

# EVALUATION REPORT

February 2021

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## Programme Evaluation: Protecting Children On The Move in the Horn of Africa





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## Programme Evaluation: Protecting Children On The Move in the Horn of Africa

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

February 2021

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The evaluation team would like to sincerely thank the programme manager for the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)-UNICEF Children on the Move Programme, Noela Barasa, and the child protection teams in Ethiopia (Karin Heissler, Tapfumanei Kusemwa, Ruth Regassa), Somalia (Brendan Ross, Lawrence Oduma, Kamal Nidam Adam) and Sudan (Sarah Ahmed, Tahani Elmobasher) and the Office of Research (Iolanda Genovese, Lucy Hovil and Olivia Bueno) for their support in conducting this formative evaluation. Child protection regional advisors for Eastern and Southern Africa region and Middle East and North Africa region were also extremely helpful throughout the process, and their contributions were well appreciated. In addition, sincere thanks to the many child protection officers and UNICEF staff throughout the organization who supported the evaluation process. The evaluation team would also like to thank government stakeholders in Ethiopia, Sudan and Somaliland/Puntland who gave detailed interview responses, as well as implementing partners across the programme locations. Thanks also to the staff of sister United Nations agencies who kindly offered their expertise. Country office programme staff were instrumental in guiding field visits in Ethiopia and Somaliland; sincere thanks to them also.

Special thanks to the members of the evaluation reference group for their guidance and substantive inputs at key moments in the evaluation: Elena Ahmed, Teona Aslanishvili, Noela Barasa, Saskia Blume, Kirsten Di Martino, Eri Dwivedi, Linda Jones, Verena Knaus, Scott McInnes, Urs Nagel, Alison Pollard, Ramya Subrahmanian. And also to the evaluation steering group for their guidance on programmatic issues, learning needs and practical issues; Brendan Ross, Dina Ali, Lawrence Oduma, Sarah Ahmad, Tahani Elmobasher, Tapfumanei Kusemwa.

The evaluators would also like to sincerely thank Beth Plowman, Senior Evaluation Specialist with the UNICEF Evaluation Office, for her oversight and guidance throughout the evaluation, along with the evaluation manager, Tina Tordjman-Nebe, who was with us throughout the inception phase. Thanks also to Hadas Yanay who stepped into Tina's shoes and provided the team with excellent and continuous support, and to Eduard Bonet Porqueras, who took over and worked hard with us on the finalization of the report.

Special appreciation is due to all collaborators and others who took time off to meet the team online or face-to-face and answer a range of questions. Finally, the evaluation team would like to thank FCDO for their insights and comments throughout the evaluation.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AoR</b>	Area of Responsibility
<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected Populations
<b>BMM</b>	Better Migration Management
<b>BOLSA</b>	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>BOWCA</b>	Bureau of Women and Children Affairs
<b>BSRP</b>	Building Self-Reliance Programme (for refugees and vulnerable host communities by improved sustainable basic social service delivery), FCDO Ethiopia
<b>CMTF</b>	Case Management Taskforce
<b>CO</b>	Country Office (UNICEF)
<b>COTM</b>	Children on the Move
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>CP</b>	Child Protection
<b>CPD</b>	Country Programme Document
<b>CPIMS+</b>	Child Protection Information Management System
<b>CPSS</b>	Child Protection Systems Strengthening
<b>DOT</b>	Digital Opportunity Trust
<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>ESAR(O)</b>	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional (Office)
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (United Kingdom)
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
<b>FTR</b>	Family Tracing and Reunification
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters (UNICEF)
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISP</b>	Information-Sharing Protocol
<b>ISS</b>	International Social Service
<b>MENA(RO)</b>	Middle East and North Africa (Regional Office)
<b>MESAF</b>	Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family, Somaliland



◀ continued

<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>MRC</b>	Migration Response Centre
<b>NCCW</b>	National Council on Child Welfare, Sudan
<b>NCMF</b>	National Case Management Framework
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD/DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
<b>OoR</b>	Office of Research
<b>PCA</b>	Programme Cooperation Agreement
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>PSNP</b>	Productive Safety Net Programme (social protection), Ethiopia
<b>RO</b>	Regional Office (UNICEF)
<b>SCCW</b>	State Council on Child Welfare, Sudan
<b>SEA</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Plan
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UASC</b>	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The number of people on the move is growing rapidly. As of September 2019, the number of international migrants had reached 272 million, outpacing the growth rate of the world's population. The most recent global estimate for the total number of child migrants in 2020 is approximately 31 million, with 17 million children forcibly displaced inside their own countries, 13 million child refugees, and 936,000 asylum-seeking children. The Horn of Africa region in particular continues to exhibit patterns of high mobility, including among children, both internally within countries and across national boundaries.



This report presents findings from a formative evaluation of a UNICEF programme funded by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) that aimed to better understand and respond to the specific vulnerabilities of children on the move (COTM) in the Horn of Africa. Implemented between 2017 and 2020, the programme was built around five outputs: (1) strengthened case management systems to provide improved services to COTM and children at risk of violence and exploitation; (2) capacity-building of the social service workforce to respond to the needs of at-risk children; (3) improved access to integrated social and child protection services and information on available safe migration options and the risks of irregular migration, (4) quantitative and qualitative data available to enhance knowledge and inform programming on COTM and (5) improved access to legal protection for children.

The purpose of the evaluation was to contribute to learning and knowledge exchange on what works for strengthening child protection systems for COTM. The evaluation was designed to inform strategy development, design and implementation of future UNICEF initiatives in the realm of protecting COTM from violence, exploitation and abuse, and the findings and recommendations generated by the evaluation will strengthen global evidence about ‘what works’ (and what doesn’t), how and why, and in different contexts, for children with different characteristics. The evaluation also contributes to UNICEF accountability for performance and results, focusing on activities and outputs which began in Somaliland and Puntland in October 2017 and were extended to Sudan and Ethiopia in September 2018.

## The objectives of the evaluation were the following:

- Examine the **relevance**, appropriateness and adaptability of approaches / interventions in Somaliland /Puntland, Sudan and Ethiopia to protect COTM from violence, exploitation and abuse;
- Assess the performance of the programmes in Somaliland and Puntland, Sudan and Ethiopia, using the evaluation criteria of **effectiveness** and **sustainability**, in strengthening national capacity and mechanisms to boost the protection of COTM through a child protection systems approach;
- Assess how well UNICEF has adapted to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis through the programme;
- Assess the **coherence** of UNICEF efforts and the extent to which it has operated in synergy with the work of local, national and international actors;
- Provide forward-looking lessons and recommendations regarding UNICEF leadership and advocacy, strategies and methodologies, and partnerships for strengthening national capacity and mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against COTM.

In addition, the evaluation assessed the **relevance** and **coherence** of the research component of the programme. The **geographic scope** was Ethiopia, Sudan, Somaliland and Puntland. The **temporal scope** is from October 2017 (Phase I)<sup>1</sup> to December 2020 (end of Phase II).<sup>2</sup>

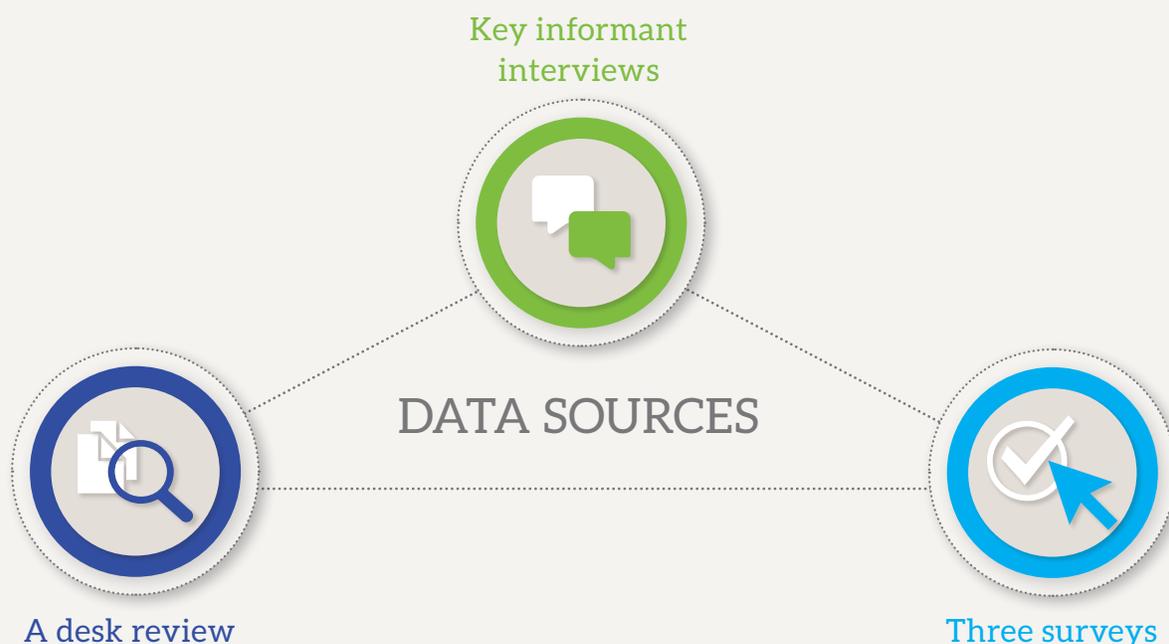
<sup>1</sup> From October 2017 to September 2018 in Somaliland and Puntland.

<sup>2</sup> From September 2018 to December 2020 in Somaliland, Puntland, Sudan and Ethiopia.

## Methodology

The evaluation design was non-experimental and drew from a 'theory-based' approach, with a focus on the thematic areas of cross-border management and child protection systems strengthening (CPSS). The evaluation used complementary forms of data collection to improve reliability and add richness and depth to findings including:

- 1. A desk review** of background documentation including programme documents, reports, monitoring data, strategic documents, research report, etc.
- 2. Key informant interviews** (semi-structured) with a range of stakeholders at all levels as identified in the stakeholder analysis, including UNICEF staff, partners (government, non-governmental and civil society organizations), district and local leaders, donors and other organizations working on child protection and/or migration.
- 3. Three surveys:** i) UNICEF staff working on child protection in each country; (ii) partners; and (iii) social workers.



## Findings

The evaluation generated **23 FINDINGS** which were further summarized into **11 CONSOLIDATED FINDINGS**.

**Significance and relevance** – The programme has generally contributed positively to child protection programming in the region, establishing/strengthening case management, deploying the social service workforce, providing services to children, and addressing evidence gaps, aligning broadly with what ministries with responsibility for children are striving to do.

**Vision** – The programme supports UNICEF in contextualizing the agenda for COTM and sets out an ambitious vision for child protection systems for both national and non-national children, which is many years away but worth striving for.

The intention to link humanitarian responses to ongoing work to strengthen child protection systems for all children, irrespective of their nationality, is extremely valid due to the protection gaps COTM face in their daily lives.

**Terminology** – Confusion over the broad term “Children on the move” was found among programme partners – some of whom were unclear what COTM actually includes; e.g. street children, refugees, IDP, stateless, specific nationalities, migrants who regularly cross borders, children who have not yet moved but are vulnerable to migration.

**Adaptability to COVID-19** – In reprogramming resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme targeted vulnerable COTM and returnees. The programme also deployed trained social workers to demonstrate the importance of

a social service workforce. UNICEF staff reported that this helped build the case for the relevance of social service workers to host governments.

**Theory of Change** – The underlying assumption in the theory of change that a strengthened capacity of social workers to identify and manage cases of vulnerable COTM leads to a better incorporation of their needs and better respect of their rights is not inevitable. This in fact relies on the availability of services for COTM, monitoring and coordination systems that are in place, and good linkages with other agencies for follow up. Moreover, the evaluation found that the providers of those services in government, social workers and partners, require more understanding of child rights.

**Partnerships and collaboration** – The programme underlined the need for collaboration to address and fulfil the rights and needs of COTM. While this programme intentionally focused on government agencies, partnerships with other entities such as IOM and UNHCR, NGOs and community networks were also important, although they took place to a lesser extent (except in Somalia). Mixed migration taskforces / UN migration networks are helping with information-sharing on COTM.

**Engagement of children / Accountability to affected populations (AAP)** – Efforts to set up feedback mechanisms for children and a complaint procedure for violation of their rights was found in the three countries, however they were not fully functioning. The evaluation did

not find innovative methods to support the right of COTM to express their views. It found that there is room for improvement on AAP. A UNICEF organization-wide proactive and consistent approach to AAP is not yet operationalized, although guidance is now available.

**Research** – Research on COTM provided important evidence, which highlighted that when designing interventions to protect children, there is the need for a protective environment at borders. The research results underlined the need for careful consideration of who COTM trust when designing interventions to protect children, which has implications for programme design of similar initiatives. Who children trust and their exposure to risks may vary by gender, age and other aspects. Although the research was conducted in a participatory way, the evaluation found that the research results were late for programming and not disseminated in different formats to different audiences so all could reflect on and use findings during the programme timeframe.

**Prevention and response measures** – The programme demonstrated the need for connection and balance between working at child protection systems levels and responding to the individual needs of vulnerable COTM; both must be achieved together. The evaluation found the need for a stronger emphasis on assessment of vulnerabilities and best interest determination measures, and the need for more robust follow-up mechanisms to prevent COTM being exposed to further protection problems. A strong gender lens in the programme was not noted.

**National ownership** – Although time consuming, it is important to involve all relevant line ministries and other entities in planning and implementing interventions in their own workplans, as it helps to ensure ownership by national actors. It was found that continuous advocacy and resources are needed to secure government commitment to include COTM, as governments have many priorities. Significant capacity gaps to implement measures for child protection and COTM remain within governments.

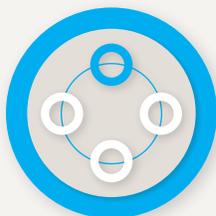
**Cross-border legal aspects** – The different legal regimes that are in place for different categories of COTM do not allow all children to receive the protection they are entitled to, nor allow cross-border work to fully materialize. It was found that case management and child protection, including across borders, requires a good understanding by all stakeholders, with common procedures and information-sharing, building on improved national child protection systems, and good relationships with governments.

The evaluation found that advocacy is key in moving forward with cross-border case management, and that UNICEF has the ability and mandate to push the agenda forward. There were some ongoing and recent initiatives to build on and learn from, such as the IOM and UNICEF partnerships. The evaluation noted better foundations for cross-border coordination work in some countries (e.g. Sudan) than others.

Primero/CPIMS+ was found to be supporting coordination and coherence with other protection actors and achieving interoperable information systems between agencies as well as with authorities. It should be a very valuable tool going forward.

## Conclusions

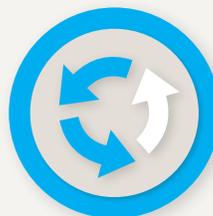
### 1 Relevance



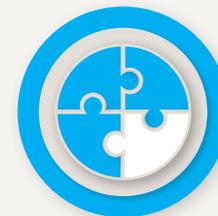
### 2 Effectiveness



### 3 Sustainability



### 4 Coherence



**Relevance:** With the intent of the COTM design to strengthen child protection systems for all children, irrespective of their nationality, the COTM programme's objective was suited to the priorities of rights holders and valid in view of protection gaps identified in international conventions. It was, however, unable to fill protection gaps for all children in the four locations, in part due to confusion over the broad term 'COTM' and the fact that government entities and international actors have limited mandates that apply only to some categories of COTM. Reaching across these divides to implement the programme was therefore challenging. The project helped raise the profile of formal child protection systems with governments and underscore their importance, including the key role of social workers. Essentially, there was a high level of partnership and alignment with government child protection systems, anchored in nationally-led coordination mechanisms. More discussions are required with governments around who will fund social workers going forward.

The programme underlined the need to consider who COTM actually trust when designing interventions. The underlying assumption in the

theory of change that a strengthened capacity of social workers to identify and manage cases of vulnerable COTM will lead to a better incorporation of their needs and better respect of their rights is not inevitable. A functioning CP system also relies on good access to services for children, coordination and linkages with others, careful follow-up and much more training on, and understanding of, child rights.

The onset of COVID-19 delayed or postponed some activities, although an early response reallocated resources quickly. The programme was able to use the pandemic to emphasize to governments that many COTM are vulnerable and require assistance.



**Effectiveness:** The programme has generally contributed positively to child protection programming in the region (establishing or strengthening case management, supporting the appointment and deployment of social service workers, providing services to children and addressing the evidence gap). More advocacy is required to secure government commitment to COTM and address national capacity gaps. Different legal regimes in place for different

categories of COTM coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in cross-border work not fully materializing. Reporting was mainly toward outputs. An effective system that documents and provides feedback for sharing information broadly with others on what works for COTM in different contexts was lacking. Primero/CPIMS+ holds much potential to improve monitoring although it is too early to predict its impact.



**Sustainability:** The evaluation found good conditions for sustainability, if governments allocate resources to sustain ongoing initiatives such as the rolling out of case management assessment tools and protocols, and if social workers trained under the programme are hired to support interventions via the child protection frameworks promoted. Unfortunately, and not unique to the region, low government salaries mean that trained social workers may look for work elsewhere. Evidently, some outputs from the programme will remain, whereas others may require more push and funding. Protection efforts for COTM still require a systematic focus. Infrastructure for child protection referrals is lacking in the region. More emphasis on the role of communities in preventing and responding to child protection risks, as well as more support for these structures is required to sustain gains made.



**Coherence:** More collaboration with community-based protection structures would be desirable, provided community networks are trained on child protection and have resources to meet the basic needs of the children they are asked to look after. A balance must be struck between addressing basic protection needs of children at individual level and child protection systems-strengthening activities. Externally, partnerships with the International Organization on Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were important across all the locations, as the two agencies have complementary programmes focusing on refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and migrants. Global-level coordination on Primero/CPIMS+ is progressing well, defining a minimum common data set, managed by information-sharing protocols, achieving interoperable information systems between agencies as well as authorities. Internal coordination was better in some locations than others.

Despite progress in this programme, it is important not to lose sight of immediate needs for urgent protection of children that currently experience violence, harsh conditions and abuse. Advocacy and policies to ensure funding goes toward structured interventions for this vulnerable group is a long-term endeavour. Despite international pledges, government interest is more likely to be focused on national children rather than those outside their jurisdiction. Building on the UNICEF six-point agenda for COTM, UNICEF and other protection actors must continue to ensure that all children are protected, based on the premise that a child is a child, independent of his or her migratory status.

## Recommendations

		Timeframe	Who should lead
	<b>1</b> UNICEF should continue to advocate for all children to be protected while providing clarity on the umbrella term 'COTM' during implementation. This is particularly important when strengthening child protection systems that are fragmented.	Immediate	UNICEF HQ CP section UNICEF CP teams in COs with communications units
	<b>2</b> UNICEF should set more realistic targets for system-strengthening programmes, recognizing that change is iterative, and it takes a long time to build or change systems.	To be ready to guide the next programme on COTM	UNICEF CP teams in COs
	<b>3</b> UNICEF should clarify what is required to ensure a balance between community-based support for COTM versus a state's responsibility toward realizing rights and providing services.	To be ready to guide the next programme on COTM	UNICEF HQ CP section
	<b>4</b> UNICEF should better operationalize its duty to involve and consult children on processes that affect their lives and should seek meaningful engagement with children while respecting the "do no harm" principle.	Immediate	UNICEF HQ CP section, CO CP staff and focal points for PSEA
	<b>5</b> UNICEF should disseminate research and evidence results as early and widely as possible to build on momentum generated from such research and interest from local partners.	Immediate	UNICEF HQ and COs in dialogue with donors for similar programmes, OoR-Innocenti
	<b>6</b> UNICEF should continue to strengthen the disaggregation of data related to COTM in line with international recommendations and advocate for all other actors to do the same, ensuring indicators are not limited to quantitative data alone.	Continuous	UNICEF HQ and M&E staff in COs



1



**UNICEF should continue to advocate for all children to be protected while providing clarity on the umbrella term 'COTM' during implementation. This is particularly important when strengthening child protection systems that are fragmented.**

Although the umbrella term 'COTM' can create confusion in implementation, stronger and consistent simple messaging on the duty to protect all children irrespective of their status should be disseminated in various for a and media channels and translated into styles and languages that governments and service providers understand.

2



**UNICEF should set more realistic targets for system-strengthening programmes, recognizing that change is iterative, and it takes a long time to build or change systems.**

This applies to outputs/outcomes that similar programmes may wish to set up on cross-border collaboration. Emphasize that cross-border child protection relies on strong national child protection systems and can only work when national child protection systems coordinate and collaborate with other jurisdictions.

Design benchmarks for measuring progress that are more appropriate to system-strengthening activities, rather than focusing on classical service-provision activities. Apply the forthcoming UNICEF child protection systems strengthening framework benchmarks.

3



**UNICEF should clarify what is required to ensure a balance between community-based support for COTM versus a state's responsibility toward realizing rights and providing services.**

This would require clarity on the type of engagement and support UNICEF field offices should provide to community-based protection networks (such as strengthening capacity, material support, advocacy for their integration into national protection systems) including in fragile states.

Mapping the potential role other agencies can play in supporting government systems for COTM is necessary. Forge partnerships that advance the UNICEF child rights mandate in coherence with others to create better synergies. Improve sharing of information and engagement with other relevant partners on their programmes and activities related to COTM. Internally, continue to strengthen a multi-sectoral focus for COTM with education, social protection, skills programmes.

4



**UNICEF should better operationalize its duty to involve and consult children on processes that affect their lives and should seek meaningful engagement with children while respecting the “do no harm” principle.**

Functional and innovative systems and methods must be put in place to support and realize the right of COTM to express their views. Include concrete and more targeted focus on building the capacity of national systems to be accountable to children by working on functioning, confidential reporting, complaint and response mechanisms. Discussions on how safeguarding and complaint mechanisms can be better emphasized and mainstreamed in systems-strengthening efforts early on is recommended, moving beyond lip-service to systematic efforts to reach out and down to all relevant actors.

5



**UNICEF should disseminate research and evidence results as early and widely as possible to build on momentum generated from such research and interest from local partners.**

There is also a need to ensure research reaches local-level implementers on the ground, which may mean translating results, among other efforts. A plan to disseminate and implement the results at national level is thus required.

6



**UNICEF should continue to strengthen the disaggregation of data related to COTM in line with international recommendations and advocate for all other actors to do the same, ensuring indicators are not limited to quantitative data alone.**

Use guidelines designed to support this work, for example from the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics, and those designed for building the capacity of social service workers by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance. Ensure gender indicators are continuously monitored with a focus on gender in substantive activities.

# OUTLINE

This report presents findings from a formative evaluation of a UNICEF programme that aimed to better understand and respond to the specific vulnerabilities of children on the move (COTM)<sup>3</sup> in the Horn of Africa region.

**1****2****3****4****5****6****7**

**Section 1** of this report provides an introduction and the context for the programme, with **Section 2** outlining the evaluation purpose and scope. **Section 3** presents the methodology used in the evaluation. The bulk of the report is contained in **Section 4**, which concentrates on 23 findings, presented under four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and coherence. These findings are consolidated in Table 6 at the end of the section. Two themes are developed further in this report. First, learnings on system-strengthening efforts across the programme locations (Section 4.5) and second, learnings that arose from the programme focus on cross-border case management (Section 4.6). **Section 5** contains conclusions, with lessons learned in **Section 6**. **Section 7** outlines recommendations arising from the evaluation. A series of annexes accompanying the report provide additional details and are referred to in the substantive sections.

<sup>3</sup> The umbrella term 'children on the move' (COTM) refers to girls and boys moving for different reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, in a documented or undocumented manner, within or between countries, with or without their parents or other primary caregivers. Moving might open up opportunities but also place them at risk (or at an increasing risk) of economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect or violence. It includes children whose movement involves smuggling or trafficking networks. Source: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme Framework for COTM', UNICEF, New York, November 2017, p.7.

# 1

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT



## 1.1 Background on the evaluation

The COTM programme is part of a larger collaboration between the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and UNICEF, known as the Ending Violence, Abuse and Exploitation of Children (EVAEC) programme. Through this collaboration, FCDO provided £15 million over three years to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children. One third of the funds were earmarked for advocacy and alliance-building through the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, while the remaining two thirds were reserved for hands-on initiatives in support of COTM in Somalia (Somaliland<sup>4</sup> and Puntland<sup>5</sup>), Sudan and Ethiopia. It is this latter component that is the subject of the present evaluation.

The evaluation aims to contribute to learning and knowledge exchange on what works for strengthening child protection systems that are inclusive of COTM. It also analyses how activities have adapted to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

## 1.2 Context of the COTM programme

The number of people on the move is growing rapidly. As of September 2019, the number of international migrants had reached 272 million, outpacing the growth rate of the world's population.<sup>6</sup> The most recent global estimate for the total number of child migrants in 2020 is approximately 31 million, with 17 million children forcibly displaced inside their own countries, 13 million child refugees, and 936,000 asylum-seeking children.<sup>7</sup> The Horn of Africa region in particular continues to exhibit patterns of high mobility, including among children, both internally within countries and across national boundaries. Migration is triggered by a complex mix of factors including protracted crises, emerging internal conflicts, socio-economic drivers, emerging health crises and more traditional seasonal and livelihood factors.<sup>8</sup>

The COTM programme operated at a time of increased global attention to international migration in all its dimensions. In 2018, the international community committed to the Global Compact for Migration<sup>9</sup> and the Global Compact for Refugees.<sup>10</sup> Previously, in 2016, world leaders

<sup>4</sup> Somaliland has been a self-governing region of Somalia for more than two decades, but its claim of independence is not recognized by Mogadishu or any foreign government.

<sup>5</sup> Puntland is a semi-autonomous state within Somalia, has its own president, but unlike Somaliland which has declared sovereignty, Puntland has always vowed to remain an integral part of Somalia.

<sup>6</sup> In 2019, the figures reached an estimated 272 million persons who migrated by choice, 51 million more than in 2010, and 70 million forcibly displaced people. The latter number includes almost 26 million refugees, 3.5 million asylum seekers, and over 41 million internally displaced persons. In practice, migration out of choice and necessity are often hard to distinguish. See for example United Nations, 'Migration', <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/migration/index.html>, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Figures at a Glance', 18 June 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

<sup>7</sup> International Organization for Migration, 'World Migration Report 2020', IOM, Geneva, 2019, [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> International Organization for Migration, "A Region on the Move", IOM, Nairobi, May 2019.

<sup>9</sup> The Global Compact for Migration (2018) is the first, intergovernmental agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The global compact comprises 23 objectives for better managing migration at local, national, regional and global levels.

<sup>10</sup> The Global Compact on Refugees (2018) is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. Its four key objectives are to ease the pressures on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

adopted the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, acknowledging children's vulnerabilities and specific needs and committing to fully protect their rights, regardless of status. Within the overall framework of its Strategic Plan (SP), 2018-2021 and anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF has joined the voices of many who have called for the inclusion of policies that address the care and protection of migrant, displaced and refugee children. The results framework of the Strategic Plan contains a specific indicator in relation to COTM, which looks at the aggregate number of COTM in humanitarian and non-humanitarian settings that UNICEF directly provides with protective services. This number went from 900,000 in 2017 to 1.75 million in 2019.<sup>11</sup>

UNICEF plays an active role in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the contribution of migration to sustainable development. Realizing the Agenda's core principle to "leave no one behind", including migrants, refugees and other displaced populations, requires programming based on robust evidence. This in turn relies on the ability to disaggregate data by migratory status, an area that requires significant strengthening. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that people on the move are too often left behind, falling through the cracks of different authorities' responsibilities or explicitly excluded by governments in their national and sectoral plans.

### Box 1: Global Programme Framework for Children on the Move

The **UNICEF Global Programme Framework for Children on the Move**, developed in 2019, outlines the organization's response to migrant, refugee and displacement issues, covering children at their origin, during transit (internationally or nationally) and at their destination. The organization's policy 'asks' provide overall direction for engagement on issues of migration and may be adapted according to the context. **These policy challenges or 'asks'** are:

1. Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from **exploitation and violence**
2. **End the detention** of children seeking refugee status or migrating
3. **Keep families together** as the best way to protect children and give children legal status
4. All refugee and migrant children **keep learning and have access to health** and other **quality services**
5. Press for action on the **underlying causes of large-scale movements** of refugees and migrants
6. Promote measures to combat **xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization** in countries and areas of transit and destination.

Source: A set of global programming principles and procedures for COTM are available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/83571/file/Global-Programme-Framework-on-Children-on-the-Move.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> The UNICEF child protection section noted that there was possible under-reporting due to an unclear understanding of who to count as COTM.

### 1.3 Overview of the programme

The COTM programme document highlights a number of challenges relevant to programming for COTM. These include the absence of comprehensive integrated child protection responses and services in the region and a weak, underdeveloped and resource-constrained social service workforce in all the programme countries. Another issue is the lack of frameworks or protocols to facilitate multi-sectoral and cross border cooperation. The programme document notes that the lack of regular migration pathways results in migrant children taking clandestine routes to avoid detection, exposing them to a myriad of risks including violence, exploitation and abuse. Messaging informing migrant children and their families of their availability may not be reaching communities in an appropriate and timely manner to contribute to informed decision-making.

A theory of change (ToC) (see Annex II) outlining how the programme will address these and other challenges was developed at the start of the Phase II of the programme, learning from the experience of Phase I in Somaliland. The ToC provides a logical chain outlining the contributions of the COTM programme toward Goal Area 3 of the UNICEF SP (*Every child is protected from violence and exploitation*). It visualizes some of the drivers and causes of children migrating, and outlines strategies that can be contextualized for each jurisdiction to contribute toward positive change for children. These strategies are expected to contribute to an increased number of COTM accessing prevention and protection services.



**Table 1: Outputs of the COTM Programme**

Outputs	Broad action and strategies proposed to reach this output
<p><b>Output 1:</b> Case management systems are strengthened to provide improved services to COTM and children at risk of violence and exploitation.</p>	<p>The creation/adaptation of case management protocols and an inter-operable information management system that supports and tracks case management, incident monitoring, and programme monitoring as well as provision of protective services through strengthened case management systems reinforced by a child protection information management system (Primer).</p>
<p><b>Output 2:</b> The social service workforce has improved capacity to respond to the needs of at-risk children at national and sub-national levels.</p>	<p>Specific activities included setting up frameworks regarding the social service workforce to help countries plan, develop and support this workforce; establishing university-based social work curricula, which include degree, diploma and certificate courses; and training social workers on effective case management appropriate to COTM in source, transit and destination sites. Also envisaged was the facilitation of social service workforce working group meetings with relevant government and non-governmental actors and an eventual implementation workshop convened alongside other relevant initiatives by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the European Union Better Migration Management or other regional actors.</p>
<p><b>Output 3:</b> Vulnerable children and communities have improved access to integrated social and child protection services and information on available safe migration options and the risks of irregular migration.</p>	<p>The development and dissemination of education and communication materials highlighting alternatives to unsafe and irregular migration, risks of movement, safe pathways, available services along migration corridors was proposed. Dissemination included through social media and identified social workers and established protection desks. Research findings from Output 4 should inform the advocacy strategy. Integrated life skills and innovation training as well as cash assistance was also planned. Suggested activities included setting up child protection desks and community-based mechanisms providing information on child protection and addressing harmful norms. Providing youth at risk with life skills and vocational training through the UNICEF UPSHIFT programme<sup>12</sup> was also proposed.</p>
<p><b>Output 4:</b> Quantitative and qualitative data are available to enhance knowledge and inform programming on COTM.</p>	<p>Learning and information on inter-agency and cross-border coordination mechanisms; coping strategies for child and youth migrants; enablers and facilitators of migration; and child protection systems mapping was planned. The research component also comprised a study, conducted by the UNICEF Office of Research (OoR)-Innocenti, to improve understanding of what drives children and young people to migrate; their vulnerability to harm during journeys; and experiences of interacting with (or avoiding) authorities/systems and support established to protect them including through information child protection mechanisms.</p>
<p><b>Output 5:</b> All children and particularly those on the move have improved access to legal protection.</p>	<p>UNICEF planned to support national authorities to establish/strengthen alternatives to detention. This was to include, for example, technical support to review legislation to include safeguards for children, promoting birth registration systems and awareness, and working with the police for release of children from detention and reunification with their families.</p>

<sup>12</sup> The UPSHIFT programme blends leading approaches to youth and adolescent development with social innovation and social entrepreneurship.

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The programme is also well positioned to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. While the programme offered protective services to address the immediate needs of children (such as case management and referrals, alternatives to child immigration detention, mental health and psychosocial support and child-friendly legal aid), UNICEF also focused on longer-term endeavours such as strengthening child protection systems (for example through capacity development of the social service workforce and support for policy/frameworks for child protection). In this way, this programme aimed to help to break down the artificial separation of humanitarian work and development work.

### Management arrangements

UNICEF headquarters (HQ) in New York was the primary point of contact for technical assistance and oversight to country offices (COs) and the focal point for FCDO. A staff member based in the child protection section of Programme Division coordinated the programme and provided oversight on the timeliness of reviews and approval processes. Regional offices (ROs) supported programme implementation, providing technical advice and coordination, including inter-agency coordination, at both regional and country levels and through different sectors.<sup>13</sup> The Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) ensured management and quality assurance of interventions across Somalia and Ethiopia as well as coordination of cross-border activities. The Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO) had a similar role to play covering Sudan. At the country level, the programme was managed under the CO chief of child protection. A range of UNICEF staff provided support for different

aspects, with some specifically hired under FCDO funding. All strategic decisions related to the implementation of the programme, including any revisions to the work plans and submissions of periodic works plans and reports, were undertaken by COs in close coordination with HQ. A comparison of activities and delivery leading to each expected output is summarized in Annex X. The partnerships for programme delivery are outlined in Annex IV.



<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, Global Programme Framework for COTM.

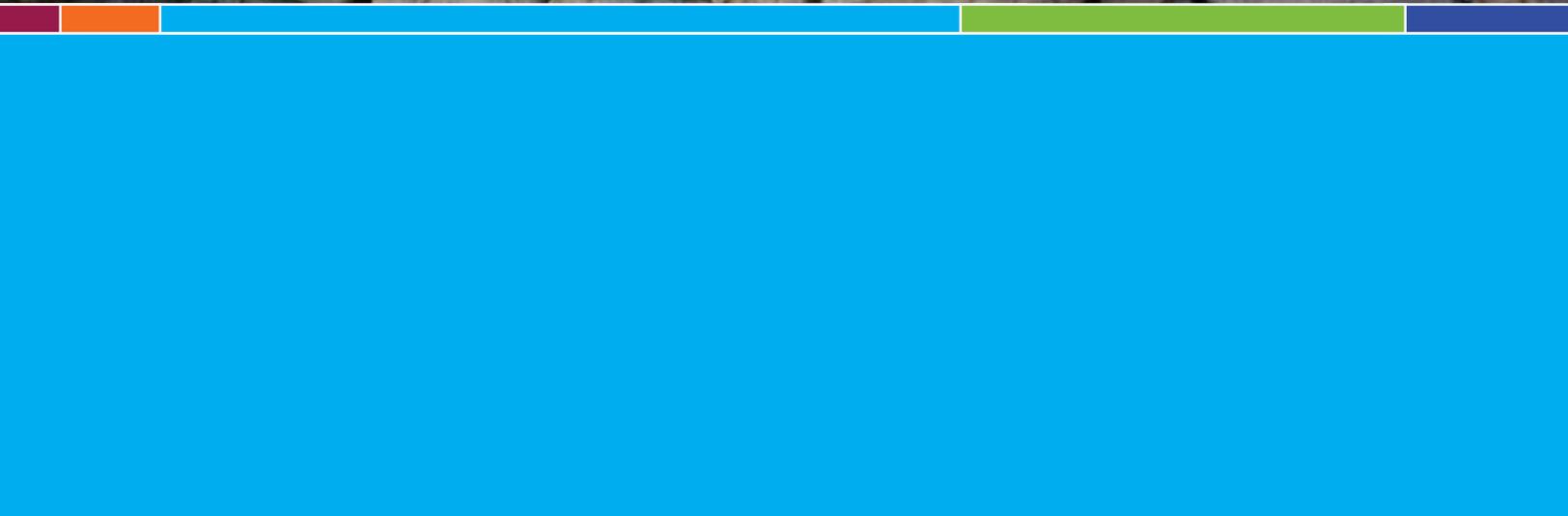
## ● COVID-19 REPROGRAMMING

From early 2020, the programme faced the challenge of operating in a difficult and unprecedented environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Crossing borders has become more challenging for persons on the move, including children, and people, including those on the move, are being exposed to the virus with limited tools to protect themselves. COTM, especially those in safe houses and detention centres, are now finding themselves in crowded and often unhygienic conditions, which further exposes them to the risk of contracting the virus. This has been compounded by travel restrictions constraining programme activities such as case management and referrals. The crisis has also exacerbated the already fragile situation of girls, who face higher risks of exposure to gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, and often have difficulty accessing protection and response services.

The pandemic has underscored the need for child protection systems to be able to quickly adjust to realities on the ground, and for the social service workforce to be flexible in order to respond. UNICEF country offices undertook an early review of how COVID-19 was affecting activities, followed by a more in-depth review, in collaboration with UNICEF HQ and FCDO, to identify the adjustments required to ensure a continuum of care for COTM during the pandemic. The programme in all four locations responded remarkably quickly. Among measures taken, UNICEF and partners placed an emphasis on the development of guidelines for the relevant governments; reviewed and revised as needed case management forms and related training materials, and provided family tracing, reunification and reintegration assistance. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), alternatives to detention for children deprived of their liberty, and distribution of protective equipment to frontline workers was also prioritized.<sup>14</sup> Section 4.2. outlines in more detail how the programme responded to COVID-19.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'COTM Biannual Report', UNICEF, New York, July 2020.

# 2 EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE



## 2.1 Purpose and objectives of the COTM evaluation

As noted above, the purpose of the evaluation was to contribute to learning and knowledge exchange on what works for strengthening child protection systems for COTM. The evaluation was designed to inform strategy development, design and implementation of future UNICEF initiatives in the realm of protecting COTM from violence, exploitation and abuse, and the findings and recommendations generated by the evaluation will strengthen global evidence about ‘what works’ (and what doesn’t), how and why, and in different contexts, for children with different characteristics. The evaluation also contributes to UNICEF accountability for performance and results, focusing on activities and outputs which began in Somaliland and Puntland in October 2017 and were extended to Sudan and Ethiopia in September 2018.

The objectives of the evaluation were the following:

- Examine the **relevance**, appropriateness and adaptability of approaches / interventions in Somaliland /Puntland, Sudan and Ethiopia to protect COTM from violence, exploitation and abuse;
- Assess the performance of the programmes in Somaliland and Puntland, Sudan and Ethiopia, using the evaluation criteria of **effectiveness** and **sustainability**, in strengthening national capacity and mechanisms to boost the protection of COTM through a child protection systems approach;

- Assess how well UNICEF has adapted to the COVID-19 crisis through the programme;
- Assess the **coherence** of UNICEF efforts and the extent to which it has operated in synergy with the work of local, national and international actors;
- Provide forward-looking lessons and recommendations regarding UNICEF leadership and advocacy, strategies and methodologies, and partnerships for strengthening national capacity and mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against COTM.

In addition, the evaluation assessed the **relevance** and **coherence** of the research component of the programme. The **geographic scope** is Ethiopia, Sudan, Somaliland and Puntland. The **temporal scope** is from October 2017 (Phase I)<sup>15</sup> to the end of Phase II.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 Evaluation questions

Ten evaluation questions (EQs) were designed by the Evaluation Office in collaboration with a reference group. The questions were organized under four of the criteria defined by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team examined the scope of these questions in relation to the team’s ability to conduct field work, and with the need to assess how well the programme was adapting to the COVID-19 crisis. Accordingly, modifications were made to some of the EQs during the inception phase.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> From October 2017 to September 2018 in Somaliland and Puntland.

<sup>16</sup> From September 2018 to December 2020 in Somaliland, Puntland, Sudan and Ethiopia.

<sup>17</sup> Original EQs are outlined in the inception report.

**Table 2: Amended evaluation questions**

The extent to which the programme is suited to the priorities and policies of rights-holders and duty-bearers and ability to adapt as needed	
<b>RELEVANCE</b>	<p>To what extent was a rationale for the programme design provided and valid? (i.e. aligning with the needs of rights-holders, country priorities, key partner priorities, donor policies, UNICEF programmatic niche and positioning in the humanitarian-development nexus?)</p>
	<p><b>EQ 1</b> To what extent was adaptability to context, risk and changing circumstances built into the design?</p>
	<p>How well was the programme able to adapt to COVID-19 following the activation of a UNICEF Level 3 corporate emergency for the global COVID-19 pandemic on 16 April 2020? (analysis of adaptation beginning in July 2020)</p>
	<p><b>EQ 2</b> How did intervention design expand on existing programmes and partnerships?</p>
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<p>To what extent were interventions designed for systems strengthening (including handover plans)?</p>
	<p><b>EQ 3</b> During implementation, what efforts were taken to ensure that the programme remained relevant to/ adapted as needed to the needs of rights-holders and to systems-strengthening objectives?</p>
	<p>How have those involved in programme implementation ensured accountability to affected populations?</p>
	<p><b>EQ 4</b> To what extent is the research component pertinent, likely to add value as a public good and contribute to future learning?</p>
Measure of the extent to which the programme attains its objectives at the outcome level (outcome level jointly achieved; outputs more directly controlled by UNICEF)	
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<p><b>EQ 5</b> To what extent, how and why did the programme components achieve expected progress within the expected timeframe, bearing in mind the activation of a UNICEF Level 3 corporate emergency from 16 April 2020?</p>
	<p>What does this tell us about what works, how and why for children with different characteristics and in different settings?</p>
	<p><b>EQ 6</b> How effective is the monitoring system? Is it built with/inter-operable with government systems or is it standalone?</p>
	<p>How does the monitoring system demonstrate results for the most vulnerable children (girls and children living with disabilities) and on human rights, gender and equity dimensions more generally?</p>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<p>How are the monitoring data actually being used (to adapt, and to improve programme performance or effectiveness)?</p>
	<p><b>EQ 7</b> To what extent did the programme implementers perceive that intervention processes, including monitoring, were inclusive and participatory?</p>
	How durable an intervention has been and whether the benefits of that intervention are likely to continue once programme resources are withdrawn
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<p><b>EQ 8</b> To what extent are results of the systems-strengthening work sustainable and resilient to risk? (e.g. workforce strengthening, improving case management systems, birth registration and legal framework strengthening)</p>
	<p>How likely are those results to continue once programme resources cease? Why?</p>
Whether the intervention was designed/implemented in coherence with other actors	
<b>COHERENCE</b>	<p>To what extent is the programme in sync with relevant local coordination systems in each setting and with the efforts of other key actors? (e.g. section working groups, the cluster system)</p>
	<p><b>EQ 9</b> What were the barriers to/opportunities for synergies, and how were these managed by the intervention?</p>
	<p>How were these affected by COVID-19 (from 16 April 2020, but analysis by evaluators from July 2020)?</p>
<p><b>EQ 10</b> How synergistic has the research conducted as part of the COTM programme been, both to the programmatic work under this initiative as well as to other evidence-generation activities in the affected regions and countries?</p>	

# 3 METHODOLOGY



### 3.1 Evaluation approach

The evaluation was conducted by an independent team comprised of three international consultants (a senior evaluator/team leader, an expert on protection and migration, and a monitoring and evaluation expert) and an embedded team member and data expert from the UNICEF Evaluation Office. Four national evaluators/consultants were also contracted by the Evaluation Office for Ethiopia, Sudan, Somaliland and Puntland. They supported the international evaluators to collect and analyse data in accordance with the overall evaluation approach, plan and timeline. The evaluation began in late February 2020 and comprised four phases.

The evaluation team examined the UNICEF Revised Evaluation Policy (2018), the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016) and the revised evaluation criteria of the OECD/DAC prior to starting the evaluation. The UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System quality standards were consulted at various points to ensure everything was on track. When initially planning to consult with children and preparing

data collection tools, the team consulted the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2015), UNEG ethical guidelines (2008), the FCDO Ethics Principles for Research and Evaluation as well as the UNICEF Guidance Note on Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation. The team also reviewed a report prepared for the UNEG task force on ethics and code of conduct, which considers state-of-the-art practices within organizations undertaking evaluations. Finally, all evaluation team members reviewed carefully the UNICEF strategy to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (2019).

The evaluation design is non-experimental, formative and draws from a ‘theory-based’ approach, with a focus on the thematic areas of cross-border management and CPSS. The evaluation also has a utilization focus and pulls out lessons learned from evidence. As a framing context for this evaluation, it is important to recognize that, while it is formative in nature and takes a forward-looking lens, it still focuses on accountability.



## 3.2 Child protection framework underlying the evaluation approach

Given that the programme aims at improving the protection and assistance of COTM, the evaluation team examined a range of UNICEF-specific protection related guidelines<sup>18</sup> as well as guidelines produced by inter-agency forums such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Global Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, both of which UNICEF is a member of. Apart from examining the UNICEF definition of child protection systems, the evaluation team focused on the guidelines and policies that spelled out the standards for action when it comes to strengthening child protection systems, case management, as well as those governing accountability to affected populations (AAP)<sup>19</sup> and the ethics of involving children in the evaluation.

The evaluation team also looked at lessons learned from previous similar engagements by UNICEF identified by other reviews and evaluations. Of particular relevance in this regard is the 2018 evaluation on Strengthening Child Protection Systems: Evaluation of UNICEF Strategies and Programme Performance, which looked at UNICEF engagement on systems strengthening across many operations. The team found the presentation of the six crucial elements that any child protection system needs to have particularly useful and used it as a reference when assessing which elements the

different programme activities were addressing. See Annex IX for a summary of points gleaned from the aforementioned reports and guidelines.

With a senior protection expert as part of the evaluation team, guidance using a protection lens was provided throughout the evaluation. During the inception phase, when the evaluation was still considering the possibility of gathering primary data from COTM themselves, the evaluation team had prepared a protection-sensitive proposal for engaging with children. However, the onset of COVID-19 led to a reassessment of whether data could still be reasonably collected from first responders (frontline social workers and staff of non-governmental organizations in contact with children) and the children themselves without putting them in harm's way. The conclusion was that it would not have been possible to guarantee the physical safety and security of children in these challenging COVID-19 times.

## 3.3 Thematic areas of focus

Based on interviews conducted during the inception phase, two thematic areas of focus were explored to uncover lessons and add depth to the evaluation (see sections 4.5-4.6). These were:

1. Strengthening of systems that provide assistance and protection to COTM
2. Forging cross-border management and cross-border coordination

<sup>18</sup> These included, for example, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), a framework to equip UNICEF and its partners to deliver principled, timely, quality and child-centred humanitarian response and advocacy in any crisis with humanitarian consequences.

<sup>19</sup> The UNICEF Handbook on Accountability to Affected Population was released in October 2020 and hence could not be used as a reference document for this evaluation.

### 3.4 Theories of action

The evaluation team utilized the ToC for the programme (see Annex II) to frame the evaluation matrix.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the mechanisms through which activities were delivered, and by which actors, were mapped to articulate three theories of action (also shown in Annex II).<sup>21</sup> This focus on implementation tested the change logic and different pathways that were built to lead to an increased number of COTM having access to prevention and protection services. Within the possible pathways leading to change, the evaluation considered why some strategies appeared to work better than others in a given context, as well as why some strategies may not work, given the political, institutional, economic and social contexts.

### 3.5 Data collection

The evaluation matrix (see Annex XI) links the evaluation criteria and questions to the required information and sources. The evaluation matrix provided an instrument to guide the process and ensure the systematic collection and recording of data and information, and allowed analysis of the evidence, showing associations between the evidence collected with findings and conclusions.

The evaluation used complementary forms of data collection to improve reliability and add richness and depth to findings:

1. **Desk review** of background documentation, including programme documents, reports, monitoring data,

strategic documents, research report, etc. A template for reviewing documents was developed and used throughout the evaluation. See Annex VIII for list of documents reviewed.

2. **Key informant interviews** (semi-structured) with a range of stakeholders at all levels as identified in the stakeholder analysis, including UNICEF CO staff, HQ and RO staff, partners from government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, district and local leaders, donors and other organizations working on child protection and/or migration. Table 3 outlines numbers interviewed, with analyses of the category of stakeholder interviewed and gender in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Type of Key Informants

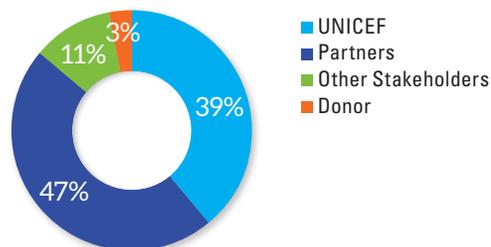
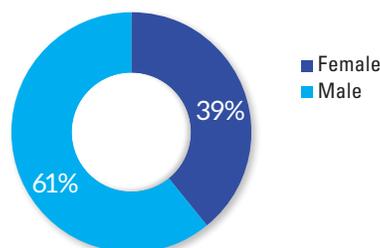


Figure 2: Gender of Key Informants



<sup>20</sup> The ToC for this programme was co-developed with all programme countries, learning from the experience of an earlier programme for COTM in Somaliland (Phase I).

<sup>21</sup> These theories of action gradually evolved as findings during the evaluation progressed. The theories of actions were shared on various occasions with COs, then adjusted again based on feedback or new findings.

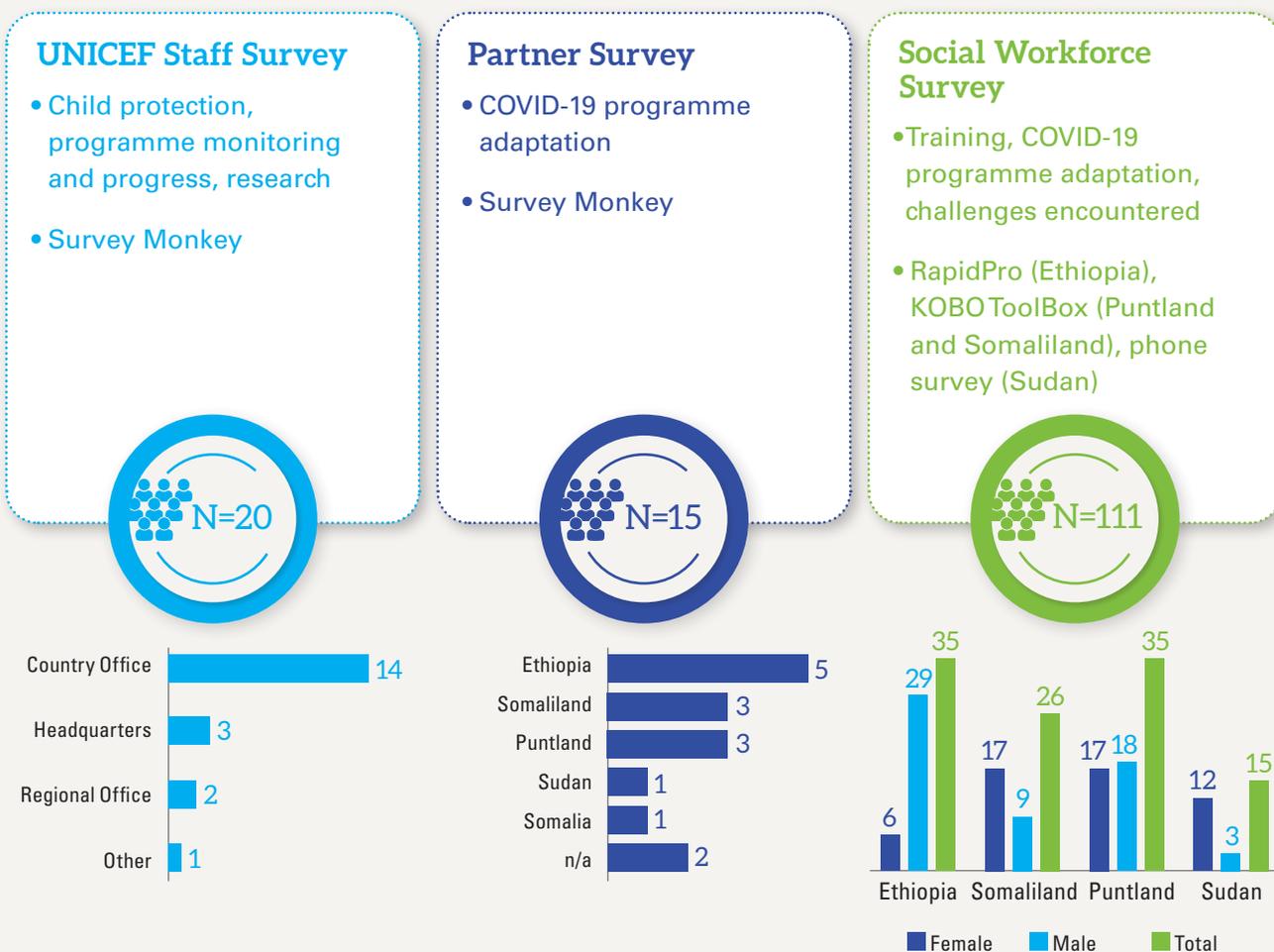
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3. Surveys of:

- UNICEF staff working on child protection (and planning and monitoring) in each country
- Partners

- Social workforce. Influenced by the work undertaken by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT),<sup>22</sup> the team explored innovative remote approaches to reach social workers.

Figure 3: Survey summary and respondent profiles



<sup>22</sup> Jarvis, A. et al, "Less is More: The 5Q approach", International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). Cali, 2015.

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4. Field visits (Somaliland and Ethiopia)

The national evaluators visited three regions to interview regional stakeholders and social workers in Somaliland and also in Ethiopia. See also Annex VII.

**Table 3: Summary of Key Informants**

	Female	Male	Total
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>71</b>
HQ	13	5	17
RO	2	2	4
Ethiopia	7	11	18
Somalia	-	4	4
Puntland	-	3	3
Somaliland	1	5	7
Sudan	13	5	19
<b>Partners</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>88</b>
Ethiopia	10	33	43
Puntland	-	7	7
Somaliland	15	16	31
Sudan	3	4	7
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>
Ethiopia	3	3	6
Somaliland	1	2	3
Sudan	-	11	11
<b>Donor</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>184</b>

3.6 Analysis

The evaluation team used different methods to transform the data collected into findings, which formed the basis of the conclusions and recommendations. The data were cleaned, reviewed and analysed to identify key themes, patterns, contradictions, relationships and explanations relevant to the evaluation questions and indicators in the evaluation matrix.

**Qualitative analysis of secondary data:** The evaluators used rigorous and logical processes to analyse qualitative data. The team started with the analysis of secondary data, which continued in parallel with the primary data collection. This allowed the identification of gaps in evidence. During the desk review, the team used structured review forms to summarize and note key aspects of documents. Rubrics were used to ensure consistency between different reviewers or consistency over time.

**Qualitative data analysis of primary data:** The evaluation team used thematic analysis as well as descriptive analysis to synthesize and analyse the data in order to understand the contexts in which the joint programme has evolved, and to describe its various types of interventions. Qualitative data collected by the evaluation team were coded through an inductive approach.

To control for bias as well as ensure accuracy and reliability, triangulation within and across methods was used. Methodological triangulation ensured that more than one option used to gather data or data gathered from multiple sources used to develop each finding.

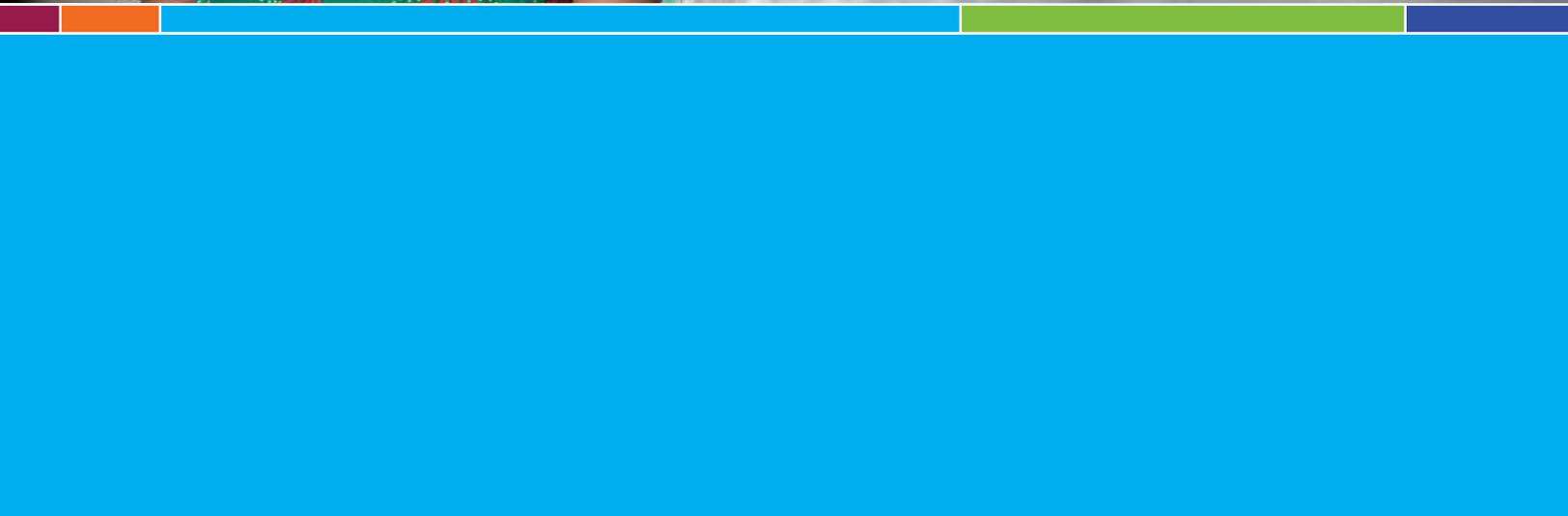


### 3.7 Evaluation limitations

The evaluation team encountered several limitations for which mitigation measures were adopted. Despite the limitations, the evaluation team was able to generate enough data to draft findings and conclusions. However, depth and quality of findings may have been affected.

Limitation	Impact	Mitigation measure
<b>COVID-19 pandemic</b>	Due to travel limitations, the international evaluators were not able to travel to the programme sites and conduct direct observations.	National consultants were able to conduct field visits in Ethiopia and Somaliland when authorization to travel from local governments and UNICEF Evaluation Office resumed.
	Virtual engagement was easier with some stakeholders than others.	National consultants were hired to facilitate some interviews through phone calls, which made contact with country and district-based government members easier.
	The evaluation does not capture children's voices using appropriate consultative evaluation approaches.	The team carefully reviewed the findings of the OoR-Innocenti research conducted within the programme, which captures views of children on their access to services, and other stakeholder views.
	The evaluation team had to remain as a 'virtual team', which is a new endeavour for UNICEF and allows less time for informal discussion on approaches and findings than would have happened if the team were spending time together in the field.	The team exchanged regularly during meetings but also remained connected through informal electronic contact. A 'get to know each other' session was held during the evaluation virtual inception week.
<b>Timeframe of the programme vs. timeframe of the evaluation</b>	Evaluating activities at the same time as they were being developed and operated (especially those adjusted to COVID-19) might have limited the depth of the evaluation.	The evaluation team members had to continuously check earlier interviews with stakeholders against progress to ensure findings were not obsolete.
<b>Contribution</b>	The team encountered difficulties distinguishing contributions of the programme from other initiatives contributing to protecting COTM.	The team consulted UNICEF staff in countries to check what activities highlighted in KIs were part of the programme or not.
	Limited data was available for outcome-level tracking combined with attribution issues at the outcome/impact level.	The evaluation focus is on output level results and does not draw conclusions at the outcome/impact level.
<b>Available data</b>	There were weaknesses in reporting systems, including a lack of qualitative data.	The team conducted more than 180 interviews with key informants as well as three surveys.

# 4 FINDINGS



An important achievement of the programme was supporting governments to focus on their own systems and building or strengthening those systems to be able to take action in prevention and response. All locations focused on increasing capacities of government social workers who work directly with children.



## 4.1 Relevance

This section examines whether the COTM programme was doing the right things for COTM, even with the change in circumstances due to COVID-19.<sup>23</sup> Areas evaluated included the extent to which the programme aligned with the needs of children as well as the alignment

of the programme with national priorities and the strategic priorities of UNICEF and FCDO. The section also covers adaptability, as well as the extent to which the programme was designed for systems strengthening (with a focus on systems strengthening in Section 4.5).

### ● SUMMARY: RELEVANCE OF THE COTM PROGRAMME

The overall rationale of the COTM programme to address protection gaps for COTM through a systems-strengthening approach is valid, particularly in its intention that all children, irrespective of nationality or legal status, are included in an improved child protection system. States have a duty to respect and uphold the fundamental rights of children, yet in practice, these rights are not always upheld, especially those of COTM. In all locations, the programme was designed to strengthen national structures for protection as well as increase national capacity and ownership of states to assist and protect vulnerable COTM. The COTM programme was suited to the priorities and policies of rights-holders and duty-bearers and demonstrated an ability to adapt as needed. The UNICEF programmatic niche is leveraging the organization's partnership with governments to improve child protection. As part of this strategy, UNICEF used the programme to advocate for channeling investments into systems that previously did not receive funding.

<sup>23</sup> How the programme remained relevant to right-holders and ensured accountability to affected populations is covered under Section 4.3.8 and 4.3.9.

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● **FINDING 1 – The programme was broadly appropriate in relation to the rights of COTM. However, some of the assumptions underpinning the ToC may need to be revisited.**

Nearly all evidence reviewed for this evaluation confirmed that the COTM programme was broadly appropriate towards the rights of COTM. Because the programme targeted COTM before, during and after migration, it was designed to reach a broad range of vulnerable children including in areas of origin and host communities.

Interviewees from UNICEF HQ and ESARO noted their appreciation of the programme, as it supports UNICEF COs to tailor COTM programming and sets an ambitious goal: child protection systems that protect all children regardless of their nationality. In reality, this vision is many years from realization, but the programme is helping UNICEF determine the elements that must be in place in order to achieve it. As one interviewee stated:



It is like trying to build a car while driving it – not working properly, but you still need to drive and improve it.”<sup>24</sup>

Interview findings show that UNICEF made efforts to ensure the programme adapted to the needs of the children in Somaliland, Puntland and Ethiopia, and to a smaller geographical scale in Sudan. In Somaliland and Puntland, the programme was designed to reach an ‘invisible’ group of children exposed to unsafe

migration, having been returned forcibly or otherwise from host countries and that may not have benefitted from sustained support in the past. Child protection desks were strategically set along the migratory routes and key transit points to ensure relevant and integrated social and child protection services as well as information on migration options. In Ethiopia, the programme intended to respond to a broad range of vulnerable children in five regions, and the *woredas* within each region (20 in total) were identified based on high numbers of COTM. Strengthening the child protection system would result in it being responsible for all children, including COTM. Interviewees from all five field regions noted the relevance of the programme to the needs of the COTM, with a prevention focus in some regions, and both prevention and returnee focus in others. (Refugees were explicitly not a focus of this programme in Ethiopia, as they were covered under another FCDO-funded programme.) In Sudan, the programme was designed to focus on vulnerable COTM in Khartoum State, a hub for COTM, where many end up in limbo. In practice, however, asylum seekers and refugees, particularly from some nationalities, benefited from more attention and support than others.

At the same time, a significant and recurring issue raised in interviews was the lack of services to meet children’s basic needs. For example, the social workers surveyed for this evaluation indicated that the biggest challenge on the ground was “inadequate services for children.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF staff at HQ

<sup>25</sup> 57 indications out of 111 responses across Ethiopia, Puntland and Somaliland – see also figures in Annex VI.

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**Figure 4: Social workers’ view of the biggest challenges they face in their everyday job**



Source: Social Workforce Survey

With the advent of COVID-19, the lack of appropriate services was accentuated. For example, in Somaliland and Puntland, the programme faced challenges in the provision of safe shelters for COTM due to social distancing requirements. In Ethiopia, there were early concerns about the safety of quarantine centres for returnee children, although UNICEF was subsequently able to convince some senior officials of the need for more attention to prevention/response activities and the role of social workers in child protection and case management. In Sudan, the exposure of children in closed spaces, particularly in detention and religious schools (*Khalwas*) to the risk of infection was highlighted.

This highlights a potential logical leap in the ToC. A central underlying assumption of the ToC (see Annex II) is that a strengthened child protection system and strengthened capacity of social workers to identify and manage cases of vulnerable children will lead to a better incorporation of and response to children’s needs and better respect for their rights. However, this logic is not automatic, and relies on availability of, and good access to, services

for children, linkages with others providing services, careful follow-up and much more training on and understanding of child rights.

**FINDING 2** – Although there was a strong focus on identifying vulnerable children, the programme was not explicitly designed to address the root causes of their vulnerability.

The ToC was considered by interviewees within and outside UNICEF to be quite ambitious, reflecting an already packed agenda; as such, the programme was not explicitly designed to address the reasons why children migrate in the first place. Many interviewees in Ethiopia reiterated this point, particularly in field interviews. This being said, some work in this area has been done through the programme. In Somaliland and Puntland, work was undertaken at community levels to address harmful norms affecting children. In Sudan, Somaliland and Puntland, UPSHIFT, a youth social entrepreneurship programme, was offered through the COTM programme in order to build skills and opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

## 4. FINDINGS

In Somaliland and Puntland, the programme also included linkages with the private sector to provide loans, and grants were established.<sup>26</sup> Overall, however, the COTM programme could have planned for stronger linkages with other international organizations or NGOs addressing economic and other vulnerabilities in sending communities. For example, in Ethiopia, linking with partners such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is working to provide access to skills development, could have been useful. Interestingly, in Sudan, the UPSHIFT programme did have linkages with ILO, but this did not include children covered by the COTM programme.

● **FINDING 3 – The programme was highly relevant to UNICEF priorities and long-standing activities in the three countries and has a clear potential to strengthen the organization’s humanitarian and development programming**

As noted above, the programme outputs were presented as linking to Goal Area 3 of the UNICEF SP. In addition, UNICEF had published its Global Programme Framework for COTM in 2017, outlining a rights-based approach. UNICEF staff at HQ and CO levels stated that interventions were integrated into UNICEF country programmes and aligned with their country programme documents (CPD). In this respect, it was important for UNICEF to ensure that case management systems and the national protection system was inclusive of all children, irrespective of their nationality.

Interviews suggested that UNICEF staff place a strong importance on support to social workers (broadly construed), including through curriculum development, hiring, training,

in-service support and mentoring. Interviewees felt that capacity-building of social workers was essential to ensuring a functioning child protection system and an important part of a longer-term systems-strengthening approach.

In terms of alignment at country level, in Ethiopia, formal and community-based child protection and response services were covered within the country’s CPD.<sup>27</sup> At the five regional field levels, the COTM programme was well integrated into the annual work plans of UNICEF child protection officers. However, there was less coordination between and across child protection programmes, except in some regions (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region) where it was noted that efforts were made to link with the violence against children programme. In Sudan, the COTM programme did not link to existing coordination processes and joint work between UNICEF Sudan and neighbouring COs in South Sudan, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Yemen, and Libya on cross-border child protection initiatives or other UNICEF programmes targeting different categories of COTM and funded by different donors.

UNICEF is attempting to strengthen and systematize its approaches to better link humanitarian and development programming. Some UNICEF CO and HQ staff asserted that the COTM programme shows how a functioning child protection system can also respond to emergency situations, and how emergency work has been showcasing the importance of conducting case management and having social workers. Views of UNICEF staff have been consolidated into the following points:

- Through linkages with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, the COTM programme both

<sup>26</sup> For example, GEEL, Amal Bank and Dahabshil Bank.

<sup>27</sup> The new CPD (2020-2025) highlights a resilient child protection system, relevant in development and humanitarian contexts, with protective, promotive and responsive services to protect children as an indicative output (5.1).

## 4. FINDINGS

helped to alleviate the immediate situation for children and is also linked to a longer-term system-building approach.

- The Primero/CPIMS+ information system can be used across different humanitarian and development situations if anchored in the national child protection system and linked with national case management approaches.
- The programme contributed to emergency preparedness for government, merging emergency with traditional programmes. The programme aligned case management tools with global humanitarian and protection standards. Thus, UNICEF was using and learning from standards in the humanitarian sector that try to ensure that efforts to protect children from violence and exploitation are of high quality and effective.<sup>28</sup>

● **FINDING 4 – The programme aligned with national priorities in child protection and had some success situating activities within existing supportive frameworks.**

Governments were the primary partners across the four locations, and the programme was highly aligned with government child protection systems.

In Somaliland and Puntland, the programme aligned with the priorities of the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF), which aimed to strengthen child protection structures, build the capacity of the social welfare workforce and adopt legislative frameworks aimed at protection of vulnerable

children. In Ethiopia, the enabling legislative and policy environment (the Children’s Policy, the amended Human Trafficking Proclamation and the Revised Refugee Proclamation) provided the basis for the development of the national case management framework (NCMF). UNICEF had been supporting the government to develop the NCMF, which was endorsed during the lifespan of the COTM programme.<sup>29</sup> The COTM programme was a convenient vehicle for testing the effectiveness of the NCMF for child protection in five regions. The government (through UNICEF) organized an extended case management technical working group with all key players in November 2019 to discuss collaboration in the implementation of child protection case management, as well as mechanisms for information-sharing. The agreed next steps were to coordinate the roll-out of the NCMF. A common issue highlighted was insufficient social workers to implement ambitious plans.

In Sudan, the former government recognized the need to strengthen some elements of the child protection system, and this interest not only remained but increased with the arrival of the new government. UNICEF support was actively sought out by the government of Sudan to help it manage the situation of groups of COTM that were victims of trafficking and/or in detention.

In most cases, efforts were made to build on or situate activities within existing supportive frameworks in the country. UNICEF systems-strengthening activities included linkages to local authorities in Ethiopia, with links to community-based structures a focus in Somaliland and Puntland. The intent in Ethiopia was to link to community groups,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In Ethiopia, at least three interviewees mentioned how many case management tools had initially been tested in refugee settings, and were now being tested in districts with high migration or returnee children.

<sup>29</sup> UNICEF and UNHCR advocated successfully for the NCMF to include different categories of children.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. established community structures such as community care coalitions and other local level structures including child rights committees, youth and women development armies as well as school-based structures and platforms.

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but the COVID-19 crisis scuttled these plans. In Sudan, two community-based networks and community-based workers were reached with capacity-building activities (specifically on the administration of child friendly justice). Thus, in practice, in Ethiopia and Sudan, there was less focus on building the capacity of relevant actors toward community engagement in child protection mechanisms, although the intent was there in Ethiopia. The intervention expanded on existing and previous programmes across the four locations. In Somaliland and Puntland, Phase II built on progress in Phase I. In Sudan, the COTM used insights gained from outputs produced under previous or existing programs and different funds (e.g. mappings, assessments of migration patterns) to inform the design. For standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to the referral of victims of trafficking, UNICEF used the expertise of UNHCR, IOM and Save the Children as well as other partners in the child protection area of responsibility within the global protection cluster. Likewise, for the rollout of *Primero*, inter-agency collaboration was essential.

Evidently, the programme could not focus on all elements of systems strengthening at once, but focused on those felt to be the most appropriate at the time of the proposal to FCDO.<sup>31</sup> In all locations, interventions attempted to remain relevant to a system-strengthening objective, focusing on ownership of national actors through involving relevant line ministries and government entities in all aspects.<sup>32</sup> UNICEF

remained focused on these highly relevant objectives, even when a number of unforeseen events occurred in the three countries, significantly affected the implementation of the programme (e.g. political instability in Ethiopia and Sudan, COVID-19). Following the change of regime in Sudan, UNICEF moved to quickly build relations with the new government. All locations reallocated funding to be able to better respond to the needs that the COVID-19 crisis had created among COTM. FCDO encouraged adaptation to COVID-19 early once the significance of the pandemic was becoming apparent. UNICEF staff noted that FCDO was very flexible and accommodating for reprogramming of proposals for COVID-19. Budget lines were swiftly and effectively altered to provide support to the government-led COVID-19 response, particularly in outreach and information dissemination. Examples are given under Finding 12.

FCDO reported that through strategic partnerships with specialist agencies, such a programme can address the particular vulnerabilities of COTM, reducing their risk of exposure to forms of modern slavery.<sup>33</sup> Funding was also in support of Sustainable Development Goal 16.2.<sup>34</sup> Recognizing that there are different ways to approach child protection and migration in the countries of focus, FCDO acknowledged that the context would be quite different, thus supported plans to document these different pathways. Overall, FCDO allowed the programme to be flexible as learning was one of the primary intended outcomes of this programme.

<sup>31</sup> Section 4.6 provides thematic details on overall progress with regard to child protection systems strengthening.

<sup>32</sup> In Sudan, UNICEF tried to increase the ownership for COTM issues by the authorities and to mainstream into the regular responsibilities of relevant line ministries, using existing government-led coordination mechanisms. In Somaliland and Puntland, the COTM supported national authorities to consolidate existing case management processes at national level and worked with different government institutions to come up with required legislative measures and strategic plans. The national case management task force, with participation of the federal Ministry of Women's Human Rights and Development-Somalia, Ministry of Women, Development and Family Affairs-Puntland and the MESAF-Somaliland, produced SOPs to outline the procedures for child protection case management for government and humanitarian actors in Somalia. In Ethiopia, strong efforts were evident to ensure that the programme remained relevant to those aspects of systems strengthening identified in the COTM programme document.

<sup>33</sup> United Kingdom Department for International Development, 'Ending Violence, Abuse and Exploitation of Children', DFID, <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300463>.

<sup>34</sup> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.



## 4.2 Effectiveness

This section examines whether the COTM programme achieved its outputs towards the outcome: an increased number of children have access to prevention and protection services (through systems strengthening). Progress on case management (including cross-border case management), social service workforce strengthening, information and awareness activities,

UPSHIFT, support for legal protection and research are discussed. Other aspects covered here include monitoring, the extent to which the programme was perceived to be inclusive, as well as how it put in place measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. Annex X outlines quantitative findings against outputs and is useful to examine with regard to progress.<sup>35</sup>

### ● EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COTM PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES: SUMMARY

The key achievements mentioned by UNICEF staff included establishing or strengthening case management, deploying the social service workforce, addressing the evidence gap, and providing services to children. Governments mentioned the support they received in strengthening their national child protection systems, not necessarily highlighting COTM. Case management protocols, tools, SOPs and social service workforce strengthening have progressed in this programme, but further support is required to sustain this work, and intensive efforts required to scale up and out to other areas. As noted, in all locations, the goal of ensuring that COTM have access to a continuum of care (multi-sectoral services) has not yet been reached, partly because services are not available. Fewer interviewees and UNICEF staff survey respondents mentioned achievements that related to cross-border collaboration, advocacy for COTM, enhancing coordination around child protection or the development of case management information systems.

All UNICEF staff survey respondents indicated that the programme has definitely or probably contributed to the improvement of the child protection system to prevent violence, exploitation and abuse of COTM, with 13 respondents definite about this. At the same time, 17 respondents were definite about the programme's contribution to a response to violence, exploitation and abuse of COTM. Thus, from the perspective of UNICEF staff, it would appear that there was a greater focus on response than on prevention. Seventeen out of 20 UNICEF staff respondents described the programme with positive words only, indicating that UNICEF staff were proud of supporting and implementing this programme.

Although UNICEF used a framework to guide its efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure related processes were in place among partners, UNICEF must put more focus on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) both internally and for its partners. Findings would indicate a gradual change with regard to values placed on a child protection system and legal protection for COTM, which continues to require UNICEF advice and advocacy. Overall, progress has been steady in a difficult and ambitious programme operating in challenging environments. As one UNICEF staff reported:



It was one of our flagship programmes of all time supporting the protection of children. It's a multi-year funding that enabled us to respond not only to emergencies but to underpin sustainable protection systems and nurture a protective environment."

<sup>35</sup> This section discusses the output results based on interviews with UNICEF staff and partners. A survey of UNICEF staff and partners involved in the programme complements interview findings outlined in this section. The results of a survey administered to social service workers provide perspectives from frontline workers.

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● **FINDING 5 – Good progress was made in supporting national authorities in the areas of case management and building the capacity of the social service workforce.**

The programme worked within national child protection systems, whilst also striving to ensure that the national system could be more inclusive and meet COTM needs. The adaptive capacity of the programme was tested by COVID-19, and it responded very well despite the need to adjust many activities and put in place COVID-19 protection measures. UNICEF staff experienced other challenges including insufficient host capacities to implement the programme, insecurity and political instability.

Case management implementation was discussed through national committees and frameworks in Somalia and Ethiopia. A high-level taskforce was set up in Somalia to coordinate and provide guidance, as well as to administer the review and adoption of the child protection case management systems and tools. In Somaliland and Puntland, children from different nationalities went through case management processes, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), orphans and returnees. Case management services were provided to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), including for example Ethiopian and Yemeni migrant children, including family tracing and reunification (FTR). Some of the children were referred by IOM-supported Migrants Response Centres under an existing collaborative framework.

In Sudan, the focus was on capacity for implementing case management. A mapping of the social workforce commissioned by the National Council on Child Welfare (NCCW) and UNICEF, which touched on the needs of case management, was finalized with the

COTM programme. The UNICEF Sudan office has also undertaken an internal mapping of case management (funded by other donors), which showed that there are multiple case management frameworks for different categories of COTM. These findings were factored into the discussions around Primero's rollout in Sudan. An important milestone was achieved in 2019 when the NCCW endorsed the SOPs for family tracing and reunification, which clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each actor involved in the process.

In Ethiopia, the NCMF for a child protection system was endorsed during the programme, and a training manual was conceptualized and finalized to support its implementation. Twenty districts are now using case management tools. With financial support from UNICEF, staff were deployed to district- or village-level administrative units of the ministry of women, children and youth, working within the same system. However, it was noted that children who received protective services were all returning Ethiopian children; other nationalities were not included.

The establishment or strengthening of case management for child protection was the most frequently cited achievement of the COTM programme in the UNICEF staff survey (9 out of 20 survey respondents). Referral of COTM through case management was indicated as making average (5 respondents) or good progress (12).

There is broad recognition across the four locations of how Primero/CPIMS+ can increase efficiency, transparency and accountability of frontline workers. In Somalia, all Federal Member States are standardizing information management process as a primary tool for storing, processing and sharing data according to information-sharing protocols (ISPs).

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Somaliland in particular has made great strides in digitizing their case management system. Primero/CPIMS+ is viewed as a 'gamechanger'.<sup>36</sup> Progress has also been made in Ethiopia and Sudan with regard to preparations for digitizing their case management systems. While missions relating to the rollout of Primero/CPIMS+ were delayed due to the political crisis in Sudan as well as COVID-19, UNICEF maintained momentum, particularly in advancing important inter-agency discussions on Primero/CPIMS+, and its implementation has started. Primero/CPIMS+ is not yet operational in Ethiopia (except for in one refugee camp). Six sites to test the CPIMS were agreed with relevant government authorities. Paper-based case management tools are being prepared for digital handover, although translation is an issue in regions.

● **FINDING 6 – Despite some notable achievements, cross-border case management has not progressed as expected in the four locations.**

The programme initially included ambitious plans for child protection case management across borders. It was reported in interviews that cross-border case management requires a good understanding by all staff and good relationships with partners, including government. The importance of UNICEF advocacy was underlined in particular.

An initial lack of consensus among UNICEF staff on what constitutes cross-border case management improved following a review meeting in February 2020, but COVID-19 slowed down attempts to move forward. Following a comprehensive mapping exercise by the COTM programme, a roadmap was prepared with

some first informal steps for social worker coordination put in place at the Ethiopia/Somaliland border. Social workers were recruited for the Tog Wajaale border. The next steps did not happen, as COVID-19 occurred shortly after this initiative. However, in addition to facilitating dialogue between child protection authorities in Ethiopia and Somaliland through the COTM programme, Ethiopia and Kenya COs have started to establish cross-border case management initiatives between the two countries. In Somaliland, working with IOM on FTR, up to 35 children were reintegrated with their families in Ethiopia. Sudan is more advanced in cross-border work, as activities appear to be mainstreamed into the regular work of UNICEF Sudan and it benefits from the strong support of MENARO (funded through other programmes). For example, MENARO commissioned the International Social Service (ISS) to carry out a preliminary mapping of the services provided to COTM in the region, with a focus on cross-border considerations. Another more recent programme funded by the Netherlands is complementing these efforts by focusing on tracing and family reunification for children in the border areas. Lessons could be drawn from the Sudan experiences in the near future.

Based on the mapping and assessment undertaken, UNICEF staff at HQ have developed and shared a theoretical flow-chart for cross-border case management. This draft flow-chart is a significant and important development for UNICEF, and is undergoing further inputs, discussion and feedback from child protection staff and partners.

Further discussion on cross-border issues can be found in Section 4.6.

<sup>36</sup> It was noted that UNICEF is careful about giving access to Primero/CPIMS+ data to avoid access to those who may mistreat such data.

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● **FINDING 7 – Steady progress was made with national authorities on recruitment, training and certification of social workers.**

Social services in all the programme countries were reported to be generally resource-constrained and supported by a limited number of qualified social workers. Low salaries are an issue, with the profession tending to attract younger people wishing to gain experience. There is also a high turn-over, as many tend to leave afterwards, seeking better paid work opportunities with NGOs or other organizations. In Ethiopia and Somaliland, early efforts are underway through the COTM programme to put in place oversight mechanisms, qualifications/certification practices, and ensure social workers are using case management protocols and tools. Indicators in the biannual reports (Annex X) provided quantitative information regarding numbers trained.

Although a significant number of social workers received training in Ethiopia (671), some only received a basic orientation on case management training, and the social service workforce requires further capacity-building. This was particularly noted from field interviews. Vocational training institutes had been primed to provide in-service training linked to occupational competences, but progress in actually offering such training stalled because of COVID-19. The model was changed to remote training.

In Somaliland and Puntland, six universities are rolling out the new social work degree programme, expanded now to diploma students (two in Puntland, one in Somaliland and three in the Central South Zone supported by the

COTM programme). Currently, a large number of students (791) are enrolled in degree and diploma courses, some with UNICEF scholarships, others sponsored by government ministries. Of these, 85 students in Somaliland and Puntland are involved in field research on experiences and perspectives of children and social workers during COVID-19, led by the Office of Research (OoR-Innocenti). Planned shorter courses are on hold due to COVID-19.

In Sudan, recommendations for the university curriculum are starting to be implemented. An agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development had been signed for the appointment of 100 social workers, however training has been delayed due to political instability.<sup>37</sup> Despite these delays, the UNICEF office trained 17 social workers so they could support the release of the 86 detained COTM. A social workers manual is being produced by the Economic and Social Research Bureau of the Ministry of Higher Education with a multi-stakeholder committee overseeing its development. Progress was made with regards to the establishment of a professional social workers' council.

According to survey results, UNICEF staff working on the programme felt that the COTM improved the capacity of workforce, with over two thirds indicating that the capacity of the social service workforce has improved. All but three of the social service workers surveyed for this evaluation indicated the training they received to assist COTM was useful. Interviews revealed that although the numbers trained reached targets, implementing what has been learned can be challenging due to

<sup>37</sup> The final update from UNICEF Sudan reported that 180 social workers were trained training on FTR, psychosocial support and case management.

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conditions on the ground, and can lead to disillusionment. In all four programme locations, the low salary of social workers was mentioned in many interviews as an obstacle to getting community workers to stay on the job. A social service workforce mapping and assessment is underway in Ethiopia. This is important, as there are different government institutions involved in deploying social workers, and it will contribute to a country-wide strategy for social workforce employment.

The programme used national institutions to train social workers, with UNICEF providing technical support for curriculum development and operational manuals for social workers. This is beneficial for stimulating the development of the social work sector. UNICEF also paid for training in many cases. Vocational institutions are appropriate in Ethiopia for the level of qualification required to be a village-level community worker, with some universities already offering degree programmes in social work. In Somaliland/Puntland, certificate or diploma programmes are also offered. However, for all national institutions offering training for social workers, there has to be a demand for these courses, and applicants must be able to see a good career path having invested in training. The mix between in-service short-term courses and long degree courses is appropriate, but more information on the profile of who is trained, with a follow-up study conducted on whether they stayed in the profession, would be useful. For shorter courses, anonymous course assessment forms should be analysed to check if the right skills are being covered. Technical support for curriculum or manuals for social workers from UNICEF seems appropriate for systems strengthening

goals. It is important that these products are jointly produced for contextualizing to the situation on the ground, and also to support systems strengthening and continued use. They should not be seen as UNICEF outputs alone.

- **FINDING 8 – Awareness-raising activities followed different patterns in each country. Somaliland and Puntland made better efforts to involve communities in outreach and awareness-raising. Limited evidence was found regarding community involvement for returnee children.**

In all programme locations, there was a focus on providing children with information to allow them to make well-informed decisions. In Somaliland and Puntland, 33 child protection desks and safe houses offered shelter and information to high numbers of COTM passing through (children were also screened and provided with medical services or legal aid as necessary). In Ethiopia, information services and awareness-raising for children and communities began through UNICEF-hired *woreda* coordinators and social workers at village level, working through community care coalitions in some locations. A cooperation agreement with an implementing partner for youth peer-to-peer awareness raising was slow to be operationalized for a variety of reasons<sup>38</sup> Toward the end of the programme, many good information products were available and translated for the five regions, although dissemination remained a challenge due to COVID-19, with virtual meetings, radio and small peer groups being the only means available. Although the numbers indicate targets were reached to a large extent,

<sup>38</sup> Delays including the need to get all five regional governments to approve the partner's work in their regions. In addition, the process of obtaining data from reliable sources and partners, and the UNICEF process of review, were onerous.

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the focus was on the implementation of these activities rather than the impact; additional monitoring tools are required to better understand whether these activities are achieving their intended goals. In Sudan, UNICEF supported communication campaigns run by different parts of the government, and through its hotlines targeting COTM disseminated information on the risks of COVID-19. It also provided information material and information technology equipment to the members of the NCCW and the State Council on Child Welfare (SCCW) in Khartoum. The positive results of this enhanced effort to reach COTM with information shed light on the current gaps in communicating with COTM and showed that child-friendly communication approaches are possible.

For awareness-raising activities to be effective, they must be culturally appropriate and take account of the drivers of migration, some of which may be context-specific. In this connection, interviewees in Somaliland, Puntland and Ethiopia noted that awareness-raising activities ought to have taken stronger account of how 'childhood' is viewed culturally. The OoR-Innocenti research found that many children reported that they made their own choice to move (76 per cent); family problems ranked as fourth among the main reasons why children move from their home area (23 per cent of respondents), with economic hardship as the top reason (67 per cent of respondents). There is an expectation that older children provide for younger members of their families or contribute to their households. Although the government is making efforts, the recruitment of child soldiers is still an issue ("forced by an armed group" was the fifth highest reason for moving). In Ethiopia, for example, it was stated that children are expected to provide from an early age and take care of themselves. One interviewee stated that a change in the belief that "*children grow*

*by their own luck*" is required. Another area that requires attention and focus at community level is when returnees are seen as a failure, particularly where families have spent money or sold assets to facilitate migration. An in-depth understanding of the consequences is hampered by challenges in monitoring and following up on COTM that have returned. Involving communities and families should help ensure that awareness-raising activities resonate with and are linked to the experiences and motivations of those who move within the regions rather than drawing on imposed understandings of migration and childhood that are based on Eurocentric perspectives (including one shaped by a narrow focus on children arriving in Europe).

● **FINDING 9 – UPSHIFT achieved mixed results in providing skills and opportunities to disadvantaged youth in Somaliland, Puntland and Sudan. UPSHIFT 'graduates' require follow-up.**

The UPSHIFT programme aims to provide livelihood, business and employable skills to adolescents at risk of migration. In Somaliland and Puntland, UPSHIFT was well received. Defined criteria were used to target youth, including youth from minority communities, rural communities, communities living in poverty, persons with disabilities, out-of-school youth, returnees from Tahriib, survivors of gender-based violence, and those in conflict with the law. In Sudan, 1,100 children from five localities in Khartoum benefited from UPSHIFT, in addition to 80 teachers who attended a training of trainers course. In Sudan, vulnerability criteria were not applied rigorously when choosing candidates for UPSHIFT, and graduates of UPSHIFT were not provided with seed money nor linked to livelihood programmes or financial incubators that would have allowed

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them to carry out their projects. UNICEF has more recently established a joint collaboration with ILO and UNHCR in Sudan, where graduates of UPSHIFT are referred to ILO to be linked with their income-generation projects.<sup>39</sup> However, it does not yet include the graduates of UPSHIFT in the State of Khartoum.

● **FINDING 10 – Progress was made with regard to legal protection in Somaliland, Puntland and Sudan and successfully linked to broader UNICEF work in this area.**<sup>40</sup>

Justice actors are recognized as important stakeholders in child protection efforts at the national level and key for national referral networks facilitating access to services. UNICEF has already defined legal protection problems for children and had linked solutions to regional or international norms. However, a strong link to other actors or other initiatives on law enforcement was not always observed (for example to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme or NGOs working in this space).

In Sudan, plans to work on the legal framework and with the Ministry of Justice were adjusted due to the political crisis. A training manual for justice personnel and judges on dealing with victims of trafficking was prepared. FCDO requested changes to work more closely with law enforcement officials, which led to support for establishing two community-based committees in Khartoum. In Somalia, UNICEF

provided technical support to the Juvenile Diversion Policy, and in the drafting of the civil registration and vital statistics policy, which is ongoing. Furthermore, UNICEF was able to align birth registration with health objectives in its advocacy work. Puntland police, immigration officers, prosecutors, local government officers, and staff from civil society organizations participated in trainings on child trafficking, screening for COTM, case management and referral pathways, and gender-based violence prevention and response. Trained immigration police and prosecutors in Galkayo, Bossaso, Garowe, and Galdogob have identified, referred, and are giving legal support to COTM cases.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF was able to use its long-standing position as a trusted child protection actor in the countries to steer a course of action for the benefit of children. In Sudan, 10,924 children in Qur'anic schools (*khalwas*) were reached with prevention services in response to COVID-19. UNICEF also supported family tracing efforts for these children, as the Government of Sudan ordered their release from these schools due to the pandemic. In Somalia, 673 children were released from detention and reunited with families to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in detention centres. Furthermore 7,773 children were issued with birth notifications and 153,240 people were issued with birth registration certificates through routine registration and during a synchronized measles campaign in Somalia.

<sup>39</sup> ILO in Sudan is also conducting a market chain assessment for income-generation projects.

<sup>40</sup> This was not a planned focus under the COTM programme in Ethiopia, although other CP programmes engage in this area.

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● **FINDING 11** – The research component provided relevant findings to inform advocacy and future programming for COTM, although they could not inform the programme itself because the research was undertaken in parallel to programme implementation.

The OoR-Innocenti research undertaken during the COTM adds value to what is already known about COTM. The plan for the research component of the COTM programme was to produce quantitative and qualitative data to enhance knowledge and inform programming on COTM.<sup>41</sup> Most interviewees felt the research was an important contribution to child protection and brought some new insights. Many other studies examine the causes of migration, but this research was unique in that it highlighted children's voices with regard to their view of services and revealed a huge mistrust of authority.<sup>42</sup>

In Ethiopia, case studies emerging from the research were helpful to develop awareness-raising activities, as well as highlighting protection issues in specific areas that led to programme interventions in Togo-Wajale. In Sudan, findings were used in conjunction with other research to strengthen the argument for improving the protective environment at cross-border areas (for example Sudan/Egypt and along migratory routes to provide a continuum of care). In addition, the evaluation

team was also able to use the research findings, which was particularly significant given that the team was unable to interview children directly.

The key research finding noted by many interviewees is that children have low levels of interaction with and trust of authorities. The UNICEF staff survey (administered just before the last quarter of the programme) indicated that the majority of respondents (70 per cent) were aware of the key messages emerging from both of these studies.<sup>43</sup> However, some UNICEF staff interviewed in the field and nearly all partners were unaware of the findings at the time the team interviewed stakeholders. In Sudan, many interviewees who spoke to the issue of research indicated that the research was not able to explore some issues with sufficient depth (for example gender-based violence) nor to be inclusive of certain categories of COTM on whom there is typically less information.<sup>44</sup> (While there was an intention to do so, challenges such as limited access, ethical issues of raising issues of sexual violence without assurance of appropriate referral services, and language issues hampered efforts.) It would have also required more time to build relations of trust with the children. Most UNICEF staff in the survey felt that the research has underscored the need to further build the capacity of the social service workforce.<sup>45</sup> When UNICEF staff were asked about the ways in which the research contributed to the needs of COTM, contribution to the COTM programme obtained the lowest

<sup>41</sup> Three country summary reports were prepared, and an interim report which covers the three countries has been circulated. Although not in the original plan, three longer country reports are also available for each CO and are considered very insightful. Other information products are available linked to these products (blog articles, video animation, Lancet migration brief).

<sup>42</sup> The research conducted by the OoR-Innocenti complements other studies, including No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate, developed during Phase I.

<sup>43</sup> 14 out of 20 UNICEF staff surveyed for this evaluation were aware of the key messages, with 3 not aware and 3 unsure.

<sup>44</sup> Of the 476 children interviewed for the OoR-Innocenti Research in Sudan, 32% were Ethiopian, 28% were Sudanese, 24% were Eritrean and 12% were South Sudanese, leaving only 4% of children of other nationalities that are also among the most vulnerable in Khartoum such as children from West Africa. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Draft Report on Ending Violence, Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Young People on the Move: Focus on Sudan', Florence, January 2020, p.5.

<sup>45</sup> When 'definitely contributed' and 'probably contributed' are taken together in the survey.

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rating. This is probably because the research had not yet been validated and was finalized after implementation of the programme had started, and hence the results could not be used fully in the programme. A number of interviewees expressed this as a missed opportunity.

At the time of the evaluation, national ownership over the research findings was being carefully planned, with each country going through an internal validation process, with government counterparts reviewing drafts of the report in each country prior to report finalization. In November 2020, OoR-Innocenti updated its original dissemination plan.<sup>46</sup> There are plans for shorter advocacy briefs to reach broader audiences and policymakers, linking to the Global Compacts and other commitments. Nearly all implementing partners and some United Nations agencies interviewed expressed a keen interest in the research results. UNICEF COs should articulate a clear strategy regarding the translation and dissemination of research findings within their respective countries, including short policy briefs, sharing widely with partners. The research produced is pertinent, likely to add value as a public good and will contribute to future programming.

● **FINDING 12 – Programme activities were adjusted quickly to respond to COVID-19.**

Evidently, the arrival of COVID-19 slowed down implementation of activities from April 2020.<sup>47</sup> However, programme activities were adjusted quickly in response to the pandemic. In the first instance, social workers supported the dissemination of public health information

on COVID-19, with dignity kits purchased for returning migrants. Procurement, manufacture and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the frontline workforce was also prioritized. The pandemic also produced new immediate needs, such as returnees expelled from Gulf countries.

The following adaptations were made to respond to the COVID 19 in Ethiopia:

- a) Adjustment of the case management tools to respond to COVID-19 needs and the corresponding training of the social workforce utilizing the revised tools;
- b) Purchase and distribution of PPE to ensure the social service workforce performed their duties safely;
- c) Adjustment of the training and information-dissemination, from a face-to-face approach to remote delivery; and
- d) Purchase and delivery of non-food items including dignity and recreational kits in more than 15 quarantine centres in Addis Ababa and in land points of entry and exit.

To ensure that cross-border child protection case management responds to the emerging challenges posed by COVID-19, Ethiopia and Kenya COs have been working to establish a cross-border case management initiative between the two countries. PCAs had to be adjusted and case management tools were adapted for online platforms, and social workers were provided with revised basic child protection case management tools through the online

<sup>46</sup> At the COTM review meeting in November, a session was held on the research reviewing key learnings with discussions on how to move forward with recommendations.

<sup>47</sup> In line with the activation of a Level 3 Corporate Emergency for the Global COVID-19 Pandemic from 16 April 2020.

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platforms Zoom and Skype. Revisions included public health information on COVID-19 and adaptation of case management practices to public health restrictions including mobility and social distancing. In light of this, more social workers were recruited in Ethiopia and protective equipment procured to ensure the safety of social workers as they fulfil their duties.

UNICEF Sudan stepped up its own information campaigns and supported those carried out by the Ministry of Health. It also provided information technology equipment to the NCCW,<sup>48</sup> the SCCW, and the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission in 18 states in order to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of activities in response to COVID-19. Protective equipment for social workers was also procured. UNICEF also engaged in advocacy for the immediate release of detained children, who were in cramped conditions that increased the risk of the virus spreading.<sup>49</sup> UNICEF had been working with the Federal Child Protection Units of the NCCW as well as with NGOs to effectively use diversion and alternative measures to detention. UNICEF stepped up its support for information campaigns and the hotlines of the Sudanese Ministry of Health, targeting vulnerable children (including street children and children released from *Khalwas*) on the risks of exposure to COVID-19 as well as effective prevention measures. Furthermore, it provided MHPSS support for 2,500 children living and working on the streets and in religious schools. Family tracing and reunification stepped up in Sudan and Ethiopia.

In Somaliland and Puntland, UNICEF had already been working with the Ministry of Justice and the police departments to establish/strengthen alternatives to detention; providing technical support to review legislation to include safeguards for children, promoting birth registration systems and awareness, and working with the police for release of children from detention and reunification with their families. All the children engaged with the programme were profiled, provided with MHPSS and FTR following case assessment. Frontline social service workers in Somaliland from the MESAF and Women's Action for Advocacy and Progress Organization participated in online MHPSS training. Some youth who took part in the UPSHIFT boot camps have been mobilized to produce PPE (face masks and sanitizers) for income. UPSHIFT beneficiaries were also engaged in public health information dissemination on COVID-19. Child protection desks continued to screen, identify, register, and refer migration children and UASC needing protection work through the child protection network. At least 85 social workers under the social work training programme received COVID-19 response training and were later deployed to create awareness on COVID-19 prevention measures among communities.

The survey to social workers confirmed elements of good programme adaptation as social workers continued to reach out to children during COVID-19. Indeed, most social workers surveyed by the evaluation continued providing assistance in person.<sup>50</sup> The majority of social worker respondents also indicated that they received guidance from UNICEF or their organization on working under COVID-19.

<sup>48</sup> In Sudan, UNICEF also redirected some funds to strengthen the information technology capacity of the NCCW in 18 states to be able to communicate more easily with staff given movement restrictions due to COVID-19.

<sup>49</sup> With, for example, 883 children aged between 13-17 years released in Sudan.

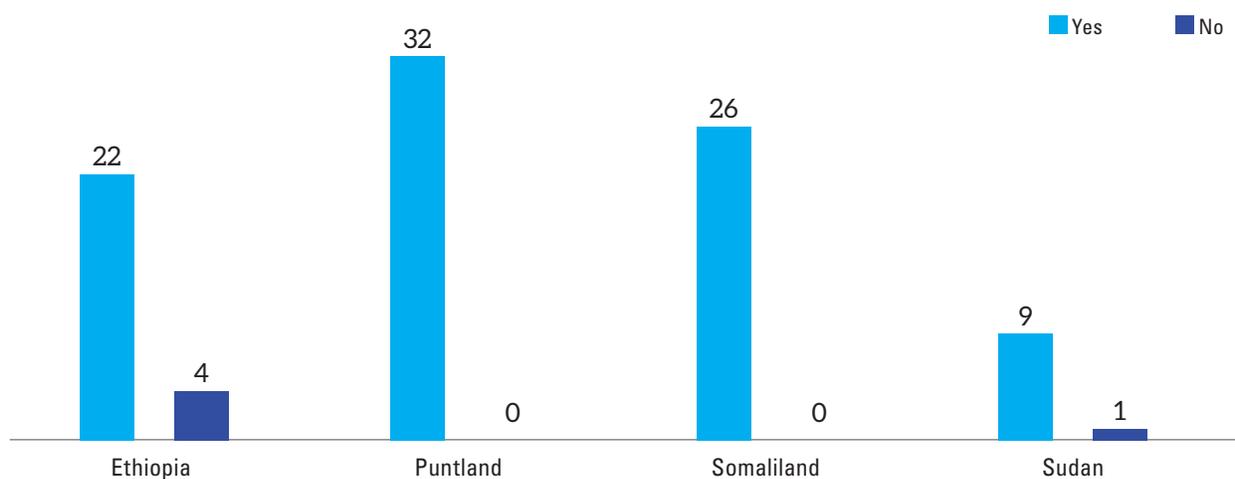
<sup>50</sup> According to a survey results from 111 social service workers, 90 per cent continued providing support to children since the onset of COVID-19. Sudan was an exception, with only half (5 out of 10) continuing to provide support to children since COVID-19, which is not surprising given the daily curfew in Khartoum in May and June 2020.

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In Somaliland and Puntland, the majority of social worker respondents indicated that the number of children assisted had drastically gone up since COVID-19, whereas Sudanese and Ethiopian social worker respondents indicated

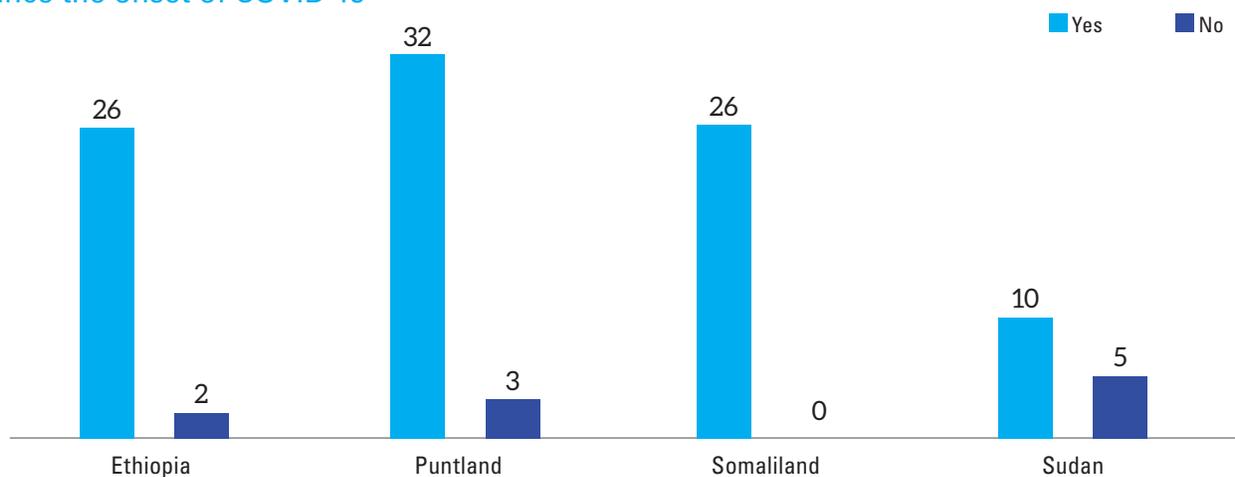
that the numbers had remained more or less the same. Overall, the evaluation found that the COTM programme adapted extremely well to COVID-19, particularly among social workers, as the figures below illustrate.

**Figure 5: Number of social workers who received guidance on working under COVID-19**



Source: Social Workforce Survey

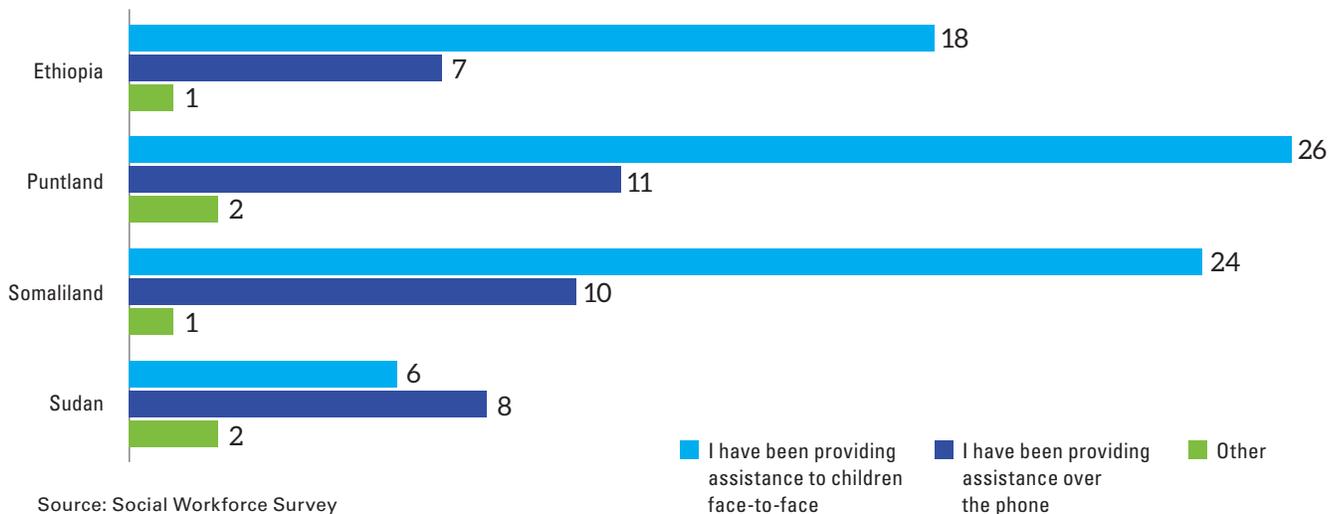
**Figure 6: Number of social workers who have continued to provide assistance to children since the onset of COVID-19**



Source: Social Workforce Survey

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**Figure 7: Modalities of assistance from social workers to children during COVID-19**



In Ethiopia, peer-to-peer awareness-raising materials had to be adjusted and delivered virtually through small groups of five who, which were supposed to cascade information to others. The numbers that were reached could not be verified. In Sudan, there was good use of data on awareness-raising interventions on COVID-19. In line with the programme’s evidence-based approach, UNICEF OoR-Innocenti re-purposed some of the data collected during the multi-country research to publish two informative articles on COVID-19, which were widely read.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the COTM programme has broadly contributed to providing information on COVID-19 in the regions.

Findings from the survey of partners indicate that the majority (12 out of 15) of partners continued implementing programme activities and COVID-19 had not greatly impacted progress.<sup>52</sup> Looking more closely at survey responses, three-quarters of the respondents reported that they had encountered no change whatsoever, or that less than 30 per cent of the activities have stopped due to COVID-19. Almost all partners have adopted new approaches in line with the COVID-19 prevention protocols, but in different ways. The adopted protocols and new strategies include: (1) following the COVID-19 response committee prevention and protection guidelines; (2) digitalizing office routine and working remotely via Zoom and other platforms; and (3) introducing protection measures and distribution of protective gear

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘COTM Biannual Report’, UNICEF, New York, July 2020. According to the report, the articles received 13,905 blog page views and 67,483 Twitter impressions and findings of the research were considered in the programme countries’ development of adaptation plans. In addition, The OoR-Innocenti provided support to the Somalia CO on the impact of COVID-19 on children, publishing a brief on the implications of COVID-19 for COTM based on the data from the research for the Lancet-UCL Commission on Migration and Health. See ‘Research Report on Heightened Vulnerabilities of Migrant Children and Youth People Living Along in the Context of COVID-19, Lessons from three Eastern African Countries in June 2016.’

<sup>52</sup> See survey results in Annex VI.

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such as face masks and hand sanitizers, among others. Despite this, respondents reported that COVID-19 brought some difficulties to their work, introducing new implementation barriers. Reports varied from country to country. Ethiopian respondents, for instance, reported technology-related challenges, whereas restrictions due to COVID-19 were the dominant constraint facing Somali respondents (Somaliland, Puntland and Somalia included).

Despite COVID-19, UNICEF staff survey findings indicated that the programme has generally contributed positively to the child protection programming in the region.<sup>53</sup>

● **FINDING 13 – National governments perceived the programme to be inclusive, although this finding was not always replicated at lower levels of government and participation of children was not systematic.**<sup>54</sup>

The COTM programme was considered inclusive by those interviewed at federal government levels. In contrast, the five regional governments in Ethiopia did not perceive the process to be inclusive, although they did view it as important for their regions. The regional governments in Ethiopia felt that the programme was designed at the federal level and activities ‘brought’ to their respective regions.<sup>55</sup>

In some contexts, partners were not necessarily involved in programme design or monitoring. In Somaliland and Puntland, however, community-based child protection mechanisms

were at the frontline in planning and delivering services; community dialogue leaders engaged in dialogue on harmful social norms and implemented directly without UNICEF supervision. In Sudan and Ethiopia, there was less emphasis on analysis and planning at the community level, or on the involvement of community structures in implementation or monitoring processes. However, regional counterparts in Ethiopia were involved in the planning and signing off of the COTM regional workplans.

The research undertaken by OoR-Innocenti was perceived to have adopted a consultative process, reaching 1,290 children and incorporating their feedback during the research process, working in partnership with national universities and working closely with governments to ensure their ownership of the research results. Country offices involved governments in the research from the onset, which might strengthen their commitment to acting on the results of the research findings. For example, evidence of discussions on planning the research were noted in the minutes of the COTM steering committee meetings in Ethiopia. Collaborative processes for validating the research were delayed by COVID-19 until October 2020. In Sudan, it was reported by six interviewees that consultations and activities were insufficiently adapted to the needs of non-Arabic speaking children.

With regard to child participation in the programme, there were concerns among UNICEF staff, partners and others around how to strike a balance between engaging

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> An exception to this general trend was found in Sudan with regard to two activities implemented under the programme: 1. The design stage of the UPSHIFT programme; and 2. the information campaigns targeting children on the risks of exposure to COVID-19, where UNICEF collected data on the hygiene-related habits of children and collected feedback on some of the multimedia information products that it had put out.

<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, the rollout of Primero/CPIMS+ was thought to be consultative and inclusive at the inter-agency level and was mentioned by at least five interviewees as such.

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children on the one hand and doing no harm on the other, pointing to the absence of an organization-wide approach reaching down to all relevant actors (staff, consultants, partners, field level). However, almost two-thirds of UNICEF survey respondents (13 out of 20) indicated that training for social workers included a session on participation or used participatory approaches to ensure the inclusion of children's views.<sup>56</sup> These answers suggest that the gap was in operationalizing the principle of engaging children rather than a lack of knowledge. For example, in Somaliland/Puntland, the child protection desks along migratory routes provided a system to document information on COTM and protect vulnerable children. With a focus on response, in conjunction with a Puntland NGO (Tadamun Social Society), the COTM programme set up psychosocial support to children who faced gender-based and sexual abuse. Feedback on how these support systems work from the perspective of COTM would be interesting to document in the future.

● **FINDING 14 – While efforts to prioritize and ensure PSEA are ongoing, more needs to be done to ensure effective mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse are in place at all levels.**

Protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse has been an important component of the programme, subjected to quarterly monitoring and follow-up by both HQ and FCDO in coordination with country offices. All UNICEF staff who were asked about measures for PSEA were aware of its importance. In addition, OoR-Innocenti developed

specific ethics and protection protocols that were approved (in-country and by ethics review boards) and used throughout the research process. Enumerators in all countries were trained accordingly, including on safeguarding/PSEA and referral mechanisms to implement the protection protocols.

In Ethiopia and Somalia, a PSEA focal point ensured Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with partners included clauses for protecting children. A comprehensive UNICEF framework on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse was developed by the Ethiopian Office and shared with the evaluation team. Also in Ethiopia, training was provided to two implementing partners, the OoR-Innocenti research partner, and 13 government social workers seconded as part of the COVID 19 response in Addis Ababa. The implementing partners and research partner also signed the UNICEF code of conduct on PSEA. The issue was also included in introductory training on case management for social workers and *woreda* coordinators.

In Sudan, UNICEF staff indicated that their partners, including government counterparts, were trained on the duty to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). However, it was recognized by some interviewees that it was challenging to put in place effective measures to prevent and address SEA. Reports of incidents were practically non-existent, which suggests that reporting mechanisms are inadequate and/or not being used. In recognition of the need to prioritize PSEA, the United Nations country team in Sudan has recently created a PSEA network. Progress in setting in place a system where individuals, communities, UNICEF personnel and

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<sup>56</sup> See survey results in Annex VI.

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partners feel safe to report violations and trust that immediate and decisive action will be taken against perpetrators is however less evident.

Overall, evidence suggests that UNICEF efforts to provide an effective and functioning complaint mechanism for children requires significant strengthening. In Ethiopia, one partner working directly with children was noted to be putting in place a complaint and feedback mechanism. In Sudan, UNICEF had established a helpline back in 2007 for children themselves to report abuse, but at least three interviewees were not confident about its effectiveness as its confidentiality could not be guaranteed. It was unclear how children in any of the programme areas are informed about where to complain. Just over one third of UNICEF staff survey respondents thought there were PSEA complaint and feedback mechanisms in place. In Somalia, UNICEF has trained its partner organization staff who work with children on SEA and made sure they signed a PSEA code of conduct. However, Somalia does not yet have hotlines for children to report incidents of abuse by partners. Conversely, in Somalia, with support from the COTM programme, a Child Rights Bill has been drafted by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and presented to cabinet for parliamentary processing. Other key legislative amendments are in process including a sexual offences bill (amongst others) which will be key reference documents for child protection case workers on PSEA.

While PSEA training is provided to partners, management and monitoring measures still need to be operationalized further. The evaluation found that rigorous safeguards to prevent SEA were not sufficiently in place. A key question is how UNICEF can establish more effective procedures

to address SEA that are mainstreamed in all aspects of programmes and activities, including with government counterparts.

● **FINDING 15 – The programme has not yet documented systematically what works for COTM, and how this may vary for different categories of vulnerable children in different contexts.**

The COTM programme did not have a system in place that seeks regular feedback from children, nor an information system that pulls out information on what works, how and why, for different children. A likely reason according to one interviewee is that it takes time to set this up with ownership required at all levels. Moreover, as is detailed in the next section, the lack of sufficiently disaggregated data on COTM in the information databases that national governments manage makes it difficult to track what works for COTM. Notably, available monitoring and reporting modalities are not sufficiently nuanced to reflect how experiences can differ based on gender.

The research conducted by the OoR-Innocenti provides some information about COTM perceptions and feelings of safety, protective environments, and their access to services and resources as well as their trust in authorities and other service providers. This research was however not designed to analyse which interventions implemented through COTM programme were effective. Consulting children themselves as originally planned in this formative evaluation may have shed light on some elements of the programme that worked in different settings, but this was not possible due to COVID-19. Apart from the OoR-Innocenti research reports, the evaluators located further information on what works,

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how and why for COTM from other research reports reviewed as part of the secondary data analysis, as well as from interviews.

Broadly speaking, what works for children depends on where they are and who they are. For example, a trafficked child requires urgent legal and psychosocial support and care. Many interviewees mentioned the need for health and legal support to boys and girls who experienced sexual abuse. UNICEF realizes that women and children who experience violence have in theory access to referrals (One Stop Centres, hospital, judiciary etc.) and a lot of advocacy have been undertaken by UNICEF on investing in these services. Unfortunately, many of these services are not widely available or fully fit for purpose. In Ethiopia, a study conducted under another FCDO-funded programme is assessing the barriers that girls, boys and women in refugee and host communities face in relation to help-seeking behaviour and access to response services for violence (sexual, physical, emotional), child marriage, and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). The results of this study will be used to influence other child protection systems work including for COTM, and to develop a strategy on behaviour change communication.

The decision to migrate is often a calculated one based on information available, family pressures, friends, their personal circumstances

(if they are head of the family), if they need to earn money, and their own perception. A comment mentioned frequently in interviews was that economic support for children and very poor families is required to mitigate pressures that children feel to migrate. Social protection targeting criteria do not reach all vulnerable families, or allow non-nationals access to benefits. Economic opportunities are required in rural areas, suggesting the need to link with jobs creation and development agents working in the agriculture sector.<sup>57</sup> Economic concerns were a contributing factor for why two in every three child or young person first moved from their home area according to OoR-Innocenti research.<sup>58</sup> Interviewees in all regions indicated that unless unsafe migration is tackled at the root, more and more children will replace those already supported.

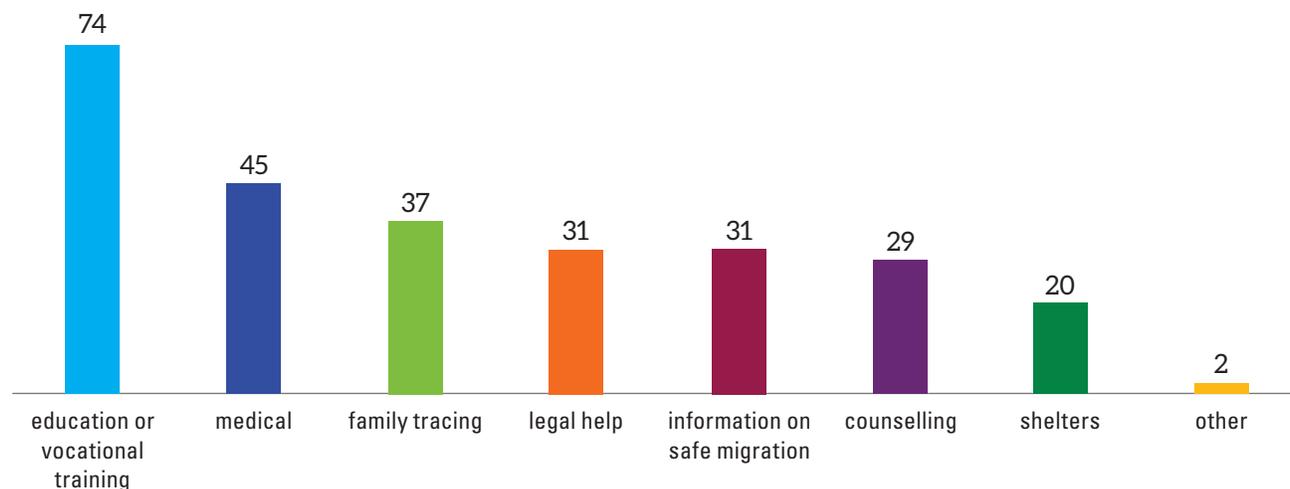
Other research reviewed during this evaluation noted how migration happens in phases. Children often stay in one place with friends or diaspora for long periods, and in order to earn money to move to another place. Diaspora networks are important in this regard. Work that does not exploit and is not considered child labour is required. Interestingly, the majority of social workers surveyed indicated education or vocational training as the biggest service gap for COTM. This was also rated as the top service gap across all four locations in the survey.

<sup>57</sup> Source: interviews in Ethiopia with woreda-level staff, social workers and partners.

<sup>58</sup> Gill, Mark et al., 'Children on the Move in East Africa: Research insights to mitigate COVID-19', UNICEF, 31 March 2020. Other findings included that almost four in ten (37 per cent) of children and young people on the move do not have access to facilities to wash themselves. One in four have not been able to access health services when they needed them, one in four reported being unable to access shelter or accommodation, and two in five have not been able to go to school when they wanted to. One in five children and young people on the move report living alone. As few as one in four children and young people on the move had access to the internet.

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**Figure 8: Social workers' rating of the top three service gaps for COTM**



Source: Social Workforce Survey

The same gaps with regard to material assistance and access to multi-sectoral services, including livelihood support, exists with regards to children that are placed in temporary or more permanent (foster) care with community leaders and families. In Ethiopia, support provided through transit centres, such as psychological, health, legal and food support and re-unification of children with their families, is important for filling these gaps. Child-friendly communication and engagement methods are often lacking along the entire journey and are crucial for prevention and response mechanisms to work. Peer-to-peer materials prepared by NGO partner Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) in Ethiopia look promising in this regard, but it is too early to determine their impact. In some regions of Ethiopia (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region) interviewees (*woreda*- or district-level coordinators) mentioned that they are strongly focusing on those children still in the community who are vulnerable to unsafe migration. Social mobilization sessions were conducted in Puntland and Somaliland, promoting the elimination of gender-based violence, FGM/C and child marriage. Community care programmes and discussions on such

issues in Puntland resulted in an action plan to address violence against women and girls in one area, which looks promising.

Participatory mechanisms accessible to children and allowing them to provide feedback are essential for accountability to these children. These mechanisms should be utilized by all actors coming into contact with children, including immigration officers and police. Given that they are often the first to come in contact with COTM and given that they are the least trusted by these COTM (as the research depicted by the OoR-Innocenti shows), a more regular and systematic engagement by UNICEF and its protection actors with law enforcement bodies in the three countries will be required in terms of capacity-building and clear referral mechanisms. Children in detention also need access to trained child protection actors (e.g. United Nations agencies, social workers) etc. through monitoring missions.

Children that are intercepted on their journey are often returned to the very same conditions that they were trying to leave. Available information, research and interviews have shown that best interest assessment does not take place

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adequately in the context of return procedures. Follow-up on the cases once they have been returned either inside the country or across the border often does not happen. Returned children and their families rarely receive support to help the child reintegrate. Efforts by the social workforce deployed to the *kebeles* in Ethiopia are however starting to show positive signs in terms of the quality of social support received by children. While community-based networks play a crucial role for caring for COTM, particularly as an alternative to detention, the burden cannot continue to fall mainly on their shoulders. While some safe houses exist, they are too few, suffer from poor conditions, and are operated by social workers of limited capacity who are overstretched. Currently, means available to children (e.g. hotlines) are limited in their effectiveness, due to lack of coverage, lack of confidentiality, as well as lack of effective feedback and follow-up. Where mechanisms for reporting incidents of gender-based violence exist, they are not sufficiently robust, accessible to children, or operationalized.

A significant finding is the need to set up systems that document systematically what works for COTM with different characteristics in different settings. Primero/CPIMS+ is promising in its potential to improve monitoring in the future, but it is too early to tell how effective it will be.

● **FINDING 16** – Reporting for the programme focused mainly on outputs, and there is no clear plan for monitoring progress toward outcomes.

While noting that putting in place a coherent monitoring framework for a complicated multi-country programme is quite an

achievement, monitoring of the COTM was primarily geared toward internal reporting and accountability, with less focus on aggregating learning across the four locations. The mid-term review planned for April 2020 had expected to identify programme accelerators and risks, but this review became a victim of COVID-19. Some interviewees in UNICEF HQ, COs and ROs mentioned they had regular discussions on overall performance, such as a reflection on whether UNICEF was implementing effective actions for improved protection of COTM. The evaluation team did not notice much progress on fostering synergies across countries. The exception was in February 2020, where there was a good exchange on cross-border case management and preliminary OoR-Innocenti research results. The end-of-project virtual meeting in November 2020 did eventually provide a platform to promote information exchange, explore opportunities to strengthen child protection cross-border case management, and clarify the link between CPSS and COTM programming. An important learning is the need to facilitate stocktaking opportunities across operations and within operations to ensure collective reflection on the challenges and opportunities that were experienced during the implementation of a multi-country initiative like COTM. Fifteen out of 20 UNICEF staff indicated in the survey conducted for this evaluation that participation in joint meetings and communication fosters synergies between COs.

According to interviews, survey results and reviewing the indicators themselves, it is evident that monitoring data were mainly intended for internal UNICEF use and UNICEF accountability reporting for each location. For example, word limitations in the monitoring systems<sup>59</sup> do not allow detail to reach higher levels for

<sup>59</sup> RAMs, COARs, SMQs.

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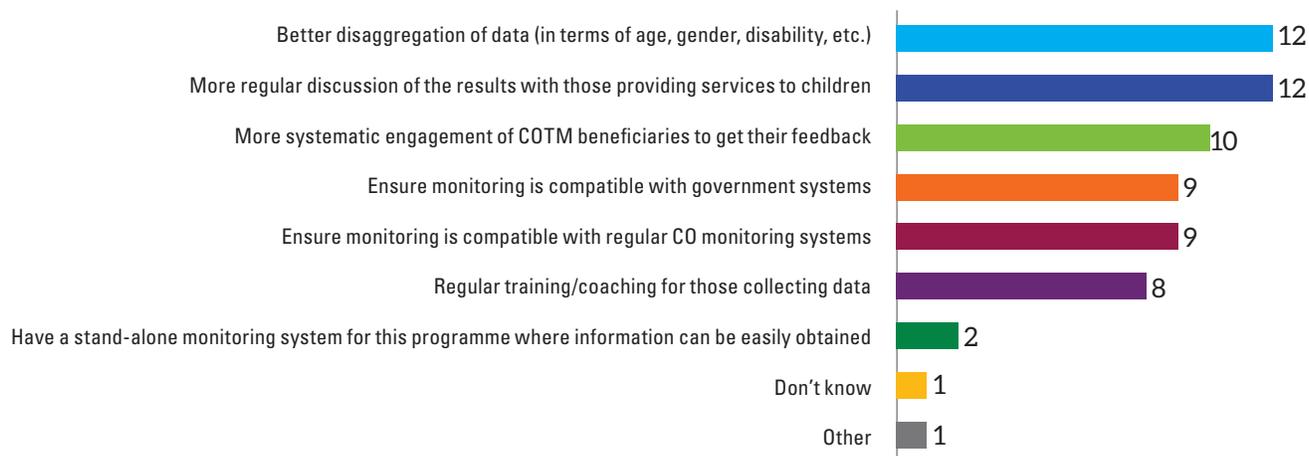
strategic decision-making. In Somaliland and Puntland, there is a general perception among UNICEF staff that data produced by UNICEF child protection staff are of good quality, but it was not possible to independently assess quality. In Ethiopia, the monitoring of the COTM programme was well integrated into UNICEF child protection annual work plans in the five regions but is reported back to UNICEF rather than to the relevant ministry. Review of three regional field trip reports actually demonstrated that key issues were raised with follow-up mechanisms recommended.

The programme monitoring mechanisms set up to report to HQ tended to focus on quantitative rather than qualitative information that could improve programme performance or effectiveness. There was little evidence that monitoring data could be used systematically to demonstrate results for the most vulnerable children. Monitoring data within UNICEF were not fully used as a tool for identifying and improving shortcomings in the delivery of services

with the aim of improving accountability to affected populations and other stakeholders. UNICEF staff survey respondents believed that monitoring data are nearly always used for internal reporting and accountability. A high percentage also indicated that it is always or sometimes used to improve programme delivery. Monitoring data are less often used to provide feedback to other partners and to COTM: almost half of respondents indicated that the monitoring data were sometimes or seldom used to provide feedback to COTM. Clearly, this is an area for improvement.

When UNICEF staff were asked what actions are required to improve the monitoring of a programme such as this, they indicated better disaggregation of data and more regular discussion of the results with those providing services to children. The third most frequently indicated action was a more systematic engagement of COTM to get their feedback (half UNICEF respondents reported this).

**Figure 9: View of UNICEF staff on actions to improve monitoring in the COTM programme**



Source: UNICEF Staff Survey

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At country level, data gathered through the COTM programme in the different locations were disaggregated mainly only at the level of nationalities and sex. The gendered impact of initiatives does not come out in monitoring. Indicators tend to be sex disaggregated into numbers who access programme activities or who attended training. The monitoring system is not set up to check whether a gender perspective is integrated into referral mechanisms, information materials or in advocacy work with government for COTM, or whether training materials are adjusted to the situation of girls.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, it is not evident what children of different nationalities and ages think of the different services provided by child protection actors, or whether referral to other services are appropriate for them. A challenge with working on strengthening national systems is that child protection systems in all countries currently produce very weak data. Such data are often not disaggregated except by sex and in some cases not even by age and nationality. Along with weak data generation, different government entities with mandates for specific categories of COTM manage different databases. There may not be clear ISPs in place between the different concerned entities. For example, in Sudan there are many challenges to keeping up-to-date disaggregated data by all relevant line ministries and bodies. While the NCCW use CPIMS+ in principle, it is not done in a systematic manner.

Some examples of tracing children with disabilities were found in Somaliland, indicating that progress is being made. In addition, 45 persons with disabilities were noted to have participated in awareness and community dialogue sessions in Somaliland and Puntland. National data systems in Ethiopia and Sudan are not fully set up for disability inclusion. However, in Ethiopia, UNICEF is advocating for the next demographic and health survey to include modules on disability. When UNICEF works through PCAs with implementing partners, they can insist on such monitoring, but working through government systems is a slow process and improvements tend to be incremental.

Although this formative evaluation is part of the plan for generating and sharing learning covering the four locations, some baseline data would have been helpful to gauge progress. A lesson learned is the need for more focus on reporting on how the programme benefits different categories of COTM, and whether the gap between available services for children and access for COTM is decreasing. Monitoring how the programme is faring with regard to changing perceptions towards COTM in communities, government administrations and so on would also be useful. Measuring these types of changes would however have required some type of baseline data before interventions started, or a comparison between those regions reached and those not yet reached.

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<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, the OoR-Innocenti recommendations advocate using multiple lenses to understand experiences: age, being unaccompanied or not (as well as gender).



### 4.3 Sustainability

This section examines whether initiatives started under the COTM programme are likely to continue, examining the extent to which results of the systems-strengthening work are sustainable and resilient to risk.<sup>61</sup> The extent to which the net benefits of the programme interventions are likely to continue after resources

cease is more easily assessed by examining physical outputs, rather than looking at the political will for continuation. The evaluation team developed a table based on interviews, physical evidence, secondary data and survey results to present elements that are likely or unlikely to be sustained after the funding period (Table 4).

#### ● SUSTAINABILITY ASPECTS OF THE COTM PROGRAMME

The COTM programme supported efforts to address COTM within the existing child protection system in certain locations, but the effectiveness of these efforts must be assessed by governments before innovations are scaled up. UNICEF managers are having discussions in order to reach a common understanding on what sustainability means for a donor programme such as this, given that this work is part of a longer term endeavour contextualized to each location. Many issues related to sustainability are outside UNICEF control.

National ownership on case management is evident due to the endorsement of case management tools and SOPs. However, how much it would cost to implement these and direct interventions for COTM are not yet known. Primero is only operating fully in Somaliland and Puntland. Similarly, and in the context of systems strengthening, it begs the question of how increased ownership by national governments and institutionalization of efforts contribute to sustainability.

The importance of political support and financial resources being put in place and maintaining a digitalization system is underlined. Sustaining the good progress made so far in the COTM programme requires human resources, funding, and legal and in some cases institutional frameworks to maintain the models set up.

<sup>61</sup> For example, workforce strengthening, improving case management systems, birth registration and legal framework strengthening.

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● **FINDING 17** – While the programme adopted a systems-strengthening approach, the lack of a continuum of multisectoral services for child protection continues to be a challenge to achieve sustainability.

It is generally acknowledged that sustainability is more likely when there is close collaboration and consultation with national institutions. In all four locations, strengthening of case management, social workforce training, legal systems strengthening, evidence generation and information for children has been done in close collaboration with government structures, and in collaboration with academic institutions in all locations and non-governmental structures in Somaliland and Puntland. A key question that is difficult to answer precisely at this point is whether a predominant focus on government actors is sufficient to enhance sustainability. This question is asked in view of limited resources for the continuity of these activities; limited capacity by governments to coordinate them; and the need for broader ownership from other actors such as a civil society, NGOs and the communities themselves.

Building up a national cohort of child protection experts (workforce strengthening) requires a suitable institutional programme with a curriculum that covers all child protection elements. Curricula and training manuals for social services should continue to help fill knowledge gaps in all four locations, provided they are easy to use, accessible, regularly referred to in important child protection-related meetings, shared with other agencies, and remain up to date. Universities in Somaliland, Puntland and Sudan are designing national curricula on social work and are implementing child protection training, which contributes to creating

a national capacity-building programme for potential social workers. Many were already trained through the COTM programme, yet much more capacity-building is required. However, capacity-building inputs and new knowledge and skills take considerable time to take hold and be assimilated into work practices.

Clearly, there is a demand for social workers across all four locations, although it is less clear who will pay their salaries in the future. Much depends on whether governments retain deployed social workers after FCDO funding. There are varying levels of commitment by host governments to pay the salaries of the additional trained social workers in the medium to long run. Sudan authorities had explicitly committed to retain and deploy social workers trained under the programme, although less than one quarter were known to have been hired by the end of the project (due to political instability and the onset of COVID-19). Some regions in Ethiopia (Tigray, Somalia Region) have indicated they are willing to sustain these workers and this assumption must be confirmed. The political situation in Tigray is likely to change priorities in the region. Paying salaries of social workers is an important aspect, but equally required is infrastructure for immediate needs of children such as appropriate medical services, washing facilities, clean drinking water and safe shelters. Capital expenditure in countries tends to be focused on roads, hospital buildings and schools, with competing demands from business and employee representatives, large influential donors and other advocacy groups. Governments inevitably face competing economic and social priorities resulting in shelters at borders, and related protection service infrastructure not high on the budget agenda (particularly for non-national children). The importance of school infrastructure was

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raised by some during the evaluation, revealing how rural-to-urban migration is often the only option for out-of-school children. Education must be coupled with better systems of coordination across government departments. Efforts to enhance collaboration between and across different services providers, government departments, NGOs and others were irregular, probably because they are time-consuming and burdensome to tackle. Assessing progress with regard to this element of child protection is not easy to determine, except ensuring SOPs are in place and agreed by the major actors, which occurred for the most part. Coordination functions must remain central to case management training, so social workers must put this at the fore of their workplans.<sup>62</sup> Systematic follow up on cases that have been referred to service providers, or transferred to be fostered, or returned to their areas of origin, must be emphasized, which is not easy given the number of vulnerable children, the standard of services and quality of staff. Primero will help with tracking coordination in the future but will not solve all problems in this regard.

UNICEF has made important headways in facilitating conversations and workable arrangements for interoperable case management systems (e.g. Primero with UNHCR), making it likely that this important tool will continue to be rolled out across countries and agencies. However, as indicated in a case study on Primero, it must be institutionalized and used by actors on the ground, particularly national authorities (and adopted into policy) to ensure success. In other words, the platform should be

mandated as the preferred information management system through government policy. It is also important that Primero is mainstreamed into curriculum that teaches social work professions. This is reported to be the case in Somaliland. Currently the rollout of the software is subsidized, although attempts are being made to sustain funding for its maintenance in countries. Furthermore, the quality of the data produced by Primero, and its usefulness as a tool, will only be as good as the level of effort and dedication to using it. Here, sound SOPs for its use are key (currently under development). These SOPs will need to be complemented by training for national actors on key issues such as carrying out vulnerability assessments, how to do best-interest assessments and case conferencing,<sup>63</sup> and how to adopt child-friendly interviewing and engagement methods.

● **FINDING 18 – UNICEF is fully aware of risks that threaten the sustainability of the interventions, including those that are outside its control.**

Results from the UNICEF staff survey conducted as part of this evaluation suggest moderate confidence in the sustainability of the interventions: 11 respondents indicated that they thought programme activities would “probably continue”; compared to only five who indicated they would “definitely continue”. Four respondents did not know. UNICEF interviewees and partners were further asked what elements of the programme they thought would be sustained after funding and these have been consolidated in Table 4.

<sup>62</sup> The social workforce has the task of coordinating and organizing, linking and providing services, while dealing with basic case administration issues. The social workers must also network with local authorities, NGOs and other agencies to ensure their full support.

<sup>63</sup> Case conferencing is employed by UNICEF, whereas UNHCR uses and calls this Best Interest Determination (BIA).

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Sustainability challenges include, for example, weak or unsupportive government structures and competing priorities in governments. A common issue relates to the fragmentation of child-related responsibilities across different ministries. All these challenges and competing priorities are related to COTM, albeit indirectly. How to link them must be spelled out across future programme proposals, which is no easy task.

In the COTM programme in Khartoum, UNICEF modelled its support to the social workforce on activities similar to those conducted in other provinces and which had positive impacts that appeared sustainable. The elaboration of SOPs for referral systems for children have provided clarity for government and non-government service providers and should continue to be used after the COTM funding ceases. A focus on one community committee to support diversion of children in conflict with the law was planned, and two were actually established (in Khartoum and Omdurman). Continuing to build capacities and stepping up support to community-based structures (e.g. material/financial support), is important with a view to better integrating them into the national child protection system. UNICEF work to strengthen cross-border coordination in Sudan is likely to continue as it builds on the gains made at national level by COTM programmes, including this programme funded by FCDO. Work with relevant national and local actors such as Social Service Technical Council, the Economic and Social Bureau, two universities, and local NGOs such as the Sudanese Organization for Literacy are an investment in local capacity and are contributing to system strengthening.

In Somaliland and Puntland, interviews indicate that systems-strengthening work is more sustainable when strategic partners are included, particularly government and community structures. Having protocols validated for future reference on case management is useful, and capacity-building with social workers helps considerably. It is unknown whether community-based initiatives like school child rights clubs will continue reaching out to children and community members. Why some continue and others do not continue should be investigated. Somaliland and Puntland have continued to advance efforts to strengthen their respective national case management systems, which is a good indication that they will use the systems, particularly with the roll out of CPIMS+. The government is willing to support the COTM programme beyond the funding period, but there are competing priorities, so the government might struggle to support the COTM.

In Ethiopia, nearly all activities implemented were within the government system and should continue in one form or another (unless affected by conflict). Thanks to UNICEF and UNHCR, COTM are mentioned four or five times in the NCMF and included in a list of 16 categories of children of concern or at risk.<sup>64</sup> However, the implementation of the case management framework for child protection is likely to need until the end of 2021 to be able to demonstrate how it works and to compare districts where rollout occurred with districts where such case management tools are not in use. UNICEF was able to demonstrate to a new minister for children the importance of having social workers through a site visit to a migrant centre at the onset of

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<sup>64</sup> This is an example of good efforts to ensure coherence within local systems, and joint advocacy between UNHCR and UNICEF.

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COVID-19, which helped to catalyse funding toward particular needs.<sup>65</sup> Field interviewees in Ethiopia frequently mentioned that if the regional government extends the social work structures down to the *kebele* (village) level, and if they take over the regional funding of the programme and are able to pay the salaries of the social workers, the programme would be better sustained.<sup>66</sup> The five regions differ, however. In Tigray,<sup>67</sup> it was reported by local government officials that they plan to link the programme with the structure and also scale up gradually to another few *woredas*. In Oromia, Somalia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region, and Amhara regions, quite a few interviewees noted officials have commitment, but the child protection workforce still lacks technical capacity. Nearly all interviewees stressed that much more technical and

systems-strengthening support is required, and the case management systems need to be well institutionalized. The need to strengthen community care coalitions at the *kebele* and link to *woreda* level to work jointly on child protection activities was frequently mentioned in interviews. There is a need to expand the COTM programme in South Central Somalia to address similar challenges faced by the COTM there. On another note, the UPSHIFT programme currently targets only urban and peri-urban youth. There is a need to expand its scope to rural areas in future to provide rural youth with similar skills.

A table outlining the sustainability prospects of different outputs of the programme has been prepared by the evaluation team based on interviews and secondary resources and is presented below.

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<sup>65</sup> For example, the ECO is advocating for the next demographic and health survey in Ethiopia to include the Washington Modules regarding disability so that there are data based on international standards.

<sup>66</sup> The low salary of social workers (particularly in comparison to salaries provided by non-government entities) is an issue that came up frequently in interviews.

<sup>67</sup> Prior to the political unrest that began in November 2020 in Tigray.

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**Table 4: Likelihood of activities and outputs being sustained**

	Likely to be sustained	Possibly sustained with more influence or support	Unlikely to be sustained and why
<b>Case management systems-strengthening work</b>			
<b>Ethiopia</b>	The child protection system has been endorsed. The Child Protection Case Management Supervision and Coaching Training Facilitators Guide will continue to be used. The CPIMS+ roll out will continue beyond this programme (e.g. in Gambela), if there is more buy-in to test and roll it out.	Case referral forms will continue to be used only if simplified and translated into local languages. Primero/ CPIMS+ will continue if more work undertaken to set up and provide technical support is provided until local service providers can manage it confidentially and effectively. Application of SOPs for the management of data pertaining to COTM cases will not automatically result in better disaggregated data without sustained focus on their application from UNICEF and others.	Funding is required for activities to train and support relevant members of community-based structures and service providers in case management procedures and protocols. More technical and financial support is required to set up and sustain administrative data on all COTM.
<b>Sudan</b>	Involvement of inter-agency working group for the rollout of Primero is likely to continue		
<b>Somaliland/ Puntland</b>	Data management practices are integrated into the university programmes on social work. SOPs and protocols are validated for reference on case management.	Child protection case management SOPs developed in the programme are likely to continue through an inter-agency consultative process with government partners, community-based groups, UN agencies and other actors working under the umbrella of the CP Area of Responsibility.	Funding required to sustain inter-agency consultative forums and fund activities especially at community level.
<b>Social service workforce capacity-strengthening efforts (a long-term endeavour in all countries)</b>			
<b>Ethiopia</b>	The development of six occupational competences for social work are in place. Training materials for occupation standard assessment of competences and training materials on how to conduct such assessments will remain because of work with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETS). Some Bureau of Women and Children Affairs (BOWCA) staff have obtained capacity strengthening to continue overseeing work for vulnerable children including COTM. Job descriptions for community and social workers can be amended and used.	Funding and commitment are required to continue training for the social service workforce. Depends on the region whether social service workforce whose salaries are paid for by UNICEF will be taken over by government. The Civil Service Commission is the authority to set up payment for new occupations, and they must be lobbied/ or a budget request sent from a relevant ministry.	The TVET are not likely to offer in-service courses to community workers unless there is a demand for these workers, and they get more support to run such courses.
<b>Sudan</b>	The prominent role played by the Economic and Social Bureau in establishing a social service technical council is promising and should go a long way in professionalizing the social work profession. The manual on social services will also help fill gaps in the knowledge of practitioners.	Engagement with the Ministry of Finance has begun to obtain the commitment of the government to pay salaries of the 100 social workers agreed to be hired. Work to ensure universities are able to continue to offer the courses on social work once the first curricula have been adopted began with a review of the curricula by UNICEF.	

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Table 4 continued

	Likely to be sustained	Possibly sustained with more influence or support	Unlikely to be sustained and why
<b>Somaliland/ Puntland</b>	Extensive consultation with universities has enabled the social worker courses to be embedded in university courses. This is a great improvement to the provision of one-off, independent and shorter skills training courses. Strong local ownership combined with the universities' dynamic attitude to implementing the course suggests it will continue to run.	The Somali Social Work Association is an important step towards social work strengthening and will be critical in providing ongoing support for and regulation of social work practitioners, convening existing and new partners, and ensuring further indigenization and sustainability of social work education and practice.	Funding is needed to continue offering scholarships to needy students (UNICEF Somalia provided 240 scholarships a year during the programme). Improved salaries of social workers to ensure they remain in government jobs will be critical.
<b>Improved access to integrated social and child protection services</b>			
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Case assessment in Addis Ababa at IOM migration transit centres will continue to refer returnee children to social workers to conduct case assessment provided social workers are paid.	Refugee children can in theory access the national child protection system, but in practice they do not, and will not without more advocacy by UNICEF and partners. If there is collaboration between MOLSA and the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth at the federal level and subsequently between Bureau of Women, Children and Youth and Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BOLSA) at the regional level towards strengthening the structure and capacity of community care committees, these will contribute to social and child protection at the <i>kebele</i> level.	More and better-quality referral mechanisms will not be fully functioning for a long time. One-stop-shops require strengthening, and more advocacy by UNICEF and partners is required toward the Federal Attorney General's office for resources to strengthen these important services for vulnerable children.
<b>Sudan</b>	The more child-centred and child friendly communication approaches that UNICEF and its national counterparts adopted in reaching out to children on the risks of COVID-19, including COTM, are likely to continue and to be replicated in similar communication and outreach efforts. These efforts have been able to increase availability of relevant information to COTM and to improve the feedback loop from them.	The reunification of COTM with their families will not constitute durable solutions in the absence of adequate best interest determination procedures and follow-up of the returned cases. The design of the programme was based on the assumption that sectoral services available to COTM in Khartoum are of good standard. While they are better than the services provided outside the capital, there is a need to strengthen the continuum of care available to COTM. A detailed mapping of the multisectoral services available in the State of Khartoum could lead to a better understanding of the gaps and therefore more targeted interventions.	The lack of safe houses for COTM in Khartoum undermines alternative care arrangements for COTM. Currently, there are only two that are not suitable for long stays, and suffer from a shortage of funds, weak care system and weak monitoring. UNICEF involvement with children from religious schools is likely to be exceptional without a strategy to engage the government. There is no clear responsibility for religious schools by any one government ministry.
<b>Somaliland/ Puntland</b>	The inter-agency SOPs developed for child protection case management are critical in sustaining access to child protection services as they contain guiding principles, procedures, roles and responsibilities for child rights violations, abuse, neglect and exploitation of all children including COTM and children associated with armed groups.	It is not yet clear whether the child protection desks will be sustained. How to ensure that the government continues funding the salaries of the social workers manning those CP desks must be worked out, so trained ones do not seek greener pastures in NGOs that might pay better.	While the programme focused on strengthening government capacity in child protection services, the government is faced with competing priorities such as recurring humanitarian crises from drought, conflict, floods among others. Support from non-governmental actors is still required.

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Table 4 continued

	Likely to be sustained	Possibly sustained with more influence or support	Unlikely to be sustained and why
<b>Improved understanding of the behaviour of COTM and their decision-making process</b>			
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Peer-to-peer learning materials and life skills training for COTM can be used again, if translated, and shared widely with others in the child protection sectors.	Vulnerable children and communities will not continue to get improved access to information safe migration options unless there is a concerted effort to disseminate such information. DOT's migration information booklet must be disseminated.	
<b>Sudan</b>	Understanding of the behaviours and motivations of COTM in the Egypt/Sudan border area will improve as UNICEF advances with the implementation of its cross-border action plan.	A more nuanced understanding of how gender impacts decision-making as well as the needs of non-Arabic speaking COTM migrants in Khartoum (particularly from West Africa) can only be achieved with targeted additional research and monitoring by UNICEF and its partners.	
<b>Somaliland/Puntland</b>	Emerging evidence from the OoR-Innocenti research has provided very useful information on what works for COTM.	Community-based initiatives like school child rights clubs should continue reaching out to children if they continue to receive capacity-building.	
<b>Improved access to legal protection</b>			
<b>Sudan</b>	Access to and follow up on COTM that are victims of trafficking will continue given the relatively strong coordination mechanisms and clear SOPs that exist in this regard.	Continuing advocacy with government is needed so they include all vulnerable children in the national protection system irrespective of nationality. The role of local communities to monitor activities related to children requires increased efforts and resources.	
<b>Somaliland/Puntland</b>	Since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2015, a Child Rights Bill has been drafted and presented to cabinet for parliamentary processing. Other key legislative amendments are in process including confirmation of the provisional constitution, a sexual offences bill, juvenile justice bill and civil registration and vital statistics bill, all of which will be key reference documents for child protection case workers.	The existence of institutional and legal mechanisms is positive in theory and indicates government commitment to child protection, but the challenge is in implementation, which is not guaranteed given the various competing priorities of government.	
<b>Use of evidence/data to enhance knowledge and inform programming on COTM</b>			
<b>Sudan</b>	The Economic and Social Bureau already has over 30 researchers examining COTM issues, which means more evidence on COTM is likely to emerge and should contribute to COTM work – a relationship UNICEF is committed to nurturing.		
<b>All countries</b>	UNICEF partners are interested in the results of the research conducted and can be useful allies in disseminating it and using the findings in their advocacy efforts. Much depends on dissemination strategy for OoR-Innocenti reports, and translation/ packaging for different audiences. Research reports and power points will be available as public goods and their use/uptake will depend on the COs and their government counterparts.		



## 4.4 Coherence

This section examines the extent to which the programme was in sync with relevant local coordination systems in each location and with the efforts of other key actors.

Barriers to and opportunities for synergies are highlighted including how were these managed and affected by COVID-19.

### ● COHERENCE ASPECTS OF THE COTM PROGRAMME

The programme straddles the humanitarian-development nexus, with linkages to, for example, the 2018 Migration and Refugee Compacts as well as global efforts to address violence against children (VAC). The programme built upon and strengthening partnerships with governmental and some non-governmental stakeholders, as well as working closely with United Nations agencies such as IOM and UNHCR, with the aim of developing SOPs and referral mechanisms. Although different approaches and methodologies tend to be used by different agencies when providing the required support to children and communities, the COTM programme recognized that it required other actors to work together in a complementary manner, activating agreed-upon identification and referral mechanisms. Further unpacking by UNICEF and others on whether the term 'COTM' is an accurate enough description of children who are falling across different mandates is required. Appropriate use of coordination networks or cluster groups were noted in each location. More collaboration with community fora would be desirable, provided community networks are trained to focus on the best interest of the child.



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● **FINDING 19** – The programme demonstrated how support for COTM requires multiple actors to work together in a complementary manner, activating agreed-upon identification and referral mechanisms.

Child protection experts generally agree that no single actor has the capacity to respond to children moving across borders. Annex IV outlines the range of partnerships working on the programme in the Horn of Africa, demonstrating that this programme linked to a considerable and manageable number of partners, including humanitarian actors.

A broad range of child protection partners appeared to work well together in Somalia. UNICEF promoted synergies of effort among these actors through an inter-agency consultative process with government partners, community-based groups, United Nations agencies and national and international actors working in child protection under the umbrella of the child protection area of responsibility. Child protection partners as well as the ministries in charge of social affairs, women and children's issues, interior and immigration services, and justice are the entry points for multisectoral programmatic interventions. Civil society organizations provide support in terms of referrals and direct service provision. The government seems to take a lead in coordination, perhaps a reflection of the composition of the government officials in Somaliland and Puntland, many of whom are former staff members of international organizations with a clear grasp of child protection issues/needs. UNICEF Somalia works with migration taskforces such as the Mixed Migration Taskforce, as well with the Special Envoy on Children and Migration in the

Federal Government of Somalia to address child migration issues in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Puntland, it was reported in interviews that the child protection working group held at regional/district level is functioning well. Child protection partners including IOM, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Save the Children and the Danish Refugee Council discuss child protection case management issues (among other protection issues) monthly, although this can be more frequent depending on the urgency of issues at hand. These meetings were reported to ensure coordination, referrals and information-sharing to avoid overlapping.

In Ethiopia, UNICEF collaborates on migration and child protection with a broad range of actors. The key United Nations collaborator was IOM, through a dedicated bilateral annual work plan. The United Nations Migration Network in Ethiopia is the key coordination platform for all migration-related issues, with terms of reference and a well-defined annual work plan. An important coordination system in Ethiopia is the child protection gender-based violence migration cluster. This platform enhances coordination, as well as developing standards for humanitarian response, and was considered by many interviewed as a good forum for sharing information and getting information on new procedures. IOM is supporting the government to develop a migration policy, with UNHCR attempting to ensure it does not cover Ethiopian nationals alone, and UNICEF ensuring that the rights of children are considered.

In Ethiopia, although there are many donor programmes, the COTM programme worked mainly with government, a new NGO partner (DOT), and a society for social workers<sup>68</sup> that

<sup>68</sup> The Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists

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had previously undertaken training for social workers aligned to the productive safety net programme (PSNP). The COTM programme also worked closely with another FCDO-funded programme, “*Building self-reliance for refugees and vulnerable host communities by improved sustainable basic social service delivery*” (BSRP). Synergies between the COTM and ILO in Ethiopia were not found during this evaluation, which is a pity given that ILO, along with the Federal Attorney General’s Office, had validated a mapping of stakeholders working on migration in late 2018, which identified all migration-focused activities including reintegration initiatives in the country at federal, regional and *woreda* level. The aim of this exercise was to improve coordination and collaboration among stakeholders. Also, a Norwegian-funded programme looked at upgrading skills offered in TVETs, also with a migration focus. Indeed, for all countries, partnerships forged with any rural employment or rural enterprise programmes may be fruitful (e.g. rural enterprise initiatives managed by ILO and the Food and Agricultural Organization [FAO], or FAO farmer field schools).

In UNICEF Sudan, there are 18 different entities that target different categories of children including COTM, funded by different donors. These programmes include areas such as legal concerns, CPSS, and birth registration, among others. Work on devising SOPs, particularly those on responding to trafficking as well as the rollout of CPIMS+/Primer, took place in interagency settings. UNHCR was able to follow up on UNICEF work to access detention centres holding children. However, with the exception of certain activities such as the rollout of CPIMS+/Primer, there was no strong inter-agency framework in which the COTM programme was implemented; it largely appeared to be a stand-alone UNICEF programme. This contrasts with many of the

other programmes targeting COTM, where the decision has been to work collaboratively and in an inter-agency manner (e.g. PROSPECTS, CASI, other UPSHIFT programs).

In all three countries, many outside UNICEF had at least heard of the programme, as COTM staff attended various fora and provided inputs on other programmes. On the other hand, some United Nations partners and NGOs were not aware of the programme. In Sudan, for example, there was a lack of awareness of the concrete objectives of the programme, perhaps because it was relatively small in relation to many other initiatives targeting COTM in the country.

Although the programme document foresaw collaboration with the European Union-funded *Better Migration Management* (BMM) programme, which focused on addressing trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa, the evaluation found no strong synergies with BMM in Sudan or Ethiopia. However, in Somaliland and Puntland, the programme was actively involved in the elaboration of the national referral mechanism for migrants with BMM and the COTM programme (e.g. provided training to the Somaliland Human Rights Commission on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in a workshop organized by BMM). A UNICEF interviewee noted that there were only a few occasions to engage with BMM at regional level. A BMM official mentioned possibilities for further cross-border collaboration with UNICEF (i.e. co-funding at country level). BMM reportedly has good forum for civil society partners to share lessons.

Work by the World Bank and others demonstrates the promise of social protection systems to address the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities of children, families and communities. There was good collaboration with the

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Ethiopian Minister of Labour with regard to occupational standards for social workers, but less crossover with regard to access to the PSNP, despite efforts by UNICEF.<sup>69</sup> One community worker functioning across both ministries would be ideal, but this requires direction and restructuring at the federal level.<sup>70</sup> Overall, better linkages to social protection systems should be emphasized in the programme, investigating how they can reach vulnerable communities.

With regard to the research component of the programme, the researchers introduced the project at many interagency gatherings and with governments and engaged many stakeholders (NGOs, academics). In Somaliland and Puntland, the OoR-Innocenti worked collaboratively with government partners respectively in the planning and implementation of the research and this was critical in getting government support and information, which enriched the findings. In Sudan, although UNICEF involved government partners from the onset of the research, UNICEF could have further consulted with other protection actors. Although many agencies took part in the research validation workshops, discussions have yet to take place with other partners in the wider protection cluster on how the findings could be used by other like-minded organizations in-country. Several interviewees expressed their interest in the research outcomes.

● **FINDING 20** – The programme technically applied to all COTM as intended, though in practice the responsibility for various categories COTM (e.g. refugees, asylum-seekers) is still fragmented among many agencies and structures, which results in a lack of coherence.

The UNICEF message, emanating from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to protect the rights of every child, everywhere, especially the most disadvantaged, irrespective of status, requires accentuation, particularly with government counterparts and other agencies. Although the programme technically applied to COTM irrespective of their nationality, the way it was designed, and the manner in which humanitarian and protection responses are organized globally, means that the COTM programme has not purposefully included refugees and asylum-seekers.

Different approaches and methodologies tend to be used by different agencies when providing the required support to children and communities. Funding streams and organizational mandates often limit capacities to synergize work. The programme falls within the remit of different cluster/sector groups and several ministries in all countries, straddling the various humanitarian and development groups UNICEF staff (not necessarily from the COTM programme) participate in. Agencies organize and categorize children by vulnerability and status. In fact, using the term 'COTM' was confusing for some agencies,

<sup>69</sup> The PSNP case management manual (April 2020) contains inputs for social workers deployed in the PSNP programme to enhance their capacity to provide social services for their PSNP clients. In regional government structures, neither BOLSA or BOWCA have a structure that adequately reaches down to the community level (unlike other government ministries such as agriculture or health). Community workers hired by the COTM programme are attempting to use community-level structures stemming either from the children's ministry (BOWCA in SNNP, Amahara, Oromia and Somali) or labour (BOLSA in Tigray).

<sup>70</sup> Social workers who work on the PSNP report to BOLSA, but at the village level, social workers were said to work collaboratively, as there are no BOWCA official positions in villages, whereas there are BOLSA positions who work with community care coalitions.

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as they are unsure who to include, given the interpretation of legal status of children in different contexts. Meetings in inter-agency settings such as the clusters do not tend to discuss COTM generally but focus on the specific categories to which these children belong.

In Sudan, children that are refugees and asylum-seekers are channelled to UNHCR. Likewise, in Ethiopia, UNICEF work in this area falls between two different clusters: one cluster for IDPs, led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and another for refugees, led by UNHCR.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, when looking at the structure of government institutions, children are also under the responsibility of specific institutions organized by legal status or nationality. Annex IV contains details on how these institutions are structured across the four locations. Bringing together sections of government that are involved in migration, education, child protection or social protection is extremely challenging. This leads to frustration, particularly in the context of a time-bound programme expected to reach agreed targets for certain indicators.

● **FINDING 21 – The UNICEF focus on strengthening national child protection mechanisms is an essential step toward improved cross-border coordination.**

UNICEF does have an internal protocol for cross-border case management in the region. Drawing on experience in the programme, UNICEF shared a draft theoretical flow chart for cross-border case management in a UNICEF review meeting in November 2020 and agreed internally on parameters for cross-border

work on COTM in the region in February 2020. UNICEF did not have an opportunity to share these with IOM, UNHCR and others, as planned meetings had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. However, a format to harmonize case management globally is being developed through the Global Case Management Taskforce (CMTF). UNICEF members of the CMTF are responsible for disseminating these tools to COs. The CMTF work is aligned with the CPIMS+ steering group. UNICEF work on strengthening the national child protection system and CPIMS+ is a step toward improved cross-border coordination. As mentioned, discussions have taken place with UNHCR and IOM on how to ensure that the current information systems are synchronized (so their services can be regulated and recognized by the government), and work at the global level on Primero/CPIMS+ with the UNHCR *ProgRes* is moving ahead. The objective is to ensure that these two information systems ‘speak to each other’, as well as to define a minimum common data set, managed by ISPs.<sup>72</sup> The inclusion in CPIMS+ of information pertaining to COTM that have different legal statuses, including refugees, will positively impact case management in-country and across borders, as it will help streamline approaches to COTM. Harmonization with the IOM data registration system, *MIMOSA*, has not yet occurred.

The alignment of information systems notwithstanding, a major barrier to cross-border work is related to the readiness of national institutions for cross-border work. In Somaliland and Puntland, it was noted in interviews that advocacy for strengthening of cross-border coordination with government is being pursued, with UNICEF advocating to ensure COTM

<sup>71</sup> A separate FCDO-funded programme is working directly with refugees and host communities in specific areas.

<sup>72</sup> The Primero/CPIMS+ collaboration is important for other actors in the four locations. ProGres 4 and Primero are interoperable.

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access services whenever needed. Building this relationship with a host government is important for work to move to the next level.

In Ethiopia, while UNICEF worked closely with IOM through a Letter of Agreement with regard to child returnees and in migrant centres, two interviewees noted that more collaboration with IOM is required on cross-border case management.

In Sudan, UNICEF began working with relevant agencies such as IOM and UNHCR quite early on, sharing with them the results of research and mapping carried out by ISS in both Egypt and Sudan, as well as an action plan with a view to enlisting their support. On the other hand, in Ethiopia, discussions on a roadmap for moving forward have not yet occurred (except on CPIMS+ with United Nations partners). UNICEF Somalia has been working with IOM under the regional activity plan. In 2019, up to 25 Ethiopian children went through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration process in a collaborative effort between UNICEF and IOM.<sup>73</sup>

● **FINDING 22 – Coordination across formal and informal actors requires more emphasis.**

Community-based structures are a viable platform for child protection, including for referrals and reintegration. UNICEF has recognized that its offices need to better define its role with regard to community-based protection mechanisms and coordination between formal and less formal actors.<sup>74</sup> Community-led awareness sessions were an important instrument

in Somaliland and Puntland. Community members received capacity-building on the protection of COTM, referrals for UASC, and gender-based violence with the aim of improving the general protective environment for children.<sup>75</sup> However, it is necessary to have clearer training and support plans in place for relevant members of community-based structures. There is also a need to strengthen their ability to provide care (either by linking them better to service providers, national social protection structures or support them materially). This was not noted as a strong focus in Sudan or Ethiopia. In Somaliland and Puntland, there is also a need to strengthen capacities, as these community-based structures are linked to referral mechanisms and play a role in referring survivors to service providers. Linkages with other organizations and their efforts on communications are important for coherent community conversations on migration.

In Ethiopia, some regions used the existing community care coalitions to discuss issues related to child protection; UNICEF had worked previously with some in the prevention of harmful practices and the PSNP (although these efforts were curtailed because of COVID-19). However, responsibilities of formal and less formal actors must be worked out by context. In Tigray, although UNICEF wanted to maintain the social work services within government institutions, the regional government authorities have pushed it to the volunteer network at the community level, who do not have the capacity/funds to retain the community workers after the programme. In Sudan, the objective

<sup>73</sup> As outlined in IOM-UNICEF Consolidated Workplan in 2020 and IOM-UNICEF Somaliland and Puntland Workplan 2019-2020.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, "Strengthening Child Protection Systems: Evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance," UNICEF, New York, 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Social mobilization sessions were conducted in Puntland and Somaliland before the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on elimination of ungender-based violence, FGM/C, and child marriage.

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of establishing a community committee in Khartoum came as an afterthought (when other work streams no longer became possible due to the political situation). As a result, two community committees were established in Khartoum and Omdurman.<sup>76</sup> Despite UNICEF Sudan doubling its target, there was no evidence of a detailed plan for capacity-building and support to these committees.

Capacity-building for members of community-based child protection networks is likely to become more important in the future as an integral part of a child protection system (see below). This is an area where UNICEF could concentrate on reaching out to networks while trying to instil and maintain a child rights focus. Although the UNICEF niche is a focus on state accountabilities for children's rights and partnering with government departments, more collaboration with these community structures would be desirable, particularly in locations where the state and other protection actors have limited or no outreach.<sup>77</sup> As recognized by other evaluations, UNICEF needs to define more clearly its role with regard to community-based protection mechanisms and the support it will provide. It can use its offices to support better coordination between the formal and the informal mechanisms and to building the capacity and capability of the latter to respond. Indeed, through the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Plan International is currently mapping what is available on community approaches to case management. Standardized approaches will be very useful, as well as general principles for communities to absorb.

● **FINDING 23 – Internal coherence within UNICEF was good overall, despite some exceptions.**

UNICEF ESARO worked closely with the COTM programme, although it did not receive any funds. It provided technical assistance to COs on demand and provided a linkage to IGAD and the African Union debates on migration policy. Internal coherence across child protection work was strong in Ethiopia and Somalia. In the Ethiopian regions, the COTM was included in UNICEF regional annual work plans with regional governments and coordinated by the UNICEF regional child protection officer. Excellent collaboration was reported from staff in the Ethiopian office working on other child protection issues, with officers provided good inputs to case management, social service workforce training and other aspects. However, despite the need for livelihoods support for families of children who migrate because of poverty, there appeared to be few linkages with UNICEF work on social protection.

In Sudan, the programme was coherent with the overall objectives and direction of UNICEF support to increasing the size and capacity of the social workforce. Prior to the COTM programme, UNICEF Sudan had historically provided hands-on support to the social workforce in many states, but not the State of Khartoum (as partnership was focused on the federal level). This is a gap that the programme therefore tried to fill, capitalizing on the interest of donors. Furthermore, the programme allowed the implementation of some of the key recommendations emanating from the social workforce mapping

<sup>76</sup> In Sudan, there is a strong recognition of the important role that the community-based protection networks play in assisting and protecting COTM, particularly in remote areas that neither international organizations nor the State cannot reach.

<sup>77</sup> The OoR-Innocenti research found that children trust community-based and religious organizations, which would suggest there is value in investing more in these to diversify service provisions as well as use them as a bridge to formal child protection systems.

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that had been carried out using other funds. In this sense, the programme allowed for the coherent continuation of UNICEF Sudan efforts to better understand in the national child protection system, and to better tailor its response.

UNICEF Sudan might have missed opportunities to improve coherence – in part because there were 18 projects where COTM appeared as direct or indirect beneficiaries, which makes it challenging to have ‘the bigger picture’. As for programmes that specifically included the State of Khartoum, only one other programme (besides the COTM programme) targeted a sub-category of COTM in Khartoum – namely South Sudanese refugees (implemented in 2018-2019). There was no evidence of linkages between these programmes and the COTM programme, suggesting its impact was not maximized. In Sudan, UNICEF works on establishing programmatic synergies with other

United Nations agencies (as part of the Mixed Migration Task Force) that collectively benefit COTM, but that have historically focused on regions outside of the State of Khartoum. There are clear examples of close inter-agency collaboration on other programmes that benefit COTM funded by other donors. For example, ILO is supporting market chain assessment for its income generation projects, so beneficiaries can sell their food products to clients in Khartoum. As noted previously, both organizations have agreed for ILO to take UPSHIFT graduates into its own entrepreneurship training programme, although this does not apply to graduates of UPSHIFT in Khartoum.

The table below outlines some barriers and opportunities for synergies, and how were these managed by the intervention and affected by COVID-19.

**Table 5: Barriers and opportunities for synergies**

Barriers for synergies	Opportunities for synergies
<p>COTM fall within the remit of several ministries. A clear coordination structure for COTM initiatives does not exist in all countries, with some cluster/sector systems focusing on refugees, migration, or child protection without a migration aspect (or the reverse: on migration without a child focus).</p>	<p>In some COs, there was an appropriate use of coordination networks or cluster groups in each country, using liaison persons to remind governments of their commitments under the CRC, the Global Compacts, and what has been agreed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)/ United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).</p> <p>COTM staff or country office staff engaged with national coordination networks and processes attending child protection or migration meetings and advocated for the inclusion of all children in child protection systems.</p>
<p>In country offices and across the protection agenda, there can be different focal points for different programmes that include COTM. This leads to compartmentalized action and has limited the ability to analyse cross-programme data, identify trends as well as to build sectoral and thematic synergies that go beyond individual programmes funded by different donors.</p>	<p>A detailed mapping of programmes, alliances, collaboration opportunities, opportunities for synergies and inter-linkages between and across child protection programmes was better in some COs than others.</p> <p>More cross-programme coordination and analysis to build thematic synergies is required that goes beyond individual programmes funded by different donors.</p> <p>Aligning the COTM objectives and implementation into key regional discussions such as IGAD is good for ensuring coherence.</p>
<p>There was an insufficient focus on community networks in some contexts. These can be key protection actors in many locations and can work hand-in-hand with the national protection systems or fill gaps.</p>	<p>Mechanisms for child participation and community engagement are currently being discussed within UNICEF within the context of a review of the UNICEF approach to CPSS.</p> <p>Through the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, efforts will soon be underway to develop guidance tools for community networks through the community-level child protection task force. A guidance note and toolkit is soon to be launched.</p>
<p>Awareness-raising campaigns took place in some locations as one-off activities rather than continuous ones linked to other efforts.</p>	<p>As enhanced communication around COVID-19 demonstrated, there are opportunities for effectively engaging children despite limitations on face-to-face gatherings.</p> <p>Awareness-raising should be an on-going activity, rather than a specific campaign.</p> <p>Mapping of those providing migration information was undertaken in some countries. Linkages with other organizations and their efforts on communicating with communities (e.g. the British Council) are important for more community conversations or forum discussions on migration</p>
<p>The lack of detailed mapping on responsibilities and activities can be a significant barrier to more effective partnership on COTM in UN organizations and NGOs. The departure of staff with historical and institutional knowledge due to staff rotations is also a challenge.</p>	<p>Although UN agencies have specific mandates, they are also highly collaborative and work together in joint programmes. Funding opportunities improve with collaboration as donors have more confidence when UN agencies implement joint programmes. It is not easy for one agency to cover migration work alone, as it requires multisector approaches. Evidently, the UNSDCF presents an opportunity for articulating coordination and joint work in partnership with government and ensure impact across different agendas. Detailed mapping of responsibilities for effective partnership on COTM between UN organizations and NGOs may be a way forward.</p>
<p>The financial management capacity of the government entities that are involved in these types of COTM programmes that receive funding is weak, limiting coherence and coordination.</p> <p>Programme resources were not always allocated efficiently and on time via government systems.</p>	<p>Share and support simple project management tools; ensure bureaucratic procedures are easy to follow including reporting.</p>

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## 4.5 Thematic Area 1: Strengthening of systems that provide assistance and protection to COTM

Taking the six elements of work that must be in place for child protection systems to be fully functional<sup>78</sup> as the basis for examining UNICEF interventions in the three countries, it becomes evident that the bulk of UNICEF work focused on three of these, namely:

- A robust legal and regulatory framework, as well as specific policies related to child protection;
- Effective governance structures, including coordination across government departments, between levels of decentralization and between formal and informal actors;
- Human, financial and infrastructure resources.

On **putting in place effective governance structures**, the overall objective of the programme was appropriate, in that the intention was to strengthen the child protection system for all children irrespective of their nationality or legal status. In doing so, UNICEF was able to capitalize on its long-standing presence and role in the three countries, as well as its role as a credible and leading child protection actor to improve government structures that aim at identifying, protecting and assisting COTM. Paradoxically however, using the umbrella term “children on the move” to describe the target population of this project may have curtailed progress toward this objective, since this category was too broad, was not used by most partners (including government partners), and did not correspond to the way programmes and interventions were



organized by them. Instead, partners recognize the sub-groups into which COTM were organized (e.g. IDPs, asylum-seekers, refugees, migrants).

In implementing the programme, attempts were made to strengthen coordination between the different levels of decentralization. A significant effort was made to target the regions that had been most affected by the phenomena of COTM, including border areas or provinces that had historically not received much attention. Progress toward that objective however remained challenging, as regional authorities and local NGOs on the ground did not always feel sufficiently included or ‘plugged’ into the frameworks being driven at the central level.

The governance structures that UNICEF offices supported focused on both prevention and response. Prevention activities in all three countries focused primarily on improving the access of COTM to education as well as life skills training (primarily through UPSHIFT) and awareness-raising materials on the risks of irregular migration, safe options, and available services for migrant children. The impact of UPSHIFT as a prevention measure worked better in Somaliland and Puntland; in Sudan,

<sup>78</sup> These are: a robust legal and regulatory framework, as well as specific policies related to child protection; effective governance structures, including coordination across government departments, between levels of decentralization and between formal and informal actors; a continuum of services (spanning prevention and response); minimum standards and oversight (information, monitoring and accountability mechanisms); human, financial and infrastructure resources; and social participation, including respect for children’s own views, and an aware and supportive public.

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it could have been strengthened if tied to seed money for self-reliance projects and livelihood opportunities. Awareness-raising and life skills interventions could have also been better used as entry points for other prevention-related interventions (for example those in Somaliland/Puntland focusing on the prevention of gender-based violence). Research activities, such as those carried out by the OoR-Innocenti to highlight the thoughts and feelings of COTM themselves, also figure in principles as preventive measures, if used in a strategic and timely manner.

UNICEF also worked extensively on ensuring a sense of ownership and leadership by the central governments of the three countries, working with the relevant ministries that had a responsibility for COTM (of which there were more than one). It was also able to ensure good coordination across some of the government departments (those with the clearest mandate/responsibility such as the councils on child welfare, ministries of social development) and to some extent other ministries providing key services for COTM such as the ministries of health, education or social protection.

While attention was given to improving the service delivery system as a system (through improved referral processes), less attention was given to delivering integrated response services (i.e. legal, education and health services). The other factor that accounts for this is the lack of material and technical support to the receiving families and communities into whose care many of the COTM were entrusted. Interventions were unable to ensure that services reached down to the level of the communities and families. These limitations highlight the need for UNICEF to clarify more precisely the framework for engaging informal structures and actors, as well as the parameters of the support that it can give to them.

Though the second element of a sound child protection system also foresaw good coordination and between formal and informal actors, **coordination** overall was an area of lesser focus for UNICEF, especially with informal actors –despite the important role that community-based protection networks and volunteer social workers play in assisting and protection COTM in all four locations. UNICEF remained more focused on government-led structures and government-employed social workers. The UNICEF approach of emphasizing systems strengthening benefits from a more conscious effort to foster linkages between community-based child protection systems and the national child protection system, such as that which occurred in Somaliland and Puntland. Besides government entities, UNICEF has enlisted partnerships with other organizations to some extent in the implementation of the programme, especially sister United Nations agencies and academic institutions, particularly in the research component and in designing SOPs, manuals and legal standards. UNICEF could have harnessed the full potential that interagency fora offers for the implementation of the programme. Where UNICEF did partner with other organizations, these were done mostly bilaterally and not at the design stage.

In terms of **advancing minimum standards and oversight**, which is an essential element of a functioning child protection system, UNICEF focused more on improving information and data management systems and less on the accountability and monitoring aspects. The organization's persistent work on rolling out Primero/CPMIS+ constituted an attempt to target the current limitations and inadequacies of managing the data of COTM at structural level. Available data on the COTM that were being identified and referred for further assistance and protection were insufficiently disaggregated. While the rollout of an interoperable system will help address some of these gaps

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in the medium to long term, it will not do so on its own. UNICEF would need to complement the positive impact of the rollout with supporting the adoption and more regular use of clear and robust case management protocols. Complex yet important themes in case management, such as determining vulnerability criteria and using them, as well as using the best interest concept in assessments and case conferencing, need to feature more prominently in capacity-building processes and trainings. To do that, UNICEF would have needed to bring on board expertise in these areas, or involve individuals through partnerships and secondments more closely to fill that gap.

Concerning **efforts to improve monitoring**, currently once a child is referred there is insufficient follow-up by the referring agencies. Similarly, feedback by the local service providers and children on the quality of the services provided does not easily make it back upstream to contribute to the adjustment of the programmes targeting COTM. The programme did not focus on strengthening measures relating to follow-up. In all countries, national capacity to allow follow-up was lacking, and services are simply not there in many parts of the Horn of Africa. Regardless, the concept of follow-up must be instilled as inherent to child protection, and stronger efforts made.

The evaluation has shown that UNICEF offices have been mindful of the issue of **sustainability** early on and have tried to advocate with host governments to identify funds for an enhanced national social workforce. There are however many elements that compete for the attention of the national government in all four locations (COVID-19, political unrest) as well as generally the lack of public funds. UNICEF

offices themselves have had limited capacity to support governments in creating budgetary space and finding resources given competing operational priorities. At the same time, all the programme countries have ensured that trainings were provided by national institutions and that the required curricula and training manuals were developed for that purpose. Such efforts contribute to sustainability, as they embed capacity-building efforts in national structures and ensure ownership by national actors.

**Accountability to children and their participation in processes that affect their lives** is an important element of UNICEF work and foundational to a functioning child protection system. While targeted research exercises that seek to gather children's views are certainly a form of participation, for social participation to be effective and meaningful it would have had to be mainstreamed into all activities that are implemented in the programme. While in all of the countries, there are UNICEF and government-led helplines that UNICEF supports, the level of effectiveness of these helplines as tools to receive and follow up on complaints remains insufficiently streamlined and concrete in the programme activities. In its policy on scaling up AAP, UNICEF recognizes that its efforts on AAP need to be more comprehensive and systematic. While UNICEF staff are aware of the importance of involving children, they need more specific guidance on how to reconcile it with the obligation of doing no harm to children and their families. Operationalization of AAP and communication with children by partners is likely to improve with UNICEF leading the way by example. The UNICEF AAP handbook was released in mid-2020, and it will be worth reviewing how this improves AAP in the coming years.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> The UNICEF AAP Handbook is available [here](#), June 2020.

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## 4.6 Thematic Area 2: Forging cross-border case management and cross-border coordination

The programme included a component on **improving cross-border coordination**. Prior to the programme, procedures within the three countries to deal with individual cases of vulnerable COTM who have crossed a border were applied by border officials and police without the involvement of child protection authorities. Procedures, where they existed, were generally focused on the return of the child rather than on gathering relevant information to inform a sustainable solution in the best interests of the child.

Prior to the implementation of the programme, the COs had varying degrees of cross-border work in place. Among these, UNICEF Sudan appears to have been coordinating regularly with other UNICEF offices and actors in neighbouring countries and beyond, and to have mainstreamed this kind of work into its day-to-day protection activities. The onset of COVID-19 has in many instances exacerbated the **protection risks** for persons on the move, including children. Not only did COVID-19 make it more difficult to cross (as borders were closed for weeks on end) but it has also created additional layers of vulnerability for migrants that were being forcefully returned, as they were prone to being detained and therefore at high risk of being infected.



One of the specific outputs that the programme envisaged was the mapping of cross-border child protection case management<sup>80</sup> and the production of case management protocols that were in line with available case management standards. It also foresaw making quantitative and qualitative data available to enhance knowledge and inform programming on COTM, including on cross-border settings.<sup>81</sup> This two-pronged approach was both relevant and appropriate for the fragile and humanitarian contexts in which UNICEF is operating. The OoR-Innocenti research highlighted a number of realities that are of significance to cross-border work. One is the impact of the securitization on children's safety and protection, including issues relating to cross-border experiences, trust and levels of contact with authorities, children's strategies to evade authorities and documentation. The other is the 'returns reflex' as the default position by many key actors, as opposed to the need for a focus on best interests of the child and promoting sustainable solutions for those who are moving.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> See for example, the UNICEF COTM report "A Mapping and Recommendations Report for Moving towards Cross Border Case Management Between Ethiopia and Somaliland, and Further Onward Along the Migratory Route, 1<sup>st</sup> version, January 2020

<sup>81</sup> Revised logframe of the COTM program, February 2020.

<sup>82</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Ending Violence, Abuse, and Exploitation of Children and Young People on the Move: Research uptake and cross-border case management', report of an action-planning workshop, UNICEF, Florence, 4-6 February 2020.

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UNICEF Sudan used some of the relevant findings from the OoR-Innocenti research in order to inform another more targeted research programme conducted by ISS in both Egypt and Sudan. The objective of this additional research was to strengthen the argument for the need to improve the protective environment at known border crossing areas and along migratory routes to provide a continuum of care. It also used the results of this research to advance a strategy on cross-border collaboration between Sudan and Egypt, with the primary objective of building child-friendly protection systems that speak to each other across countries and that respond to the needs of COTM. Site visits to border crossings in Ethiopia and Somaliland revealed no case conferencing, a lack of access to legal support, no interim care arrangements, and no access to social workers. Following an assessment and mapping of existing procedures, a roadmap was developed through the COTM with a set of non-iterative steps including at the international and multilateral levels and bilateral arrangements. Suggested measures included, for example, the need to lay the foundations at the international level, strengthening national child protection case management systems to allow for cross border case management, and working with appropriate national authorities for child protection case management, among others. Also included was the need for an information management system. This assessment recommended that a pilot along a migratory route be run, evaluated and adjustments made before moving further ahead. Subsequently, efforts were made to connect UNICEF-appointed social workers on one side of the Ethiopian border with officials on the Somaliland side to initiate a process for communicating with child protection authorities. Progress however fell afoul of COVID-19. Nevertheless, this assessment

and mapping, along with the aforementioned ISS study, allowed UNICEF to draft a theoretical flow chart for cross-border case management.

Given the length of time that interventions on cross-border coordination require, UNICEF realized early on that it would have been too ambitious to marry its work at the national level in each country with work on cross-border coordination, given the time span of the programme. This is due to the fact that any meaningful cross-border coordination needs to build on strengthened national child protection in the three countries. This also means that efforts to strengthen cross-border collaboration are hampered by some of the same factors that hamper progress in building national systems – some of which UNICEF cannot control, such as the capacity of national social workers, who are few and far between, a high-turnover of social workers and border staff, low salaries, a lack of robust referral mechanisms, and limitations in the continuum of care.

The experience of the programme shows that it may have been unrealistic to expect considerable progress on this issue in such a short time. For example, the expectation that there would be a scaling up of identification, referral and case management systems in Somaliland and Puntland along migration routes by the end of the programme was too optimistic. Similarly, and despite intentions to significantly scale up the number of social workers in Ethiopia along the border with Somaliland, only two social workers were deployed. The experience with the programme shows just how much time the planning and implementation of enhanced cross-border activities can legitimately take. For one, agreeing on the meaning of important concepts such as “cross border case management” between the three country

## 4. FINDINGS

offices took time. The COVID-19 pandemic has also created additional challenges as it slowed down cross-border coordination efforts.

UNICEF recognized that work on enhancing cross-border collaboration requires **strengthening partnerships** with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including other United Nations agencies such as IOM and UNHCR. Internally to UNICEF, staff felt that an institutional emphasis was being placed on collaboration with other United Nations agencies and host governments on cross-border aspects.<sup>83</sup> The renewed emphasis has also led to more information-sharing and discussions between offices in different locations. At the same time, there have been some important examples of closer collaboration between UNICEF and other key agencies such as IOM and UNHCR. For example, the conversations that UNICEF and UNHCR globally have been having with a view to creating interoperable information systems will have a positive impact on case management of COTM, including at border areas. Discussions are also currently ongoing between UNICEF and IOM in Ethiopia with a view of developing SOPs on cross-border case management. On the Somaliland side, there are now shelters and a partnership with IOM for cross-border case management and family tracing and reunification. Under the IOM-UNICEF collaboration, up to 35 unaccompanied minors were reunified with their families in Ethiopia.

Nevertheless, and at the time of conducting the evaluation interviews, partnerships were still emerging; addition scale and frequency is required. Key protection partners may have been privy to some elements of UNICEF plans

for border areas, but not the full plans (e.g. Sudan/Egypt). The delay in sharing these plans was in part attributed to the onset of COVID-19.

In terms of local partnerships, one national actor that would need to be deliberately included in future efforts related to cross-border coordination efforts are law enforcement bodies (police, security, border guards). Research shows that they are often the ones to first come into contact with COTM and enforce forced returns and detention, while not necessarily being aware of the rights of COTM and not always recognizing the role of child protection authorities or actors. Research has also shown that many COTM are choosing to move 'under the radar' in order to avoid border police and immigration. In Somaliland/Puntland such training was offered to law enforcement, and it would be interesting to follow up on the effects of this training. The programme in Sudan had initially tried to include the objective of training immigration and justice officials on child protection-sensitive procedures. However, given the political crisis in the country, that objective was replaced by another.

## 4.7 Summary of findings

Table 6 below condenses the 23 findings already presented in the evaluation report into 11 findings that cut across the different evaluation criteria. Some of the 23 findings are used more than once to develop a consolidated finding. These findings have been triangulated across different data collection methods. The strength of the consolidated finding is presented in the right-hand column.

<sup>83</sup> Nearly all (17 out of 20) UNICEF survey respondents indicated that cross-border collaboration with other UN agencies with regard to children probably or definitely improved (a third said definitely). A quarter of survey respondents indicated that dialogue on cross-border collaboration between UNICEF and the host government with regard to children definitely improved, with over half (11 out of 20) indicating that in probably improved, but less indicated that actual collaboration improved (only 2 said definitely, with half indicating probably improved).

## 4. FINDINGS

**Table 6: Consolidated findings**

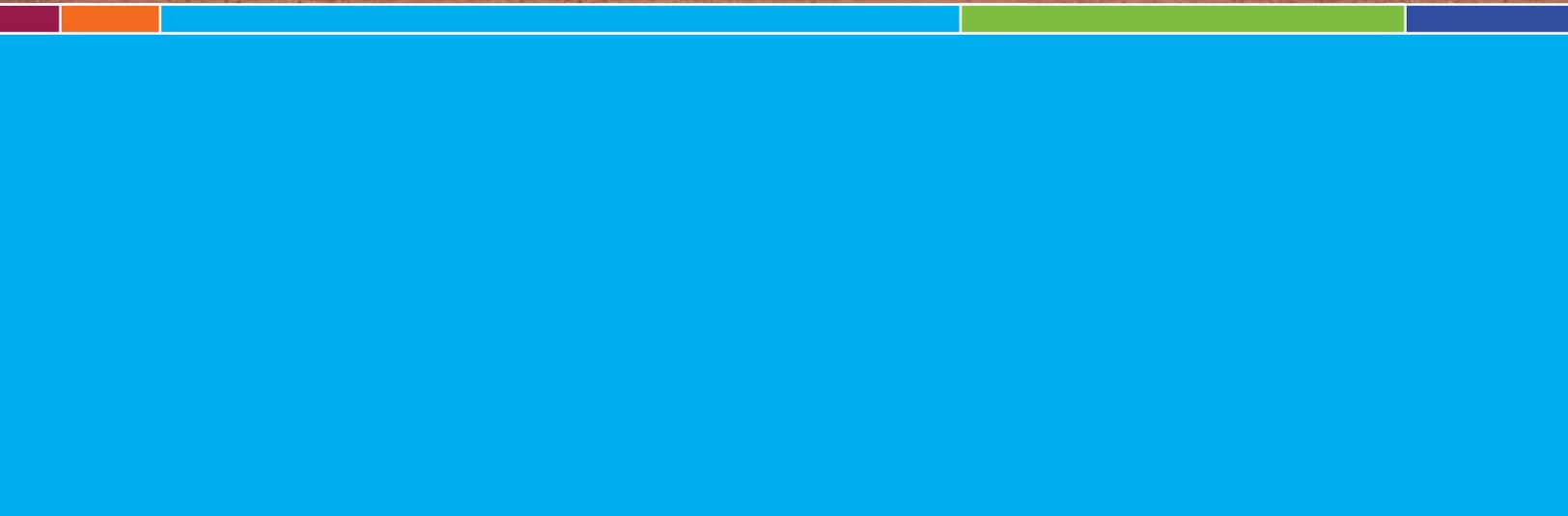
Headings/ themes	Consolidated Finding	Findings in the report
<b>Significance and relevance</b>	The programme has generally contributed positively to child protection programming in the region, establishing/strengthening case management, deploying the social service workforce, providing services to children, and addressing evidence gaps, aligning broadly with what ministries with responsibility for children are striving to do.	<i>Finding 4</i> <i>Finding 5</i> <i>Finding 7</i>
<b>Vision</b>	<p>The programme supports UNICEF in contextualizing the agenda for COTM and sets out an ambitious vision for child protection systems for both national and non-national children, which is many years away but worth striving for.</p> <p>The intention to link humanitarian responses to ongoing work to strengthen child protection systems for all children, irrespective of their nationality, is extremely valid due to the protection gaps COTM face in their daily lives.</p>	<i>Finding 2</i> <i>Finding 3</i> <i>Finding 4</i> <i>Finding 13</i> <i>Finding 16</i> <i>Finding 18</i>
<b>Terminology</b>	Confusion over the broad term “ <i>Children on the move</i> ” was found among programme partners – some of whom were unclear what COTM actually includes (e.g. street children, refugees, IDP, stateless, specific nationalities, migrants who regularly cross borders, children who have not yet moved but are vulnerable to migration).	<i>Finding 17</i> <i>Finding 20</i>
<b>Adaptability to COVID-19</b>	In reprogramming resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme targeted vulnerable COTM and returnees. The programme also deployed trained social workers to demonstrate the importance of a social service workforce. UNICEF staff reported that this helped build the case for the relevance of social service workers to host governments.	<i>Finding 12</i> <i>Finding 17</i>
<b>Logic of theory of change</b>	<p>The underlying assumption in the theory of change that a strengthened capacity of social workers to identify and manage cases of vulnerable COTM leads to a better incorporation of their needs and better respect of their rights is not inevitable. Evidently, having a well-functioning child protection system also relies on the availability of services for COTM, monitoring and coordination systems in place, and good linkages with other agencies for follow up.</p> <p>The evaluation found that more training/understanding on child rights is also required by government, social workers and partners who provide the much-needed services.</p>	<i>Finding 1</i> <i>Finding 9</i> <i>Finding 10</i> <i>Finding 13</i> <i>Finding 19</i> <i>Finding 22</i>
<b>Partnerships and collaboration</b>	The programme underlined the need for collaboration to address and fulfil the rights and needs COTM. While this programme intentionally focused on government agencies, partnerships with other entities such as IOM and UNHCR, NGOs and community networks were also important, although they took place to a lesser extent (except in Somalia). Mixed migration taskforces / UN migration networks are helping with information-sharing on COTM.	<i>Finding 11</i> <i>Finding 13</i> <i>Finding 19</i> <i>Finding 20</i> <i>Finding 22</i> <i>Finding 23</i>
<b>Engagement of children, AAP</b>	Efforts to set up feedback mechanisms for children and a complaint procedure for violation of their rights was found in the three countries, however they were not fully functioning. The evaluation did not find innovative methods to support the right of COTM to express their views. It found that there is room for improvement on AAP. A UNICEF organization- wide proactive and consistent approach to AAP is not yet operationalized, although guidance is now available.	<i>Finding 1</i> <i>Finding 13</i> <i>Finding 14</i>

◀ Table 6 continued

Headings/ themes	Consolidated Finding	Findings in the report
Research	<p>Research on COTM provided important evidence, which highlighted that when designing interventions to protect children, there is a the need for a protective environment at borders. The research results underlined the need for careful consideration of who COTM actually trust when designing interventions to protect children, which has implications for programme design of similar initiatives. Who children trust and their exposure to risks may vary by gender, age and other aspects. Although the research was conducted in a participatory way, the evaluation found that the research results were late for programming and not disseminated in different formats to different audiences so all could reflect on and use findings during the programme timeframe.</p>	<p><i>Finding 11</i> <i>Finding 15</i></p>
Prevention and response measures	<p>The programme demonstrated the need for connection and balance between working at child protection systems levels and responding to the individual needs of vulnerable COTM; both must be achieved together. The evaluation found the need for a stronger emphasis on assessment of vulnerabilities and best interest determination measures, and the need for stronger follow-up mechanisms to prevent COTM being exposed to further protection problems. A strong gender lens in the programme was not noted.</p>	<p><i>Finding 5</i> <i>Finding 15</i></p>
National ownership	<p>Although time consuming, it is important to involve all relevant line ministries and other entities in planning and implementing interventions in their own workplans, as it helps to ensure ownership by national actors. It was found that continuous advocacy and resources are needed to secure government commitment to include COTM, as governments have many priorities. Significant capacity gaps to implement measures for child protection and COTM remain within governments.</p>	<p><i>Finding 4</i> <i>Finding 5</i> <i>Finding 7</i> <i>Finding 13</i></p>
Cross-border aspects	<p>The different legal regimes that are in place for different categories of COTM do not allow all children to receive the protection they are entitled to, nor allow cross-border work to fully materialize. It was found that case management and child protection, including across borders, requires a good understanding by all stakeholders, with common procedures and information-sharing, building on improved national child protection systems, and good relationships with governments.</p> <p>The evaluation found that advocacy is key in moving forward with cross-border case management, and that UNICEF has the ability and mandate to push the agenda forward. There were some ongoing and recent initiatives to build on and learn from, such as the IOM and UNICEF partnerships. The evaluation noted better foundations for cross-border coordination work in some countries (e.g. Sudan) than others.</p> <p>Primero/CPIMS+ was found to be supporting coordination and coherence with other protection actors and achieving interoperable information systems between agencies as well as with authorities. It should be a very valuable tool going forward.</p>	<p><i>Finding 6</i> <i>Finding 17</i> <i>Finding 19</i> <i>Finding 20</i> <i>Finding 21</i></p>



# 5 CONCLUSIONS





## 5.1 Relevance

With the intent of the COTM design to strengthen child protection systems for all children, irrespective of their nationality, the COTM programme's objective was suited to the priorities of rights holders. The programme is valid in view of protection gaps identified in international conventions, global compacts on trafficking and migration, SDG 16.2, national mandates, research and national observations regarding the situation of COTM in the four locations. It was, however, unable to fill protection gaps for all children, in part due to confusion over the broad term 'COTM' and the fact that government entities and international actors have limited mandates that apply only to some categories of COTM. Reaching across these divides to implement the programme was therefore challenging. With a different emphasis in each location, the COTM programme corresponds to a significant part of host government child protection needs (support for vulnerable children, strengthening systems), recognizing that government stakeholders have many competing priorities and few resources. The COTM did however manage to capitalize on the protection and programmatic niche of UNICEF and capitalized on its rapport with host governments. Broad consistency of the COTM programme with UNICEF institutional norms on child protection was found, even if not all necessary elements of a functioning child protection system were part of the programme.

A key issue encountered by the evaluation is whether UNICEF should sometimes revert to spelling out what the category of COTM can include (IDPs, stateless, street children, refugees and migrants) rather than using the umbrella term "COTM". It may be that this would help emphasize that different protection needs require different approaches; conversely, it

might reduce the focus on the need to uphold the rights of all children (ensuring every child is protected, healthy and educated, especially children left behind by wider economic and social progress). This matter requires further discussion within UNICEF and with partners.

The programme was able to adapt as needed – for example in response to COVID-19 or changing political circumstances.

The project helped raise the profile of formal child protection systems with governments and underscore their importance, including the key role of social workers. Essentially, there was a high level of partnership and alignment with government child protection systems, anchored in nationally led coordination mechanisms. This helped to develop coordination mechanisms for child protection, particularly in Somalia (where previously agencies working in silos) and to a considerable extent in Ethiopia and Sudan. More discussions are required with governments around who will fund social workers going forward.

New partnerships emerged through the programme, and some of these are relevant for systems strengthening (e.g. universities). The programme built on existing relationships, in particular with IOM, and drew on the expertise of other protection actors such as UNHCR and Save the Children. There was less focus on partnership with some other United Nations agencies, NGOs and community-based networks in some contexts. In Somaliland and Puntland, as well as in Sudan, there was a strong focus on access to justice through legal reform where possible.

The programme underlines the need to consider who COTM actually trust when designing interventions. Although the design used insights and experience gained in previous programmes targeting COTM (mapping, assessments of

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

migration, SOPs), it did not emphasize a focus on who children actually trust, evidence of which came out rather late in the research conducted through the OoR-Innocenti. The programme was designed for CPSS and focused on particular elements: the social service workforce; case management; information and services for children and communities; evidence generation and legal protection. During implementation, the programme remained relevant to the systems-strengthening objective by focusing on ownership by national actors and involving relevant line ministries and other entities in planning and interventions. The underlying assumption in the ToC that a strengthened capacity of social workers to identify and manage cases of vulnerable COTM will lead to a better incorporation of their needs and better respect of their rights is not inevitable. A functioning CP system also relies on good access to services for children, coordination and linkages with others, careful follow-up and much more training on, and understanding of, child rights.

While the onset of COVID-19 delayed the implementation of some of the planned activities and led to the postponement of others (notably those involving face-to-face meetings), the programme was able to capitalize on the new opportunities that came with the spotlight being put on the particular vulnerability of children and the need for urgent actions/interventions to reduce the exposure of COTM to the pandemic (e.g. having social workers support child returnees).



## 5.2 Effectiveness

In terms of the extent to which the UNICEF programme attained its outcome, the final reports presented detailed progress against outputs of the COTM programme. Annex X provides a summary of the status of indicators as found by this evaluation. The programme has generally contributed positively to child protection programming in region, establishing or strengthening case management or deploying social service workers, providing services to children, and addressing evidence gaps.

Cross-border work was not an easy process. Different legal regimes in place for different categories of COTM, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in cross-border work not fully materializing. UNICEF identified some first steps to take in Ethiopia and Somaliland and developed a theoretical flowchart. Security, political instability, and of course COVID-19, are ongoing challenges. How governments will continue to enforce restrictions, border closures, curfews and lockdowns remain to be seen. Still more advocacy is needed to secure government commitment to COTM and to address national capacity gaps and link community-based protection mechanisms to the government-led protection system. Low levels of trust for non-nationals will always be a source of tension in interactions with authorities. Good relationships with different sections of government are required by UNICEF and partners working on borders. More work on cross-border collaboration with other partners is required, along with technical support from UNICEF HQ to continue with the rollout of management information systems (Primero/CPIMS+).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In each country, activities are being delivered by different actors – some following different processes while others are broadly similar, as shown in Annex II.

Reporting in the programme was mainly geared toward outputs. Monitoring should better guide reflection toward the outcome, and a monitoring system should carefully consider what information is useful to share beyond UNICEF internal reporting procedures (and with whom). Programmes such as this require a system in place that documents and provides feedback on what works for children, how and why; however, this was not evident. Primero/CPIMS+ hold much potential to improve monitoring, although it is too early to predict their impact. Setting up feedback systems that are age-, gender- and diversity-sensitive is challenging, particularly because of national data collection systems. However, it is important to keep building and strengthening partnerships toward disaggregated data. Capturing the vulnerabilities of children and including children's perspectives is difficult, although there are some resources beginning to emerge on how to proceed.



### 5.3 Sustainability

Overall, the evaluation found that there are good conditions for sustainability, if government remains interested in and allocates resources to sustain ongoing initiatives (e.g. rolling out case management assessment tools and protocols), and if social workers were to support interventions via the child protection frameworks promoted.

In all four locations, there was close collaboration with government structures (and with NGOs to a considerable extent). Whether this is sustainable is difficult to determine at this point, but some outputs and products from the programme will remain, whereas others may require additional momentum and funding. More emphasis on the role of communities in preventing and responding to child protection risks and resources may help to sustain some of the outputs implemented through the programme. Overall, better coordination and closer collaboration is said to be the key factor for service delivery, which is easier said than done. Protection efforts for COTM still require a systematic focus, as there are different levels of government commitment with many competing priorities. Infrastructure for child protection referrals is clearly lacking. Apart from Sudan, it is still unclear whether deployed social workers will remain in their positions. Low salaries are a disincentive in Somalia and Ethiopia, and there is a danger that trained social workers will find work in better paid non-government initiatives. An important element in promoting sustainability (and cost-effectiveness) is contributions from the governments in term of human resources, in-kind contributions, linkages with other initiatives and of course state budget additions, all of which will require follow-up from UNICEF.



## 5.4 Coherence

Complementarity and internal coordination aspects were better in some locations than others, e.g. Ethiopia, Puntland. For instance, coordinating at the Ethiopian regional levels was in sync with existing child protection government systems, even though regional UNICEF child protection officials were found to be overloaded.

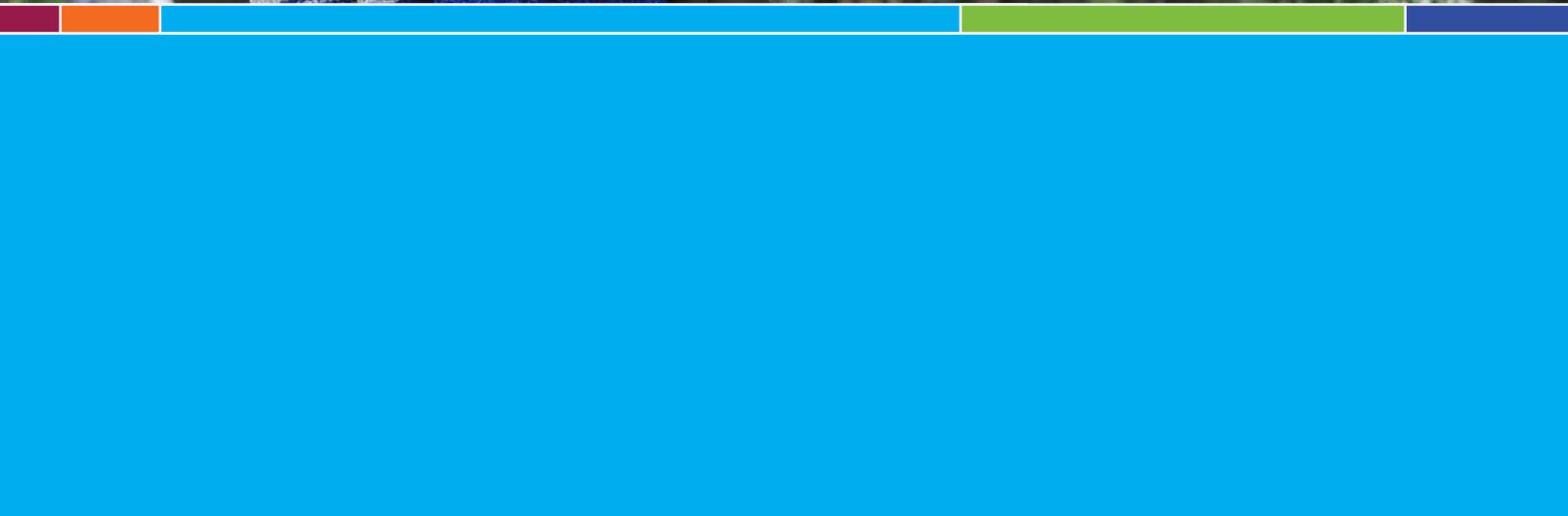
As noted above, partnerships with IOM and UNHCR were important across all the locations. More coordination with NGOs working the protection field is however desirable. Indeed, it was noted that there was not always a place for coordination of all programmes working on migration and refugees. Attending the many different interagency meetings and national taskforces on related issues does consume a considerable amount of time for a programme with few staff. UNICEF often falls between different stools in the cluster/sector architecture, and the lack of a single overarching framework (an issue beyond the control of UNICEF) makes cross-border synergies difficult. The work in Somalia may indicate that more collaboration with community-based protection structures may be desirable, provided community networks are provided with training and resources to meet the basic needs of children. Assessing coherence with external actors should be an important focus of further support planned for COTM, to ensure that UNICEF interventions are always adding value while avoiding duplication with other actors.

Clear synergies between the programme research component and other studies were noted. Working with universities and keeping the government informed are all considered to have increased synergies, and it would also be helpful to publish a think piece in an international journal to give the findings academic standing in universities. Many interviewed outside UNICEF expressed interest in the research results, so it will be important to speed up its dissemination, particularly in host countries.

Despite progress across different outputs, it is important not to lose sight of the short-term and immediate protection needs of children that are currently experiencing violence, harsh conditions and abuse. Advocacy, policies and budgets are required to ensure structured interventions for this vulnerable group as a long-term endeavour. Services and funds are required to reach more vulnerable children immediately through protection actors, administered in a way that links informal systems with stronger formal systems. Building on the UNICEF six-point agenda for COTM, UNICEF and other protection actors must continue to ensure that all children are protected, based on the premise that a child is a child, independent of his or her migratory status.

# 6

## LESSONS LEARNED



## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

## Lesson 1

The focus on anchoring UNICEF systems-strengthening interventions firmly in national structures and supporting national actors to play their part constitutes a good use of resources. There are however complex structural issues that are beyond the organization's control (e.g. level of coordination between central and provincial authorities, allocation of sufficient resources to social work streams in the government, revising mandates of government entities). UNICEF and other actors working on systems strengthening should link these efforts to the work of other actors on issues such as employment generation, social protection, health, education, etc. While unprecedented emergency situations such as COVID-19 created additional challenges in the protection and assistance of COTM, it has also highlighted their vulnerabilities and alerted governments to the fact that they alone cannot adequately respond to their needs. COVID-19 also provided an opportunity to test the robustness of the nascent child protection system under development and is a way of strengthening the safety net for the most vulnerable populations.

## Lesson 2

Child protection case management across borders requires time, particularly since advances must be made in national child protection systems before they can connect to and align with others. Undoubtedly, it requires a longer-term approach in planning and designing interventions. For the two-year funding duration of this programme, it would have been reasonable to aim for the more modest objective of gaining a better understanding of the gaps in cross-border coordination through additional research, monitoring and assessments.

## Lesson 3

A lesson learned is the need for more evidence on *how* a programme such as this one benefits different categories of COTM, and whether the gap between available services for children and access for COTM is decreasing. Monitoring the extent to which the programme has changed perceptions toward COTM among communities, governments and other stakeholders would also be useful. Measuring these types of changes is not easy and requires some type of baseline data before interventions begin.

## Lesson 4

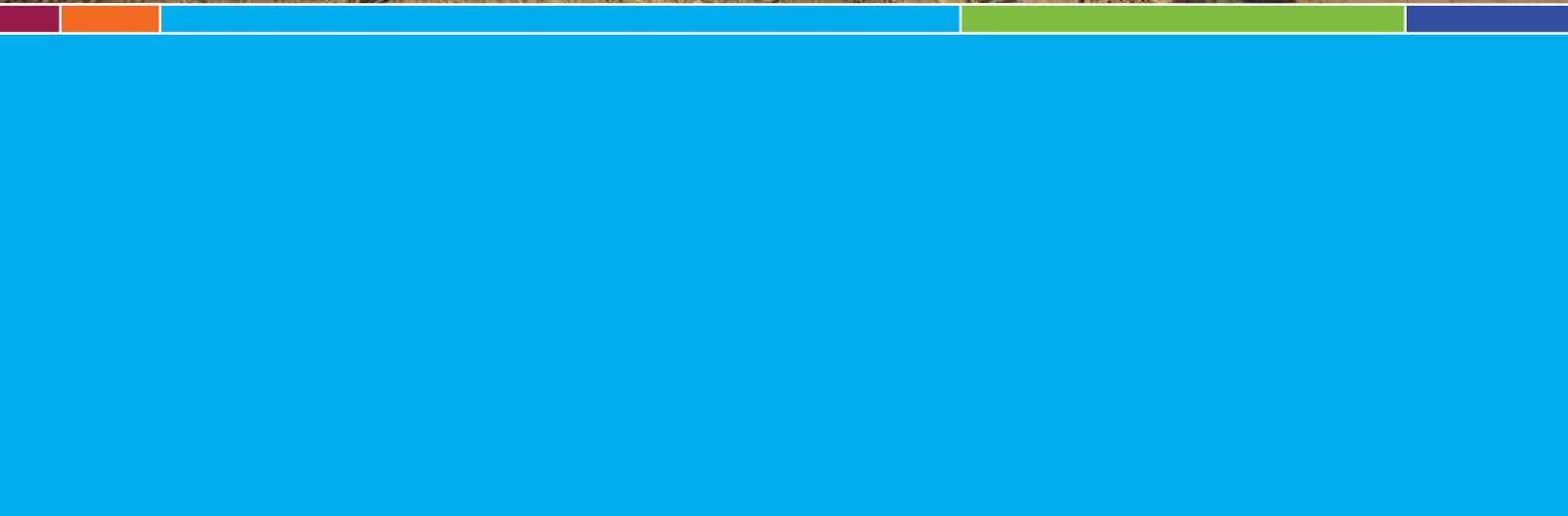
The importance of working in partnership cannot be overemphasized and should be the way of working from the inception of a programme. In this instance, more time was probably required to have planned better partnerships with others, identifying linkages and complementarities. Working in partnership does not always have to mean pooling financial resources, but can involve bringing together technical expertise, sharing assessments, research and lessons learned, and joining forces in advocacy efforts.

## Lesson 5

In addition, and as highlighted by other evaluations, UNICEF would benefit from making a deliberate effort to include profiles with specific expertise in areas relevant to systems strengthening in its workforce where systems-strengthening programmes are being implemented (e.g. experts in best interest assessments, policy processes, advocacy and public finance).

# 7

## RECOMMENDATIONS



**Table 7: Recommendations arising from the programme**

Recommendations	Timeframe	Who should lead
 <p><b>1 UNICEF should continue to advocate for all children to be protected while providing clarity on the umbrella term 'COTM' during implementation. This is particularly important when strengthening child protection systems that are fragmented.</b></p> <p>Although the umbrella term 'COTM' can create confusion in implementation, stronger and consistent simple messaging on the duty to protect all children irrespective of their status should be disseminated in various for a and media channels and translated into styles and languages that governments and service providers understand.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>UNICEF HQ CP section UNICEF CP teams in COs with communications units</p>
 <p><b>2 UNICEF should set more realistic targets for system-strengthening programmes, recognizing that change is iterative and it takes a long time to build or change systems.</b></p> <p>This applies to outputs/outcomes that similar programmes may wish to set up on cross-border collaboration. Emphasize that cross-border child protection relies on strong national child protection systems and can only work when national child protection systems coordinate and collaborate with other jurisdictions.</p> <p>Design benchmarks for measuring progress that are more appropriate to system-strengthening activities, rather than focusing on classical service-provision activities. Apply the forthcoming UNICEF child protection systems strengthening framework benchmarks.</p>	<p>To be ready to guide the next programme on COTM</p>	<p>UNICEF CP teams in COs</p>
 <p><b>3 UNICEF should clarify what is required to ensure a balance between community-based support for COTM versus a state's responsibility toward realizing rights and providing services.</b></p> <p>This would require clarity on the type of engagement and support UNICEF field offices should provide to community-based protection networks (such as strengthening capacity, material support, advocacy for their integration into national protection systems) including in fragile states.</p> <p>Mapping the potential role other agencies can play in supporting government systems for COTM is necessary. Forge partnerships that advance the UNICEF child rights mandate in coherence with others to create better synergies. Improve sharing of information and engagement with other relevant partners on their programmes and activities related to COTM. Internally, continue to strengthen a multi-sectoral focus for COTM with education, social protection, skills programmes.</p>	<p>To be ready to guide the next programme on COTM</p>	<p>UNICEF HQ CP section</p>

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

◀ Table 7 continued

Recommendations	Timeframe	Who should lead
 <p><b>4</b> <b>UNICEF should better operationalize its duty to involve and consult children on processes that affect their lives, and should seek meaningful engagement with children while respecting the “do no harm” principle.</b></p> <p>Functional and innovative systems and methods must be put in place to support and realize the right of COTM to express their views. Include concrete and more targeted focus on building the capacity of national systems to be accountable to children by working on functioning, confidential reporting, complaint and response mechanisms. Discussions on how safeguarding and complaint mechanisms can be better emphasized and mainstreamed in systems-strengthening efforts early on is recommended, moving beyond lip-service to systematic efforts to reach out and down to all relevant actors.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>UNICEF HQ CP section, CO CP staff and focal points for PSEA</p>
 <p><b>5</b> <b>UNICEF should disseminate research and evidence results as early and widely as possible to build on momentum generated from such research and interest from local partners.</b></p> <p>There is also a need to ensure research reaches local-level implementers on the ground, which may mean translating results, among other efforts. A plan to disseminate and implement the results at national level is thus required.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>UNICEF HQ and COs in dialogue with donors for similar programmes, OoR-Innocenti</p>
 <p><b>6</b> <b>UNICEF should continue to strengthen the disaggregation of data related to COTM in line with international recommendations and advocate for all other actors to do the same, ensuring indicators are not limited to quantitative data alone.</b></p> <p>Use guidelines designed to support this work, for example from the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics, and those designed for building the capacity of social service workers by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance. Ensure gender indicators are continuously monitored with a focus on gender in substantive activities.</p>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>UNICEF HQ and M&amp;E staff in COs</p>



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March 2021**