherence across UNICEF-led clusters and AORs. Also, it may help lay the groundwork for such future advocacy by briefing and engaging these groups early and often.

- UNICEF should engage donor organizations to discuss how their influence shapes the patterns and findings of the evaluation. Donor policies and practices have significant bearing on the direction of the cluster system, both at global and individual country levels. UNICEF should organize discussions with key donors to present the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and to discuss different concepts and means of addressing funding approaches that help ensure that these approaches reinforce the IASC principals’ agreement on cluster roles and relevance, while identifying ways to support coordination needs beyond the scope of cluster work.

- UNICEF should engage national governments before and at the beginning of cluster operations to establish and agree clear scope and transition points. Discussions with national governments should ensure clarity on the character and expected lifespan of cluster work and how transition will take place. Although the timing and approach may differ by country context, national governments play an essential role in shaping expectations and influencing potential transition strategies. Discussions with national governments should consistently build appreciation for clusters as a temporary construct, ideally with shared responsibility between the CLA and government, and planned transition to full national government ownership over time.
ANNEXES

The Evaluation Office has been supplied with the following appendices that contain supporting information for the report. These are:

1. Terms of reference
2. Evaluation methodology description
3. Selecting country case studies:
   Technical note
4. List of documentary data sources
5. List of stakeholders consulted
6. CLA performance measurement:
   Concept note
7. Cluster coordination capacity development: Concept note