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FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS

PART II

EVALUATION ISSUES

PERIODIC REPORT ON INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICE (IOS) EVALUATIONS

SUMMARY

In accordance with 186 EX/Decision 6.VI and 207 EX/Dec.5.II.A, this report synthesizes key findings from evaluations conducted in 2019 and early 2020. The report draws on eight corporate and six decentralized evaluations and is structured in three parts. Part I presents an overview of the portfolio of evaluations completed. Part II presents an analysis of the crosscutting findings that emerge consistently across the evaluations. Part III presents an overview of the quality of evaluation reports. The Annex presents a Management Response to the cross-cutting findings found in Part II.

Decision required: paragraph 34.

INTRODUCTION

1.   At its 186th session, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to continue to report periodically on evaluations completed (186 EX/Decision 6.VI). The Internal Oversight Service (IOS) commissioned a synthesis of eight corporate[1] and six decentralized[2] evaluations completed in 2019 and early 2020 to identify key cross-cutting findings and to provide a more integrated presentation of UNESCO's performance against its Expected Results from the Programme and Budget (C/5).

2.   This report focuses primarily on a discussion of the crosscutting findings emerging from the evaluation reports and an analysis of the overall quality of the evaluation reports against accepted quality standards. The purpose of the report is to present the Organization's achievements, comparative strengths and areas for improvement resulting from recently completed evaluations to inform the Executive Board's strategic decision-making. The full report of the Synthetic Review can be found on the IOS website, which includes, *inter alia*, a section on UNESCO's performance against standard evaluation criteria and an analytical summary of UNESCO's performance against individual C/5 Expected Results.

3.   This report is structured in three parts. Part I presents an overview of the portfolio of evaluations included in the synthesis. Part II presents the major cross-cutting findings that emerged consistently across the evaluations. Lastly, Part III presents an overview of the quality of the evaluation reports. A Management Response to the cross-cutting findings from Part II can be found in the Annex.

APPROACH

4.   A desk-review was conducted of eight corporate and six decentralized evaluations. Cross-cutting themes, or systemic findings, that emerged consistently across the evaluations were identified. These cross-cutting findings include factors that both facilitate and hinder UNESCO's ability to fulfil its mandate and to meet its organizational objectives. The quality of the evaluation reports was assessed against the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports.

5.   The findings outlined in this synthesis and its conclusions rest primarily on the review of evaluation reports finalised during 2019-2020. Consequently, readers should take into account the following limitations:

- The quality and robustness of the evaluative evidence, particularly between corporate and decentralized evaluations, is variable. However, most reports met minimum quality standards set out in the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (see Part III of this report).

- The scope of the evaluations varies significantly, ranging from evaluations of micro level projects to evaluations that assess global outreach and impact of UNESCO's interventions at portfolio level, and include evaluations of corporate services/processes. This makes it challenging to systematically analyse and aggregate results.

- A higher number of evaluation reports from the Education Sector were available for this synthetic review compared to the number of reports available from other Sectors.

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[1]   The detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations of corporate evaluations are presented in the full evaluation reports, which are available along with management responses on the IOS website.

[2]   Corporate evaluations are managed by the IOS Evaluation Office, whereas decentralized evaluations are managed by the Programme sectors and/or UNESCO Field Offices. Corporate evaluations are published on the IOS website, whereas decentralized evaluation reports are available on UNESCO's intranet (UNESTEAMS).

PART I: BASIC PORTFOLIO DATA

6.   This section provides basic data on the 14 evaluations (eight corporate and six decentralized) considered in the synthesis. While the number of corporate evaluations over a comparable period remained the same as in previous years, the number of decentralized evaluations managed by other UNESCO entities was lower (i.e. 18 in the 2019 synthetic review compared to six for the current 2020 synthetic review) resulting in a lower overall number of reports. Reasons for this can be attributed to variations in project cycles with fewer projects due for evaluation in the current period and the lack of timely submission of completed reports to IOS.

7.   Figure 1 illustrates the coverage of the 14 evaluations across the five Major Programmes. In 2020 there was one evaluation commissioned and funded by Communication and Information Sector: *Evaluation of UNESCO's Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* (PVE). However, due to the intersectoral approach adopted by UNESCO for PVE, this report has been considered under the Intersectoral category. Furthermore, two evaluations of Central Services were carried out by IOS in response to the UNESCO Executive Board request to assess the results of the Organization's strategic transformation initiatives: the *Evaluation of the first Managed Mobility Programme* and the *Review of the Frequency and Modalities of the UNESCO Structured Financing Dialogue*. These reflect a positive shift towards a more integrated approach to lift organizational performance that includes the contribution of Central Services.

Figure 1: Programmatic coverage of the 14 completed evaluations
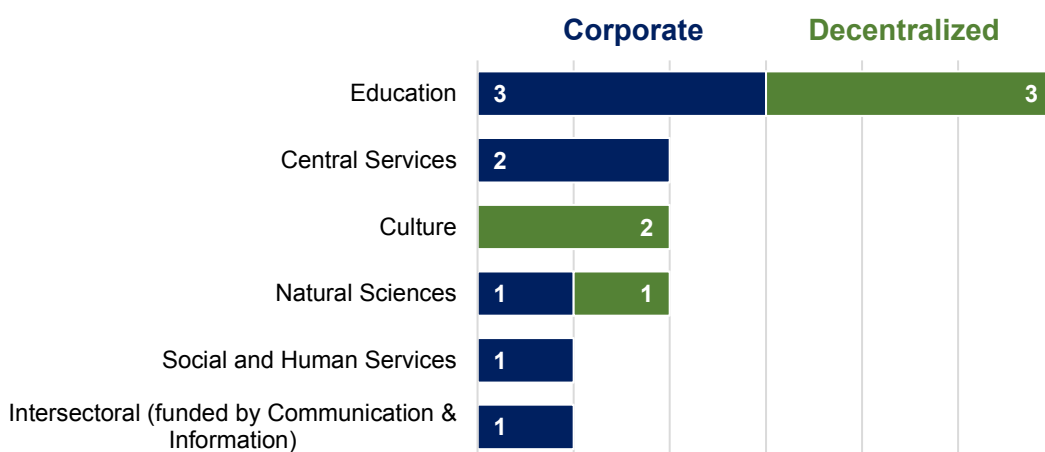
PART II: CROSSCUTTING FINDINGS

8.   This section presents cross-cutting findings and provides an important opportunity for UNESCO to reflect on its strengths, including its comparative advantages vis-à-vis other multilateral actors as well as to identify areas where there is room for improvement.

UNESCO's neutrality and convening power continue to be its main comparative advantages

9.   UNESCO's reputation as a neutral broker and an Organization that provides stable, robust intergovernmental and international platforms for national, regional and global action and international exchange and cooperation continues to be among its strongest comparative advantages. Stakeholders commented on the Organization's long history in facilitating complex processes in often difficult and sensitive contexts. UNESCO's ability to bring diverse voices to the table and facilitate important conversations on issues that matter is described as incomparable, unequalled and unique within the United Nations system.

10.   Across the evaluations, examples showed that UNESCO's convening power, global reach and expertise contributed to informing and guiding policy development and approaches (e.g. the *Evaluation of History, Memory and Intercultural Dialogue for Inclusive Societies* (HMID) and the *Evaluation of UNESCO's actions to Prevent Violent Extremism*). UNESCO helps navigate complexities on topics that have political and technical dimensions (e.g. the *Review of UNESCO's work in Curriculum*). Evidence of the Organization's unwavering commitment to a human rights-based and humanistic approach to education can, for example, be seen in the *Evaluation of the Future of UNESCO's Education Sector*. In addition, UNESCO, as the only UN agency that specializes in the protection of culture, is serving as a key strategic partner to ensure that culture contributes to peace building (e.g. *Evaluation of the EU-UNESCO Project: Protecting Cultural Heritage and Diversity in Complex Emergencies for Stability and Peace)*. These examples collectively demonstrate the ongoing relevance and significant value of the Organization's mandate for Member States.

11.   A few evaluations highlighted that civil society representatives suggested UNESCO could perform better at using its "soft power" and its convening power and to draw on the breadth of its research and knowledge products and interdisciplinary cooperation when advocating for policy changes. Other evaluations suggested that UNESCO could make better use of its comparative advantage particularly in strategically mobilizing partners and networks of experts.

High value placed on the technical expertise and experience of UNESCO staff

12.   The expertise and technical skills of UNESCO staff and their unique ability to work simultaneously at the highest policy and at the community level, facilitating communication lines between the two, continues to be well regarded and a comparative strength across all of its sectors.

13.   Many evaluations, such as the *Evaluation of UNESCO's actions on PVE, the EU-UNESCO project on protecting cultural heritage and diversity in complex emergencies for stability and peace* and the *Evaluation of Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT) Higher Education Project* provide evidence of the professionalism of UNESCO staff and their key role in pushing both policy change and implementing fieldwork. Staff prove expertise and guidance and forge technical and operational partnerships that help to open up new opportunities. In several instances partnerships and collaborations with both local and international entities, including government, civil society organizations, universities and locally-based experts were made possible due to the professional reputation and credibility of UNESCO staff. This underscores the need to ensure staff are valued and their work is facilitated by adequate tools and processes so as to sustain effective delivery and relationships.

Ongoing challenges in advancing UNESCO's aspirations for intersectoral cooperation in areas of its mandate

14.   Progress towards the SDGs and addressing the rising complex global societal challenges such as combating violent extremism increasingly call for intersectoral cooperation and interdisciplinary approaches to bring holistic and interconnected solutions that bridge research, policy and practice. The Programme and Budget (39 C/5) conveys UNESCO's aspirations to leverage its convening power and mandate by leading intersectoral, multi-stakeholder efforts and packages of interventions that combine the Organization's key functions to achieve the transformation desired. The C/5 Expected Results, however, are specific to each Major Programme. The evaluations considered for this synthetic review show a mixed picture in this regard. While there are examples of successful intersectoral cooperation, (e.g. Women in Africa and African Heritage Liberation Movement Programme identified in the *Evaluation of HMID*), systemic organizational barriers (e.g. lack of mechanisms to enable joint budgeting and planning for programme implementation) and insufficient human and financial resources limit UNESCO's delivery on this front. As a result, the potential for intersectoral cooperation is yet to be fully realized.

15.   The challenges in realising the full potential of intersectoral approaches is well illustrated in the *Evaluation of UNESCO's Actions to PVE*. This evaluation explicitly aimed to generate evidence and

insights on the intersectoral approach applied by the Organization in its Action to PVE in an effort to inform other areas of UNESCO's work. The findings highlighted that, while there was widespread agreement that working across sectors is needed and helpful, many staff felt the organizational structures did not support an intersectoral approach. In the implementation of PVE initiatives staff noted that there were delays as the process for validating key documents by different sectors took longer, the processes were heavier, and there were structural challenges due to the vertical financial allocation and approval systems of UNESCO.

16.   The *Evaluation of HMID* also highlights similar issues with respect to intersectoral work referring to UNESCO planning, budgeting and reporting systems as not supportive of intersectoral cooperation nor of interdisciplinary approaches. It also points to the need for more incentives at the organizational level to facilitate working intersectorally.

17.   UNESCO has a clear and well-developed overarching vision of its role in supporting intersectoral work and bringing together different areas of expertise and action. However, this is not yet translated into a coherent, logical Organizational narrative and results chain and consequently, there is no adequate framework for monitoring, reporting and evaluating progress against its vision.

Need for rebalancing UNESCO's global, regional and operational roles relating to its Education programme

18.   Most internal and external stakeholders believe there are significant potential synergies between UNESCO's global, regional and operational roles. These roles are seen as mutually reinforcing. UNESCO would not have the same strength in carrying out its global coordination and intellectual leadership functions if it did not have an understanding of national-level systems and policy issues in the areas of its mandate. The *Evaluation of the Future of UNESCO's Education Sector* indicates that there is a need to *rebalance* the Sector's global, regional and operational roles through a combination of:

- Strengthening the Sector's global leadership and coordination roles and continuing to further develop its education foresight and research functions. Clarifying regional leadership of SDG 4 in Africa is a key priority.

- Reinforcing capacity and capability of regional offices including addressing the unevenness that exists across regions, particularly the relatively weak capacity in Africa.

- UNESCO's country-level operational activities need to be refocused on upstream policy support and away from the delivery of large numbers of small extrabudgetary projects.

Leveraging UNESCO structures to deliver value for projects

19.   In some of the countries where UNESCO does not have a field office, evaluations identified challenges in implementing complex projects particularly due to gaps in expertise on procurement and administrative processes in some small antennas. Project officers operating far both from expertise present in the already-stretched Regional Offices, as well as from administrative officers can face challenges in resolving project implementation issues. These are illustrated in the *Evaluation of UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust (CFIT) Project.* Despite the availability of expertise within UNESCO to facilitate procurement of ICT equipment, UNESCO administrative rules and hierarchical structures posed challenges in mobilizing the most adequate support for procurement. In such instances, direct access to the wider UNESCO infrastructure can help overcome these challenges. Developing a systematic approach to knowledge sharing and learning would also help replicate good practices from better resourced and high-performing field and antenna offices.

Support for the improvements initiated by the strategic transformation process

20.   UNESCO has initiated a number of important initiatives under the ongoing Strategic Transformation Process to strengthen the performance of the Organization. The *Review of the*

modalities and frequency of the Structured Financing Dialogue (SFD) and the *Evaluation of the Managed Mobility Programme* assess the results of recent reform efforts. The assessments of both initiatives signal strong support from relevant stakeholders for the direction and improvements initiated by the four pillars of the strategic transformation process.

21.   The Integrated Budget Framework developed within the scope of UNESCO's SFD offers transparency to Member States as to how the C/5 Programme is resourced, which programmes receive voluntary contributions and where there are funding gaps. While some progress has been acknowledged, the analysis conducted of the three modalities[3] of UNESCO's SFD as well as the comparison with the SFDs of WHO, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF highlighted important areas for improvement. Developing an organizational narrative as well as a robust results framework for UNESCO's contribution to Agenda 2030, within the context of the new Medium-Term Strategy, and clearer communication about the Organization's past achievements and future funding needs will be a precondition for building trust and enabling UNESCO to achieve more predictable and less earmarked funding and cooperation with donors.

22.   The implementation of the Managed Mobility Programme is another example of UNESCO's efforts for an agile, versatile and motivated workforce. The evaluation findings indicate that mobility is an essential element of a global international workforce. The evaluation recommended resuming the managed mobility programme provided necessary adjustments are incorporated. For example, reviewing the deferment process and the list of posts not subject to mobility, adjusting the timing of notification and facilitating relocation. Moreover, other important adjustments spoke to the need to empower and support staff to make the right career choices, build capacity for future career moves, including short-term assignments and placing staff in the right posts, both from the perspectives of the staff members and of the Organization.

Progress towards implementation of Global Priority Gender Equality continues to be patchy

23.   Gender Equality has been a Global Priority for UNESCO since 2008. The Gender Equality Action Plan states that by mainstreaming gender equality UNESCO aims to "fully integrate gender-equality considerations into programme strategies and activities including policy advice, advocacy, research, normative and standard setting work, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation/assessment and any other technical assistance work".[4] However, despite the Organization's efforts to mainstream gender equality in different areas of work, reporting against this global priority continues to lack consistency and many evaluations show that monitoring tends to be focused on output level performance indicators rather than on outcomes. Evaluations tend to measure participation of men and women, but not much beyond that. For instance, the Evaluation of HMID reports that besides some exceptions such as Women in Africa, and African Heritage Liberation Movement Programme (AHLMP), many projects within the thematic area lack a clear gender focus beyond ensuring that there is a mix of women and men (or girls and boys) participating or benefitting.

24.   A gender-mainstreaming approach needs to go further to take account of a more nuanced understanding of, and the need to apply a transformative approach towards the achievement of gender equality and inherent social, political and economic power relations. However, there is little evidence of these deeper dimensions of gender equality that can be examined across the evaluations considered in the scope of this report.

25.   In 2019, the IOS Evaluation Office embarked on an inter-agency initiative to synthesize evaluations relevant to SDG 4 Target 5 on gender parity, equality and inclusion in education. This initiative[5] led by UNESCO in close collaboration with six international partners is an important step towards (a) consolidating best practices, lessons learned and recommendations, with a view to

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3   The three modalities are the Structured Financing Dialogue in the Executive Board, a Partners' Forum and Decentralized and Thematic Structured Financing Dialogue.

4   UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021)

5   Making Evaluation Work for the Achievement of SDG4 Target 5: Equality and Inclusion in Education

helping Member States accelerate their progress towards this target; and (b) to test an approach to evaluate progress towards an SDG. The findings also show how evaluations can more effectively support global learning among countries and their development partners, by ensuring a robust evidence base to support the implementation and scale-up of effective education strategies to improve gender parity, equality and inclusion of marginalized groups in education.

Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes requires urgent attention

26.   Many evaluations highlighted significant challenges in defining and measuring outcome level results. Despite some progress, projects focus primarily on the implementation of activities and much less on measuring the relationship, complementarity and synergies between projects/initiatives and higher-level outcomes in line with SDGs. This limitation needs urgent attention, as it severely impedes the Organization's ability to meaningfully leverage and communicate the value of its work and investment at a higher level. Several evaluations provide insights on the potential value of more advanced results frameworks or comprehensive theories of change to better identify and track progress, including the *Evaluation of the international Geoscience and Geoparks programme*, the *Evaluation of the UNESCO-CFIT project*, and the *Evaluation of IHP's Programmes and Major Initiatives* (IHP Flagships).

27.   The findings from these evaluations and others clearly signal the need to develop more adequate organization wide planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems in line with the RBM approach applied at UNESCO. This will allow for accountability and learning across all interventions as well as provide critical information for effective steering and management at the strategic level. Identifying and effectively communicating outcome level results and potentially UNESCO's long-term impact is crucial for attracting partnerships and funding and for learning. There is limited conduct of impact assessments across the evaluations considered in this report. Instead, the evaluations examined pathways towards impact, looking at the various results levels from outputs to outcomes (where possible) rather than using conventional impact assessment methodologies. Measuring impact of development efforts poses significant challenges: it is resource intensive and relies strongly on the availability of systematically collected and organization-wide quality data. Despite these challenges, UNESCO is envisaging to conduct an impact study on the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme.

Partnerships continue to be strengthened, but outreach can be further diversified

28.   Partnerships and collaborations offer an important opportunity for UNESCO to deliver on its mandate with limited resources, particularly as many of UNESCO's programmes depend on extrabudgetary resources. Over the years, the Organization has made concerted efforts to build on established partnerships and work with a wide range of partners, so as to make progress towards shared objectives and goals. UNESCO's ability to forge technical and operational partnerships with local, regional and international entities and civil society organizations is seen as one of its strengths and the evaluations make favourable observations of these features of the Organization. The last synthetic review noted a shift towards a positive trend in this regard and the findings from this review affirm these developments. For instance, the HMID depends on partnerships for the success of its programmes. The number and types of collaborations are vast and include government ministries, schools, museums, civil society organizations, scientists, academics and artists to name a few. The evaluation found that the partnerships within the scope of this thematic area are useful and clearly establish an added value. However, more can be done to sustain them, and particular attention needs to be paid in strategically engaging the private sector to reach out to the general public and to ensure stability of funding.

PART III: QUALITY OF UNESCO EVALUATION REPORTS

29.   All eight corporate evaluation reports meet minimum quality requirements, but none of the decentralized evaluations considered for this synthesis fully meet them. The main challenges in report quality continue to be linked to the gender equality and SDG relevance criteria. This finding is

also in line with the IOS report on the Evaluation Performance Indicator for 2019 as part of the United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) which shows that the integration of gender equality into evaluation reports was slightly weaker than the previous year.

30. The discrepancy in the overall quality of corporate versus decentralized evaluations continues to be a cause for concern. Unlike corporate evaluations that undergo an external quality review, decentralized evaluations do not have the same degree of scrutiny prior to finalization. Quality shortcomings risk to diminish the value and insights that can be gained from these reports.

31. UNESCO's Evaluation Policy explicitly states that "Evaluation reports include a formal Management Response and Action Plans as a general principle". The management response is a critical element of an evaluation as it defines how the client or business owner intends to implement the recommendations from the evaluation. All corporate evaluations include a management response that is validated by senior management; however, this is not the case for decentralized evaluations which do not systematically include management responses.

32. During 2019 and early 2020, the IOS Evaluation Office has continued to step up the guidance and technical backstopping to decentralized evaluations managed by sectors, field offices, bureaux and category 1 institutes. Some of the support modalities were: advice on the planning and resourcing of evaluations, targeted feedback on the selection of consultants, evaluation budgeting, drafting terms of reference and/or quality assurance on draft evaluation reports.

33. In addition, efforts were made to strengthen and animate the Evaluation Focal Point Network (70 staff) and to provide face-to-face and virtual training sessions including the mandatory e-learning course on evaluation management and regular webinars on topics such as self-evaluation and theory of change. Evaluation focal points are essential in the efforts to strengthen UNESCO's decentralized evaluation function. A new UNESCO Evaluation Manual is currently being drafted. These IOS initiatives are critical to growing the culture of evaluation within the Organization.

Proposed draft decision

34. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 186 EX/Decision 6.VI and 207 EX/Decision 5.II.A,

2. Having examined document 210 EX/5.II,

3. Welcomes the periodic analysis of crosscutting findings emerging from evaluation reports and of their overall quality which supports the Executive Board's decision-making;

4. Also welcomes the evaluations reported on, and invites the Director-General to implement the corresponding recommendations;

5. Also invites the Director-General to continue addressing the crosscutting findings referred to in Part II of document 210 EX/5.II.

ANNEX

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO CROSSCUTTING FINDINGS

Ongoing challenges in advancing UNESCO's aspirations for intersectoral cooperation in areas of its mandate

Interdisciplinarity will feature high as a new organizational paradigm in the next medium-term strategy and quadrennial programmes. In order to optimize cross-sectoral synergies and impact, an organization-wide process will need to be in place to clarify roles and responsibilities of sectors in terms of planning, budget allocation, implementation and reporting, as well as for accountability and performance assessment systems when engaging intersectorally.

All Programme Sectors have engaged in intersectoral work to some extent for the last biennia in different programme areas, such as PVE, climate change, STEM, Open Educational Resources, artificial intelligence, indigenous languages etc. A recent example is the joint ED/CLT intersectoral initiative, which is meant to support stronger linkages between education and culture particularly in the areas of heritage education, arts education and the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity.

This work has been supported by organizational structures that promote the exchange of ideas and knowledge, for instance the intersectoral task team on artificial intelligence, and the recently set up intersectoral task force for the 2022-2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

Need for rebalancing UNESCO's global, regional and operational roles relating to its Education programme

The Education Sector has already started re-examining and asserting its mandated lead and coordination role at global and regional levels. It has substantially strengthened its foresight and intellectual leadership functions by the launching of the "Futures of Education" initiative and the establishment of a separate team for this within the Education Sector. UNESCO has taken important steps to strengthen its SDG4 leadership and coordination function, including through mechanisms such as the Multilateral Education Platform and the convening of the Global Education Meeting. UNESCO will strive to improve the strategic focus of the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee and bureau meetings and strengthen its linkages with regional offices. It will seek to raise the profile and visibility of the Steering Committee as a global political platform. At the regional level, through its regional bureaux and together with the SDG-Education 2030 co-conveners, UNESCO will continue to promote regional cooperation and strengthening of linkages between global and regional levels.

In response to a number of evaluations, other Programme Sectors are also reassessing and rebalancing UNESCO's role at the different levels, in view of UNESCO's comparative strengths and considering UNESCO's global positioning and contributions to the Agenda 2030 through various thematic strands. Implementation on the ground and multi stakeholder partnerships remain key for UNESCOs credibility at the global level.

Leveraging UNESCO structures to deliver value for projects

In follow up to several evaluations, specific efforts by Programme Sectors are made to ensure an organization wide approach by better involving and coordinating between units at Headquarters and UNESCO's field structure and Category 1 Institutes, and by consulting central services. The aim is to tap on internal resources and expertise that is often thinly spread across few entities. A good example for Organization wide initiatives are thematic areas and priorities such as Youth or gender equality where focal point systems are available in all UNESCO entities acting as communities of practice. Furthermore, the Organization is seeking to enhance its knowledge management systems and approaches to allow for better exchange and access to good practices and lessons learned. For this purpose, new knowledge management tools are being deployed across UNESCO.

Support for the improvements initiated by the strategic transformation process

In response to the recommendations of the *Review of the Structured Financing Dialogue* to develop an organizational narrative as well as a robust results framework for UNESCO's contribution to Agenda 2030, the content of the next approved Medium-Term Strategy C/4 will reflect the interdisciplinary and more holistic approaches echoing from consultations with Member States and within the Governing bodies. At the same time, the narrative about UNESCO's contribution to the 2030 Agenda will be further strengthened within, or in connection with the next C/4.

The Bureau of Human Resources Management, after implementing adjustments recommended in the IOS evaluation, is ready to resume the Managed Mobility Programme. However, the impact of COVID-19 cannot be disregarded, so delays are likely. The Bureau is reviewing the planning, list of posts, deferments, communication and relocation support mechanisms. Recommendations on career incentives require decision by the General Conference.

Progress towards implementation of Global Priority Gender Equality continues to be patchy

Gender equality was re-confirmed as a global priority by Member States during the 40th session of the General Conference, and in their responses to UNESCO's questionnaire on the draft 41 C/4 and 41 C/5. Member States also indicated that they want gender equality integrated throughout the Organization's main strategic planning documents, indicating support for seven thematic priorities to be implemented transversally.

Programme sectors are working closely with the Gender Equality Division to strengthen the integration of gender lenses in their programmes and projects from the design stage and ensuring relevant indicators are defined and integrated to allow measuring results. The online training launched in early 2020 is one way to strengthen capacities across the Organization.

Reinvigorating a culture of gender equality throughout UNESCO requires the participation of all staff. Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Division for Gender Equality and strengthening the overall gender equality architecture will be addressed in the 41 C/4 and 41 C/5. It will also be addressed in the ongoing IOS Evaluation of the UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality. An internal working group made up of Executive Officers and gender specialists from each Sector was set up in 2020 to work collaboratively on common priorities.

Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes requires urgent attention

Evaluations and experience demonstrate that projects and programmes that comply with UNESCO's Results-Based Management (RBM) approach and guidance are effectively reporting results at the outcome level. Moreover, projects and programmes aligned with the RBM approach respond more effectively to Organisational higher-level results and the Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the application of Results-Based Management at UNESCO. The RBM Guiding Principles, Project templates, and eLearning modules were launched in April 2019 to facilitate outcome-oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation by further embedding the Theory of Change, more robust Results -, Monitoring- and Evaluation Frameworks, by engaging stakeholders and by embedding sustainability measures. The 2020 versions of the above are underway to reflect good practices and lessons learned. RBM events ranging from briefings, workshops, webinars were delivered as feasible within the limited resources dedicated to RBM and coaching support has continuously been provided to staff at the Corporate C/5 and Programme/Project levels. To further enhance outcome-oriented projects and programmes, there is an urgent need to continue strengthening RBM capacities at all levels in the Organization which would necessitate a substantive increase in the offer of RBM events. Regarding reporting, emphasis has been placed through the 2019 project Report templates on showcasing results and impact (e.g. testimonies) as well as demonstrating the contributions of programmes'/projects' achievements to the hierarchy of results and up to the 2030 SDGs and targets.

Concerning evaluation, the continued more consistent implementation of the 2014-21 UNESCO evaluation policy that requires systematically dedicating three percent of all regular budget and voluntary contributions for monitoring and evaluation shows initial results with more robust resources dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. Many evaluations have inspired the development of a Theory of Change which provides a starting point for discussions on future strategic directions and key areas of action for the respective programmes.

Continued efforts with respect to evaluation capacity building measures such as training workshops, webinars and the launch of the evaluation e-learning are contributing to better evaluation quality and more visibility and increasing interest in evaluation-related matters as well as to an enhanced evaluation culture across the Organization with better recognition of evaluation as a management and learning tool.

Partnerships continue to be strengthened, but outreach can be further diversified

Resource Mobilization Action Plans are being developed by several Field Offices and Programme Sectors in close cooperation with BSP. They are aimed at strengthening existing partnerships and developing new ones. In several cases, these demonstrate a focus on developing partnerships with the private sector, such as in the case of the CI Sector. The Education Sector is also expanding partnerships with the private sector notably through the Global Education Coalition. The GEC is a platform for collaboration and exchange to protect the right to education during the unprecedented disruption of education due to the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. It brings together more than 150 members to ensure that #LearningNeverStops, including 25 private sector partners.

Other examples of partnerships are the Futures of Education Initiative which will be the converging point of UNESCO's work on research and foresight. In this regard, the new dedicated 'Future of Learning and Innovation Team' will provide a unified support and coordination structure. It will work closely with the team on higher education and the UNESCO Chairs and university networks.

As indicated in the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (207 EX/11) UNESCO is using the Structured Financing Dialogue principles of alignment, transparency, predictability, flexibility and donor diversification to frame its relationships with donors in general and will encourage both public and private donors to participate in annual review meetings, which offer a mutually accountable framework for the planning, review and evaluation of cooperation.