The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)

Formative Evaluation

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for every child

EVALUATION REPORT

February 2018

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FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN INITIATIVE (OOSCI)

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PREFACE

One of the major policy goals during the Education For All (EFA) era was the declaration of universal access to basic education, setting goals and targets, and implement programmes towards achievements of the stated goals. The international education community believed, then, that opening up access to schooling by removing barriers such as school fees and enacting free education and related policies would translate to all children being able to access school.

For instance, the School Fees Abolition Initiative (SFAI) was conceived based on the assumption that abolishing school fees would, by and large, benefit all children. For some categories of children - children from poor households; children from ethnic minorities; orphans; children trapped in child labor; children in communities afflicted by conflict, wars and natural disasters – such measures were not enough. While many of the children did gain access to school, ensuring that children can attend and complete quality basic education requires a more complex set of solutions and targeted investments. Hence, the period of the Millennium Development Goals was largely focused on making progress on MDG 2, that is, bolstering access. Alongside that effort, educators had to isolate and understand factors that keep children out of school, and devise strategies to mitigate them.

The era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) begins with a daunting awareness of the 100-year gap in education outcomes between developing countries and developed countries. To that end, the most important question that the education community will be faced with in 2030, if not sooner, is whether progress in education outcomes has had cumulative and compounding benefits, and whether it is, indeed, sustainable. Education programmes and interventions will be judged against a new standard of achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes for all children. For the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), this evaluation concluded that commendable progress was made, and the initiative is on a path to build towards sustainable achievements. However, bold investments are required to ensure that the next generation of otherwise poor and disadvantaged children begin on a stronger footing and finish secondary school, and that more of them access higher education, thus setting them on a path towards breaking cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

The evaluation was conducted by PROMAN S.A. in association with CEval GmbH and Redi4Change. On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to thank Joachim Pfaffe for his role as team leader, and Stefan Silvestrini for leading the methodological and data analysis components. Other members of the evaluation team - Cornelia Römling, Susanne Väth, Dean Nielsen, Cream Wright, and Caroline Assad - made invaluable contributions as well. The national experts, Martin Compaore (Burkina Faso), Julian Valdes (Dominican Republic), Isabella Tirtowalujo (Indonesia), Meenakshi Dahal (Nepal), Mohammed Nur (Sudan), and Letwina Ndanga (Zimbabwe) enriched the evaluation team with their extensive knowledge of critical education sector issues and national perspectives, as well as making connections with key institutions and interlocutors in each of their countries. We are grateful, also, for their expertise.

I would also like to express my gratitude to UNICEF colleagues; Mark Waltham, for coordinating technical inputs in the Education Section, the Regional Education Advisers for their advice and support, and OOSCI Focal Points for their thought-provoking contributions. Colleagues in UNICEF Country Offices in Burkina Faso, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Romania, Nepal, Sudan, Zimbabwe and the Regional Office in Nepal (ROSA), and government partners in the respective countries provided invaluable support during field visits. As always, their inputs and cooperation are appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Evaluation Office for their work on seeing the evaluation through. Kathleen Letshabo developed the evaluation approach, managed the evaluation and brought her own expertise in education to bear by providing extensive inputs to finalize the evaluation report. As always, Dalma Rivero provided strong administrative support throughout the evaluation. I commend the efforts of all colleagues, and believe that our colleagues in the Education team will find the findings, insights and recommendations herein useful and timely.

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ACRONYMS

5DE	Five Dimensions of Exclusion
ABE	Alternative Basic Education
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEA	American Evaluation Association
AEP	Alternative Education Programmes
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BEGE	Basic Education and Gender
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CEE	Complementary Elementary Education
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CfS	Child-friendly School
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DeGEval	German Evaluation Society
DfID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EAC	Educate a Child (Uganda)
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific
EAPRO	(UNICEF) East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
EFA	Education For All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment

EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQ	Evaluation Question
EQE	Equity and Quality in Education Project (Uganda)
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESARO	(UNICEF) Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EVS	Education Voucher Schemes
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSI	Fragile States Index
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GEROS	Global Evaluation Oversight System
GIS	Geographical Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRG	Global Reference Group
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HDI	Human Development Index
HRBAP	Human-Rights-Based Approach to Programming

IAG-EII	Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators		**OVC**	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
ILO	International Labour Organization		**QCA**	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization		**PEDP**	Primary Education Development Programme (Bangladesh)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education		**REA**	Regional Education Advisor
			ROSA	(UNICEF) Regional Office South Asia
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency		**SDG**	Sustainable Development Goals
JSR	Joint Sector Review		**SFAI**	School Fees Abolition Initiative
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean		**SIDA**	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
KG	Kindergarten			
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		**SWAp**	Sector-Wide Approach
MDG	Millennium Development Goals		**TVET**	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa		**UBR**	Universal Basic Education
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office		**UCW**	Understanding Children's Work
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey		**UIS**	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
MLE	Multilingual Education		**UNEG**	United Nations Evaluation Group
MoE	Ministry of Education		**UNESCO**	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MoRES	Monitoring of Results for Equity Systems			
MoV	Means of Verification		**UNFPA**	United Nations Population Fund
NER	Net Enrolment Rate		**UNGEI**	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
NFE	Non-Formal Education		**UNHCR**	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization		**UNICEF**	
NPHC	National Population & Housing Census			United Nations Children's Fund
OOSCI	Out-Of-School Children Initiative		**WASH**	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
OOSCR	Out-Of-School-Children Rate		**WB**	World Bank
			WCA	Western and Central Africa
OOSCY	Out-of-School Children and Youth		**WFP**	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) was founded and launched in 2010. It aims to support governments to develop and apply innovative approaches to better estimate the number of children that are excluded from educational opportunities, identify who the children are, and to develop solutions to bring the children back to school.

OOSCI is a partnership between UNICEF, the *UNESCO Institute for Statistics* (UIS), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). GPE joined the initiative in 2013, and provided a grant to be used to create greater awareness around the issue of out-of-school children and to accelerate progress in achieving the outcomes of the initiative. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Bank supported the work of OOSCI through *Understanding Children's Work* (UCW)[1]. The work of the initiative is organised around three programme objectives, namely:

- To develop capacity and robust processes for deriving profiles of out-of-school children and to analyse barriers that have led to their exclusion;

- To identify and implement effective policies and strategies to reduce out-of-school children, and to integrate, the necessary changes within education sector plans *[and thereby enhancing the likelihood for their sustainability]*; and,

- To engender greater international attention and enhanced advocacy that will translate into commitments (national and international) to bring all children into school.

A formative evaluation of OOSCI was commissioned in 2017 to obtain an independent appraisal of the progress that governments have made to enact policies and implement solutions designed to reduce the number of out-of-school children. The evaluation aims to verify the contribution of UNICEF and partners in opening up learning opportunities - formal, non-formal or informal - for all children, and to enable the programme to meet its accountabilities to OOSCI donors. The evaluation covers the entire period of OOSCI implementation, from its inception in 2010 through the 2016 reporting period.

One of the activities that were undertaken by the UNICEF education team in preparation for the evaluation was to articulate a theory of change for OOSCI. The theory of change postulates that the provision of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school, coupled with extensive advocacy efforts, will prompt governments to implement changes in their education systems that are necessary to bring children into school, and to achieve the stated goal of OOSCI - *substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school.*

Evaluation purpose, objectives, scope and use

Purpose: The purpose of the evaluation was to test the validity of the programme theory of change and its assumptions, to provide a formative assessment of progress towards the achievement of the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school, and to strengthen the programme logic.

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[1]   Anchored by ILO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, UCW is an initiative that brings together leading academics, policy-makers, practitioners and donors to conduct research and develop policies and solutions in the area of child labour and youth employment.

Objectives: Three objectives defined in the evaluation terms of reference were as follows:

- To examine the efficacy of strategies supported by UNICEF towards realising the goal of universal participation in basic education[2], and to determine whether pathways to reaching the intended goal are articulated clearly and are aligned with those of key-partners.

- Determine the extent to which OOSCI studies generated credible evidence on out-of-school children, influenced key policy changes, and facilitated the selection of effective strategies and interventions for various programming contexts, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming.

- To assess UNICEF's contribution in building individual and institutional capacities to address barriers to entering and staying in school, assess their adequacy, and evaluate efforts at building capacities of key partners.

Organized around OOSCI programme outcomes, descriptive and normative evaluation questions are presented in the evaluation matrix in (see Appendix 3). The evaluation addresses the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency** and **sustainability** as promulgated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). It also addresses two additional criteria; ***coherence***, to enable assessment of the formative aspects of OOSCI and the evolving nature some concepts and tools, and, ***utility***.

Scope: The evaluation covered all OOSCI partner countries that had completed their studies by the end of 2016, estimated at 40 of 87 countries. Countries were spread through all UNICEF regions. Partner countries are at different stages of OOSCI implementation (conducting their studies, policy level work, etc). The evaluation also covered inputs and activities of OOSCI core partners, namely UNICEF, UNESCO *Institute for Statistics*, the GPE, and respective governments.

Evaluation use: The evaluation was meant to facilitate reflection and learning among education managers responsible for programming on out-of-school children issues in all participating agencies. A possible revision of implementation strategies aimed to improve programme coherence is anticipated. Policy-makers and government counterparts are expected to use evidence from the evaluation to deepen their understanding of the issues facing out-of-school children at all levels of the education system, as well as to mobilize stakeholders in key sectors, such as the social services sector.

Methodology and approach

A theory-based design was employed for the evaluation, with the OOSCI theory of change being articulated retroactively by OOSCI managers during the scoping phase of the evaluation.

Evidence of the contribution of UNICEF and that of partners was derived through a qualitative design. Sources included (i) a desk-based review of secondary data analysis; (ii) an online survey, administered to education programme officers in all UNICEF country offices implementing OOSCI; (iii) interviews and focus group discussions with a sample of respondents in UNICEF New York, Regional Education Advisors and/or OOSCI Focal Points in all seven

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[2] Basic education: primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 1-2, i.e. ISCED-P).

UNICEF regional offices; and (iv) interviews and focus group discussions held with stakeholders at country level during the course of the field visits.[3]

All primary and secondary data were subjected to a **qualitative content analysis**[4] and/or a **qualitative comparative analysis (QCA)**.[5] QCA was used to answer evaluation questions relating to different contextual conditions under which OOSCI was implemented, and combinations of factors that would make the reduction of the number of out-of-school children more likely in one context, and less likely in another. Finally, survey data was subjected to descriptive analyses (e.g. mean values, standard deviations). These analyses were mainly used for triangulation with an additional data source, and to substantiate the qualitative findings with a larger empirical base.

Selected findings

Progress towards universal basic education

- Declarations of universal basic education, expressed or implied, were found in government documents for the majority of OOSCI partner countries (80 percent), signalling a strong intent to eliminate the problem of children being out of school.

- OOSCI is credited with having brought a positive attitudinal change to government partners on the subject of out-of-school children, and with bringing new energy and a new push for prioritizing programmes on issues facing out-of-school children in UNICEF country offices.

- With nearly 70 percent of the countries having executed or completed an OOSCI study, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) maintained an intense focus on OOSCI and issues relating to out-of-school children. These efforts were beginning to show dividends, both in terms of targeting approaches, and the variety of solutions for out-of-school children.

However,

- Many OOSCI countries often conflated "inclusive education" with special education programmes, and because of this lack of conceptual clarity, interventions failed to address exclusion of specific groups of out-of-school children.

- The link between stated goals for universal basic education, its objectives, and proposed and/or implemented strategies was often inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory.

- Also, sub-national authorities often lacked the data and/or evidence required to make a strong push for investing in education, and/or to devote the necessary time and resources to dedicate to inclusion strategies.

Evidence generation and utility of OOSCI studies

- OOSCI studies executed in partner countries were found to be effective in generating profiles of children that are out of school, and in identifying barriers that prevent

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3 Field visits were conducted to selected OOSCI partner countries (Burkina Faso, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Romania, Nepal, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and UNICEF Regional Office in Nepal). The purpose of the field visits was to validate preliminary judgements and findings from the other data sources.

4 Mayring, Philipp (2010), Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. In: Mey Günter and Mruck, Katja, eds, Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie. Wiesbaden, 2010.

5 For a more detailed description of the QCA-approach, see Ragin, Charles C., Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008.

children from enrolling in school, cause them to drop out, and/or prevent them from re-entering school appropriately.

- OOSCI has contributed positively to increasing the visibility of the subject of out-of-school children, and the plight of the children that are excluded from participating in school in the education development discourse, policy dialogue, and in priority setting agenda.

- Where countries were not successful in generating complete profiles of out-of-school children or in identifying and addressing barriers that keep children from school, a reduction in the number of out-of-school children were still realized, provided that the countries **were relatively prosperous** (using a high human development index as proxy for prosperity) and **were judged as stable** (i.e., Fragile State Index of 60 or less).

- Almost all OOSCI studies were successful in coming up with robust data, and where possible, estimates of the number of children that are out of school; however, these figures were often contested, resulting in some countries being reluctant to release their studies for public consumption.

However,

- The "five dimensions of exclusion" as articulated by OOSCI were not adequate to describe all profiles of out-of-school children. The evaluation also found that the upper-secondary school population should be included in the OOSCI methodological framework in order to make it more responsive to the different country contexts.

- Solutions for eliminating the barriers that keep children away from school were not a key component of the priority setting agenda in most OOSCI partner countries.

- While OOSCI studies were successful in generating recommendations to address key issues affecting out-of-school children, the recommended actions were sometimes tenuous in terms of addressing the most prevalent barriers and bottlenecks, and at times not feasible and/or actionable.

Partnerships to advance the work of out-of-school children

- OOSCI partnership arrangements and the division of tasks between the core partners were considered to be cohesive, productive and to have increased efficiency for the majority of implementers, while the contribution of all OOSCI partners was credited for having expanded geographical coverage of activities and interventions for out-of-school children. This outcome was highly valued by participating governments.

- OOSCI is credited with a creating a higher demand for technical and policy advice around issues affecting out-of-school children, and to have increased opportunities for face-to-face interaction with decision-makers.

On the other hand, the evaluation also found that:

- OOSCI non-government partners were not diverse enough. National civil society organizations were underrepresented in the work of out-of-school children in comparison with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Also, the roles and results expected from this category of partners were not clearly defined.

- OOSCI was highly valued by smaller NGO partners whose views are rarely represented in policy debates, and who regarded the opportunity to work alongside OOSCI as reclaiming their "voice".

Strengthening education systems and capacities

Derived from Chapter 6, the findings on strengthening of education systems and capacities signal that the overall sustainability of OOSCI objectives and government efforts are shaky, at best. For instance:

- Half of the countries sampled for the document review demonstrated only modest success in improvement of data systems and processes, while commendable success was registered in only in a small number of countries.

On the other hand, the evaluation also found that:

- Availability of robust and reliable data was highly inconsistent, due mostly to limitations in financial and human resources capacities for data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and related processes; and,

- A robust contribution analysis to explain the factors that account for reductions in the number of out-of-school children is both methodologically possible, and necessary to sustain the evaluability of OOSCI.

Evaluation Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1:** Universal basic education is still a unifying goal and message for what the education sector is required to achieve in terms of maintaining high enrolment, retention, and completion rates. Beyond these measures of participation and efficiency, UBE is increasingly being reconceptualized to include equity and inclusiveness, which also means that education resources should be allocated to achieve *progressive universalism*. Adopting a formal definition of UBE to reflect this thinking would strengthen the linkages between the objectives of OOSCI, UNICEF's advocacy and resource mobilization efforts, and other work around out-of-school children, as well as the overarching goal of improving education outcomes for all children.

- **Conclusion 2:** OOSCI studies have laid an important foundation in developing comprehensive profiles of out-of-school children in each country, and in identifying barriers. The analysis of barriers needs to be contextualized and updated periodically in order to remain to responsive to the needs of different groups of out-of-school children.

- **Conclusion 3:** Evidence and policy guidance from OOSCI studies have become a useful resource for planning processes in education departments and for education sector partners. To the extent that the initiative has gained acceptance in the partner countries, OOSCI is well positioned to push important messages (such as the value of stability in terms of a lack of conflict, and a productive economic environment), and to provide support to turn those messages into action that is tailored for different programming contexts.

- **Conclusion 4:** While the contribution of UNICEF and OOSCI partners has led to discernible progress and changes in policies and planning, a gap between policy and planning on one hand, and implementation on the other remains, due mainly to inadequate prioritization of issues facing out-of-school children. The evaluation concluded that a new advocacy effort for the out-of-school children agenda is required. So is the prioritization of solutions and/or interventions for the most disadvantaged sub-groups of children that are out of school, as well as a resourcing model for issues facing all children that are out of school.

Conclusion 5: In an operating environment subject to frequent changes in government staffing decisions, shifting donor resources, and continuous movement of people, UNICEF was regarded by all actors as a constant factor, and a reliable "anchor partner"; its convening power helped to move the partnership objectives forward.

Conclusion 6: Technical capacities to identify and serve all children, including all profiles of children that are excluded from school, were strengthened. However, improvements were confined to individual capacities, and did not permeate the system. As such, the gains from OOSCI will not be sustainable in the long run, unless the next generation of OOSCI studies concentrate greater effort on supporting governments to achieve systemic changes.

Evaluative assessment

1. Relevance	OOSCI was found to be relevant to national and international debates on equity in development. By highlighting the plight of out-of-school children, even as countries celebrate gains in enrolment rates and progress towards the MDGs/SDGs, it has raised issues of equity and fairness as well as the rights of children, in the quest to make full use of the human resource potential of countries. In addition, through policy dialogue and strategic support, OOSCI has enhanced its relevance in helping to shape national priorities and to formulate robust sector plans that embrace education as a right for all children.
2. Effectiveness	In most countries, OOSCI was effective in cultivating a critical mass of national stakeholders who are ready to support the shift from targeted community interventions to an effective systemic approach, with regard to out-of-school children. Consequently, an effective and inclusive process of policy making and priority setting around out-of-school issues was triggered at the macro level. However, OOSCI was less effective in supporting countries to translate recommended policies and strategies into concrete practice.
3. Efficiency	By being embedded in priority setting processes, developing sector plans, and mobilising resources; OOSCI partner agencies have contributed efficiently to measures that address key challenges posed by the problem of out-of-school children in target countries. Efficiency could be improved by keeping all OOSCI partners engaged by assigning more roles and tasks, and through deeper collaboration between OOSCI partners. This would enable partners to better "deliver as one" in providing their support for measures that help to translate policies, plans, and priorities into concrete achievements on issues pertaining to out-of-school children. In this regard, marshalling research capacities of a partner such as UCW and allocating specific tasks to the group should increase efficiencies of OOSCI.
4. Utility	The utility of OOSCI is closely tied to its effectiveness, Useful outputs have been put in the hands of governments. As an initiative designed to support addressing key challenges and reducing the number of out-of-school children in the population, the utility of OOSCI is also linked to availability of resources on a sustainable basis. Without this, the problem of out-of-school children will persist or worsen, no matter how many studies and strategic plans the initiative generates for any given country.

5. Coherence	Barriers to universal education are complicated and intertwined. Hence, the ability to deliver a comprehensive national, regional, and global response depends on sound interrogation of concepts and claims about what OOSCI can deliver. In that regard OOSCI was internally coherent enough to be functional it its formative phase. As end users begin to expect more of OOSCI, additional work will be required to make it conceptually sound, and coordinate effectively across sectors and among stakeholders.
	OOSCI's external coherence was also low, due to weak cross-sectoral coordination and failure to attract the necessary non-traditional partners. There is still a need to improve coordination and strengthen leadership on programming, to seek out and engage with less prominent by significant partners.
6. Sustainability	Sustainability depends not only on resources (or a lack thereof) at country level, but also on the political will and commitment of governments and partners to a rights-based model of education. Resources facilitate the implementation of feasible solutions, and commitment drives efforts towards progressive realisation of the goal of basic education for all. Both resources and commitments are not yet at levels that would make for sustainability in addressing the challenges posed by out-of-school children. This is particularly the case for domestic resources, implying a need for long term external support

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Theory of change for OOSCI should be revised to reflect the key elements of inclusion to ensure that the needs of all out-of-school children are met at all levels of the basic education cycle, while still ensuring that the initiative focuses on identifying strategies and policies that empower governments to eliminate the lack of participation at the pre-primary level, such as sustainable, pro-poor financing for the sub-sector.

Management response: UNICEF management agrees to revise the theory of change for OOSCI to incorporate all levels of education from pre-primary to upper secondary as well as the financing implications of interventions for out-of-school children, while still maintaining a special emphasis on the crucial early years of education. An expert group consisting of staff from UNICEF HQ, regional offices and country offices, as well as partners such as GPE, UIS and ILO will be established to revise the theory of change, and to create new tools and methodologies for developing profiles of out-of-school children.

An expert group consisting of staff from UNICEF HQ, regional offices and country offices, as well as partners such as GPE, UIS and ILO will be established to revise the theory of change, develop new tools and methodologies for developing profiles of out-of-school children and identifying barriers to their inclusion.

Recommendation 2: OOSCI should expand its focus to harness the expertise and capabilities of OOSCI technical partners to seek effective and efficient strategies and solutions that support the *implementation* and *comprehensive monitoring* of policies in key contexts where programming for different profiles of out-of-school children occurs, and to attract resources to ascertain sustainability of implementation.

Management response: UNICEF management agrees that OOSCI should focus on strategies to support policy implementation and monitoring, and will engage technical partners in this work. Once the theory of change has been revised, the expert group will develop and circulate new operational guidance for conducting OOSCI country studies, including on strengthening links with existing processes such as the

development of Education Sector Plans and on attracting sustainable financing, particularly from domestic resources, that meet the needs of out-of-school children.

Recommendation 3: OOSCI should re-orient its methodological framework towards the entire basic education cycle (i.e., pre-primary to upper secondary), and target key vulnerable groups that cut across all profiles of out-of-school children, and *generate explicit strategies* that address the learning needs of these groups, including but not limited to *embracing appropriate forms of learning* for them, and *responsive modalities* for delivering those learning opportunities.

Management response: *UNICEF management agrees that the OOSCI methodological framework should be expanded to include adolescents of upper secondary school age and other forms of education outside formal schooling such as alternative and flexible education programmes. The expert group will develop the tools to create statistical profiles of adolescents who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and guidance on incorporating non-formal education in the OOSCI analysis.*

Recommendation 4: While maintaining the usual focus on supporting governments to discharge their mandate to extend learning opportunities to all children, OOSCI should facilitate processes for assembling the right type of partners, including but not limited to government officials, that have a clear potential to bring new ideas, and/or offer new entry points for programming for out-of-school children.

Management response: *UNICEF management agrees that it is essential to continue to build coalitions and partnerships to respond to emerging issues and changing situations, including greater engagement by civil society, multi-lateral and bilateral agencies, religious organizations, the private sector and*

non-traditional donors. UNICEF (Education Section) will commission research and issue briefs on engaging with other service providers including low-cost private schools and Quranic schools, and encourage Country Offices to actively promote the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders in Local Education Groups that advise partner governments and advocate for specific groups of marginalized children.

Recommendation 5: OOSCI should strengthen all its programmatic elements to set the initiative up to yield evaluable information on the stated goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children. This includes ascertaining the internal and external coherence of the initiative, the feasibility of achieving intended results, and ensuring that adequate M&E inputs and systems are put in place to enable systematic assessments of OOSCI's contribution.

Management response: *While the formative evaluation has demonstrated that OOSCI has made a valuable contribution to efforts to reduce the number of children out of school, UNICEF management agrees that the expert group should also establish indicators and monitoring arrangements to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that will enable the progress of the initiative to be systematically assessed in both humanitarian and development contexts in the future.*

SECTION I
BACKGROUND

This section summarises the evaluation purpose, methodology and process, presents the global context and efforts to reach children that are out of school children, and describe the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI).

GLOBAL OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

This chapter provides the global overview of efforts to ensure provision of education for all children. It summarises current knowledge and/or evidence on the status of out-of-school children, and provides a rationale for the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI).

1.1 PROBLEM GENESIS

Over the past few decades, considerable effort has gone into making education accessible and to create opportunities for schooling for all children and youth. Approaches to bring as many children as possible and young people into school have taken many forms, including grass-roots lobbying for the importance of schooling, political declarations for universal access to education, introduction of school fees abolition initiatives, and/or pro-poor education financing frameworks, to mention a few. Despite these efforts, too many children await the opportunity to access and participate in schooling.

One of the most recent accounts for out-of-school children estimates that 264 million children and youth are excluded from education, 61 million of which are of primary school age, 62 million of lower secondary school age, and 141 million of upper secondary age (UIS, 2015). However, agencies typically estimate and report different numbers of out-of-school children, depending on their ideological underpinnings, methodologies and data sources.[6]

As such, there are persistent differences in the numbers of out-of-school children reported by governments and/or by different agencies.

Similarly, while there may be a shared understanding and/or convergence on the multiplicity of contributory factors for children being out of school, there is no consensus on what the critical factors for addressing the problem are, even in similar contexts. Rather, they tend to emphasise or prioritise different factors based on their insight and comparative advantage.

For instance, the World Bank tends to focus on rigorous statistical analysis to highlight causality and statistical significance as a way of homing in on key variables for their interventions and therefore views exclusion as a major ethical and governance issue for countries. In another example, UNICEF uses elements of the Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP) and the MoRES framework to ensure equitable facilitation of rights through programme design, implementation, measurement, and budgeting.

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6   UNESCO typically uses administrative data, since it is the main custodian of education sector data as collected and reported by countries. It is also mandated with responsibility to produce official education statistics for the EFA/MDG goals. On the other hand, household survey data were preferred by Word Bank and UNICEF (using its Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys [MICS]).

In yet another example, UNESCO and UNICEF have invoked a 'twin-track approach' as a necessary means to provide basic education for all children. The macro-systemic track involves enacting policies and strengthen systems to create a more inclusive approach to access and quality in education. On the other hand, the micro-interventionist track uses targeted interventions to show that quality education can be achieved for the most marginalised children. In order to pursue either track successfully, governments need robust information on who these children are, where they live, whether they have ever attended school and if they are likely to do so in the future.

Hence this approach requires action to invest in better data, and assumes that reaching the most marginalised may initially cost more but also yields greater benefits. It also assumes that evidence-based solutions, including innovative policy and budgeting tools can help guide governments and donors to allocate education resources more efficiently and equitably in support of universal access and completion of basic education.

Launched in 2010, the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) was founded to respond to these dynamics by support governments to develop and apply innovative approaches to better estimate the number of children are excluded from educational opportunities, identify who the children are, and to develop solutions to bring them back to school. OOSCI was initially joined by 25 countries.

At the end of 2016 there were approximately **87 partner countries** at various stages of implementation of OOSCI activities. OOSCI-supported studies were conducted and completed by 37 of the 87 partner countries, while new studies were in progress in approximately 20 countries.

In 2017 an evaluation was commissioned to obtain an independent appraisal of the progress towards supporting governments to enact policies and implement advice and recommendations of OOSCI studies.

1.2 OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Initial conceptualizations of the problem of out-of-school children tended to reflect relatively simplistic concerns around the adequacy of education facilities, staff, and resources to meet the demand represented by the school-age population. Based on an instrumental and transactional model that views education as an area of investment for human resource development, the emphasis was on turning out adequate numbers of educated/skilled personnel to service the economy and cultivate a functionally enlightened population. In principle schooling was open to all, with a promise that children could progress through the system on merit. In practice, however, schooling was elitist and catered to those who could afford to participate and complete the education cycle. As a result, public investments in education benefited only some children whilst others were excluded from schooling.

Increasingly, this instrumental model of education proved unfair, inequitable, and incapable of meeting the growing demand for schooling. This demand meanwhile, was premised on the perceived role of education in determining life chances, enhancing quality of life, and helping to develop individuals, families, and communities. As a result, the concept of education as a right for all children gained ascendance in development work[7]. Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UNICEF, UNESCO, and other key partners advocated

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7   Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

strongly for education as a right and formulated practical principles for implementing rights-based schooling.

For instance, the principle of inclusion meant that it was not enough simply to declare that schooling was open to all. Countries had to enact laws on compulsory basic education for all children. Governments, parents, and communities had to become "duty-bearers", charged with responsibility to provide, facilitate, and support basic education for all children. Also, the principle of equity emphasized that education should be available for all children regardless of background and circumstances. UNICEF and other proponents of rights-based schooling worked in disadvantaged communities to help provide quality basic education for all their children.

These efforts in disadvantaged communities involved difficult and costly investments but yielded valuable lessons on facilitating rights-based schooling. It became clear that factors limiting children's access to school cut across multiple sectors, requiring measures to address poverty, undernutrition, poor health, safety and/or protection, gender bias, housework, child labour, and discriminatory cultural practices. Moreover, the problem of out-of-school children was becoming intractable as school-age population growth outpaced education provision, and drop-out created 'leakages' in enrolment levels. Thus, whilst countries celebrated gains in enrolment rates, the problem of out-of-school children persisted, accentuating the perception of inequity in education. It was not clear that continuing or expanding community projects could eliminate the problem within a foreseeable time span.

Moreover, the principle of progressive realization of rights implied that systemic and relentless pursuit of the goal, rather than cumulative piecemeal efforts by partner agencies to

help countries achieve access and completion for out-of-school children was key. As such, the focus shifted to helping governments to better understand the issues and develop strategies and tools for addressing the problem of out-of-school children, as an integral part of investments in their education systems.[8]

In parallel with the ascendancy of the rights-based approach to schooling the field of education and development was undergoing radical changes. The United Nations system was emphasizing the need for its various agencies to "deliver as one" in supporting development at national level.

Major donor partners within the EFA/MDG/SDG movements stressed the need to harmonise and simplify efforts by multiple agencies to support education and development at the country level. These changes require all development partner agencies to cluster their support around national priorities set by the governments, and to engage in constructive policy dialogue on priorities and implementation strategies (including technical and financial resources).

The ensuing developments have shaped the nature of partnerships for addressing challenges in the field of education and development. As such, GPE promoted country-level structures through which development partner agencies came together as one, to engage with the government in education policy dialogue, planning, priority-setting, resource mobilization, and execution mechanisms. Increasingly, these efforts produced education sector plans (ESPs) with credible implementation strategies. In-country, more partners were expected to invest resources in education sector plans, and to support mobilisation of additional resources to augment GPE funds.

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8   This approach provides a precursor to the current initiative (OOSCI).

Whilst the extent to which development partners are committed to the rights-based approach to schooling is unclear, the issue of out-of-school children seems to be a shared concern and priority for all partners. It is a blight on efficiency to have so many children out of school, as this hampers the potential for human resource development. It is equally an ethical issue to use national resources to benefit some children, whilst others remain out of school, raising the potential for grievance, and even conflict.

These changes in education and development therefore help to explain the convergence of several agencies with different mandates and priorities around the out-of-school children initiative. So far, the OOSCI consortium seems to be 'on point' by providing governments with the tools, first to go beyond rhetoric to ensure that all children that are out school are counted, and to create the necessary space for such children to assert their right to education.

1.3 THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN INITIATIVE (OOSCI)

OOSCI is a partnership between UNICEF, *UNESCO Institute for Statistics* (UIS), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). GPE joined the initiative in 2013, providing a grant to to create greater awareness around the issue of out-of-school children, and to accelerate progress in achieving outcomes of the initiative. Other OOSCI partners include the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank, which supported OOSCI work through one of their initiatives - *Understanding Children's Work* (UCW)[9]. Beginning with 25 countries in 2010, OOSCI was being implemented in 87 partner countries by the end of 2016.

1.3.1 Goal and outcomes

The initiative's overall goal is to use evidence-based advocacy to help countries reduce the number of children that are out of school by pursuing the following outcomes:

- Developing comprehensive profiles of excluded children;
- Linking these profiles to the barriers that lead to exclusion;
- Identifying, promoting, and helping countries to implement policies, strategies and budgets that address exclusion of out-of-school children (including children with special needs).

The key outputs of the initiative are the regional and national OOSCI studies. These provide the evidence base for identifying and analysing the key issues and barriers influencing access and completion of basic education. Evidence from OOSCI studies helps to raise awareness amongst decision makers and practitioners. It also provides a basis for recommending changes in government policy or strategies to reduce/eliminate barriers, and to enable more children to access and complete a full course of education. The main assumption is that the recommendations of an OOSCI study accurately reflect and respond to the barriers identified through the study, and are also politically, financially, and technically feasible to implement.

1.3.2 A unified concept of out-of-school children

OOSCI is an evidence-based approach to advocate for policies, strategies, and budgeting practices aimed at addressing the problem of out-of-school children. In an OOSCI study, data is typically collected from diverse sources - education data systems, health data, regional

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[9] Anchored by ILO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, UCW is an initiative that brings together leading academics, policy-makers, practitioners and donors to conduct research and develop policies and solutions in the area of child labour and youth employment.

surveys and population surveys - and used to estimate the number of children that are out of school, identify them and create profiles that describe different groups of out-of-school children.[10] Over time, a unified concept of out-of-school children was articulated as the five "dimensions of exclusion" (5DE), to capture the subtleties of the exclusion problem and the need for different strategies to address different categories of out-of-school children, as indicated in Figure 1.

During an OOSCI study, 'profiles' of out-of-school children are created under one or more of these dimensions, a **profile** being described as " *a group of children in one or more of the 5DE* with certain shared characteristics", for example children with disabilities, rural adolescent girls, children in specific regions.[12]

In a second an important step, a **barriers and bottleneck analysis** is performed. A barrier is considered as *"a factor which is keeping children out of school or placing them at risk of dropping out"*. An example of barriers would be societal norms and/or social and cultural practices and beliefs, the legal framework, availability of services and/or facilities, to mention a few.[13]

The barriers and bottleneck analysis underscores the critical conditions or determinants which either constrain or enable the

FIGURE 1 **Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)[11]**

DIMENSION 1
Not in pre-primary school
→
Pre-primary age children

DIMENSION 2
Attended but DROPPED OUT | Will NEVER enter | Will enter LATE
→
Primary age children

DIMENSION 3
Attended but DROPPED OUT | Will NEVER enter | Will enter LATE
→
Lower secondary age children

OUT OF SCHOOL

DIMENSION 4
AT RISK of dropping out of primary school
→
Primary school students

DIMENSION 5
AT RISK of dropping out of lower secondary school
→
Lower secondary schools students

IN SCHOOL

- **DIMENSION 1** Children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school.

- **DIMENSION 2** Children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school.
- **DIMENSION 4** Children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out.

- **DIMENSION 3** Children of lower secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school.
- **DIMENSION 5** Children who are in lower secondary school but at risk of dropping out.

[10] Three terms are used to further describe the school status of children. 'Visible children' refer to children appearing in Ministry of Educations' databases (this usually does not include OOSC). 'Semi-visible children' refers to those appearing in other databases (e.g. Ministry of Health) and who could thus be identified if the databases were linked. 'Invisible children' refers to those children that do not appear in any database – such as street children or those from nomadic communities.

[11] Source: Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, Conceptual and Methodological Framework (CMF), 16 March 2011.

[12] Source: Operational Manual, Global Out-of-School Children Initiative, p. 53.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 61.

achievement of results for different groups of children. Based on UNICEF's MoRES approach, barriers are identified (analysis of the problems) based on ten determinants of bottlenecks grouped under four sub-headings (i.e., enabling environment, supply, demand, and quality) as shown in Table 1.

MoRES determinants are articulated in four levels - planning, programming, implementation and monitoring, with an emphasis on (i) the flexibility of the approach; (ii) the economy of indicators to be monitored (regarding their ability to feed back into programming); and, (iii) ways and means to identify, collect and collate the relevant data. Table 2 shows how the four programmatic levels relate to the ten MoRES determinants.

TABLE 1	Determinants of exclusion	
Code*	**Determinant**	**Description**
Enabling environment		
E1	Social norms	Widely followed social rules of behaviour
E2	Legislation/ Policy	Adequacy of laws and policies
E3	Budget/ Expenditure	Allocation and disbursement of required resources
E4	Management/ Coordination	Roles, accountabilities, and partnerships
Supply		
S1	Roles and accountability for coordination and/or partnerships	Essential commodities or inputs required to deliver a service or adopt a practice
S2	Access to services, facilities, and information	Physical access (services, facilities, information)
Demand		
D1	Financial access	Direct and indirect cost of services/practices
D2	Social and cultural practices and beliefs	Individual/community beliefs, awareness, behaviours, practices, attitudes
D3	Timing and continuity of use	Completion/continuity in service, practice
Quality		
Q1	Quality of care	Adherence to required quality standards (national or international norms)

* Matching codes are also included in the Evaluation Matrix, in order to show the relationship between evaluation questions, indicators of the MoRES framework, and the respective determinants.

TABLE 2	Levels of programme implementation
Programmatic level	**MoRES Determinants**
Level 1: Equity focussed planning to identify bottlenecks and barriers for achieving results (situation analysis and strategic planning)	E1; E2; E3; E4; S1; S2
Level 2: Monitoring implementation of UNICEF's inputs and activities which contribute to addressing child deprivations	E4; S1; S2; Q1
Level 3: Programme assessment and/or monitoring, analyses and timely actions to remove specific barriers and bottlenecks, strategic adjustments to programme interventions at all levels and informing policy dialogue	E1; D1; D2; Q1
Level 4: Monitoring trends in the situation of children (validating outcomes and estimating progress towards reducing child deprivations)	D3; Q1

Overall, the MoRES analytical framework facilitates linking UNICEF's support to the strengthening of policies and systems to concrete changes in the lives of children. Hence the final step of an OOSCI study is to interpret the resultant analyses, and to recommend policies and interventions tailored to the needs of localities, countries, and regions.

The use of this common approach notwithstanding, OOSCI lead agencies have typically analysed the barriers that prevent children from entering school differently, depending on their perceived mandates/missions and comparative advantages. For instance, while not disputing the importance of other contributing factors, the World Bank considers tackling poverty as central piece in unlocking the problem of out-of-school children, based on in-depth statistical analysis that tended to show poverty as the most significant variable in education exclusion.

On the other hand, while acknowledging the importance of several variables, UNESCO emphasizes supply-side shortcomings, and the need for, inter alia, more schools, trained teachers and learning materials as the answer to education exclusion.

For UNICEF, gender has for some time been highlighted as the most ubiquitous of the variables that account for education exclusion, hence its leadership the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) as part of the EFA/MDG education movement. Amongst the poor, in rural populations, in ethnic minorities, and in urban slums, girls were seen to be consistently more disadvantaged than boys in terms of accessing and completing basic education. Hence a focus on gender is seen as an important strategy in the attempt to resolve the problem of children being out of school.

Responding partly to pressure for greater coherence and improved harmonization in supporting countries to achieve global education goals (MDGs 2 & 3 in the recent past, and now rather focussing on SDG 4, *to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning*), UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank converged on the 5DE model.

Coordinating efforts on OOSCI has fostered greater commitment to these shared goals among lead agencies, Also, a common agenda of influencing policies, strategies, and budgets of countries towards feasible solutions and achievement of education for all children is taking root.

1.3.3 Theory of Change

A theory of change[14] for OOSCI was articulated by the UNICEF education team during the scoping of the evaluation. It postulates that the provision of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school, coupled with and extensive advocacy efforts will, prompt governments to implement changes in their education systems that are necessary to bring children into school, and achieve the goal of "substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school".

A theory of change analysis typically works backwards to identify enabling conditions (inputs, outputs and processes), and how these relate to one another causally for the outcome to occur. In the case of OOSCI the desired gosal is inclusion and participation of all children in primary and lower secondary school (regardless of their background gender, economic, ethnic, cultural, religion, special needs, etc.). Presented in Figure 2, the theory of change postulates that the goal of reducing the number of out-of-school will be achieved if the following occurred:

- All relevant barriers are well-understood;

- Key decision makers and practitioners are adequately sensitised to the evidence; and

- Appropriate measures are developed and implemented to help reduce those barriers.

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14   Source: Terms of reference for the formative evaluation of the Out-of-school-children Initiative (OOSCI): 2010-2016, (See Appendix 1, p. 9).

FIGURE 2   **OOSCI Theory of Change**

SUBSTANTIAL AND SUSTAINABLE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN THAT ARE OUT OF SCHOOL

AT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS:

Broader debates on education & Broader advocacy work to highlight the issue of OOSC and influence donors and decision makers

Change in national Education Sector Plans and other policies in the education systems necessary to bring children into school

Change in actions and practices at country level necessary to bring children into school

KEY ASSUMPTION
Governments will embrace and respond to the evidence in OOSCI studies

Attitudes

Greater awareness of the bottlenecks and solutions for OOSC among policymakers based on number of global, regional and country studies published by OOSCI

Discourse

Statements by leadership and government representatives on needs of OOSC based and references to OOSCI country studies in nat'l ESPs

Procedures

Shifts in procedures and processes through which policy decisions are made (e.g., including minority groups in policy dialogue on out-of-school children)

Policies

Changes in content of government policies in line with recommendations from OOSCI studies (new considerations/formula in allocation of resources)

Behaviours

Changes in financial flows and expenditures; effectual compliance with MoE operating procedures; enforcement of school policies and standards (e.g., CFS child-seeking practices)

OUTCOMES/CHANGES

KEY ASSUMPTION
Recommendations in OOSCI studies are politically, technically, and financially feasible

DATA AND EVIDENCE BASE

Profiles of OOSC

Range of demographic characteristics, including gender, age, location, CWD, ethnic and linguistic minorities etc.

Identification of barriers

Direct and opportunity costs of education that keep children out of school, including gender and ethnic biases in local communities or the school system, factors such as distance to school and future employments opportunities for children, and often the effects of violence and conflict around schools or other emergencies.

Recommendations

Key issues and recommendations for changes in government policy or strategies that would reduce or eliminate the key barriers and enable more children to go school and complete a full course of education. Also, strengthening of implementation mechanisms.

OUTPUTS

TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FROM UNICEF AND UIS

UNICEF To analyze household survey data-often from DHS or MICS- using the five dimensions of exclusion

Statistical techniques

INPUTS/ STRATEGIES

Application of MoRES framework

To systematically identify 'barriers' that either keep children out of school or push out those who have already enrolles

ADVOCACY FOR A MORE EQUITABLE RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

At the base of the causal framework are necessary **inputs** in the form of *technical support for OOSCI studies* from UNICEF and UIS. Other inputs include elements such as capacity building for data collection and use, evidence-based advocacy to redirect attention to the centrality of identifying out-of-school children and developing solution to remove bottlenecks for their participation, and fostering inter-agency cooperation and alignment in programming for out-of-school children programming.

The theory of change also indicates crucial elements of **data and evidence** elements that should be marshalled through the *creation of profiles out-of-school children, identification of barriers, and formation of relevant policies and strategies (interventions).* These three elements are core to the OOSCI model as tangible **outputs** that contribute to **intermediate outcomes** *(observable changes in attitudes, discourse, procedures, and behaviours of policy-makers and education practitioners)* which then contribute to the ultimate outcome of **substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children.**

Borrowing from Jones (2011)[15], the theory of change also postulates intended impacts of OOSCI processes and recommendations. *OOSCI aims to foster **attitudinal change*** as a result of greater awareness of the bottlenecks and solutions for out-of-school children among policy makers derived from evidence from global, regional and country studies published by OOSCI, and/or presentations that include OOSCI messaging. Evidence of ***discursive commitments*** is expected from statements by national governments or regional organisations on the needs of out-of-school children, including references to OOSCI country studies in national education sector plans, while ***procedural change*** signal shifts in processes through which policy decisions are made (for example, opening new spaces for policy dialogue with representatives of minority groups that are typically left out of discussion on out-of-school children).

In this continuum, the theory of change further postulates changes in **policy content**. An example would be instituting new policies for allocating education resources that favour out-of-school children, or new legislation against child marriage in response to having disproportionately higher numbers of adolescent girls being out of school.

Behaviour change is expected to manifest in enactment, consistent implementation, and strict enforcement of the new policy decisions, procedures and laws, in line with recommendations from OOSCI country studies. These changes were expected to take hold, provided that studies offer sound, feasible, and actionable policy advice, and that partner governments will embrace the evidence presented in OOSCI studies and advocacy work by UNICEF and its partners, and respond positively to the recommendations.

1.4 IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF OOSCI

In 2017, OOSCI was being implemented in 87 partner countries. By the end of 2016, 41 OOSCI studies were completed, with others being at various stages of execution and/or being updated. UIS has led in the statistical methodology for creating profiles of out-of-school

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15   For a complete discussion of attitudinal, discursive, procedural, and behaviour changes in policy advocacy, see Jones, H. 'A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Policy Influence,' Overseas Development Institute, London, 2011.

children, while UNICEF led on the analysis of barriers and bottlenecks, drawing on its strong field presence.

UNICEF also played a leading role in coordination with governments and local education groups, and in bringing in regional perspectives under the auspices of the Regional Education Advisors (REAs). The initiative was rolled out to all UNICEF regions and a number of country offices through a series of regional workshops and guidance notes. This allowed each region to adapt the initiative to the prevailing conditions in its constituent countries. GPE and provided

funding that made it possible to implement the latter set of activities when it joined the initiative in 2013.

The formative evaluation of OOSCI which is the subject of this report will obtain an independent appraisal of the progress that governments have made to enact policies and implement solutions designed to reduce the number of out-of-school children. The evaluation aims to verify the contribution of OOSCI partners in discharging their responsibilities, thus providing additional details and/or evidence on the implementation status of OOSCI.

EVALUATION DESIGN

This chapter addresses the purpose of the evaluation, its objectives, scope, and synopsis of the methodology. A detailed description about the evaluation approach and methodology are found in Appendix 2, while the evaluation matrix is presented as Appendix 3.

2.1 EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The purpose of the evaluation of OOSCI was to test the validity of the programme theory of change and its assumptions, to provide a formative assessment of progress towards the achievement of the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school, and to strengthen the programme logic. The three objectives defined in the evaluation terms of reference were as follows:

- To examine the efficacy of strategies supported by UNICEF towards realizing the goal of universal participation in basic education,[16] and to determine whether pathways to reaching the intended goal are articulated clearly and aligned with those of key partners.

- Determine the extent to which OOSCI studies generated credible evidence on out-of-school children, influenced key policy changes, and facilitated the selection of effective strategies and interventions for various programming contexts, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming.

- To identify and assess contribution of UNICEF in building individual and institutional capacities to address barriers to entering and staying in school, assess their adequacy, and evaluate efforts at building capacities of key partners.

The three objectives were translated into evaluation questions, which were in turn aligned with the three programme outcomes of OOSCI:

- Sustainable **capacity and robust processes** developed by partner countries for **deriving profiles of children out of school and for analysing the barriers** that have led to their exclusion.

- Effective **policies and strategies identified and implemented** to increase the number of children that attend school and to mobilize necessary resources to enable completion of at least primary and lower secondary education, and to integrate necessary changes within education sector plans.

- International **attention increased, advocacy enhanced and translated into commitments** (national and international) to address the issue of out-of-school children.

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[16] Basic education: primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 1-2, i.e. ISCED-P).

Organized around OOSCI programme outcomes, descriptive and normative evaluation questions are presented in detail in the evaluation matrix in Appendix 3. The evaluation addresses the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency** and **sustainability**. It also addresses two additional criteria; *coherence*, to enable assessment of the formative aspects of OOSCI and the evolving nature some concepts and tools, and *utility*.

In terms of scope, the evaluation included all OOSCI partner countries that completed their studies by 2016, estimated at 40 of 87 countries. It also included all UNICEF regions. Partner countries are at different stages of OOSCI implementation (conducting their studies, policy level work, etc.). The evaluation also covered activities of all key partners (i.e., UNESCO and the GPE).

2.2 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A theory-based design was employed for the evaluation. Presented in Section 1.3.3 of this report, the OOSCI theory of change was articulated retroactively by OOSCI managers during the scoping phase of the evaluation. Consistent with its "formative" nature, the evaluation emphasized the following:

- Examining of the "strategies" and "pathways" towards reaching the overall OOSC reduction goal;

- Determining the extent to which OOSCI studies generated credible evidence, and

- Assessing the contribution of UNICEF to building individual and institutional capacities of key partners.

Consequently, the evaluation set out to achieve the following:

- Reveal the effectiveness of the processes (e.g. the implementation of policies and interventions);

- Ascertain whether core pathways are causally connected and whether there are gaps in the causal chain that need to be filled by new elements; and,

- Provide an independent appraisal of the progress that governments have made towards enacting policies and implementing policies and other actions that are designed to achieve a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are currently out of school.

However, the evaluation ascertained whether core pathways are causally connected and whether there are gaps in the causal chain that need to be filled by new elements. The evaluation thus provided an independent appraisal of the progress that governments have been made towards enacting policies and implementing actions that are intended to result in a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children.

2.2.1 Data collection

Evidence of the contribution UNICEF and that of partners was derived through a qualitative *ex-post-facto design* from the following sources:

- *Desk-based document review secondary data analysis:* A large volume and comprehensive number of documents was reviewed in this exercise. These included studies on out-of-school children commissioned through OOSCI in partner countries *(28 OOSCI country study reports, 5 OOSCI regional study reports);* UNICEF programme documents and annual reports *(25);* education sector planning documents from governments *(29);* and, and *64* documents contributed by other global partners, including the World Bank, European Commission, USAID, OECD, EFA.

- *Online survey:* Primary data were collected through a semi-standardised online survey, administered to education programme

officers in all UNICEF country offices implementing OOSCI (questionnaire contained in Appendix 6).

- *Interviews and focus group discussions:* Primary data were also collected through interviews with a sample of respondents in UNICEF Headquarters; Regional Education Advisors and/or OOSCI Focal Points in all seven UNICEF regional offices. Interviews and focus group discussions were held with stakeholders at country level during the course of the field visits.

Field visits were conducted to selected OOSCI partner countries (Burkina Faso, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Romania, Nepal, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and in UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (based in Nepal). The purpose of the field visits was to validate preliminary judgements and findings from the other data sources. The field visits also provided an opportunity for additional consultations with UNICEF offices, government counterparts, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders as indicated in Appendix 9.

2.2.2 Data analysis

All primary and secondary data were subjected to a **qualitative content analysis**[17] and/or a **qualitative comparative analysis.**[18] As illustrated in Figure 3, a content analysis of documents was executed in a four-step process, beginning with systematically identifying factors that determine the success of OOSCI. Second, a search was undertaken for repeated combinations of those factors while an analysis was undertaken as a third step to unmask patterns and contrast in the data. In the step conclusions were drawn regarding common factors for success and failure.

Furthermore, as described in greater detail in Appendix 2 and Appendix 7, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) was used to answer evaluation questions relating to different contextual conditions under which OOSCI was implemented, and their contribution to the reduction of the number of out-of-school children.

FIGURE 3 **Content analysis approach**

Identification of country specific OOSCI characteristics and other influential factors (e.g. ownership of partner government, donor coordination etc.)

Search for repeating combinations of characteristics and measurable effects (e.g. countries with high level of government ownership, good donor coordination etc.)

Analysis of patterns of OOSCI characteristics and observed effects (e.g. reduction of number of out-of-school children)

Conclusions regarding common factors for success and failure (e.g. by comparing OOSC development in countries with high/low level of government ownership, good/bad donor coordination etc.)

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[17] Mayring, Philipp (2010), Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. In: Mey Günter and Mruck, Katja, eds, Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie. Wiesbaden, 2010.

[18] For a more detailed description of the QCA-approach, see Ragin, Charles C., Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008.

Finally, descriptive analyses were generated for survey data (i.e., mean values, standard deviations), and interpreted. Findings from survey data were used to corroborate and/or substantiate qualitative findings with a larger sample and a different data source.

2.3   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation team was required to adhere to UNEG norms and standards, as well as methodological and ethical standards of the American Evaluation Association (AEA)[19] and the German Evaluation Society (DeGEval).[20]

Consistent with UNEG guidelines, some of the actions that were undertaken to discharge obligations to institutions and individuals are detailed below:

- **Securing necessary approvals:** The evaluation team worked in accordance with the local laws and obtained any required approval in advance from the relevant organization and local/national authorities.

- **Respect for rights of individuals and institutions:** The evaluation team accorded respondents the opportunity to participate voluntarily while maintaining their anonymity, and to make an independent decision to participate without pressure or fear of penalty. Also, interviewers assured respondents that information would be confidential, and that reports would be written such that responses/contributions would not be traced back to them. Interview notes and any recordings will be accessible to the team members only.

- **Respect for cultural identities and sensitivities:** Variances in ethnicities, local culture, religious beliefs, gender, disability, age were acknowledged and respected. As a result, evaluation processes were mindful of cultural settings, developmental status/capacities, and needs of the respondents.

Professional responsibilities and obligations of evaluators: Evaluators exercised independent judgement and operated in an impartial and unbiased manner. During data collection, sensitive issues such as concerns and appearances of conflict of interest were raised and/or addressed promptly. To the extent possible and given the data limitations, this evaluation has attempted to produce reports that are comprehensive and balanced, based on observations and evidence that was examined.

2.4   LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION

The methodology of the evaluation was anchored on a desk-based review of documents, which means that the findings were heavily dependent on explicit evidence contained in OOSCI reports and UNICEF country offices and regional offices programme plans and reports. This imposed some limitations on the evaluation:

- UNICEF country office and regional office reports have a positive bias towards the organization in that they are a public record, and are also used to communicate the successes of the respective offices. This effect was mitigated by mostly using verifiable facts and drawing very little from them in terms of direct examples. Rather, examples were mainly drawn from OOSCI studies, publications that were mostly conducted by non-UNICEF staff.

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[19]   Cf. http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=51
[20]   Cf. https://www.degeval.org/fileadmin/Publikationen/DeGEval_Standards_fuer_Evaluation_-_Erste_Revision__2016_.pdf

- It was not possible to verify the methodological quality of OOSCI studies or test the voracity of findings or claims in any other publications. The objectivity and independence of the views in the studies could not be tested. However, the studies were based on a common methodological framework, prepared under the guidance of the UIS technical team, and quality assured by UIS and in-country reference teams that included UNICEF education staff. These mitigating factors gave a higher level of confidence than if the studies were executed under completely different arrangements.

- It was difficult to find required and/or reliable data on the number of out-of-school children for most countries. As a result, it was not feasible to provide sufficient evidence on the progress made towards the OOSCI goal of sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children, or relatedly, the contribution of OOSCI.

For the interview and online surveys, a positive bias towards UNICEF due to socially desirability was a possibility. The effects of this bias are difficult to estimate or eliminate. However, triangulation of data sources and data methods helped mitigate the effect of these biases. Also, more confidence was put on the information gathered from the OOSCI studies than self-reported accounts from individual interviews, focus group discussions, or online survey data. There was an attempt to corroborate the evidence with data from at least one other source.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation in four chapters, grouped around the three themes of the evaluation and an examination of OOSCI partnerships arrangements. Each chapter begins with an overview that situates the evaluation within the theory of change, followed by a presentation/discussion of the findings, and a summary of findings and key messages.

THE GOAL OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION?

3.1 OVERVIEW

The education community has invested enormous time and substantial resources in thinking about, and devising strategies to provide education for all children. Before there was OOSCI - a coordinated pursuit to bring in children that are excluded from the schooling - the strategy of declaring universal basic education was designed to be the means through which all children could access education.

The main aspirations of universal basic education (UBE) were codified in the early 2000s through the Education For All (EFA) movement. Universal basic education was operationalized to accommodate different country context. For UNICEF and development partners, the impetus of OOSCI in relation to UBE is a means to assist governments to seek a more progressive path to universalism.

OOSCI developed a theory of change as a tool to articulate the pathway to the goal of *substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school.* Substantial and sustainable progress to universal basic education is implied in this goal. However, OOSCI takes a more progressive stance by first recognizing that children are often left out of school due to certain barriers, poverty being the main driver.

So, this chapter describes the context and commitments for providing access to basic education for all children in OOSCI partner countries. It examines interventions that countries were implementing towards the achievement of universal basic education and assesses if those interventions have a realistic chance of bringing about the necessary changes to attract children that are out of school back into school. The findings are organised around three evaluation questions, addressing the following:

- The extent to which universal access to basic education is specified as a goal, outcome or result for OOSCI partner countries;

- Whether countries have articulated clear and coherent strategies, inputs and outputs towards the outcome of universal access to basic education; and,

- The different entry points for OOSCI in partner countries, and whether progress towards achieving OOSCI programme objectives was made.

In essence, the findings in this chapter address the relevance of OOSCI to the stated goal of achieving universal basic education, and examines the coherence of the OOSCI approach.

3.2 COMMITMENT TO THE GOAL OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

OOSCI, is in a way a continuation of the imperative to bring children into school. Unlike earlier efforts, it recognized the need first to support governments to invest in collecting systematic evidence to understand the phenomenon of out-of-school children and the factors that prevent the children from participating in school before enacting policies or implementing solutions targeted towards different categories and/or profiles of out-of-school children.

To that end, whether or not attainment of universal basic education is a goal of the government, it provides a good starting point and a possible signal for political commitment to solving the problem of out-of-school children. Therefore, the evaluation investigated whether universal access to basic education was a documented goal in partner countries.[21]

3.2.1 Universal access to education programmes

Government documents (including national plans for education, Education for All national reviews, and evaluation reports) from a sample of 40 partner countries provide descriptions of national initiatives and programmes contributing to the achievement of universal access to education. Declarations of universal access to education, expressed or implied, were found in government documents from 32 of 40 countries.

Interventions and measures to reach all children, including children who are yet to gain access to schooling and/or those who have dropped out of school children generally addressed the following:

- Shortcomings in education service delivery, particularly with regard to shortages in the number of trained teachers and in teaching and learning materials, or rehabilitating school buildings to nationally accepted Child-Friendly School (CFS) standards (**Sri Lanka, Gambia**);

- Demand-side incentives like school fee subsidies, school grants, scholarship schemes, school feeding programmes (**Ethiopia**), or awareness campaigns on the importance of (girls) education;

- Non-formal or second chance education programmes including bi- or multi lingual education programmes targeting different types of disadvantaged children (**Cambodia, Sudan**);

- Education programmes for children with special needs; and,

- Leadership training for education sector personnel (school principals and managers) in school development planning, management of operational budgets/school improvement grants.

Evidence from the review revealed that countries were increasingly embarking on efforts to be inclusive. However, "inclusive education" was often referred to as education programmes for children with disabilities, rather than identifying bottlenecks and targeting specific groups of children that were left out-of-school and falling far behind with each successive year.

In addition, although country documents demonstrate an increased awareness of barriers for a variety of profiles of out-of-school children, inclusive education was in some cases conflated with "special education" programmes, accelerated learning or multilingual programmes that aim to facilitate the transition to mainstream education, or bridge the gap in enrolment or learning. In those cases, interventions failed to address characteristics of formal education that contribute to the exclusion of specific groups of out-of-school children - issues related to poverty or affordability, orphanhood, social norms, and many other barriers that make it difficult for parents and guardians to send their children to school.

By contrast, the document review identified non-formal interventions - underpinned by flexibility, diversity, context-specificity and

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21   The scale goes from 0 = 'Universal access to education not mentioned in governmental documents' to 3 = 'Universal access to education mentioned clearly in governmental documents (ESP/ other publicly available documents/ statements of officials) and emphasized, with direct reference to out-of-school children.'

openness - as having a great potential to reach under-served children. As long as they promote the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, non-formal approaches to education enable more flexible modes of delivery and learning.

3.3 STRATEGIES TOWARDS UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

Fifty percent (20 of 40) of the countries in the document review reported on governmental strategies and interventions that ensure universal access to basic education. The main strategies for making basic education accessible and equitable and of higher quality were quite conventional; (i) improving infrastructure and physical access to schooling facilities: (ii) developing institutional and individual capacities for education staff such as increasing the number of qualified teachers; (iii) providing school feeding programmes; and, (iv) increasing community participation in school governance.

Some examples of these included the setting up of a school quality assurance framework in **Cambodia** and fostering participation of communities in school councils in **Egypt.** While partner countries demonstrated commitment to the goal of achieving universal access to basic education, a direct link between the stated goals, objectives, and strategies that were being implemented could not be established. In fact, the effects of the planned actions were often inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory.

For example, **Iraq**'s policy and strategy aims at shifting perceptions and practices of the entire primary education system, yet sector planning remains centralized and is often quantity rather than quality-focused. **Bangladesh** reports achievements in nearing universal access to primary education, attaining gender parity at the primary and secondary education levels, while at the same time stating that five million children are still out of school, or dropped

out early, mostly due to poverty. Both things cannot happen at the same time. And although **Egypt** reported successes in reaching universal access to basic education, there were numerous accounts of students graduating without rudimentary skills in reading and writing, as well as reports of pervasive corruption in much of the education system.

Although partner countries reported that access to education had increased in most cases, they also acknowledged that reducing the number of out-of-school children was still a major challenge, mainly because key policies and programmes for targeting out-of-school children were not fully costed, let alone implemented. Also, weak institutional capacities at the decentralised level have meant that sub-national authorities do not have the required evidence to make a strong investment case, and/or to devote the necessary time and resources to include the most disadvantaged children into the education system.

3.3.1 Universal basic education strategies in education sector plans

In many partner countries, education sector plans presented abolition of school fees and or mitigation of the cost of schooling as the most visible and coherent strategy to achieve universal access to education. For instance, the OOSCI report for West and Central Africa Region (WCAR) stated that national programmes in **Cameroon**, **Benin**, **Togo** and **Congo** proved that reduced school fees had the effect of enrolling more children in school. In response, countries like **Liberia** included school fee abolition measures into their education sector plans.

Even with school fee abolition, however, children from the most vulnerable households still experienced disproportionately higher exclusion due on indirect costs (school uniforms, transportation costs, etc.) and parents' calculations

of opportunity costs. For this reason, a number of countries in WCAR were setting up national programmes and strategies to mitigate education costs in response to the recommendations from OOSCI studies.

These measures aside, partner country commitments within the broader context of the national ratification of international human rights conventions, including the right to education and the rights of the child and of women were mostly rhetorical. This is due, at least in part, to the underlying assumption that all people perceive the value of formal education as a means to achieve development, regardless their social, cultural or economic background. In reality however, certain communities and minority groups may not attach that much value to formal education. Regardless, characterizing the problem as one of demand deflects attention from possible strategies addressing issues of basic education relevance, quality, and/or socio-cultural fit in the communities it is supposed to serve.

3.4 OOSCI MOMENTUM IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

One way of determining the uptake of OOSCI was to ask UNICEF country office staff to determine whether progress was made on the political and societal environments pertaining to OOSCI. Those assessments are encapsulated in Table 3.

TABLE 3   **Enabling environment before and during implementation of OOSCI**

Variable	OOSCI status	No.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Change
Political environment					
Awareness of the problem out-of-school children and related issues at the political level	before	67	2.54	0.78	
	during	63	2.86	0.72	.32
Government ownership of programmes and projects to reduce the number of out-of- school children	before	67	2.40	0.72	
	during	62	2.77	0.73	.37
Government's willingness to engage in dialogue with partners working on issues of out-of-school children	before	67	2.66	0.81	
	during	61	2.89	0.84	.23
Policy framework for the work on out-of-school children	before	66	2.15	0.73	
	during	60	2.38	0.82	.23
Regulation or enforcement of policies for the work on out-of-school children	before	66	2.02	0.75	
	during	60	2.35	0.68	.33
Societal environment					
Public awareness of the problem out-of-school children and related issues	before	67	2.19	0.74	
	during	61	2.69	0.76	.50
Public debate on the merits of providing education that includes all children	before	66	2.11	0.70	
	during	59	2.54	0.75	.43

Source: Online survey of UNICEF Country Offices

The mean for each of the categories improved over time. As expected, respondents perceived that the biggest changes occurred in the societal environment, more in terms of passive awareness of the problem of out-of-school children than in concrete action such as engaging in public debate. Similarly, perceived gains in government "awareness" were predictably higher than gains associated with the presence of a policy framework. Also, the perceived gains in enforcement of policies was high, conceivably validating the experiences of implementers, that where clear guidance is provided, enforcement of existing regulations becomes much easier to accomplish than initiating on the more difficult task of instituting new policies and/or legislation. A cautionary note would be that these interpretations are only good for the general trend since they are self-reports. Fortunately, there was more tangible evidence of progress from other data sources.

UNICEF education staff across the regions provided strong evidence of positive attitudinal change on issues relating out-of-school children issues among government partners, and their prioritization in UNICEF offices. Among the most common areas of change mentioned were a retreat from the widespread phenomenon of denying the existence of the out-of-school children, and increased recognition of the complexity of the issues relating to out-of-school children.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) reports indicated that governments recognized the inherent complexity as well as the potentially high educational and political payoffs in prioritizing issues pertaining to out-of-school children. A Ministerial Conference held in CEE/CIS in 2013 shifted regional education priorities out-of-school children, and had three of its four pillars organized around issues that affect out-of-school children disproportionately (e.g., "Every Child in School," and "Every child learning early and enrolling on time"). Showing a

similar shift, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) declared 2017 as the year of Strengthening Education for Out-Of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY).

Finally, interview data indicated that all MENA countries are sensitized to the subject of out-of-school children. Evidence was presented of a snowball effect across the region, where nine countries decided to start OOSCI studies at the same time. Also, while representing the second fewest UNICEF country offices (16), MENA had conducted and published eight OOSCI studies, the highest number (and proportion) of all seven UNICEF regions, a published regional study, and had three new on-going OOSCI country studies. In another show of commitment to the course, most out-of-school children issues were found to have become mainstream in country discourse beyond education, which necessitated the bringing of the term "OOSCI" into the Arabic language.

3.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND KEY MESSAGES

This chapter provided the context and commitments for providing access to basic education for all children in OOSCI partner countries. Key findings from the evaluation include the following:

- Declarations of universal basic education, expressed or implied, were found in governmental documents for 32 of 40 countries (80 percent), signalling a strong intent to eliminate the problem of children being out of school;

- OOSCI is credited with having brought a positive attitudinal change to government partners on the subject of out-of-school children, and with bringing new energy and a new push for prioritizing programmes on issues facing out-of-school children in UNICEF country offices.

- With nearly 70 percent of the countries having executed or completed an OOSCI study, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) maintained an intense focus on OOSCI and issues relating to out-of-school children. These efforts were beginning to show dividends, both in terms of targeting approaches, and the variety of solutions for out-of-school children.

However,

- Many OOSCI countries often conflated "inclusive education" with special education programmes. Because of this lack of conceptual clarity, interventions failed to address exclusion of specific groups of out-of-school children.

- The link between stated goals for universal basic education, its objectives, and proposed and/or implemented strategies was often inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory.

- Also, sub-national authorities often lacked the data and/or evidence required to make a strong push for investing in education, and/or to devote the necessary time and resources to dedicate to inclusion strategies.

One of the key messages of the evaluation is that while countries generally demonstrate a commitment "to be inclusive", there is a narrow understanding of what "inclusiveness" or "inclusive education" means beyond "special education" programmes for children with disabilities. There seems to be a need for systemic change to accommodate learning needs for heterogeneous groups of learners with diverse backgrounds, rather than improvements in the systems' effectiveness and efficiency measures (i.e., enrolment, repetition, attrition, etc.).

Relatedly, there is a need to deepen the understanding of the concept of inclusion to go beyond access, and to bring a multi-sectoral perspective to education and issues of out-of-school children. To that end, concepts of 'equity' and 'quality' need further specification or operationalisation in terms of adapting schooling to meet practical and specific learning needs of out-of-school children.

Also, universal access to education needs to be reformulated rather as **equitable access to quality (basic) education**, expressed not only in terms of enrolment, retention, and completion rates, but also with regard to the well-being of students, the relevance of the content, and the quality of and suitability of the teaching and learning approach. Only relevant quality teaching and quality learning in a child-friendly environment will eventually ensure that children stay in school after initial enrolment and convince parents that educating their children will yield benefits.

Eventually, a pro-poor approach could be beneficial for addressing a large proportion of out-of-school children. This is directly related to the provision of scarce resources (both material and human). Nevertheless, the key issue is to solicit commitment from OOSCI partner countries to follow the path of "progressive universalism" that will combine a commitment to [providing education for] every child with more resources devoted to those children who need [the] most help.[22]

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[22] International Commission on Financing Global Education, 'The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World' (undated).

The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE GENERATION AND UTILITY OF OOSCI STUDIES

4.1   OVERVIEW

This chapter examines the effectiveness of OOSCI studies in generating accurate and comprehensive profiles of children that are out of school and the barriers that led to their exclusion. It also determines whether OOSCI country studies were successful in generating recommendations that address these barriers and other key issues that keep children out of school. In that sense, it aligns with the OOSCI theory of change, which postulated, among other things, that country ownership will enhance the likelihood of uptake and implementation of OOSCI recommendations, provided that key decision-makers and practitioners are adequately sensitised to the evidence.

The theory of change further assumes that partner governments will embrace the evidence presented in OOSCI studies, and respond favourably to advocacy work by UNICEF and its partners. Therefore, the evaluation also addressed the following:

- Whether there were deliberate processes to ensure country ownership of OOSCI activities and recommendations emerging from OOSCI studies;

- Whether there is evidence that national government counterparts and other partners are beginning to use the data and evidence generated by OOSCI studies to develop new policies; and,

- Whether OOSCI studies influenced the inclusion, in education sector plans, of interventions that target children that are out of school.

The chapter concludes with a summary of findings and key messages of the evaluation.

4.2   GENERATING COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCURATE PROFILES

The *OOSCI Operational Manual* articulates five dimensions of exclusion. The first three dimensions describe children who are old enough to go to school but who are not enrolled or attending (Dimensions 1-3), and the last two describe children that are at the risk of dropping out of school (Dimensions 4-5). These are:

1.   Children of pre-primary age who are not in pre-primary or primary school;

2.   Children of primary school age (i) who are not in primary school; (ii) who attended but dropped out; and, (iii) who will never enter or will enter late;

3.   Children of lower-secondary age (i) who are not in primary or secondary school; (ii) who attended but dropped out; and, (iii) who will never enter or will enter late;

4.   Children in primary school but at risk of dropping out; and,

5.   Children in lower secondary school, but at risk of dropping out.

As a prerequisite, partner countries were supposed to ascertain, through their studies, whether the above-mentioned descriptions fit the profiles of out-of-school children in their contexts, to develop additional more comprehensive profiles where necessary, and to identify barriers that kept children away from accessing formal education. Studies were also tasked with developing strategies to address the barriers that, if mitigated or eliminated, would result in a reduction in the number of children that are out of school.

In defining the problem, some countries introduced additional dimensions of exclusion that best described the profiles of out-of-school children in their context. For instance, **Namibia** incorporated two additional categories, namely: *children of senior-secondary age who never entered senior secondary school; who will enter late, or who entered but dropped out*; **and,** *children at risk of dropping out of senior secondary school*. Given that **Namibia** is a middle-income country and has extended access to the senior secondary level, the adaptation to the original OOSCI model was necessary to facilitate monitoring of out-of-school children at all levels, including the senior secondary level.

In a review of documents from 40 partner countries, 25 had completed their OOSCI studies, while studies for the remaining 15 countries were at various stages of execution, and/or were being updated. The 25 studies that were completed were assessed on the 'comprehensiveness' of profiles that were generated. Profiles were judged as 'comprehensive' if they provided a description of dimensions of exclusion that covered the entire population of out-of-school children (typically identifying all five OOSCI dimensions of exclusion and, in some cases, additional dimensions), and also provided indicators for monitoring and means of verification.

TABLE 4	Generating profiles of out-of-school children	
Descriptor	**Definition**	**Percent (Total)**
Profiles described but incomplete	Some profiles that fit the country context are not included (e.g., Cambodia)	4% (1)
Profiles complete but not operationalized	All relevant profiles are included, but without indicators and/or means of verification	0
Profiles outlined comprehensively	All relevant profiles are mentioned, including means of verification and indicators	96% (24)
	Total	**25**

Source: Document analysis

All studies except one (96 percent) were assessed as having generated comprehensive profiles of out-of-school children for their contexts, as indicated in Table 4. Relatedly, 20 of the 25 countries with comprehensive profiles also published their OOSCI studies, and a positive and significant correlation was found between level of completeness of profiles and the publication of an OOSCI country study.

In **West and Central Africa**, OOSCI studies identified the primary school children as the age-group with the highest proportion of out-of-school children, while children of secondary school age were identified as having the highest proportion of out-of-school children in **East Asia** and **Latin America and the Caribbean**.

Based on data from the same online survey of UNICEF staff, Table 5 indicates that the most prevalent characterization of out-of-school children (in 25 of 54 countries) was that of children that attended school and dropped out at some later point.

TABLE 5	Description of out-of-school children identified in OOSCI country studies	
Category		**Number of country studies**
Majority of out-of-school children never entered school and will never enter		9
Majority of out-of-school children never attended school but will enter late		13
Majority of out-of-school children attended school but dropped out		25
Other		7
Total		**54**

Source: Survey of UNICEF offices

The clearest manifestation of high attrition was in **Latin America** and the **Caribbean**, where 84 percent of respondents indicated that the largest group of out-of-school children were those that dropped out of school.

In most countries, out-of-school children were reported to be more prevalent in low-income families residing in rural areas, as well as those residing in urban areas and/or metropolitan slums. They were also prevalent in war-affected, internally displaced or nomadic populations. Adolescents, children from ethnic minority groups, and children with disabilities were over-represented in the out-of-school population, while children performing below academic standards were considered at high risk of dropping out.

The document review also provided examples of countries where profiling was successful in identifying children with special needs made visible through improvements in data collection. In many of these cases interventions to increase enrolment and reduce or prevent dropping-out were being implemented. However, evidence in **Cambodia** indicated that children

with disabilities were under-reported in the out-of-school population, hence the "incomplete profile" reported in Table 4.

4.2.1 Accuracy of out-of-school children profiles

Most countries reported complications with data analysis due to differences in calculation methods, data gaps in key education data sources, differences in data collection periods, and outdated education data. Also, there was a lack of uniformity or clear guidance on what constitutes a complete data set. For instance, in **Liberia** and **Zambia**, data on which most of the OOSCI studies relied (demographic health studies, population censuses and household surveys) were not disaggregated by many of the key variables that are necessary to detect the likelihood of exclusion from school. Neither were they up-to-date.

Issues around the availability and/or accuracy of data affected the quality of the estimates of the out-of-school children population as indicated in Box 1, an example of the profiles offered in an OOSCI report that was extracted from one of the countries in the desk review sample. The country is referred to anonymously as "**Country X**"[23] in this critique to illustrate weakness in data, that occurred in a number of other OOSCI studies.

First, the most up-to-date data, presumably EMIS data, was generated in 2011 by the Ministry of education (MOE). Hence the estimates for the number of out-of-school children were not updated. Second, the population data were offered only by age range for the school level (and not for year and grade level). This means that the estimates for out-of-school children of 'pre-school age' is grossly overestimated since it covers the entire early childhood development (ECD) cohort, which includes children that are too young to attend pre-school.

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[23] **"Country X"** is not hypothetical. However, it was kept anonymous because the critique is illustrative of the improvements that are necessary across board, and not necessarily a reflection of shortcomings of only one country.

Third, and relatedly, the description of the profiles is not comprehensive, and not convincing in parts. For instance, the pre-primary and primary school cohorts are presented as similar in that they are both characterized as heavily involved in household chores, and yet the 2-5 year olds are largely too young for those chores. Also, the study offers estimates of children with disabilities, most of whom seem to be at the primary level, and yet children with disabilities are not mentioned at all in the description of the profiles.

Another challenge in the accuracy of profiles from OOSCI studies relates to the fact that there are pockets of children that were 'uncounted' in administrative systems, either because of incomplete birth records or lack of proper identification documents. In many other instances, youth that attend non-formal education programmes to acquire basic cognitive, vocational and/or "life skills were potentially 'miscounted'.

However, there is no consensus on whether children in the non-formal education track are 'miscounted'. For instance, UNESCO estimates of out-of-school children tend to be lower, based on the agency's contention that non-formal education does cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy, thus serving and education for out-of-school children, as well as life skills programmes (International Standard Classification of Education, 2011).

Key informants from UNICEF regional offices characterized the effort that is required to develop comprehensive profiles as the most difficult part of OOSCI objectives.

BOX 1	Profiles of out-of-school children: example from an OOSCI study, "Country X"

Table A: Population and enrolment figures, by year and school level

	Pop. Est.	Total Enrolled	Percent Female Enrolled	Percent Total Enrolled
Preprimary 2-5 yrs	481 824	611 807	48	40
Primary 6-11 yrs	610 799	674 534	47	44
Junior High 12-14 yrs	258 473	138 029	45	9
Senior High 15-17 yrs	232 898	82 049	43	5
Alternative Learning		35 979	47	2
TOTAL	1 583 994	1 542 398	47	100

Table B: Estimates of out-of-school children, by dimension

OOSCI Dimension	Male OOSC.	Female OOSCI	Total OOSC	Female OOSC	OOSC as Percent of total
1	119 822	124 395	244 217	51	23
2	50 741	153 135	303 876	50	28
3	8 500	14 942	23 442	64	2
4	223 020	227 342	450 362	50	42
5	24 843	25 753	50 596	51	5
TOTAL	526 926	545 567	1 072 493	51	100

Source: MOE 2010/2011 SC Database, recalculated by authors of the OOSCI study

The latest education statistics in **Country X** estimates that the Gross Enrolment Ratio for the primary level is 102.0 percent, 49.5 percent for lower secondary, and 40.5 percent for upper secondary (UIS, 2014). The education system is characterized by late entry into school and lack of efficiency, hence the ▶

net enrolment rate (NER) at the primary level is 41.0 percent, while the primary completion rate is 65 percent, and the transition rate from primary to lower secondary is 78 percent. The OOSCI study estimated that 42 percent of the children between 2-14 years were physically out of school in 2017, while 62 percent of those of 6-14 years are at risk of dropping out. This is the context from which profiles of out-of-school children were derived.

Dimension 1: Children of pre-primary age not in school:
This dimension covers children at pre-primary level (2-5 years old). The school census for 2010/2011 estimated that there were 244,216 children at the pre-primary level who had never attended school (Dimension 1 in OOSCI terms). The household survey conducted under the OOSCI study provided additional information to develop a profile of the children. More than half of the children (57.2 percent) lived in rural communities, while 59.7 percent live in households that described themselves as poor. About two-thirds of the children (63.7 percent) were involved in age-appropriate household chores such as cleaning, washing dishes and clothes, cooking or doing farm work. Surprisingly, 5 percent of the children were employed for pay, while another 4.3 percent were involved in petty trade for commission, selling goods such as doughnuts, plantain, banana, and non-food items such as cold water, coal, kerosene, and soap.

An out-of-school child in Dimension 1 would be a boy or a girl, most likely residing in a poor household in a rural community, with household chores either at home or on family farms.

Dimensions 2: Children of primary school age, who are not in primary or secondary school:
An overwhelming majority of children in this age group (94.3 percent) have never attended school, while 5.7 percent attended school for a short time and dropped out. More than half of children (57.2 percent) live in rural communities. Approximately 59.7 percent of children are from households that consider themselves as poor, while two-fifth of children worked in their households or close to their homes. Household work accounts for 37.8 percent of all activities undertaken by children in this category.

An out-of-school child in Dimension 2 would be a boy or a girl, most likely residing in a poor household in a rural community, with household work either at home or on family farms.

Dimension 3: Children of junior high school age who are not in primary or junior high school:
Dimension 3 has the least number of children. Over half of the children live in rural communities; approximately 60 percent come from households that consider themselves as poor. Most children are involved with household chores. Household work accounts for 73.7 percent of all activities undertaken by children, with 30.4 percent of the children being employed for pay.

An out of school child in Dimension 3 is more likely to be a girl, most likely residing in a poor household in a rural community, either doing basic household chores at home or on the farm, or working outside the home.

Dimension 4 and 5: Enrolled in primary or junior high school, but at risk of dropping-out:
About 57.2 percent of the children live in rural communities, while 59.7 percent come from households that consider themselves poor. With only a small number of them (13.5 percent) being extensively involved with household chores, most of the children do not seem to be extensively involved with household chores to supplement household income or for themselves. It is presumed that the children in this group are largely engaged in school related activities.

An out of school child in Dimensions 4 or 5 is more likely to be a boy, residing in a poor household rural area, lightly engaged in basic household chores, but most likely to drop out of school due to other factors, such as being overaged.

To that end, most participating countries were judged as having done "as good a job as possible" in developing profiles of out-of-school children, given the deficiencies in the available data - mostly administrative data from EMIS, and household surveys in a few instances.

Regional office informants also acknowledged that there were many gaps in the profiles, due mainly to missing 'fine levels of aggregation' in household survey data, especially with respect to ethnic groups, children with disabilities, migrants and/or displaced persons. For that reason, some regions had designed additional monitoring tools and instruments (e.g., UNICEF/UIS Monitoring Education Participation, 2016).

Other regions had commissioned more in-depth studies covering a range of topics. For instance, there were on-going studies on Koranic education, children with disabilities, and children affected by child labour in WCAR, while studies on disabled children, and displaced Syrian children and youth were underway in MENA. The lack of reliable data underlines the importance of improving methods of data collection to supplement administrative data obtained through EMIS, which is one of the major objectives of OOSCI.

The accuracy of the profiles seems to be variable across studies. Hence the objective of the critique of the OOSCI study above, while not representative of all studies, was first to demonstrate the limitation mentioned earlier (in Section 2.4), that the quality of the studies, and the voracity of the findings of OOSCI studies were not verified. More importantly, the critique illustrates the need to update the quality assurance regime for the next generation of OOSCI studies. For instance, the OOSCI toolkit should include guidance on minimum standards or deliverables of an OOSCI study to ensure a certain level of utility is derived from all studies.

4.2.2 Completeness in the description of barriers

Improvements in data collection, research, and evaluation are expected to provide a better basis to inform educational policy and planning for out-of-school children. Availability of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school will enable governments to develop strategies to decrease the number of out-of-school children, either by enrolling learners for the first time, or facilitating re-entry for those who dropped out. Hence, OOSCI studies are set out to identify and provide a complete set of the main barriers and drivers of the out-of-school children phenomenon, providing policy makers with comprehensive evidence on which they could formulate policies, strategies and plans to combat the issue.

'Complete identification' of barriers meant coverage of the "five dimensions of exclusion" as articulated by OOSCI, as well as disaggregating the data by types of out-of-school children (e.g. children of minorities, children from poor rural areas, etc.). Of the 25 countries in the desk review that completed and/or published an OOSCI study, 20 (80 percent) were successful in identifying a complete set of barriers in their contexts, as indicated in Table 6.

TABLE 6 **Identification of Barriers**

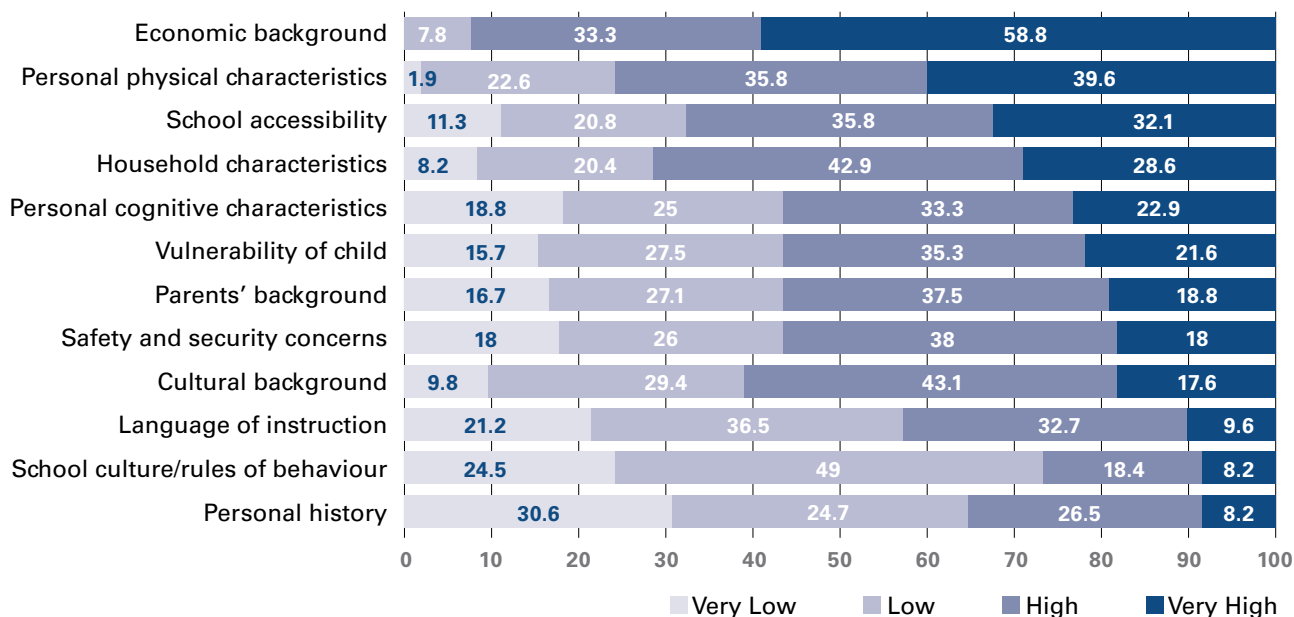| Barriers	Definition	Total (Percent)
Barriers identified, but incomplete	Some barriers that are relevant not identified	1 (04%)
Barriers completely identified	All relevant barriers are identified	4 (16%)
Barriers identified; consistent with OOSCI profiles	Barriers identified, and are in line with profiles outlined in OOSCI studies	20 (80%)
	Total	**25**

Source: Document analysis

Many barriers were related to demand, supply, and quality, as well as economic, social and cultural factors, and each barrier had a different effect on out-of-school children, depending on the dimension of exclusion. Supply side reasons for being out of school included inadequacies in school infrastructure, distance to school, and lack of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, affecting children in Dimensions 1-3. Furthermore, shortage of schools, teachers, teaching equipment and supplies, as well as school-based violence and deficient teaching practices resulted in poor academic achievement and accounted for a large proportion of children dropping out of school, and/or eventually being excluded.

Most barriers affected boys and girls equally, except for **gender-based violence (GBV), which is one of the major barriers for girls to enter and/or remain in school**. However, even though gender-based violence often impacts more girls than boys, violence against young men is believed to be widely underreported and unmitigated.

On the demand side, family issues related to economic hardships, child health problems, cultural factors and a poor perception of the value of education, partly explained exclusion from education. Children's background also triggers differential treatment and attitudes of discrimination towards them while they are in school. This often resulted in children from poor and/or minority backgrounds being deprived from equal access to learning. On the other hand, the cost of schooling and quality of education were found to be interdependent, as reducing registration fees and parental contribution also reduced the ability to pay for good teachers and/or investment in infrastructure.

Figure 4 presents perceptions of online survey respondents, UNICEF staff reporting the prevalence of the barriers according to their respective OOSCI studies country. Children's' **economic background** (i.e., family wealth and having to participate in earning a livelihood) was cited by 92.1 percent of the respondents as a barrier with high/very high prevalence,

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FIGURE 4   Prevalence of barriers

Barrier	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
Economic background	7.8	33.3		58.8
Personal physical characteristics	1.9	22.6	35.8	39.6
School accessibility	11.3	20.8	35.8	32.1
Household characteristics	8.2	20.4	42.9	28.6
Personal cognitive characteristics	18.8	25	33.3	22.9
Vulnerability of child	15.7	27.5	35.3	21.6
Parents' background	16.7	27.1	37.5	18.8
Safety and security concerns	18	26	38	18
Cultural background	9.8	29.4	43.1	17.6
Language of instruction	21.2	36.5	32.7	9.6
School culture/rules of behaviour	24.5	49	18.4	8.2
Personal history	30.6	24.7	26.5	8.2

Very Low   Low   High   Very High

followed at 75.4 percent by **personal physical characteristics** of children (e.g., gender, age, disability, etc.), and **school accessibility,** which was cited as highly/very highly prevalent by 67.9 of the respondents.

On the other hand, **personal history** (e.g., history of traumatization, civil war experience, etc.) and **school culture and/or rules of behaviour** were cited as least prevalent with only 34.7 and 26.6 percent of respondents reporting in the high and very high prevalence categories, respectively. Personal history being cited as a barrier of lower prevalence seems to indicate resiliency on the part of children, which bodes well for programming investments aimed at rehabilitating children. Also, for school culture to be cited as the least prevalent barrier seems to suggest that children, presumably with their parents' involvement, are not being deterred from participating in school by relatively unimportant issues such as rules of behaviour.

Some barriers were cited as being of low prevalence on the general survey, but of high prevalence in certain country contexts. For instance, safety and security is the largest barrier for staying away from school in Nigeria and the DRC, two populous conflict-affected countries with a large proportion of out-of-school children. Similar observations can be made for the barriers of personal physical characteristics, which affect individuals with disabilities in a very distinct and recognizable manner. For the latter profile of out-of-school children, it is important to have credible estimates to support advocacy, inclusivity and planning for children with disabilities. These findings were corroborated by document review data, which indicated that poverty, manifested in the inability to afford schooling related costs, is one of the main barriers that keep children away from school.

Of 25 OOSCI country studies identifying barriers in the document review, 20 identify a combination of barriers that were consistent with the profiles they generated. For example, in **Romania**, Roma children often came from poor economic backgrounds, lived in communities that were far away from services and therefore lacked access to education, and/or could not afford the expense of going to and from school. When enrolled, they attended poorly resourced schools, did not speak the language of instruction, and were more likely to be involved in child labour. It is this combination of factors, rather than ethnicity itself, which greatly increases the likelihood for Roma children of being excluded from education.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS GENERATED BY OOSCI STUDIES

One of the tasks of the evaluation was to review the recommendations generated from completed OOSCI studies, both published and unpublished. The purpose of the review was to determine whether recommendations address the key issues and barriers, whether countries assumed ownership of the recommendations, and indeed, whether the recommendations were actionable and being implemented by partner countries. Substantively, recommendations from OOSCI country and regional studies were categorized into **six main thematic areas** described below.

1. **Inclusiveness in education.** This category of recommendations covered the following: (a) inclusiveness training for teachers and improving recruitment practices to include minorities; (b) revision of textbooks and other materials to make them gender and culturally sensitive, and to introduce accommodations for children with special needs; (c) capacity building for education

sector personnel on inclusion; (d) sensitization campaigns to promote enrolment and combat stereotyping; (e) community engagement and organizing school life to reflect the priorities of the community; (f) promoting multi-sectorality in government as an effective way to combat exclusion; and, (g) resource allocation practices that target out-of-school children.

2. **Improvement of data systems and processes.** Recommendations addressed: (a) building technical capacities of education personnel on data collection and analysis; (b) encouraging disaggregation of data by variables that will identify the most-vulnerable children; (c) building open-source data platforms to increase access to education data; (d) strengthening of EMIS systems and monitoring and evaluation of educational programs; and, (e) commissioning research studies at the local level, in particular the use of qualitative methodologies to understand issues of out-of-school children.

3. **Shaping policies and strategies;** Recommendations on policy reform addressed the following: (a) gender equality and empowerment of girls in the school and in education systems; (b) enhancing the prestige of the teaching profession; (c) provision of high-intensity short-term interventions on school readiness to ease young children into the formal school system; (d) introduction of non-formal education programs to serve children who have to work; (e) marshalling capacities of the international community to enact school policies that are gender-sensitive and disability-sensitive; (f) enacting school-based child protection and children's rights policies; (g) holding communities accountable for child rights offenses (e.g., child labour, early marriage);
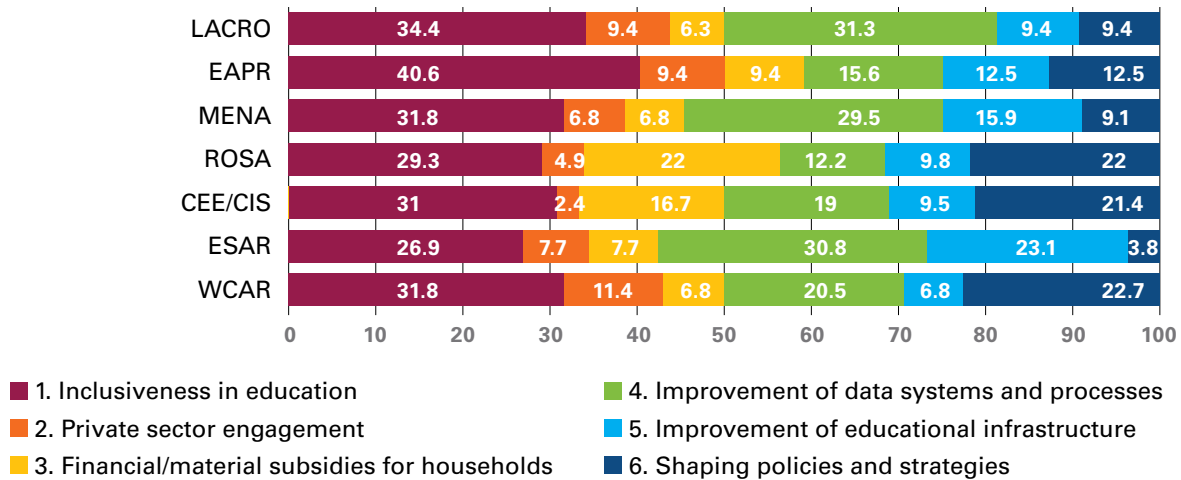
and, (h) policy accommodations for pregnant youth and penalties for excluding disabled persons.

4. **Improvement of educational infrastructure and the school environment:** Recommendations addressed: (a) improvement in school buildings, equipment and provision of basic facilities such as toilets; (b) investment in quality pre-primary and primary education; (c) provision of extra-curricular activities to motivate student attendance; (d) provision of social workers who serve the school system; and, (e) combatting gender-based violence and ensuring safety of students when travelling to and from school.

5. **Financial/material subsidies for households:** Recommendations addressed: a) cost mitigation through demand-side subsidies; (b) cost mitigation through supply-side subsidies; (c) expenditures that benefit out-of-school children directly; (d) detecting and tackling wastage due to corruption; (e) communicating subsidy programs effectively; and, (f) encouraging aid from private schools to out-of-school children.

6. **Private sector engagement:** Recommendations in this category addressed harnessing the power of the private sector to do the following: (a) outreach programmes to groups affected by exclusion and conflict; (b) involvement of NGOs in vocational training; (c) peer mentoring between in-school children and out-of-school children; and, (d) NGO-led campaigns to change community perceptions on the value of education.

A total of 261 recommendations were harvested from 33 reports (28 country and 5 regional studies). Recommendations are organized into the aforementioned categories in Appendix 6, and are summarized in Figure 5.

Region	1. Inclusiveness in education	2. Private sector engagement	3. Financial/material subsidies for households	4. Improvement of data systems and processes	5. Improvement of educational infrastructure	6. Shaping policies and strategies
LACRO	34.4	9.4	6.3	31.3	9.4	9.4
EAPR	40.6		9.4	9.4	15.6	12.5	12.5
MENA	31.8	6.8	6.8	29.5	15.9	9.1
ROSA	29.3	4.9	22	12.2	9.8	22
CEE/CIS	31	2.4	16.7	19	9.5	21.4
ESAR	26.9	7.7	7.7	30.8	23.1	3.8
WCAR	31.8	11.4	6.8	20.5	6.8	22.7

Legend:
- 1. Inclusiveness in education
- 2. Private sector engagement
- 3. Financial/material subsidies for households
- 4. Improvement of data systems and processes
- 5. Improvement of educational infrastructure
- 6. Shaping policies and strategies

The highest number of recommendations came from the theme of inclusiveness in education (84 of 261), followed by improvement of data systems and processes (58 of 261). Within the inclusiveness theme, 20 of 84 recommendations were on the sub-category of training of teachers on inclusion and improving teacher recruitment practices to include minorities. The fewest number of recommendations were on the theme of private sector engagement (19 of 261), perhaps reflecting the reality that education is mainly provided by the public sector in OOSCI partner countries.

With 40.6 percent of the recommendations in the East Asia and the Pacific (EAPR) addressing inclusiveness, inclusiveness had the highest number of recommendations in all but one region, Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAR). Improvement of data and systems was about as popular as inclusiveness in LACR (31.3 percent), in ESAR (30.8 percent), and in MENA (29.5 percent). Within the data theme, improvement of EMIS and disaggregation of data to facilitate identification of out-of-school children, also be deemed an improvement of EMIS, accounted for the majority of the recommendations (67.2 percent).

Recommendations on shaping of policy reflected the reality that the education sector alone is hardly in a position address the complex and interlinked barriers that keep children out of school. For instance, enacting policy reforms on child protection and children's rights, or accommodations for pregnant youth would require participation of the health and social protection sectors.

4.3.1 Assessing the fit and actionability of recommendations

The evaluation also addressed the extent to which recommendations were adequately targeted to the barriers identified in OOSCI studies, and whether they were actionable. A preliminary assessment indicates that OOSCI studies were successful in generating recommendations to address key issues affecting out-of-school children. For instance, inseveral multilingual countries, where colonization resulted in the use of one dominant official language (e.g., Namibia, Kenya), studies often recommended training in inclusion and/or inclusiveness mother tongue education, bilingual teaching, training of teachers to

deal with multilingual classes, and increasing the number of local language teachers (Nepal and Pakistan).

In **Romania** the OOSCI study recommended the design of interventions to target Roma children. In response, social and media campaigns to combat prejudice and stereotyping have been initiated, while the teacher training curriculum has been updated to include inter-cultural education. Linked to child-friendly school (CFS) initiatives, the new inter-cultural education module acknowledges every child's culture in a way that is meant to enhance their self-esteem and a feeling of belonging. Another recommendation calling for more efficient monitoring of poor Roma households from which children are

likely to drop out of school during the school year, was followed up by the establishment of school inspectorates nationwide to monitor and advise on issues specific to the Roma.

However, in some cases recommendations of OOSCI studies were of limited relevance in terms of addressing the most prevalent barriers and bottlenecks, and at times they were not feasible and/or actionable. The example from the OOSCI study in Box 1 illustrates some of these points. Table 7 presents barriers that children face in a country referred to as "**Country X**"[24], classified into four categories of factors (socio-cultural, economic, school-related, political), and recommendations to mitigate the barriers. It illustrates three points.

TABLE 7	Barriers and recommendations: An example of the OOSCI study, "Country X"
Barriers	**Recommendations to mitigate the barriers**
Socio-cultural Factors	
1.1 Influence of the *poro* and *sande* societies (traditional education practices) 1.2 Lack of awareness by some parents of importance education and of ECD; 1.3 Oversized households with too many children; 1.4 Refusal of some children to go to school; 1.5 Early marriage of girls; 1.6 Teenage pregnancy; and 1.7 Poor health and disability of children.	1.1 The MOE and MIA should work together to ensure that *Poro* and *Sande* activities are scheduled not to overlap with the school year. 1.2 The government should institute a permanent program to create and maintain awareness among parents about the importance of sending their children to school, and of early childhood education. 1.3 The government should ramp up birth control programs with awareness for households on matching family size to household income; 1.4 The practice of polygamy should be discouraged. 1.5 MOE and the Ministry of Gender, along with partners, should galvanize and synergize their programs aimed at discouraging early marriage and encouraging households and communities to keep girls in school. 1.6 Government should increase access to health in all parts of the country. 1.7 The MOE should devise a program to work with communities in organizing study classes for children of parents who cannot read or write or who are otherwise unable to help their children with school lessons. 1.8 Further investigation should be conducted to understand why children are refusing to go to school. 1.9 The Ministry of Information should regulate video cinemas not to admit school-aged children during the school week and impose heavy fines for violators. 1.10 The government should also expand existing social protection programs with incentives for beneficiary households based on school attendance, child health and nutrition.

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[24] The identity of **"Country X"** was withheld because the critique is illustrative of the improvements that are necessary across board, and not necessarily a reflection of shortcomings of only one country.

Barriers	Recommendations to mitigate the barriers
Economic Factors	
2.1 Household poverty; 2.2 Household food insecurity; 2.3 Loss of parents, guardians, and support sources; and 2.4 Child labour practices.	2.1 The government should also expand the scope and geographic coverage of existing social protection and public works programs. 2.2 As the economy expands, the government should prioritize job creation 2.3 Encourage traditional family and community support systems for orphans, and abandoned children 2.4 Enforce policies on child labor in schools; 2.5 Assistance programs (such as social protection programs, school feeding) should be conditioned on non-engagement in child labour.
School-related Factors	
3.1 Poor quality of schools; 3.2 Lack of schools or teachers; 3.3 Financial exploitation by teachers; 3.4 Rumors and fears of sexual harassment; 3.5 Bullying at school; 3.6 Punishment and children refusal to accept discipline; and, 3.7 Distance from school	3.1 Government should increase the quality of schools; the MOE should ensure that schools meet minimum established standards. 3.2 The MOE and the National Teachers Association should establish a program for certifying teachers, which includes standards for teaching at the various levels of the education system. 3.3 A mechanism should be devised and implemented by the MOE for the monitoring of teacher attendance and performance in schools. 3.4 Establish a code of conduct for teachers and school workers aimed at preventing sexual harassment and other exploitation of students. 3.5 Involve communities and parent teacher associations (PTAs) in the monitoring the implementation of the code of conduct 3.6 The MOE should establish mechanisms for reporting and investigating cases of sexual harassment with clear punishment for culprits. 3.7 Awareness should be created among students, parents, teachers, etc. on the availability of these mechanisms and consequences for perpetrators. 3.8 Counseling programs should be implemented to promote social cohesion among students. 3.9 Schools authorities should establish a mechanism for reporting cases of bullying and enrolling perpetrators in counseling programs. 3.10 Further investigation should be conducted to understand the nature of punishments and the reasons students are refusing them. 3.11 Every child should be given the opportunity to go to school particularly at the preprimary and primary levels; 3.12 The government should establish pre-primary schools in every town or village that is located more than 15 minutes from the nearest school; 3.13 The government should establish primary schools in every town or village that is located more than 30 minutes from the nearest school.
Political Factors	
4.1 Non-implementation of education policies; 4.2 Lack of adequate capacity of the MOE; and 4.3 Inadequate financing.	4.1 The MOE should determine why the implementation of the free and compulsory primary education has not worked. 4.2 Create awareness among stakeholders about the existence of educational policies and laws. 4.3 Clearly formulate a definition of 'free' in free education and determine the total cost of schooling to establish the actual proportion that cost that government is bearing. 4.4 Strengthen the implementation of the provisions of the Education Reform Act of 2011 on equitable distribution of school grants. 4.5 Increased capacity for the MOE to monitor education activities in the country. 4.6 Furnish the MOE with the requisite resources needed for monitoring education activities. 4.7 The government should increase it expenditure in education. 4.8 Partners should also increase their support to the education sector.

First, while these may be reasonable actions to address the barriers, the recommendations are fragmented, way too many, which signals a lack of targeting and/or prioritization of the most important actions. Second, some of the recommendations are not actionable. Third, a few of the recommendations are politically non-feasible and/or non-actionable.

Out of 36 recommendations, a judicious reading identified eight (8) recommendations that were non-actionable (i.e., 1.4; 1.5; 1.7; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 4.1; and 4.8). Five (5) recommendations were politically non-feasible (i.e., 1.6; 1.9; 3.12; 3;13 and 4.7). Using the recommendations listed under school-related factors to illustrate the point on fragmentation and a lack of tightness, recommendations 3.4 to 3.7 could essentially be restated into one recommendation. And, while withholding judgement on the merits or demerits of the recommendation (i.e., whether infractions of a sexual nature are crimes that are the preserve of law enforcement), one way to restate the recommendation to make it more succinct **and actionable** is as follows:

> The Ministry of Education should establish a code of conduct for teachers and all school personnel, aimed at preventing sexual harassment and other forms of exploitation of students, as well as mechanism to implement the code that involves communities and parent teacher associations (PTAs) in the reporting of cases, investigation, and monitoring of recommended actions.

Similarly, Recommendations 3.8 and 3.9 addressing bullying could be collapsed into one, while recommendations 3.12 and 3.13 addressing mitigation the barrier of distance from school could also be one succinct recommendation.

Relatedly, apart from being politically non-viable in terms of the cost involved, the policy prescription in Recommendations 3.12 and 3.13 is not

sound. The recommendations call for establishing pre-primary schools and primary schools without making the association between the two (e.g., what the catchment areas for the pre-primary classes will be). These and related issues are some of the technical improvements that OOSCI could make to improve the quality of the studies, and to enhance the chances of adaptation and implementation of recommendations by partner countries

Finally, online survey respondents were asked to offer their insights as to whether the recommendations adequately addressed the most prevalent and/or strongest barriers in their countries. They indicated that economic background was cited as the most prevalent barrier in all the regions except CEE/CIS. However, recommendations of OOSCI studies from all regions did not put enough emphasis on alleviating barriers associated with poverty, with financial and/or material subsidies being among the least recommended actions in each of those regions.

This finding suggests, among other things, that more guidance should be provided to authors of OOSCI studies to ensure that recommended actions address the barriers that were identified. In addition, it would perhaps be more strategic to propose a process of validating recommendations that gives more leverage to partner countries on what the final set of recommendations should be, thus increasing the likelihood that recommendations will be implemented.

4.3.2 Country ownership of OOSCI recommendations

Country ownership of development initiatives that are motivated and/or introduced by others (e.g., the donor community or other international actors) typically depends on; (a) awareness that there is a development imperative to pursue the issue at hand; (b) the relevance

of the proposed initiatives to the country goals; (c) political will; and, (d) feasibility of pursuing such initiatives.

Data from OOSCI country studies indicated that participation of the respective governments was vital in generating interest and ownership of the findings. Mostly, this was achieved through bringing together, in planning of OOSCI activities and associated policy debates about out-of-school children, as many of the relevant ministries and education departments as possible, and using multiple levers of influence to mobilize inputs and action for out-of-school children.

Evidence from the document review and field visits indicated that country ownership got enhanced if:

- Partner countries were afforded the space to embrace OOSCI goals fully before they commit to OOSCI studies;

- Partner countries commissioned their own national assessments of out-of-school children and then developed country-specific strategies (the establishment of a non-formal education directorate or an out-of-school children unit/task force in Zimbabwe is a good example);

- Partner countries were in-charge of OOSCI studies, findings, and recommendations, and associated themselves clearly with adoption and implementation of recommendations from OOSCI studies; and,

- Findings from OOSCI studies conducted by government-led steering and technical committees influenced what was included in country's education sector plans.

In that regard, Zimbabwe was instructive. No OOSCI study was launched; neither did the Ministry of Education endorse OOSCI in any official sense. Instead the Ministry of Education,

through the institution *Institute of Environmental Studies*, commissioned a national assessment on out-of-school children using the OOSCI methodological framework and guidance. The study influenced the establishment of a directorate of non-formal education at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Manjengwa, 2015). The example of **Zimbabwe** further illustrates, among other things, that it is much more important to articulate a shared goal (in this case executing a study of out-of-school children) and find alternative and mutually agreeable ways to deliver that goal. As a result of this versatility, UNICEF is able to work effectively in environments that are challenging and sometimes highly charged politically.

Interview data indicated that country ownership of OOSCI activities strengthened significantly when countries began to implement the guidance provided in the revised OOSCI operational manual in 2015. The manual articulated management arrangements where government assumed oversight of OOSCI studies, resulting in government-led steering committees and OOSCI technical teams with better representation of. government researchers.

For instance, in **Eritrea** the OOSCI study followed the management arrangements in the 2015 manual. As a result, the Ministry of Education assumed leadership of all processes, including adoption of the findings and recommendations. Government's leadership of the processes is credited with the speed and efficiency with which the recommendations were adopted, and implemented.

4.4 UTILISATION OF OOSCI EVIDENCE FOR NEW POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Figure 5 (presented in Section 4.3), indicated that 15.3 percent of the recommendations from OOSCI country and regional studies provided

advice on shaping policy and strategies. Relatedly, government policy and planning documents made direct reference to evidence from OOSCI in 38 percent of the countries as indicated in Table 8. In another third of the documents out-of-school children was mentioned, without any reference to OOSCI, while no mention of out-of-school children was made in almost an equal proportion of the documents.

| TABLE 8 | Use of OOSCI data |

	Total (Percent)
No mention of out-of-school children in government documents	13 (33%)
General mention of out-of-school children without direct reference to OOSCI	12 (30%)
Direct reference of OOSCI in policy development and planning	15 (38%)
Total	**40**

Source: Document analysis

While recommendations did influence national policies, programmes and monitoring frameworks for out-of-school children and youth, the document analysis provided very little information on direct effects of OOSCI studies. Reference to OOSCI studies does not, in itself, mean that impact can be attributed solely to OOSCI. However, other documents did make indirect references to OOSCI and the need for data and evidence of what works in tackling the problem of out-of-school children.

For instance, many governments and partners implemented non-formal education initiatives, such as Complementary Elementary Education (CEE), Alternative Basic Education (ABE), or Continuing Education, skills and/or vocational training, multi-grade classes, education voucher schemes, and hostel services to provide in-school accommodation in hard-to-reach

areas. Also, several OOSCI studies recommended multi-sectoral collaboration between education, health, nutrition, and WASH sectors to improve the quality of education and attract children to schools.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, 43 percent of children with disabilities were out of school, hence their inclusion in education was identified as a priority area. Also, inclusion of children with special needs in education is featured in the 2020 Education Development Strategy. Similarly, using evidence from their OOSCI study, **Sudan** has committed to incorporating specific strategies into government plans, focusing on providing education for girls from families that have been internally displaced, and nomadic populations.

Even with this progress, there was evidence that the newly-developed policies and strategies excluded a variety of smaller groups of out-of-school children. For example, while acknowledging the need to include children with disabilities, the **Kyrgyzstan** 2020 Education Development Strategy does not prioritise inclusion of children from the Lyuli minority. In **Kenya,** where 1.5 million children are reported to be out of school, the implementation of the free primary education policy which was intended to enable every Kenyan child to have access to primary education (Standards 1-8) did not reach all eligible children.

In too many instances, however, inclusion in education was made only in reference to providing access to all children. Studies did not address how learning needs of vulnerable children, once in school, were to be addressed so as to avoid their becoming "at risk" and/or dropping out of school completely.

Informants for regional offices indicated that policies and strategies that emerged from OOSCI analyses were limited in various other ways.

- The progression from the first two steps of OOSCI studies (profiles and barriers) to formulation of policies and strategies was weak, and that new OOSCI 'tools' were required to strengthen that link.

- Barriers were often stated in a highly generic manner and were too vague to give rise to anything other than general (non-focused) policies;

- Recommendations were rarely prioritized, and in a context of tight budgets, countries were given very little guidance on what the most important considerations should be in prioritizing recommendations for implementation. In other words, it was not clear if any forethought was put into recommending actions that would yield the highest returns in terms of improving education outcomes for out-of-school children.

Despite these limitations, OOSCI recommendations often generated additional discourse, altered some mindsets, and in some cases increased readiness for policy change.[25] Also, field visits confirmed that progress was being made in integrating solutions that are relevant to out-of-school children into new policies, sometimes through means other than education sector planning processes.

4.4.1 Out-of-school children interventions in education sector plans

Education sector plans are typically a mechanism to rally the education community around an agenda and a set of shared goals. They are also a coherent governance mechanism to ensure that political rhetoric aligns with action, and promote an efficient and effective approach to promote inclusive education. The document review identified topics that were covered in discussions of out-of-school children in education sector plans. Presented in Figure 6, some interventions focused on:

- Improving access to early childhood education for children in geographical areas where admission and enrolment rates are low and drop-out rates are high;

- Expanding equitable access to quality primary education, including access to intercultural and bilingual education for the most disadvantaged groups that typically reside in the most remote areas;

- Improving access to and quality of secondary education; and,

- Strengthening teacher professional development.

Many education sector plans included activities aimed at the improvement of monitoring and evaluation systems. A good example was found in **Cambodia**'s Annual Operational Plan for 2014, which included activities organized around the Student and School Tracking System. However, indicators used to monitor progress on inclusion of out-of-school children in formal education were predominantly inputs, and outputs (i.e., participation and internal efficiency indicators such as enrolment, attendance, repetition and drop-out rates), without ascertaining the whole results chain.

While studies enhance understanding of the inter-dependency and complexity of barriers related to societal norms, individual characteristics, family background and school-related factors, the majority of planned strategies focused primarily on conventional solutions such as expanding infrastructure, providing learning materials, improving preservice and in-service teacher training, providing scholarships, or implementing school nutrition programmes.

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25 Since 2015, some regions (e.g. CEE/CIS and MENA) have conducted sub-national analyses, generating more contextualized strategies, and have paid more attention to programme costing, resulting in more actionable strategies.

FIGURE 6   **Topics incorporated in education sector plans**

Topics incorporated in education sector plans

Topic	Value
Out-of-school children in general	15
Marginalised and vulnerable	12
Preschool / ECE	11
Monitoring of OOSC	10
Quality of education in general	8
Non-formal education	5
Facilities	4
Age appropriate learning approaches	4
School fees	4
(Adult) literacy and numeracy	3
Scholarships	2
Peacebuilding	2
Gender issues	2
School feeding	2
Change in regulations	1
Language of instruction	1
Dialogue with politicians	1
Lower secondary school	1

Many national education sector plans, including those funded by the Global Partnership for Education, did not include or prioritise non-formal education as illustrated in Figure 6. Despite some positive policy efforts, the perception of non-formal education as inferior and 'the option of last resort' still persists, encouraging separation of non-formal programmes from formal education in national policies and sector-wide approaches. This could be a lost opportunity because non-formal programmes have a better reach for children that are not well suited to the formal schooling track in that they provide the flexibility that is required by children that are prone to be excluded from school in the first place.

4.4.2 Changes associated with policy reforms

Policies and strategic plans, developed by partner countries, serve as a base for donor support. Country reports frequently mentioned that funding is targeted at the central level to support/improve national level planning, monitoring and evaluation, financial management, internal control, and public accountability. As a result, strategies developed by partner countries focused on reforms in education financing, such as per capita financing of schools, management reforms and improved monitoring and evaluation systems. Development of new education policies resulted in, among other things:

- The incorporation of pre-primary education in formal (compulsory) basic education;

- Devolution of responsibilities to decentralized levels of the education system such as school boards and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs).

However, decentralisation was viewed sceptically as a means to push the responsibility for education financing from national to sub-national levels since the increase in responsibilities was rarely ever accompanied by an increase in budgets.

While it is difficult to identify any direct effect of OOSCI studies based on the document review, some important insights around translating the studies' results into policies were observed.

First, providing access to education to out-of-school children is an inherently political process. For instance, in ethnically and linguistically diverse countries, national policy on the language of instruction and the extent to which

a diverse and inclusive curriculum is implemented reflects a country's political history and other political considerations. This in turn has implications for the supply of textbooks, pedagogy, learning achievements, and retention, with the latter often being cited among the most consequential of the barriers that keep children away from school.

Second, the process of developing profiles of out-of-school children and improving monitoring of access generated important insights in defining who the children that are out of school are. The identification of other cross-cutting groups of out-of-school children (e.g. ethnic/linguistic minorities, children with disabilities, orphans, nomadic children) was arduous and sometimes politically sensitive, which made specific policies and strategies difficult to construct. And yet a relatively small step such as acknowledging that children with disabilities cut cross all five dimensions out-of-school children has magnified the problem of out-of-school children with the effect that it can no longer be ignored. Naming of specific groups, it appears, facilitates visibility and more targeted approaches to ensure universal educational access (**Zimbabwe** and OOSCI study for **ESAR**).

4.5 OOSCI CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRESS IN REDUCING OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Using data obtained from 69 countries, 23 of which were OOSCI partner countries, the difference between the number of out-of-school children in 2009 (the period just before OOSCI was launched) and in 2014 (the most recent year for which data was available) was analysed.[26]

The results indicated a positive trend in the reduction in the number of children that are out of school. However, a correlation analysis and a simple regression analysis with a selection of controlling variables determined that the difference was not statistically significant.

In an additional enquiry, a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) was performed to examine the effect of identifying profiles of out-of-school children and the barriers that children face on the reduction of the number of out-of-school children, using the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Fragile State Index (FSI) as 'conditions'. Given limitations in data availability, the difference in the rate of out-of-school children rate could be only calculated for 13 countries out of a sample of 40 selected for the document review[27] (see in Appendix 4). Table 9 presents a summary of the results of the QCA in three combinations.[28]

TABLE 9	QCA results summary

Result (n = 13)
Combination 1: Profiles + Barriers +Recommendations + Low HDI-Level
Combination 2: Profiles + Barriers + Recommendations + High FSI-Level
Combination 3: No Profiles + No Barriers + (high FSI-Level and high HDI-Level)
Consistency: 0.8009, Coverage: 0.80212*

Source: UIS database, document review

*Consistency** is the extent to which a combination is always associated with a given outcome. **Coverage** refers to the number of cases for which a configuration is valid.

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[26] UIS and World Bank The combination of the years 2009 and 2014 years yielded the highest number of countries with data available (74). However, 5 outliers that were 2sd from the mean were eliminated.

[27] The original sample of 40 countries from the document, based on the differences between 2008/2009 and 2014/15 data analysis, yielded a small sample size (N=13). The results became robust when the sample was expanded to 20 countries, to include data from 2007 and 2013,

[28] FSI: Fragile State Index of 60 or less, recoded as 1 (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high)

The results in Table 9 indicates that *a reduction in the number of children that are out of school* was found in countries which had any of the following combination of factors:

- **Combination 1:** Countries that (i) were successful in defining profiles of out-of-school children; (2) were successful in identifying barriers and generating recommendations, and (iii) had a **low human development index**;

- **Combination 2:** Countries that: (i) were successful in defining profiles; (ii) were successful in identifying barriers and generating recommendations; and, (iii) **were stable.**

- **Combination 3:** Countries that (i) were not successful in identifying profiles, barriers or recommendations; **(ii) were stable;** and, (iii) had a high **human development index**.

The QCA supported OOSCI's the hypothesis, that if a country generates complete profiles of out-of-school children, as well as recommendations that address barriers that keep children from school, a reduction in the number of children that are out of school would be realized. However, because QCA results can only be interpreted within the limitations and insights of the original document analysis, it is not possible to use it to identify all determinants that contribute to the achievement of given programme outcome (in this case a reduction in the number of out-of-school children), in the same way that, for instance, a regression analysis would, for instance.

Nevertheless, while there may be additional factors within a country that would bring even greater success in reducing the number of children that are out of school, the present QCA did affirmatively identifying profiles, and as well as generating recommendations that clearly

address barriers that children face as a necessary first step to the reduction of the number of out-of-school children.

4.6 SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES

This chapter examined whether OOSCI country studies were effective and instrumental in generating accurate and comprehensive profiles of out-of-school children, and to analyse barriers that led to children being excluded from school. Key findings of the evaluation were as follows:

- OOSCI studies executed in partner countries were, by and large, found to be effective in generating profiles of children that are out of school and in appropriately identifying barriers that prevent children from enrolling in school, cause them to drop out, and/or prevent them from re-entering school;

- The "five dimensions of exclusion" as articulated by OOSCI were not adequate to describe all profiles of out-of-school children, and that the addition of upper-secondary school population would make the OOSCI framework more complete;

- Out-of-school children, and the plight of the children who are excluded from participating in school have become a standard topic of discussion in development circles and have found their way into policy discussion and policy making dialogue;

- Solutions for eliminating the barriers that keep children away from school were not a key component of the priority setting agenda in most OOSCI partner countries;

- OOSCI studies have provided more detailed analyses for use as baselines in monitoring progress towards more inclusive basic education than have previous

studies. However, the degree to which baselines are continuously monitored and compared with follow-up data, differs greatly between countries, depending on human resource capacities, and the availability of funding for maintaining complex data collection systems;

- Many children are out of school for reasons that cut across the five dimensions of out-of-school children proffered in the OOSCI methodology; and,

- OOSCI studies generated recommendations regarding a variety of themes and issues relating to out-of-school children issues. In some cases, the recommendations were not feasible or actionable.

In conclusion, OOSCI has contributed to the formulation of enabling policies and strategies for raising awareness and helping to address the challenge of out-of-school children, and has also facilitated government ownership of these issues and strategies.

The document review revealed that partner support and assistance for interventions and programmes targeting out-of-school children interventions and programmes have focused on conventional methods centred around increasing access to schooling, and measuring, monitoring, generating data and information on education system performance. This perspective on the education system does not seem to: (i) encourage finding solutions outside the formal education system, (ii) questioning the system's exclusion mechanisms; or (iii) taking a bottom-up and participatory approach to finding solutions for excluded groups of children.

In addition, many stakeholders were involved in the implementation of policies and/or strategies that were believed to contribute to the reduction of the number of out-of-school children. Consequently, any observed 'change' cannot be attributed solely to OOSCI activities, or be credited to OOSCI in a quantifiable or clearly identifiable manner.

Finally, one unintended negative consequence of OOSCI has been that the findings and recommendations from OOSCI studies have created new expectations among partners, and while a new standard for success in programming for out-of-school children was set, the demand for funding support to implement the recommendations outpaces the supply.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR BASIC EDUCATION AND OOSCI

5.1 OVERVIEW

UNICEF has developed, over a long period of time, constructive partnerships and synergies with UN sister agencies at the global, regional and country levels. Other equally important partners are in-country, at the national, sub-national and community levels because they present opportunities to engage education stakeholders beyond the government. Also, they often provide entry points for creative, innovate solutions to many education problems that may never rise to national prominence. For this reason, depending on the topic at hand, and drawing on the relative strengths of different organizations, partners are configured and reconfigured in different ways in each country.

The theory of change formally recognizes the core partnership of OOSCI as consisting of national governments (primarily national governments through ministries of education, and a few sub-national governments entities in countries such as India and Pakistan), UNICEF, UNESCO/UIS and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The theory of change confers responsibilities to each of the core partners.

UIS was expected to take the lead in providing capacity building and advice on statistical and quantitative aspects of the OOSCI studies, while UNICEF took the lead for coordinating OOSCI inputs in partner countries, provision of technical guidance on barriers and bottleneck analysis, and on evidence-driven advocacy work for out-of-school children. GPE was also core to the initiative as a partner that provides funding support to some of the activities for out-of-school children programmes in OOSCI partner countries.

This chapter provides a description of the extended in-country partnerships for out-of-school children work in general, and for OOSCI, in particular. It assesses the extent to which core OOSCI partners brought greater efficiencies to the initiative and to the seemingly elusive goal of providing education to all children, and whether those efficiencies translated to value for OOSCI partner countries. The findings are organized around three evaluation questions addressing the following:

- The contribution to the initiative, of each of the OOSCI core partners, and what efficiencies were realized as a result of the predetermined division of responsibilities;

- Alignment and complementarity between government efforts, OOSCI core partners' support, and the support of the extended partners working on issues related to the out-of-school children; and,

- Whether support from OOSCI and partners constitute a clear added value to the efforts of partner governments to make basic education inclusive.

The chapter concludes with a summary of findings and key messages on partnerships.

5.2 PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS TO OOSCI AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

All OOSCI partner countries benefitted directly by receiving technical inputs from UNICEF, UIS and the GPE in the process of executing their studies. Table 10, constructed from

data from an online survey of UNICEF staff in OOSCI partner countries, presents an array of partners that were assembled for OOSCI work across countries.

TABLE 10   **Extended list of OOSCI partners**

	National	Inter-national
Governmental Entities (55.6%)	**126**	**22**
1.1 Ministry of Education	73	
1.2 Social development ministries/department	18	
1.3 Planning departments	25	
1.4 Sub-national entities	10	
1.5 Foreign/donors		22
Civil Society (17.6%)	**27**	**20**
2.1 International INGOs		20
2.2 NGOs	18	
2.3 CBOs	9	
Private Sector/Parastatals (9.4%)	**25**	
3.1 Universities	6	
3.2 Research Institutes	7	
3.3 Public authorities	10	
3.4 National Banks	2	
Global Entities (17.3)		**46**
4.1 UN bodies/agencies		36
4.2 Development Banks		6
4.3 Transnational Institutions		4

Naturally, government entities make up the majority of OOSCI partners in-country, since education is dominated by the public sector in developing countries. Government entities included education ministries and departments, health and social development ministries, and planning ministries and entities (e.g., statistical units, planning departments). Donor organizations are typically governmental bodies in their

countries of origin, counted under government entities in Table 10. National civil society organizations presented in slightly higher numbers than international NGOs, though the former were still considered to be an under-representation. Meanwhile private sector and parastatal organizations consisted of only 9.4 percent of the organizations that support the work for out-of-school children.

Sudan offers a good example of multi-partners being harnessed to support the agenda for out-of-school children, and to advance the shared objectives of OOSCI and the government:

- *Governmental bodies*: The Government of Sudan through the Federal Ministry of Education, and the Central Bureau of Statistics shared responsibility for conducting the OOSCI study, while the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the National Council for Child Welfare and the Federal Ministry of Health were members of the country team brought in to represent the multi-sectoral nature of the initiative;

- *Global entities:* UNICEF Sudan, UNICEF Regional Office in MENA (MENARO), UNESCO, GPE, and the World Bank maintained a strong presence and supported education work through the local education group; WFP provides food support in settlements for internally displaced persons – presumably reaching children that are out of school with food support. Also, a four-year co-funding arrangement with UNICEF (2013-2017), Educate A Child foundation (EAC) provided substantial funding support towards the goal of reducing out-of-school children – to get 600,000 out-of-school children into school; and,

- *Civil society organizations:* There were few NGOs which collaborated on OOSCI (and by extension and local implementing partners), mainly because education

sector support from donors and multilateral organizations is mainly channelled through government. However, there were NGOs and CBOs who work in the out-of-school children space; some of having been brought in as community champions for children who are not in school and/or accessing learning.

UNICEF coordinated OOSCI activities at all levels - global, regional, and in-country - hence UNICEF support was acknowledged readily by all OOSCI partner countries. Partner countries also highlighted the support of UNICEF regional offices, which mainly consisted of sourcing experts to assist countries in conducting OOSCI studies to the technical specifications of the methodological framework.

While appreciating the insights and initiatives emerging from OOSCI regional studies, most country office respondents indicated that additional OOSCI resources would enable regional offices to strengthen the support in-country work by organizing pools of technical resources that country offices could access to support governments' responses to recommendations from OOSCI studies. Some also emphasized the need for OOSCI conversations to include mobilization of funding for the implementation of those plans.

Interviews and consultations with a variety of stakeholders indicated that UNICEF was regarded as a highly trusted partner in creating an enabling environment for change. This is particularly relevant in contexts where there are limited opportunities for dialogue and a free flow of ideas between government, development partners and/or civil society. The 'good faith' that UNICEF enjoys has made it possible for the organization to bring its civil society partners along to policy debates - implementing partners and other non-traditional partners - some of whom would ordinarily not have the opportunity to exchange ideas with government.

Many other partners benefited directly from GPE funding. For instance, UNICEF regional offices received funding support to execute the six OOSCI regional studies that were completed and published. Other in-country examples of partnership support for OOSCI and/or targeted programming for out-of-school children came from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, World Food Programme, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNESCO, as well as bilateral agencies such as Deutsche Gesellschaft fur internationale Zusammenarbelt (GIZ), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the UK Department for International Development (DfID), and NGOs such as Save the Children and Plan International.

GPE made direct funding inputs in a few other countries. A new teaching and learning methodology was introduced through a GPE implementation grant in Vietnam. Adapted to the Vietnamese context from the Colombian *Escuela Nueva* model, the methodology aims to transform teaching and learning processes to instil skills for independence and innovative thinking. This funding support for the GPE targets the most disadvantaged groups of primary students as a part of the Education Development Strategic Plan 2012-2020.

The document review highlighted some of new activities and commitments that were triggered by OOSCI, government, as well as civil society and private sector activities. These included the integration of evidence from OOSCI studies into education sector plans; 'high level' exchanges often involving inter-sectorial collaboration; better data provision and exchange mechanisms; enhanced identification of out-of-school children through official government channels; and, accelerated learning concepts and strategies to reach marginalized population groups.

Other examples came from civil society organizations reported to be actively engaged in activities for out-of-school children at the

community level and working as implementing partners in some cases. While a few private sector entities were acknowledged for providing funding for select activities, such as school kits in remote areas, much less information was provided on private sector engagement.

The online survey assessed the contribution of OOSCI partners in several elements of OOSCI implementation (programme implementation, programme design, programme management, funding, and monitoring and evaluation). In four of five categories, the majority of respondents (more than 60 percent) characterized the contribution of OOSCI as "moderate" or "major" as indicated in Figure 7. Providing "funding" support was an exception in that one in four people reported "no contribution at all" from OOSCI, compared to 16.4 percent who acknowledged major funding inputs.

The data from the document review yielded examples of the contribution of UNICEF beyond just the coordination role. Table 11 indicates the number of times that UNICEF staff were invited to provide support to government on technical matters of data interpretation, and to provide policy advice relating to the findings of OOSCI studies. Staff were mostly requested to explain and/or interpret data to officials at the technical

level about eight times on average[29], compared to three times for the political decision-making level presumably to officials at the level of Ministers of Education.

TABLE 11 — Areas of support provided by UNICEF

Area of support provided by UNICEF under OOSCI	Number of times		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum
To explain and/or interpret data to decision-makers at the political level (n=46)	3	1	100
To explain and/or interpret data to officials at the technical level (n=49)	8	1	80
To discuss policy advice with the decision-makers at the political level (n=44)	3.5	1	100
To discuss policy advice with the officials at the technical level (n=43)	5	1	100
To sensitise communities on issues for out-of-school children (n=35)	6	1	100

FIGURE 7 — Contribution of partners towards OOSCI activities in-country

Programme design (n=57): 3.6 | 21.8 | 49.1 | 25.5
Technical assistance (n=59): 5.3 | 21.1 | 52.6 | 21.1
Programme management (n=58): 3.4 | 27.6 | 53.4 | 15.5
Monitoring and evaluation (n=56): 5.4 | 33.9 | 48.2 | 12.5
Funding (n=61): 24.6 | 29.5 | 29.5 | 16.4

■ No Contribution   ■ Minor Contribution   ■ Moderate Contribution   ■ Major Contribution

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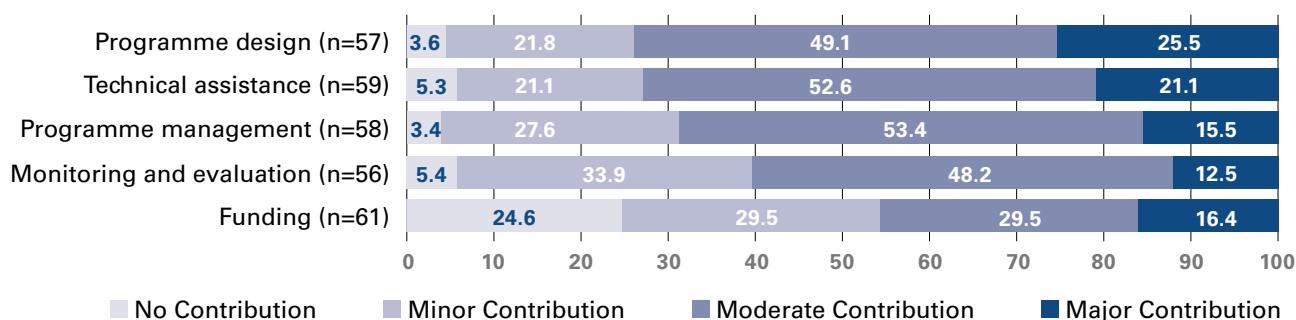
29   The averages in Table 11 are "medians" (or those at the 50th percentile).

The pattern was similar for policy advice. Still, OOSCI is credited for having increased opportunities for UNICEF staff to interact face-to-face with decision-makers, which suggests that OOSCI should invest in preparing partners thoroughly for when these opportunities present themselves. OOSCI was also credited by respondents of the online survey for expanded geographical coverage of activities and interventions (74.0 percent), and for improved quality of outputs (56.9 percent).

5.3 EFFICIENCY, ALIGNMENT, AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF OOSCI

The evaluation examined efficiency in terms of the division of labour and/or tasks between OOSCI partners, whether there was alignment, and whether partners worked in a complementary way.

Even though core partners (UNICEF, UIS and GPE) led on different activities, the document review did not find a clear distinction of the division of tasks between them, presumably because development agencies are finally coordinating their support in a highly synergistic manner in most countries. However, respondents of the online survey had a different view, as indicated in Figure 8.

In all the elements that are featured (programming, monitoring and evaluation, funding) a majority of respondents judged the division of tasks within OOSCI as "partly efficient", or better. UNICEF respondents were best placed to make these judgements because they coordinate in-country activities. Also, it would fall on them if other partners were not discharging their responsibilities.

The evaluation did not have enough data to explain these efficiencies, or to predict if they will persist as OOSCI shifts its focus to supporting countries to implement the recommendations. Still, it was instructive to determine if OOSCI partners worked in an efficient manner overall, and respondents of the online survey indicated that they did.

5.3.1 Alignment and complementarity

A high degree of alignment was observed among partner with similar objectives (e.g. Netherlands, Norway, Italy, United Kingdom, GIZ, GPE, ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR). These partners converged on the following:

- Efforts to engage out-of-school children in alternative forms of education as a bridge (back) into standard primary provision, including in contexts affected by natural disaster, conflict, and/or transitioning from humanitarian programming;

FIGURE 8 **Efficiency of division of tasks**

	Not efficient	Partly efficient	Mostly efficient	Very efficient
Programme implementation	3.8	34	35.8	26.4
Programme management	3.7	29.6	46.3	20.4
Programme design	7.4	20.4	53.7	18.5
Monitoring and evaluation	5.7	30.2	52.8	11.3
Funding	13.2	49.1	26.4	11.3
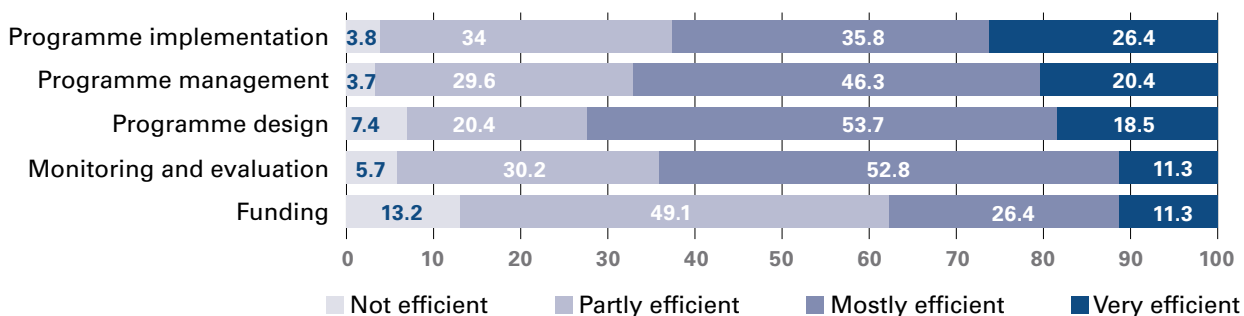
- The achievement of gender equity, including awareness and enrolment campaigns for girls;

- Child protection and protection of the rights for victims of violence, abuse, and child labour;

- Child-friendly school programmes;

- Increased access to and completion of quality early childhood, primary and secondary education for all children, including children from indigenous groups and other vulnerable populations; and,

- Access to education for children with special needs.

Evidence of alignment and/or collaboration between partners was noted in the implementation of strategies that are likely to move the out-of-school children agenda along, even if these efforts were not conceived through OOSCI. These included:

- Netherlands, GPE, and the World Bank: reform processes and strategic research for policy improvement and quality monitoring in support of **Cambodia**'s reform programme focusing on: (a) over-age enrolment; (b) gender disparities; (c) low primary completion and high repetition and dropout rates; (d) high cost of education; (e) poor pupil to teacher ratios; and, (f) poor learning outcomes;

- UNICEF, University of Hong Kong: Development of a common framework and standardized assessment tools to measure the development of 3 and 4 year-old children, and school readiness of 5 year-old children in different domains, including cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and motor skill development.

- GPE and **Cambodia**: Implementing a nationwide Early Grade Reading (EGRA) and Mathematics Assessments (EGMA) as well as technical support to the Education Quality Assurance Department, relating to national assessments for grades 3, 6, 8 and 11, and support provided to the annual review of EGRA and EGMA results; and,

- UNICEF and the World Bank: Conditional cash transfer programmes providing financial stimuli necessary for impoverished families to send their children to school, as well as national programmes to reduce parental financial contributions to education (**Cameroon**, **Benin**, **Togo**, **Congo**).

Some development partners play a significant role in financing education, thus financial reporting came up as an efficiency issue that relates to programming for out-of-school children programming in general, and to OOSCI, tangentially. Working at the systems level, a few partner countries reported improvements on the financial system, while acknowledging that financial accountability was weak.

Strengthening the system for financial accountability should become a key concern for work around out-of-school children if the logic of the current OOSCI theory of change – particularly the elements around pro-poor budgeting, allocations and expenditure - is to be followed.

Relatedly, tracking financial expenditures within EMIS (an enhancement that some countries have executed under OOSCI) provided the opportunity to hold all partners accountable, ensuring that governments as duty bearers followed through with the planned allocations, as indicated in budgeting and planning documents. and that the international community contributed directly to agreed strategies. But, first, OOSCI has an unfinished business of providing tangible evidence that the strategies presented to government as solutions do actually work.

5.4 VALUE ADDED TO PARTNER COUNTRIES BY OOSCI

The added value of OOSCI was assessed by examining the relationship between the perceived contribution of OOSCI partners, and the value added to government efforts to tackle issues that prevent children from enrolling in school or staying the course when they do enrol.

Some of the elements that denote the contributions of OOSCI partners were significantly correlated with the valued added by OOSCI to the government's efforts as indicated in Table 12. However, these relationships are not necessarily causal. However, the import of the correlations is that OOSCI has embarked on activities that are found to be adding positive value to efforts made by governments efforts to address the barriers faced by out-of-school children.

TABLE 12	Correlation between contribution of partners and value added by OOSCI
Contribution of OOSCI Partners	**Value added by OOSCI to governments efforts**
Funding	0.299 **
Programme design	0.507 ***
Programme implementation	0.454 ***
Programme management	0.413 ***
Monitoring and evaluation	0.471 ***

Source: Online survey of UNICEF country offices[30]

5.4.1 Negative unintended consequences; negative value

OOSCI implementers reported, for the most part, that the initiative had brought a positive influence (e.g., heightened awareness around issues relating to out-of-school children, and using data from OOSCI studies for evidence-based strategic planning by partner countries). However, the document review indicated a few examples of negative consequences that were unintended.

For instance, the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP III, 2011-2015) in **Bangladesh** recognizes non-formal education and second-chance education, and mandates provision of resources for non-formal education programmes. However, the five dimensions of exclusion as defined by OOSCI are only in reference to the formal education age track. Sustaining parallel systems for these groups of out-of-school children alongside the formal education system needs to be discouraged by addressing the excluding characteristics of formal education. **Sri Lanka**'s equity-based decentralized funding mechanisms to invest more in under-performing schools (instead of separate funding on non-formal education programmes) is a measure with similar effects.

Related to the examples above, supporting non-formal education could weaken the formal school system in the current atmosphere of limited resources. Another issue that emerged from the document review is that the findings and recommendations from OOSCI studies have created new standards for success in programming for out-of-school children, while the demand for funding support to implement the recommendations continues to outpace the supply.

Another unintended negative consequence was that the fierce debates around estimates of out-of-school children and the lack of acceptance of the data generated by OOSCI studies by government counterparts often remained unresolved. Also, data collection systems are

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30 *, **, *** indicates statistical significance of the correlation on a 10%, 5%, 1% level, respectively.

themselves expected to perpetuate exclusion if some parts of a country do not have resources and/or rudimentary skills for working with data (data collection, handling and analysis), a problem that will disproportionately affect communities in remote areas, the very populations for which data are mostly needed.

5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND KEY MESSAGES

This chapter examined whether core OOSCI partners (UNICEF, UIS and the GPE) and extended partners, brought greater efficiencies to the initiative, and to the shared goal of providing basic education to all children. The chapter also examined whether those efficiencies translated to value for OOSCI partner countries. Key findings of the evaluation include the following:

- OOSCI partnership arrangements and the division of tasks between the core partners were considered to be cohesive, productive and to have increased the efficiency of a majority of implementers, while the contribution of all OOSCI partners was credited for having expanded geographical coverage of activities and interventions for out-of-school children. This outcome was highly valued by participating governments; and,

- OOSCI is credited with a creating a higher demand for technical and policy advice around issues affecting out-of-school children, and to have increased opportunities for face-to-face interaction with decision-makers.

On the other hand, the evaluation also found that:

- OOSCI non-government partners were not diverse enough. National civil society organizations were underrepresented in the work of out-of-school children in comparison with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Also, the roles and results expected from this category of partners were not clearly defined; and,

- OOSCI was highly valued by smaller NGO partners whose views are rarely represented in policy debates, and who regarded the opportunity to work alongside OOSCI as reclaiming their "voice".

The partnership slate presenting in the evaluation indicates first, that the government sector dominates the discourse on out-of-school children. And while it is not yet clear if the right partners have engaged, low participation of national civil society organizations suggests that some key constituencies may be missing from this important dialogue.

It is understandable that government should, as a duty bearer accountable for enacting policy, planning for and delivering services, be fully represented in the discussion around out-of-school children. However, the absence from the policy table of some constituencies could mean that policies that are enacted as a result of OOSCI may not only perpetuate exclusion, but could institutionalize it. However, the evaluation noted that beyond the core partners constituting OOSCI's conception team, the initiative's partnership approach was still evolving.

Finally, effective partnerships are labour intensive. They require commitment and management time. As a result, the due diligence required to assemble the right cast of partners, and to define their roles cannot be overstated.

STRENGTHENING EDUCATION CAPACITIES AND SYSTEMS

6.1 OVERVIEW

Reliable up-to-date data on out-of-school children remain patchy, as does research to identify the causes and solutions. Capacities to record, analyse and/or act on data is limited at all levels, and are particularly limited at the sub-national and local levels. With incomplete birth registration and school records, monitoring education indicators and progress for educational planning is always challenging, data are often unreliable, politically sensitive, and in many fragile states non-existent. Many countries are still not able to come up with reliable estimates of the number of out-of-school children.

Given that it is formative in nature, the evaluation went only as far as to investigate whether the different inputs and outputs from OOSCI were organized such that partner countries gathered the necessary tools for success in integrating recommended improvements within education sector plans and other systems and processes. The findings are organized around a number of evaluation questions, addressing the following:

- Whether there are visible inputs and or improvements in administrative data collection systems, such as GIS mapping and other state-of-the-art technologies to improve the efficiency of collecting analysing and interpreting student data at all levels, including the sub-national level;

- Whether multi-sectoral collaboration and synergies around issues of out-of-school children are beginning to take root; and,

- Whether OOSCI has prepared UNICEF staff adequately for policy dialogue with partners and other stakeholders, including senior government officials.

Sustainability was also examined from the angle of those who can assist governments with the resources necessary to implement solutions for out-of-school children. As such, the evaluation examined the intent of OOSCI to attract international commitments and actions to redress barriers facing out of school children. The findings in this chapter address the sustainability of OOSCI efforts, and the extent to which inputs go beyond individuals to impact systems.

6.2 IMPROVEMENTS IN ADMINISTRATIVE DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

All OOSCI partner countries in the document review sample had Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), and nearly all of them used EMIS to collect data for OOSCI studies. 22 of 40 countries recorded improvements in the administrative data collection systems, albeit to a different degree as indicated in Table 13.

TABLE 13	Improvement in administrative data collection systems	
Level/quality of improvements		**Total (Percent)**
No improvements mentioned at all		18 (45%)
Improvements mentioned on in planning and policy development		9 (23%)
Improvements operationalised in programmes and projects		7 (18%)
Improvements comprehensively operationalized, resulting in better understanding of issues relating to out-of-school children issues		6 (15%)
		40

Source: Document analysis

General improvements associated with OOSCI included increased capacity building on data analysis, and data systems building to improve harmonization of M&E procedures, including the identification of relevant and measurable indicators.

The highest level of improvement was recorded in only six countries (15 percent of sampled countries) where EMIS became part of OOSCI. In those countries EMIS generated annual student data that, together with household survey information, were necessary inputs in the formulation of profiles of out-of-school children. **Ethiopia** presented the best example of a country where support for the revision of existing data collection tools resulted in the ability to: (a) disaggregate data; (b) account for out-of-school children and reasons for being out of school; (c) complete summaries in educational statistics, annual abstracts; and, (d) use the data for reporting. As a result, profiles of out-of-school children can be articulated for all levels of the education system.

In the remainder of countries, regional office informants reported improvements in data collection systems due to the requirements of the OOSCI. For instance, UNICEF education staff in ESARO and UNESCO-UIS supported the Ministry of education in **Eritrea** with information

to target disadvantaged communities for a better understanding of the barriers preventing children from going to school.

However, while some preliminary estimates of the number of out-of-school in pre-school through middle school were made, the exact number and extent of the problem remains unclear due to the absence of a national population and household census. This means that the capacity for better planning has not improved. Unfortunately, this problem persists in the majority of OOSCI countries (85 percent), where major improvements are required in EMIS before accurate estimates of numbers of out-of-school children are possible.

6.2.1 Improvements attributable to OOSCI studies and activities

The document survey yielded some examples that mentioned OOSCI studies as a trigger for improvements in data and information systems. Selected examples from **Eritrea**, **Honduras**, **Kyrgyzstan**, and **Liberia** are summarized below.

In **Eritrea**, the out-of-school study identified data anomalies for children of ages 8 and 9, which led to a dialogue between the Ministry of Education and others, such as National Statistics Office, Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defence. From these consultations, the Ministry of Education received feedback that was used to redefine education indicators, which will improve EMIS, and yield better information for planning.

In **Honduras**, the GPE Plan (which included issues relating to out-of-school children) resulted in improved decision-making and accountability processes, especially with regard to tracking progress on educational indicators and towards achieving related goals. Financial resources included in different projects were integrated in order to better organize the use of technical assistance, resources and indicators.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the new Education Development Strategy (EDS) 2020 was restructured to focus on three cross-cutting priorities, i.e. (i) education management; (ii) education financing; and (iii) monitoring and evaluation of the education system. Overall, the EDS 2020 puts a strong focus on strict monitoring and evaluation of results, and explicit reference is made to an information databank that was created as a part of the joint project of UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Science for school-level monitoring.

In **Liberia**, the five dimensions of exclusion for out-of-school children were determined from the MoE 2010/2011 School Census Database and the 2011 national population, based on the 2008 National Population & Housing Census (NPHC). The Conceptual and Methodological Framework for OOSCI was used as a guideline.

The study on out-of-school children in **Zambia** has provided an opportunity to triangulate EMIS data on out-of-school children and to provide profiles of these children, stating where they are and also highlighting the barriers that inhibit them from accessing schools and staying in schools.[31] This has increased the capacity of the Ministry of Education to adequately plan for all children.

Further, the child-friendly school initiative in CEE/CIS countries is being shaped by OOSCI inputs to integrate the concepts of equity, inclusion and quality education at classroom level. In contrast to the document review, respondents of the online survey (representing UNICEF staff from country offices) were optimistic. More than 50 percent and up to 70 percent reported a moderate to major contribution to the improvement of the data collection systems and other capacities of national counterparts as a result of OOSCI activities as indicated in Figure 9. Whether those improvements are sustainable is yet to be determined.

FIGURE 9   **Contribution of OOSCI to strengthening capacities of national counterparts**

	No Contribution	Minor Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Major Contribution
Using report results for decision-making	6	28	54	12
Analysing data and report writing	2	29.4	60.8	7.8
Generating data	5.7	26.4	60.4	7.5
Cooperation between sectors/line ministries	7.5	39.6	39.6	13.2
Integration within sectors/line ministries	3.8	40.4	48.1	7.7
Improvement of data collection systems		28	56	16

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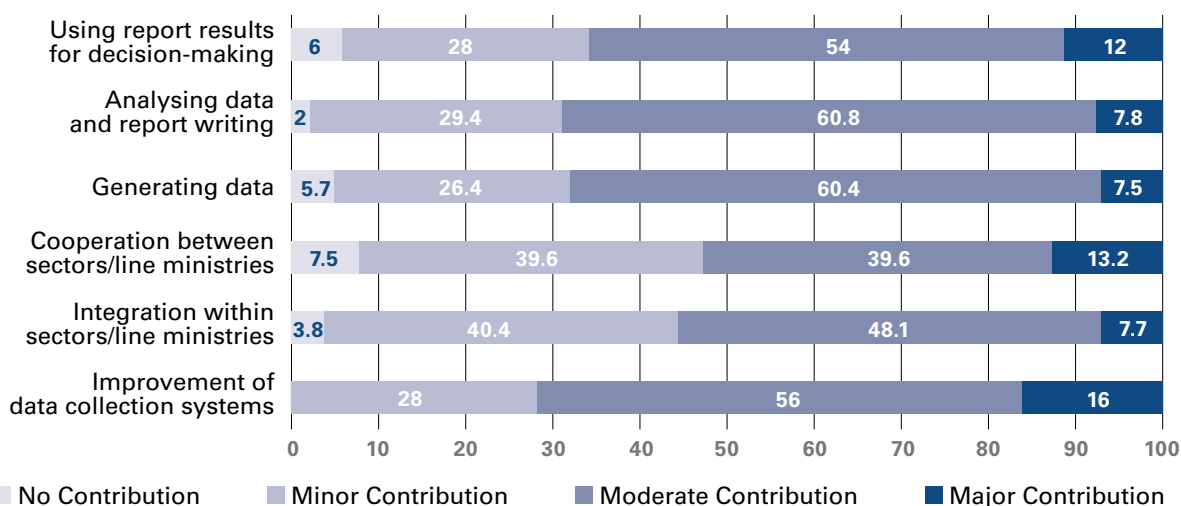
31   Cf statement by Chishimba Nkosha, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, Zambia: "In order for the Ministry to adequately plan for all children, availability of data on children in school and out of school children is essential. However, some challenges have been encountered in capturing this data. **MESVTEE, through its EMIS, has been able to show the number of out-of-school children,** but has not gone far to show the profiles of these children." Quoted in Zambia OOSCI Study 2014, Preface.

While it is difficult to establish the degree to which observable improvements are a direct offshoot of OOSCI studies in countries that received grants from donors such as Educate A Child, there are clear indications that many of the changes were set in motion in response to the OOSCI study. Also, it was possible in many cases to demonstrate a moderate to strong contribution.

6.2.2 Improved use of EMIS in routine data collection

Education departments and/or ministries in countries visited by the evaluators used EMIS for regular data collection, even though their capacities for data collection and analysis differed significantly. The use of EMIS was mainly focused on formal education, and on providing data for programmes for primary and secondary education.

Other improvements to EMIS came through regional offices' support for OOSCI partner countries. For example, **CEE/CIS** and **ROSA** launched programmes to help countries improve capacities for OOSCI analyses, while **CEE/CIS** sponsored workshops and webinars to help countries 'dive deeper' into data collection/analysis, using methods that are summarized in a string of regional documents. In **ROSA,** UNICEF supported the India where a massive upgrading of EMIS is underway, as well as supporting Pakistan and India in creating sub-national EMIS databases.

Ethiopia presents another example where UNICEF ESARO supported the revision of existing data collection tools to enable the inclusion of out-of-school children data in educational statistics and annual abstracts, and to perform different types of analysis, including disaggregating data by reasons for being out of school. These efforts have resulted in improving capacities for developing profiles of out-of-school children at all levels of the education system.

A promising approach for the improvement of EMIS was reported in **Turkey** where an *e-School Management Information System* is used to identify and monitor non-enrolment and absenteeism. Reaching beyond the limitations of more traditional data collection systems, this web-based system was successful in identifying a large number of children who are not enrolled in school, and children at risk of dropping out of school. The system also facilitated disaggregation of data by non-traditional variables, and included variables related to child labour and health-related issues such as pregnancy, in order enhance the systems power to explain some of the dynamics affecting out-of-school children.

6.3 STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES

6.3.1 Integration and collaboration

Collaboration between education departments, social sectors (e.g. health, social protection, labour, water, environment, and agriculture) and planning departments is crucial in tackling common barriers facing youth and children. For 29 of 40 countries (73 percent) there was no indication of improved collaboration between government sectors and ministries. Collaboration was detected for only 11 countries (27 percent), with no clear indication of the contribution of OOSCI in those instances.

Except for a few examples, integration and/or collaboration between different sectors and line ministries regarding out-of-school children could not be confirmed through the document review. However, multi-sectorality was practiced effectively in many of the OOSCI countries.

For instance, multi-sectorality is a core strategy of the education sector development plans in **Eritrea** and **Ethiopia**. **Namibia** provides an example of inter-ministry coordination by using social protection funds to encourage school access for children with disabilities. In the **Maldives**, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Law and Gender, Maldives Police Service, Juvenile Justice Unit and Maldivian Red Crescent and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are working together to address child protection issues more efficiently and effectively.

Other countries made efforts to coordinate different government ministries or departments to address the problems of out-of-school children more holistically, but evidence of improved coordination between and among different ministries is limited. While these approaches were not necessarily a result of OOSCI, the fact that they align with OOSCI aims is encouraging, and could be used for the benefit of out-of-school children.

6.3.2 Strengthened capacities to participate in policy dialogue

UNICEF education staff were often called upon to provide policy advice as was indicated in Table 11 (Section 5.2), with up to 44 countries reporting that their offices were invited on several occasions to provide such advice to officials at the technical level and decision-makers at the political level. It is therefore realistic to expect that OOSCI will invest in strengthening capacities of staff to influence policy dialogue, and to carry out effective advocacy with partners and senior government officials on issues relating to out-of-school children issues.

Regional Education Advisors (REAs) in **LACR**, **WCAR**, and **CEE/CIS** indicated that policy dialogue on out-of-school children issues had increased, and that there was a higher demand from government officials for policy advice. In **WCAR** such dialogue took place within Local Education Groups. In **CEE/CIS** an increase in policy dialogue on out-of-school children was noted both in a regional 'high level' Ministerial Meeting, in line with the revised OOSCI guidelines that emphasised the need to seek opportunities for engagement of country decision makers. Increases in discourse about out-of-school children issues in the press were observed in **LACR**.

While staff continued to engage in policy dialogue in a number of countries, there was no evidence that there were deep deliberations about different policy choices for out-of-school children, or that this subject was incorporated systematically in OOSCI activities and/or training modules.

Another way to understand if OOSCI made any difference is to determine whether it's stated objectives were met. Figure 10 (see page 57) presents the assessments of implementers on whether OOSCI objectives were achieved.

FIGURE 10   Achievement of OOSCI objectives

Greater awareness among policymakers: 13.7 | 66.7 | 19.6

Changes in National Education Sector Plans: 2.1 | 33.3 | 50 | 14.6

Pro-OOSC statements by government officials: 32.7 | 53.1 | 14.3

Advocacy and influence on donors and decision makers: 6.3 | 27.1 | 54.2 | 12.5

Broader debates on education: 2.2 | 30.4 | 58.7 | 8.7

Changes in school-level actions and practices: 2.1 | 29.2 | 60.4 | 8.3

Shifts in government systems or donor priorities: 6.8 | 47.7 | 40.9 | 4.5

Changes in resource allocation and policies for OOSC: 6.8 | 38.6 | 52.3 | 2.3

■ Not achieved   ■ Partly achieved   ■ Mostly achieved   ■ Fully achieved

6.4 INFLUENCE/SUCCESS OF OOSCI ADVOCACY WORK

The third programme goal of OOSCI is to enhance advocacy in the international community to obtain certain commitments that will move the agenda for out-of-school children forward. Table 10 (Section 5.2) indicated a strong presence of international partners that work on OOSCI and/or issues relating to out-of-school children. Out of a total of 266 partners that were indicated by UNICEF education teams, 88 (about 33 percent) were international entities. Many of these work with OOSCI teams in-country, while a handful work only at the regional and global levels. The evaluation made assessments on whether OOSCI's advocacy work has yielded commitments to support

activities relating to out-of-school children, and a few isolated examples were offered:

- In South Asia, an increased sensitivity to the barriers faced by the most disadvantaged (and the variation in this across regions) has prompted countries in the region to move towards more decentralised planning, even in smaller countries like **Nepal**;

- In CEE/CIS, **Serbia** did not conduct an OOSCI study, but used OOSCI concepts for work on "at risk" students by, for instance, creating a school-based drop-out prevention programme (involving peer support). The programme has been successful in bringing down drop-out rates;

- **Romania**, conducted an OOSCI study that was fully initiated and owned by government, and created a new school funding formula that takes into consideration the school's success in reducing its drop-out rate; and,

- CEE/CIS reports also, that the region is implementing new tools for identifying and understanding different reasons for non-participation in school. These tools were incorporated into the 2015 OOSCI operations manual.

6.4.1 International commitments and actions on data improvement use

The evaluation found that UNESCO (and UIS in particular) is leading the effort to improve data on out-of school children. A few are mentioned below:

- As the recently-appointed lead organization in the Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators, UIS has used OOSCI experience to create, under the Strategic Development Goal (SDG 4), the adjusted parity index. UIS has also used OOSCI work on school drop-out to create an SDG thematic indicator on overage students, to assess parity between different groups of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth.

- Reporting on out-of-school children data has been expanded, for example, by generating and disseminating national, regional and global rates, and numbers of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary age.

- Using the UIS Data Centre and other products, UIS disseminates estimates for the out-of-school typology (dropped out, never

attended but will attend, never attended and will never attend) that is an integral component of the 5DE of OOSCI.

However, the evaluation did not find any coordinated effort and/or activities in OOSCI advocacy work that would increase the likelihood of success (success being measured by the actual commitments of financial support and material resources). Rather, different agencies, country, and regional offices were working independently, mainly on technical tasks. Inarguably, these technical efforts can be harnessed as inputs into OOSCI advocacy plan, which should be put in place to ensure coherence and harmonization of efforts.

6.5 SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES

One of the programme objectives of OOSCI was to address the capacity gap, for individuals as well as systems. For instance, OOSCI was credited with having contributed to making substantial improvements in data collection systems in a handful of countries, and enhancements to enable EMIS to track out-of-school children only in one partner country. For the remaining partner countries, findings of the evaluation indicate the following:

- Half of the countries sampled for the document review demonstrated only modest success in improvement of data systems and processes, while commendable success was registered in only in a small number of countries;

- Availability of robust and reliable data was highly inconsistent, due mostly to limitations in financial and human resources capacities for data collection, analysis, interpretation, and related processes;

- Except for a few isolated cases, coordination and/or collaboration between different sectors and line ministries regarding out-of-school children was not systematic;

- Rigid application of the 5-dimensions of the 5DE approach and weak alignment and complementarity in inputs from different sectors of the government has meant that groups of out-of-school children affected by religious, ethnic, and other forms of discrimination are shut out of OOSCI and other targeted support from UNICEF.

Also,

- While there was a reduction in the number of children that are out of school since the inception of OOSCI, it was not possible to attribute this change to OOSCI and/or UNICEF activities by means of a quantifiable contribution. However, a robust contribution analysis to explain the factors that account for the reduction in the number of out-of-school children is methodologically possible, and is required to sustain the evaluability of OOSCI.

While OOSCI activities contributed positively in some instances, the initiatve came short on sustainability. Governments remain highly constrained in implementation capacities for just about every aspect of the education sector, Also, there is a need for greater efficiencies between different sectors with a mandate for providing for vulnerable children, with out-of-school children being only a subset of this category.

OOSCI should support government to reimagine and reengineer EMIS and similar processes such that it can have a radar on all the children, all the time, including those that periodically enter and exit formal systems, either because they are too poor to stay in school, or are compelled to exit one school system and enter another due to conflict, or other destabilizing factors. Put differently, the capacities to identify and serve all children, including all profiles of children that are excluded from school, were strengthened, but not in a sustainable way.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the overall assessment of UNICEF's Out-of-School Children Initiative and recommendations arising out from the evaluation.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the **overall conclusions based on summarized evidence and findings** produced in the evaluation. These are presented in line with the three OOSCI programme outcomes, namely that OOSCI should:

- Support the development of sustainable capacities and robust processes for partner countries to derive **profiles** of children that are out of school, and to analyse the **barriers** that have led to the exclusion of children from school;

- Support the development and implementation of effective **policies and strategies**, including necessary changes within education sector plans to reduce the number of children that are out of school, and mobilise necessary resources to enable completion of at least primary and lower secondary education;

- Enhance their **advocacy efforts to** draw increased international attention to the subject of out-of-school children, and to derive resource **commitments** (national and international) to reduce the number of children that are out of school substantially, or to eliminate the problem altogether.

The chapter also includes an **evaluative assessment** with regard to the initiative's **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, utility, coherence, and sustainability**. In the final section of the chapter, the evaluation presents a summary table, mapped against the three objectives of the evaluation.

7.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

Universal basic education is central to any discussion on out-of-school children because of its promise to provide access to schooling to every child. And, if universal basic education had succeeded in its goals, the problem of out-of-school children, while not eliminated completely, would be substantially reduced in scale. Countries would only be required to focus their resources on a select, substantially smaller and more manageable number of children whose life circumstances dictate that they access education by means other than formal schooling.

An examination in this evaluation of the inputs, outputs and implementation strategies to achieve universal basic education seems to suggest that universal basic education was *mis*understood by many in decision-makers, who considered UBE to consist of the expansion of access alone. In that sense, many decision-makers interpret high national enrollment rates as signaling that the goal has already been accomplished.

Even while using the correct language about 'education [being] a right' that every child should enjoy, the central dictum *that rights cannot be meted out selectively* did not enter the UBE discourse, at least not in a demonstrable manner. Hence, the concept of 'inclusiveness' was not a strong feature of the solutions to provide universal basic education.

Even so, the findings of the evaluation illustrate promisingly that:

- Declarations of universal basic education, expressed or implied, were found in government documents for the majority of OOSCI partner countries (80 percent), signalling a strong intent to eliminate the problem of children being out of school.

- OOSCI is credited with having brought a positive attitudinal change to government partners on the subject of out-of-school children, and with bringing new energy and a new push for prioritizing programmes on issues facing out-of-school children in UNICEF country offices.

- With nearly 70 percent of the countries having executed or completed an OOSCI study, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) maintained an intense focus on OOSCI and issues relating to out-of-school children. These efforts were beginning to show dividends, both in terms of targeting approaches, and the variety of solutions for out-of-school children.

On the down side,

- Many OOSCI countries often conflated "inclusive education" with special education programmes, and because of this lack of conceptual clarity, interventions failed to address exclusion of specific groups of out-of-school children.

- The link between stated goals for universal basic education, its objectives, and proposed and/or implemented strategies was often inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory.

- Also, sub-national authorities often lacked the data and/or evidence required to make a strong push for investing in education, and/or to devote the necessary time and resources to dedicate to inclusion strategies.

Cumulatively, these findings point to the need to revisit what it means for access and provision of basic education to be truly universal, and to update the conception of universal basic education. Increasingly, universal basic education is understood in the development community to mean "provid[ing] the greatest support to individuals who have the greatest need, while maintaining an element of universality that reflects the shared investment citizens make in education as taxpayers."[32] **Conclusion 1** challenges OOSCI to address the problem of out-of-school children from similar conceptual underpinnings.

Conclusion 1: Universal basic education is still a unifying goal and message for what the education sector is required to achieve in terms of maintaining high enrolment, retention, and completion rates. Beyond these measures of participation and efficiency, UBE is increasingly being reconceptualized to include equity and inclusiveness, which also means that education resources should be allocated to achieve progressive universalism. Adopting a formal definition of UBE to reflect this thinking would strengthen the linkages between the objectives of OOSCI, UNICEF's advocacy and resource mobilization efforts, and other work around out-of-school children, as well as the overarching goal of improving education outcomes for all children.

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32   Diamond, Ian, 'Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales', Welsh Government, Cardiff, 2016. http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160927-he-review-final-report-en.pdf

7.3 EVIDENCE GENERATION AND UTILITY OF OOSCI STUDIES

The findings on evidence generation and utility of OOSCI studies address three sets of issues. The first set of findings on this theme relates to effectiveness in discharging on the core mandate of OOSCI, that is, generating profiles of out-of-school children and associated explanatory factors. In this regard, the evaluation found that:

- OOSCI studies executed in partner countries were, by and large, found to be effective in generating profiles of children that are out of school, and in identifying barriers that prevent children from enrolling in school, cause them to drop out, and/or prevent them from re-entering school.

- OOSCI studies have provided more detailed analyses than previous studies, and armed countries with baselines to use for monitoring progress towards more inclusive basic education.

- The "five dimensions of exclusion" as articulated by OOSCI were not adequate to describe all profiles of out-of-school children. The evaluation also found that the upper-secondary school population should be included in the OOSCI methodological framework in order to make it more responsive to the different country contexts.

- Many children are out-of-school for reasons that cut across the "five dimensions of exclusion" as articulated in the OOSCI methodological framework. Also, barriers are multi-faceted; some barriers can be addressed by making improvements to the education system, while others fall under the authority of other sectors, such as health and social protection.

- OOSCI has contributed positively to increasing the visibility of the subject of out-of-school children, and the plight of the children that are excluded from participating in school in the education development discourse, policy dialogue, and in priority setting agenda.

Accordingly, the evaluation concludes the following:

Conclusion 2: OOSCI studies have laid an important foundation in developing comprehensive profiles of out-of-school children in each country, and in identifying barriers. The analysis of barriers needs to be contextualized and updated periodically in order to remain to responsive to the needs of different groups of out-of-school children.

The second set of findings on evidence generation confirms the hypothesis promulgated by OOSCI, namely that:

- If countries invest in generating complete profiles of out-of-school children, and identify and address the barriers that keep them from school and mitigate them, then a reduction in the number of children that are out of school would be realized – but in only in countries with (i) a low human development index (HDI); and/or, (ii) countries that are stable.

- Where countries were not successful in generating complete profiles of out-of-school children or in identifying and addressing barriers that keep children from school, a reduction in the number of out-of-school children were still realized, provided that the countries **were relatively prosperous** (using a high human development index as proxy for prosperity) and **were judged as stable** (i.e., Fragile State Index of 60 or less).

- Almost all OOSCI studies were successful in coming up with robust data, and where possible, estimates of the number of children that are out of school; however, these

figures were often contested, resulting in some countries being reluctant to release their studies for public consumption.

Conclusion 3: Evidence and policy guidance from OOSCI studies have become a useful resource for planning processes in education departments and for education sector partners. To the extent that the initiative has gained acceptance in the partner countries, OOSCI is well positioned to push important messages (such as the value of stability in terms of a lack of conflict, and a productive economic environment), and to provide support to turn those messages into action that is tailored for different programming contexts.

The third set of findings on utility of OOSCI studies indicate a need for course correction.

- Solutions for eliminating the barriers that keep children away from school were not a key component of the priority setting agenda in most OOSCI partner countries.

- The degree to which baselines were being monitored and/or compared with follow-up data, differed greatly among countries, depending on human resource capacities, and the availability of funding for maintaining complex data collection systems; and,

- While OOSCI studies were successful in generating recommendations to address key issues affecting out-of-school children, the recommended actions were sometimes weak in terms of addressing the most prevalent barriers and bottlenecks, and at times were not feasible and/or actionable.

The evaluation concludes the following:

Conclusion 4: While the contribution of UNICEF and OOSCI partners has led to discernible progress and changes in policies and planning, a gap between policy and planning on one hand, and implementation on the other remains, due mainly to inadequate prioritization of issues facing out-of-school children. The evaluation concluded that a new advocacy effort for the out-of-school children agenda is required. So is the prioritization of solutions and/or interventions for the most disadvantaged sub-groups of children that are out of school, as well as a resourcing model for issues facing all children that are out of school.

7.4 PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE THE WORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

The findings on OOSCI partnerships relate first to the "core partners", and include the following:

- OOSCI partnership arrangements and the division of tasks between the core partners were considered by a majority of implementers to be cohesive, productive and having enhanced the efficiency of the initiative;

- The combined contribution of all OOSCI partners was credited with having expanded geographical coverage of activities; and, interventions for out-of-school children were highly valued by participating governments; and,

- OOSCI is credited with having created a higher demand for technical and policy advice around issues relating to children that are out of school, and with having increased opportunities to interact with high-level decision-makers.

On the other hand, the evaluation also found that:

- The initiative's non-governmental partners were not diverse enough; national civil society organizations were underrepresented in the work around out-of-school children in comparison with the international NGOs.

- For extended partners, the roles of partners and the results expected from them were not clearly defined.

- OOSCI was highly valued by smaller NGO partners whose views are rarely represented in policy debates, and who regarded the opportunity to work alongside OOSCI as reclaiming their "voice";

Conclusion 5: In an operating environment subject to frequent changes in government staffing decisions, shifting donor resources, and continuous movement of people, UNICEF was regarded by all actors as a constant factor, and a reliable "anchor partner"; its convening power helped to move the partnership objectives forward.

7.5 STRENGTHENING EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND CAPACITIES

Derived from Chapter 6, the findings on strengthening of education systems and capacities signal that the overall sustainability of OOSCI objectives and government efforts are shaky, at best. For instance:

- Half of the countries sampled for the document review demonstrated only modest success in improvement of data systems and processes, while commendable success was registered in only in a small number of countries.

- Availability of robust and reliable data was highly inconsistent, due mainly to limitations in financial and human resources capacities for data collection, analysis, interpretation, and related processes.

- Except for a few isolated cases, coordination and/or collaboration between different sectors and line ministries regarding out-of-school children was not systematic.

- Rigid application of the 5-dimensions of the 5DE approach and weak alignment and complementarity in inputs from different sectors of the government has meant that groups of out-of-school children affected by religious, ethnic, and other forms of discrimination are shut out of OOSCI and other targeted support from UNICEF.

Also,

- There are many stakeholders who work on out-of-school issues, or related programmes. This work has the cumulative effect of bringing the number of out-of-school children down, but this reduction cannot be attributed to OOSCI and/or UNICEF activities by means of a quantifiable contribution.

- A robust contribution analysis to explain the factors that accounting for the reduction in the number of children that are out of school is methodologically possible and is required to ensure the evaluability of OOSCI.

Conclusion 6: Technical capacities to identify and serve all children, including all profiles of children that are excluded from school, were strengthened. However, improvements were confined to individual capacities, and did not permeate the system. As such, the gains from OOSCI will not be sustainable in the long run, unless the next generation of OOSCI studies concentrate greater effort on supporting governments to achieve systemic changes.

The evaluation also observed that the issue of out-of-school children was cast largely in technical terms in the conception of OOSCI, thus neglecting considerations of the political or social drivers of exclusion. For instance, the five dimensions are framed in an 'apolitical' manner of simply analysing who the out-of-school children are, and where they are. Awareness of the five dimensions of exclusion, and the availability

of quantitative data to substantiate the problem along those lines are, however, not sufficient to ensure that politically sensitive dimensions of exclusion (ethnicity, religion, etc.) are included in new policies and strategies.

7.6 EVALUATIVE ASSESSMENT

In the few years that the initiative has been operational, OOSCI has proven its relevance, effectiveness and utility, particularly stable contexts where it has been able to take root. However, while it might have some internal coherence, additional conceptualization and inputs are required to improve its external coherence and sustainability, and to extend its reach, relevance and utility within more challenging and complex programming contexts, including in fragile states and countries with humanitarian programming.

Generally, though, OOSCI studies have **enhanced national capacities for mapping the profiles of out-of-school children, as well as for analysing the complex and multi-sectoral barriers that impede access or constrain completion of basic education**. However, as noted above, adequate attention has not been given to those barriers that involve religious, ethnic, political, or ideological discrimination in society.

Overall the evaluation findings show that OOSCI has been instrumental in **situating issues of out-of-school children at the centre of the development agenda** at national and international levels. Some **level of advocacy and commitment** to these issues is shown around processes of setting priorities and formulating sector plans. However, this has not been matched by the allocation of adequate resources on a sustainable basis, and it is not always clear if all partners fully embrace the "rights-based" model of education underpinning OOSCI. Table 14 examines the value of OOSCI more systematically under the OECD/DAC criteria.

TABLE 14	Evaluative assessment of OOSCI using the OECD/DAC criteria	
DAC Criterion	**DAC Definition**	**Assessment**
1. Relevance	Assessment on whether OOSCI is in line with local needs and priorities and consistent with intended effects.	OOSCI was found to be relevant to national and international debates on equity in development. By highlighting the plight of out-of-school children, even as countries celebrate gains in enrolment rates and progress towards the MDGs/SDGs, it has raised issues of equity and fairness as well as the rights of children, in the quest to make full use of the human resource potential of countries.
		In addition, through policy dialogue and strategic support, OOSCI has enhanced its relevance in helping to shape national priorities and to formulate robust sector plans that embrace education as a right for all children.
2. Effectiveness	Measures the extent to which OOSCI has achieved its purpose or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of outputs	In most countries, OOSCI was effective in cultivating a critical mass of national stakeholders who are ready to support the shift from targeted community interventions to an effective systemic approach, with regard to out-of-school children. Consequently, an effective and inclusive process of policy making and priority setting around out-of-school issues was triggered at the macro level. However, OOSCI was less effective in supporting countries to translate recommended policies and strategies into concrete practice.

DAC Criterion	DAC Definition	Assessment
3. Efficiency	Measures the ratio of outputs achieved to the total inputs contributed (cost efficiency, timeliness, and comparison to other alternatives).	By being embedded in priority setting processes, developing sector plans, and mobilising resources; OOSCI partner agencies have contributed efficiently to measures that address key challenges posed by the problem of out-of-school children in target countries. Efficiency could be improved by keeping all OOSCI partners engaged by assigning more roles and tasks, and through deeper collaboration between OOSCI partners. This would enable partners to better "deliver as one" in providing their support for measures that help to translate policies, plans, and priorities into concrete achievements on issues pertaining to out-of-school children. In this regard, marshalling research capacities of a partner such as UCW and allocating specific tasks to the group should increase efficiencies of OOSCI.
4. Utility	Assesses the ability of a service to satisfy the needs or wants of the target group(s).	The utility of OOSCI is closely tied to its effectiveness, Useful outputs have been put in the hands of governments. As an initiative designed to support addressing key challenges and reducing the number of out-of-school children in the population, the utility of OOSCI is also linked to availability of resources on a sustainable basis. Without this, the problem of out-of-school children will persist or worsen, no matter how many studies and strategic plans the initiative generates for any given country.
5. Coherence	Assesses the consistency in approach and whether policies/guidance take into account standards and human rights considerations.	Barriers to universal education are complicated and intertwined. Hence, the ability to deliver a comprehensive national, regional, and global response depends on sound interrogation of concepts and claims about what OOSCI can deliver. In that regard OOSCI was internally coherent enough to be functional it its formative phase. As end users begin to expect more of OOSCI, additional work will be required to make it conceptually sound, and coordinate effectively across sectors and among stakeholders. OOSCI's external coherence was also low, due to weak cross-sectoral coordination and failure to attract the necessary non-traditional partners. There is still a need to improve coordination and strengthen leadership on programming, to seek out and engage with less prominent by significant partners.
6. Sustainability	Assessing if achievement of the goals can be maintained by the respective systems' resources and services, and if the benefits of an intervention can continue after the end of donor funding.	Sustainability depends not only on resources (or a lack thereof) at country level, but also on the political will and commitment of governments and partners to a rights-based model of education. Resources facilitate the implementation of feasible solutions, and commitment drives efforts towards progressive realisation of the goal of basic education for all. Both resources and commitments are not yet at levels that would make for sustainability in addressing the challenges posed by out-of-school children. This is particularly the case for domestic resources, implying a need for long term external support

7.7 SUMMARY STATEMENT

It is estimated that there is a '100-year gap' between education levels and outcomes in developing countries in and those of developed countries.[33] Gaps in enrolment, completion, and learning rates persists, mostly because there are too many children who come to school lacking the necessary preparation they need to succeed, and a substantial number that are completely left out of the education ecosystem. The mission OOSCI is to shine a light on these children, and to both challenge and support partner countries to accelerate programming on their behalf. OOSCI has, to some extent, been successful in this.

The evaluation found that OOSCI has reached some level of maturity and has succeeded in infusing the dialogue around out-of-school children into important policy debates, which in turn has heightened awareness of the issues of out-of-school children as possible instances of exclusion. This message is beginning to be reflected in policies and strategies of most partner countries. Tangible outputs have been delivered and are being used by countries as indicated in the evaluation's assessment of OOSCI utility.

However, the evaluation also found that the gains that OOSCI made are not yet sustainable. Sustainability of OOSCI will depend on the resources it can attract to support countries to implement the recommendations generated through the first round of studies. Future financial support will, in turn, be channelled through OOSCI if the initiative assembles the right partners, and gains more visibility by delivering many more tangible results for out-of-school children.

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[33] Robinson, Jenny Perlman et al, 'Millions Learning: scaling up quality education in developing countries', Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2016. https://www.brookings.edu/research/millions-learning-scaling-up-quality-education-in-developing-countries/

CHAPTER 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The recommendations presented in this chapter draw from findings and conclusions of the evaluation. They attempt to propose and justify, from a long menu of possible solutions, key actions that will shape the thinking of OOSCI and partners on how to configure and/or package their support to partner countries, in order to achieve the shared goal of ***accelerating*** the reduction in the number of children that are out of school.

Recommendations are targeted to all OOSCI partners, but mostly for execution by UNICEF as the lead partner for OOSCI. Selected members from the reference group were invited to validate the recommendations, first to determine whether they were based on the findings of the evaluation, whether they were well targeted and actionable, and also to determine whether the required follow-up actions were practical and/or feasible.

8.2 REIMAGINING OOSCI

The evaluation described in this report utilized a theory of change approach. The theory of change was an excellent starting point and a useful tool to frame the first evaluative exercise for OOSCI. It provided a roadmap for assessing whether OOSCI made the inputs that it promised, and a framework to interrogate progress on policy implementation (an element that is examined only cursorily in the evaluation). The evaluation nevertheless concluded that

the theory of change needed to be updated to recast the scope of the initiative, and to be strengthened in several other ways.

First, the theory of change could benefit from tightening – conceptually. To that end OOSCI should consider reflecting the thinking around inclusion and/or inclusiveness in the theory of change – to bring clarity around what extinguishes an inclusive programme from a non-inclusive one. Also, the pathways to results should be shaped on notions of progressive universalism – first to bring some "theory" into the theory of change, but also to communicate a deliberate message that a disproportionate amount of resources would have to flow towards poor people before any meaningful reduction in the number of out-of-school children can be realized.

To that end, OOSCI should consider an intermediate outcome of altering the political economy in partner countries to adopt pro-poor policies for out-of-school children, including pro-poor financing of education. The issue of proper arrangements for financing of education should therefore be more than just an "enabling condition," Rather, it should have a place in the revised theory of change as an intermediate outcome. It is likely that the scant attention to financing is one of the reasons for weak implementation of policies and interventions, and why financing and behaviour change should be causally connected.

Also, it should not be considered sufficient for countries to have declared the goal of providing universal basic education to all children, or

to reach all marginalized children. Armed with evidence to prove that children immediately become at risk of dropping out at the next cycle if the fall behind in one cycle, OOSCI can challenge countries to mitigate the effects of being out of school, even as they continue to seek solutions that will deliver full universalisation of education.

Hence, a reasonable strategic choice for OOSCI would be to continue to invest in studies that identify out of school children, articulate their profiles, identify associated barriers, and update estimates out-of-school children in each country. But, since that alone will not bring us to the intended goal, OOSCI should also champion bolder solutions for maximizing progress in the reduction of the number of children that are out of school. One such solution would be inclusive school readiness and/or preschool, often cited as the most "progressive" solution in combating "out-of-school*ism*" in that there is a guarantee that fewer children will drop out of school in the next cycle if governments invest the necessary resources to ensure that all children "begin strong".

That said, strategic and well rationalized choices are necessary. For instance, engaging the pre-school population would mean front-loading OOSCI resources into finding solutions (both strategies and policy) that empower governments to eliminate the lack of participation in preschool as the first cycle of formal schooling. Associated with Conclusion 1, the first recommendation speaks to reimagining the potential of OOSCI - making bold choices about what the initiative is to achieve in the next cycle, while ensuring that there is clarity on the pathways to achieving intended results.

Recommendation 1: The theory of change for OOSCI should be revised to reflect the key elements of inclusion and/or inclusiveness, to ensure that the needs of out-of-school children are met at all levels of the basic education cycle, and to make a strategic choice find policy solutions and strategies to empower governments to address the lack of participation at the pre-primary level, such as sustainable, pro-poor financing for the pre-primary sub-sector, pro-poor financing for the pre-primary sub-sector.

8.3 OOSCI SCOPE AND STRATEGIC CHOICES

By all accounts, programming for out-of-school children is programming for poor children, who typically live in economically depressed neighbourhoods (e.g., urban slums, rural areas, conflict-affected areas and other hard-to-reach areas). In addition to the afore-mentioned factors, cohorts of children that are out of the mainstream schooling system typically present with a disproportionately higher number of adolescents, and a disproportionately higher number of girls. Many are already disadvantaged by the social norms and mores of their communities, and/or have experienced life altering occurrences, such as teenage pregnancy.

Essentially, this description of out-of-school children implies that the children are, to some extent, underserved by their states and therefore susceptible to additional vulnerability. And while OOSCI does not have implementation capacities per se, UNICEF as an agency that supports governments at the point of implementation should advocate for broadening the scope of OOSCI to incorporate the development of strategies for the full range of programming contexts in which the education programme operates.

As such, the second recommendation addresses the need to expand the scope of OOSCI to incorporate the range of education programming contexts for out-of-school children, and for

UNICEF to seize the momentum and opportunity offered by the strategic planning processes to update OOSCI programme objectives, and find coherent ways of working across other objectives of Goal Area 2 of the Strategic Plan (2018-2021).[34]

This is not to say that OOSCI possesses all the answers, but that by bringing others into the dialogue around out-of-school children from the perspective of the initiative, OOSCI can facilitate a technical process for asking the right questions and tackling some of the most pervasive issues relating to out-of-school children. Associated with Conclusion 2 in the previous chapter, Recommendation 2 addresses the future scope of OOSCI.

Recommendation 2: OOSCI should expand its focus to harness the expertise and capabilities of OOSCI technical partners to seek effective and efficient strategies and solutions that support the implementation and comprehensive monitoring of policies in key contexts where programming for different profiles of out-of-school children occurs, and to attract resources to ascertain sustainability of implementation.

Related to Recommendation 2 on programming for different contexts, the need to update programme objectives not only includes finding solutions for what works in respective contexts. It also means expanding coverage to include all levels of the basic education cycle. In this regard, expanding the methodological framework to articulate profiles that go beyond the five dimension of inclusion (5DE) would be useful to many partner countries. Indeed, without much guidance from the existing OOSCI framework, some OOSCI studies, mostly from middle income countries, created profiles for the upper secondary level. The upper

secondary level serves the adolescent and young adult populations, for whom the task of articulating exclusionary factors becomes even more complex.

Within the expanded version of the OOSCI methodological framework, the evaluation also emphasized that programme strategies and solutions needed to target specific groups that cut across all profiles, such as learners with disabilities, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious minorities, and other forms of disadvantage that predispose children to defer the opportunity to participate in school (e.g., orphans, children of nomadic populations, etc.), or to miss it completely.

Relatedly, an improved OOSCI framework would allow for learning to be tailored to the needs of each group and enable an additional layer of targeting that incorporates enhancements in the contextual factors that promote learning (e.g., environmental factors that support certain styles), and mitigates factors that tend to hold children back in those environments. An improved framework should also incorporate a certain level of versatility in extending access to out-of-school children by embracing all forms of learning delivery, as well as developing new innovations as articulated in Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 3: The methodological framework for OOSCI should be re-oriented towards the entire of basic education cycle (i.e., pre-primary to upper secondary), and target key vulnerable groups that cut-cross all profiles of out-of-school children, and generate explicit strategies that speak to the learning needs of these groups, including but not limited to embracing appropriate forms of learning styles for them, and responsive modalities to deliver those learning opportunities.

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[34] The formative evaluation of OOSCI coincided with the launch of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2018-2021).

The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)

Again, the opportunity exists for OOSCI to take the lead in the technical methodological aspects of the work, and to convene a dialogue on what 'targeting' means when it comes to the complexities and sensitivities of trying to serve the different constituencies that make up the population of out-of-school children population.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE PROGRAMMING

OOSCI should, presumably with UNICEF taking the lead at the country level, seek creative ways of engaging new partners, or new ways to harness existing partnerships for out-of-school work. Committees that report on compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) would be a good place to begin. Current and past members of CRC committees are typically individuals who are already exposed to the discourse on rights and would intuitively understand the issues around out-of-school children, and the enormity of the work that is to be accomplished for them.

Similar partnerships should be assembled at the global and regional levels as well, with the same types of considerations regarding who is included and how they are likely to affect the partnership dynamic. As noted in the UNICEF guidance on partnerships though, while it may be important to include people in partnerships because of their individual capacities, the selection decisions should be based primarily on the results that are to be achieved, and the potential of individuals to enhance the capacity of the partnership to achieve those results.

Associated with Conclusion 4, Recommendation 4 is motivated by the afore-mentioned concerns. The recommendation provides enough flexibility to maintain a 'results focus' while urging an inclusive approach to partnerships, such that where appropriate and feasible, the

voices of marginalized communities are represented in discussions around issues that affect them most.

Recommendation 4: While maintaining the usual focus on supporting governments to discharge their mandate to extend learning opportunities to all children, OOSCI should facilitate processes for assembling the right type of partners, including but not limited to government officials, that have a clear potential to bring new ideas, and/or offer new entry points for programming for out-of-school children

The overall goal of OOSCI as articulated in its theory of change is to achieve a *substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children*. Since this evaluation was formative in nature, its primary purpose was to examine if OOSCI was set up for success; that is, if the key elements of the initiative are in place and set to work coherently. These elements include executing country studies to generate profiles of out-of-school children and identify associated barriers, and conducting policy advocacy work.

More importantly, OOSCI studies were meant to update estimates of the number of out-of-school children in each country, thereby providing valuable information that governments can use to quantify the scale and magnitude of the problem of out-of-school children in their respective countries.

Because of the formative nature of the evaluation, it was not possible to make conclusive assessments about the likely contribution of OOSCI to reductions in the number or share of out-of-school children in different partner countries, mainly due to the lack of a coherent results framework. Some studies updated their estimates of the number of out-of-school children, which will enable the countries to set their own targets, and to use those estimates as baseline

against which progress can be assessed at a later stage. However, other countries did not go that far. And while this was not a fully-fledged assessment of evaluability, its findings point to the necessity of: (a) strengthening the **internal coherence** of OOSCI by (revisiting the programme's logic and the alignment of the theory of change and results framework); (b) enhancing the **feasibility or likelihood of achieving the intended results** (considering programme resources against stated results and the time frame); and, (c) ensuring **adequate M&E inputs** (performance indicators, targets and relevant tracking/monitoring methods). In that way assessments about the contribution of OOSCI can be made with a higher degree of confidence in a summative evaluation.

Recommendation 5: OOSCI should strengthen all its programmatic elements to set the initiative up to yield evaluable information on the stated goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children. This includes ascertaining the internal and external coherence of the initiative, the feasibility of achieving intended results, and ensuring that adequate M&E inputs and systems are put in place to enable systematic assessments of OOSCI's contribution.

8.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This evaluation has registered some initial successes of OOSCI, as well as challenges. The evaluation has also recommended that the initiative should revisit some of its earlier assumptions, sharpen its focus on coherence and results, and assemble the right partnerships to advance work around out-of-school children.

The logical next step for the initiative is to continue its work by initiating the second medium-term cycle of five to six years, and to capitalize on this initial progress to target key vulnerable groups that cut across all profiles of out-of-school children. A related focus would be for OOSCI to formally incorporate, in its methodological framework, solutions for out-of-school children and align efforts with UNICEF's work on the second decade of life. and move the policy and advocacy agenda beyond sensitizing communities and engaging in policy dialogue regarding out-of-school children issues to achieve measurable progress towards effecting changes in the planning and budgeting processes and outcomes.

The evaluation has identified two key priorities for the future focus of OOSCI. First, to have an extended consultation around articulating new objectives for OOSCI, including how the next generation of OOSCI studies can be strengthened to enhance their utility for partner countries, and to strengthen the theory of change to reflect those choices. The second priority would be to reposition OOSCI to influence debates and advocacy moments within the context of SDG 4.

In its current configuration, OOSCI is set up to have an expansive reach in that it is already positioned to contribute to at least four of the seven outcome targets for SDG 4. Without necessarily being formally declared as such, OOSCI can easily position itself for adaptation as the fourth implementation modality of SDG 4.

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This list excludes reports harvested for the evaluation
which can be found in Appendix 9.

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APPENDIX 1
ABRIDGED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title	Terms of reference for the formative evaluation of the Out-of-school-Children Initiative (OOSCI): 2010-2016
Purpose	To conduct a formative evaluation to determine progress made towards realizing OOSCI objectives, its relevance, and effectiveness
Reference	RfPS-USA-2016-502396
EA Timeline	March 2017 through July 2017
Reporting to	Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Office

I. Background to OOSCI and the evaluation

1. OOSCI was launched in 2010 by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). It aims to 'turn data into action' by developing detailed 'profiles' of out-of-school children, identify barriers that are pushing them out of school, and propose changes in partner government policies and strategies to address these barriers. The ultimate goal of OOSCI is to generate a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children out of school in each partner country.

2. The OOSCI results framework features three outcomes. The first outcome is that partner countries develop sustainable capacity and robust processes for deriving profiles of children out of school and for analysing the barriers that have led to their exclusion. The second outcome addresses the need for countries to identify and implement effective policies and strategies to increase the number of children who attend school, and mobilize necessary resources to enable completion of at least primary and lower secondary education, and to integrate necessary changes within education sector plans. The third outcome aims to bring about greater international attention and enhanced advocacy that will translate into commitments (national and international) to address the issue of out-of-school children.

3. UIS has taken the lead on the statistical methodology for creating profiles of out-of-school children. Given its strong field presence and global advocacy capacity, UNICEF typically takes the lead on managing country studies and promoting more equitable and inclusive education policies and strategies on the basis of the study findings. An important partner, the Global Partner for Education (GPE), joined the OOSCI in 2013. GPE has provided a grant of $3.3 million from July 2013 to December 2015 to accelerate progress on achieving OOSCI outcomes.

4. OOSCI was initially joined by 25 countries across UNICEF's seven regions. By the end of 2015 there were **87 OOSCI partner countries**, 35 of which are GPE developing country partners. To date, 37 OOSCI country studies have been completed, 27 of which have been published. Additional studies

are in progress in approximately 20 more partner countries, while three countries are in the process of updating their OOSCI study using new data.

5. ***Theory of change to reduce the number of children that are out of school (see Figure 2, page 8):*** National governments are ultimately accountable for setting education goals, targets and plans, developing education policies and strategies, mobilizing the required resources, and implementing education plans. A 'theory of change' for OOSCI postulates that the provision of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school and extensive advocacy efforts will prompt governments to implement the changes necessary in their education systems to bring these children into school. Indeed, UNICEF reporting highlights instances where OOSCI studies appear to have contributed to beneficial changes in government policy and practice, and where there is progress in the desired results in terms of having more children enrolling in school for the first time, or re-entering school. Inputs and outputs described below are required to achieve the OOSCI outcomes and to contribute to the reduction of risks that drive children to drop out of school, and the desired impact of sustainable participation in school for all children.

    a. **OOSCI inputs:** OOSCI inputs begin at the country level with the governments in partner countries commissioning a country study. Both UNICEF and UIS typically provide technical and management support for the study. In most studies, statistical techniques are used to analyse household survey data – often from a national census, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) or Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) – to produce detailed 'profiles' of children,

using the five dimensions of exclusion (which include children at pre-primary, primary and lower secondary level who are out of school or at risk of dropping out). Profiles generally reflect a range of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, location, and family income, and may also include information on children with disabilities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous children and child labour. UNICEF's Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) framework is used to systematically identify the 'barriers' that either keep children out of school or push out those who have already enrolled. Barriers usually include the direct and opportunity costs of education, gender and ethnic biases in local communities or the school system, factors such as distance to school and future employment opportunities for children, and often the effects of violence and conflict around schools or other emergencies.

    b. **OOSCI outputs:** The key output for this initiative is the OOSCI study. It provides the evidence base for identifying key issues, and recommends changes in government policy or strategies that would reduce or eliminate the key barriers and enable more children to go school and complete a full course of education. Recommendations also often address the strengthening of implementation mechanisms, including monitoring progress towards reaching the most marginalised children. The main assumption at the output level in the Theory of Change is that the recommendations in the OOSCI study accurately reflect and respond to the profiles and barriers derived through the study, and are also politically, financially and technically feasible to implement.

c. **Outcomes and dimensions of influence:** Findings from an OOSCI study are used to inform dialogue and planning in partner countries and at the regional and global levels. In partner countries the findings help governments to refine their education sector strategies and plans, usually in consultation with UNICEF and other partners as part of their 'upstream' work to advocate for more equitable, inclusive and effective policies and strategies. This outcome is associated with five dimensions of influence that the OOSCI can affect over time: changes in *attitudes*, *discourse*, *procedures*, *policies* and *behaviours*. Measureable attitudinal change includes greater awareness of the bottlenecks and solutions for out-of- school children among policy makers based upon the number of global, regional and country studies published by OOSCI or presentations that include OOSCI messaging. Discursive change includes statements by national governments or regional organisations on the needs of out-of-school children based on OOSCI products and references to OOSCI country studies in national Education Sector Plans, while procedural changes include shifts in government systems or donor agency's priority countries or rules for funding based on OOSCI products (among others). Measurable outputs associated with policy and behaviour change should manifest in changes in resource allocation, Ministry of Education procedures or government policies that are in line with recommendations from an OOSCI country study. The main assumption at the outcome level is that partner governments respond to the evidence presented in the OOSCI study and advocacy work by UNICEF and other partners.

6. At the global and regional levels, the findings from OOSCI studies are used to inform broader debates on education, such as the new Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation at regional and national level, as well as to influence the policies and practices of development partners, such as Educate A Child, and the Global Partnership for Education. At the global level, OOSCI studies are used in broader advocacy work to highlight the issue of out-of-school children and to influence the rules and procedures of donors and decision makers. This work at national and global levels is intended to contribute to changes in national education systems that lead to a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children out of school. A formative evaluation of OOSCI is necessary in order to get an independent appraisal of the progress that has been made towards influencing governments to enact policies and implement action which will result in a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are currently out of school.

7. A formative evaluation of OOSCI is necessary in order to get an independent appraisal of the progress that has been made towards influencing governments to enact policies and implement action which will result in a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are currently out of school. The evaluation is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2016.

II. Purpose of the evaluation and draft evaluation questions

8. The purpose of the evaluation will be to test the validity of the OOSCI theory of change and its assumptions, strengthen the programme logic, and to provide a formative assessment of progress toward achieving the overall goal of achieving a

substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school. The evaluation is also expected to facilitate reflection and learning among OOSCI programme managers, government counterparts, and key stakeholders, leading to increased programme coherence and a possible revision of implementation strategies. This will enable the programme to meet the accountability requirements of UNICEF OOSCI donors, but also to help verify the important contribution that UNICEF and partners can make in opening up learning opportunities, formal, non-formal or informal, for all children. Table 15 below organise evaluation into objectives and indicate possible evaluation criteria,

9. Expanding on the themes and objectives, Table 16 proffers a mix of descriptive and normative questions that the evaluation seeks to answer. **Descriptive questions** are aimed to provide information and verifiable facts about OOSCI (e.g., the country context, including development challenges that necessitated programming for out-of-school children; description of OOSCI activities and implementation modalities; role of government and other partners; and, coverage of intended beneficiaries, among others). Answering **normative questions** involves making judgments, based on application of explicit criteria for weighing evidence (e.g., whether there is coherence in UNICEF approach; relevance and adequacy of UNICEF strategies against national goals; OOSCI's contribution of towards stated outcomes, etc. By and large, OECD/DAC criteria[35] have been proffered the as the standard for assessing evidence in this evaluation. **However bidders are encouraged to determine the suitability of these criteria and, if necessary, proffer alternative criteria. Bidders are also required to propose scales for evaluating evidence for normative questions.**

TABLE 15	Evaluation objectives, and evaluation criteria	
Evaluation Themes	**Key Components and Evaluation Criteria**	**Evaluation Objectives**
1 Universality: A shared goal? **SFAI?**	Purpose of OOSCI; global evidence of what works; pathways to results and their coherence; relevance to country context (relevance, coherence)	To examine the efficacy of strategies supported by UNICEF towards the realizing the goal of universal participation in basic education, and to determine whether pathways to reaching the intended goal are articulated clearly, and are aligned with those of key partners*
2 Evidence generation and utility of OOSCI studies	UNICEF's programme response after OOSCI study; selection of policy solutions and interventions; coverage of barriers for participating in school (effectiveness, utility)	Determine the extent to which OOSCI studies generated credible evidence on out of school children, influenced key policy changes, and facilitated the selection of effective strategies and interventions for various programming contexts, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming.
3 Strengthening education systems	Building individual and institutional capacities; monitoring and evaluation (efficiency, sustainability)	To assess UNICEF's contribution in building individual and institutional capacities to address barriers to entering and staying in school, assess their adequacy, and evaluate efforts at building capacities of key partners

* UNICEF's key partners in the out-of-school initiative are national governments, UNESCO's UIS, and the GPE. Depending on the regional and country context, other partnerships include regional organizations, donor nations, public institutions, private institutions/organizations.

[35] OECD-DAC, 2002

TABLE 16	Draft evaluation questions, by evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Indicative Evaluation Questions
Relevance and coherence	1.1 To what extent is universal access to basic education specified as a goal, outcome or result for OOSCI partner countries? (Descriptive)
	1.2 Have OOSCI partner countries articulated clear and coherent strategies, inputs and outputs towards the outcome universal access to basic education? (Descriptive)
	1.3 What are the different ways in which countries have engaged in OOSCI, and how much progress has been made towards achieving OOSCI objectives (Descriptive)
	1.4 Does support from partners constitute a clear added-value to government efforts in providing access to basic education? (Normative)
	1.5 How has each of the OOSCI core partners (National Governments, UNICEF, UIS, GPE, UCW) contributed to the initiative, and what efficiencies have been realized as a result of that division of responsibilities? (descriptive and normative)
	1.6 Is there alignment and complementarity between government efforts, UNICEF support, and support of key partners in providing access to basic education? (Normative)
Effectiveness and utility	2.1 How effective were OOSCI studies in generating accurate profiles of children that are out of school, and associated barriers (family, societal systemic/structural, etc.)? (Normative)
	2.2 What are the different types of effects that were realized by OOSCI studies, and the political, financial, and technical conditions that made those effect possible in some contexts and not others? (Descriptive)
	2.3 What is the significance of those effects in terms of coverage and/or reach, both in development and humanitarian contexts? (Normative)
	2.4 To what extent did national government counterparts and partners use the data and evidence generated by OOSCI studies to develop new policies? What is the implementation status of those policies (Descriptive)
	2.5 Did OOSCI studies influence the inclusion of programmes/interventions for children that are out of school in education sector plans? Are those programmes accompanied by clear result frameworks and reasonable pathways to achieving the intended results? (Descriptive and normative)
	2.6 Did OOSCI studies generate recommendations that address the key barriers/issues? Were there deliberate processes to ensure country ownership of the recommendations, and were the recommendations actionable? (Descriptive and normative)
	2.7 Did OOSCI studies and activities make any identifiable contribution to the reduction in the number of out-of- school children in partner countries? (Normative)
Sustainability	3.1 Did OOSCI result in improvements in administrative data collection systems (e.g., to use techniques such as GIS mapping, to collect sub-national data, and to collect student level data)? (Descriptive)
	3.2 Did OOSCI result in greater integration and/or collaboration between the different sectors and line ministries to address issues of out-of-school children? (Descriptive)
	3.3 To what extent has OOSCI strengthened capacities of national counterparts and partners to generate reports, interpret and use the data for programming and decision-making? (Normative)
	3.4 To what extent has OOSCI strengthened capacities UNICEF education staff to influence policy dialogue, and to carry out effective advocacy with partners and other stakeholders including senior government officials (Normative)
	3.5 To what extent has advocacy around OOSCI work resulted in international commitments and actions to address the problem of out of school children?

10. **Indicative scope:** The evaluation will include all OOSCI partner countries that completed their studies by June 2015, estimated at 25 of 87 countries, covering all UNICEF regions. Partner countries are at different stages of OOSCI implementation (conducting their studies, policy level work, etc). So, while all selected countries will be included in the desk review, additional evaluation activity (e.g., participation in field visits) will depend on the stage that the country is in. The evaluation will also cover activities of all key partners (i.e., UNESCO and the GPE).

III. Evaluation approach and methodology

11. **Evaluation approach/design:** The evaluation will mainly be desk-based, with light-touch field-based activities to engage in interview conversations with government partners. Execution of the evaluation should include the following elements and/or tasks: (a) literature review; (b) conducting a desk-based review (c) field visits to conduct interviews with government partners in high level policy-making positions; (d) data analysis and formulation of preliminary findings on the efficacy of OOSCI; (e) articulating an approach to validate preliminary findings (using a delphi survey or a comparable technique) establishing consensus and/or generalizability of findings, and to obtain additional insights and/or nuances; and, (f) articulating an approach to validate evaluation recommendations.

12. To be further refined during the inception phase, the proposal for evaluation methods should include the bidders approach to the following:

    a. Literature review: a summary of literature on topical issues and global trends on out-of-school children, and progress made towards identifying the children and enrolling them in school, and internationally verifiable indicators.

    b. Desk-review and analysis: This will be the main task of the evaluation, and a source from which most of the evaluation questions will be answered. A total of 42 of 87 partner countries will be included in this review. These will be selected by the evaluation team from the list supplied in Appendix B, hence a draft selection criteria will be included in the proposal (see indicative criteria in table provided in Appendix B). The review will yield a summary/synthesis of findings, including key barriers identified by OOSCI studies and country education sector planning documents, and a mapping of the recommendation accompanied by an assessment of the extent to which they address the barriers. Depending on the availability of secondary data, cross-country analyses and comparisons of out-of-school children will be made.

    c. Field visits approach: Short field visits (of approximately three days in each partner countries) will be carried out in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Sudan, Sri Lanka for primary data collection. These will provide the opportunity to conduct interviews with government partners in policy-making positions and key partners (e.g. members of education sector groups) in the education sectors, and to substantiate and/or verify findings from the desk review report. Field visits will also be used to engage with education sector groups, and focus groups of beneficiaries where programmes that target out-of-school children are underway.

d. Data analysis approach and plan, that articulates the unit of analysis; an indicative set of indicators (input, output and outcome); and, how data will be organized, classified, compared and displayed, relative to the evaluation themes and evaluation questions (or clusters of evaluation questions). It should also indicate evaluation criteria (and instruments) to make the necessary judgements especially on the normative questions, and to validate findings and conclusions. The data analysis approach should also examine understandings and perceptions of different categories of stakeholders, and the feasibility of comparing trends across countries.

e. Validation approach, articulating an approach to validate preliminary findings (using a delphi survey or a comparable technique) establishing consensus and/or generalizability of findings, and to obtain additional insights and/or nuances; and, an approach to validate evaluation recommendations.

13. **Attribution or contribution:** While it is desirable for UNICEF to examine its own goals to determine if intend results were achieved through capacity development and systems strengthening; advocacy, promotion of policy dialogue, evidence generation, and education sector planning; and building of strong partnerships, it is often difficult to attribute results to only any one source of inputs, actions, or actors, or to claim credit for positive outcomes associated with such efforts. Hence a 'contribution approach' should be considered, with the evaluation methodology articulating, a priori, how UNICEF's contribution will be assessed.

14. **Ethical considerations:** Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed during the evaluation. Specific reference is made to the UNEG guidelines. Good practices not covered therein are also to be followed. Any sensitive issues or concerns should be raised with the evaluation management team as soon as they are identified. Two particular issues should be noted:

a. The evaluation methodology may indicate children as informants or objects of study. In all contacts with children, the UNEG ethical guidelines regarding issues like confidentiality and not exposing the child to danger must be carefully respected.

b. In addition to exercising ethical considerations for informed consent, no participant may be compelled to cooperate with the evaluation. UNICEF will direct staff to participate where needed.

15. Methodological rigor will be weighted significantly in the assessment of proposals (40 percent of the points awarded for the technical proposal). **Hence bidders are invited to interrogate all aspects of the methodology indicated in para 11-14, make adjustments and/or improvements as they see fit, and proffer a comprehensive description of their intended methodology.**

IV. The evaluation team, management and governance arrangements

16. The Evaluation Office will contract with an institution (consulting firm, research institute, university, or a consortium) with the appropriate capacity to carry out a complex, multi-country evaluation. Based on their understanding of the task, the organization should offer **a team of senior and mid-level evaluation professionals**.

Additional expertise may been enlisted through subcontracting arrangements (e.g., enhancing capacity for case studies and/or case studies by incorporating national evaluators).

17. Desired skills and competencies for the evaluation team: The core evaluation team must offer the following demonstrated experience, knowledge and competencies:

a. Exceptional technical knowledge, skills and expertise in evaluation concepts and capacity to execute a multi-country evaluation effort;

b. In-depth knowledge and experience in conducting evaluations with education experience in education policy development/advocacy; practices and analyses; partnerships in education development; education systems strengthening; public sector budgeting approaches or education economics analysis'; aid effectiveness; or comparable professional area/content.

c. Programming experience in out-of-school children interventions;

d. Expertise/experience in developing results frameworks, tools or guides for monitoring and evaluation;

e. Strong quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills, and experience qualitative comparative analysis, correlational analyses, and data analysis using statistical software;

f. Excellent language and communication skills in English, French and Arabic, including facilitation skills, particularly design of stakeholder consultations exercises;

g. Strong report writing skills in English: and, computer literacy in Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Knowledge of other forms text and graphic representations (e.g., text mining software) will be an added advantage.

18. The evaluation team must have experience of working cross-culturally in development, and demonstrate capacity in managing evaluation projects and teams. The evaluation team will be required to demonstrate familiarity with UNICEF work for children and gender rights, to have experience/familiarity with countries of different typologies, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming. Adequate gender and geographic balance is also desirable.

19. The team leader is required to work on the evaluation full time throughout the duration of the evaluation (5 month period). He/she will be required to be the conceptual leader for the evaluation, to direct data collection and analysis efforts, and to assure quality and validity of all activities, as well as contribute to drafting the report and editing. Other members of the team will be allocated tasks in a complementary fashion and are not necessarily required for the entire duration of the evaluation. In all cases though, the level of effort should be indicated, **in person days,** for all team members, and for all the stages of the evaluation.

20. **Participation of present and former UNICEF staff:** All current UNICEF staff and consultants may be involved as informants or in other specific roles (e.g. member of the steering committee). **For that reason, they are not eligible to be evaluation team members.** Former UNICEF staff and consultants that have worked on BEGE programmes may be members of the evaluation team if they meet technical qualifications for skills. However, any prior involvement with UNICEF should be

declared in the technical proposal in order to work around any possible conflicts of interest.

V. Management and governance arrangements

21. **Evaluation management:** The evaluation will be **managed by the Evaluation Specialist**, UNICEF's Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Specialist will have overall responsibility for the following:

    a. facilitation of initial consultations with relevant staff in the UNICEF HQ, and arrange for subsequent meetings and consultation with the global reference group;

    b. day-to-day coordination and supervision of all activities of the evaluation team, and decision- making;

    c. technical management of all phases the evaluation, according to the terms of reference and stipulations of the inception report;

    d. consulting and liaising with the Evaluation Focal Point in the Education Section in key moments in the evaluation;

    e. facilitating internal and external review and quality assurance processes, including being the liaison between UNICEF and the reference group;

    f. approving all deliverables, and

    g. preparing publishing-ready versions of the reports for issuing by the Director, Evaluation Office.

    h. providing overall guidance to the evaluation team on UNICEF requirements and standards for evaluative work.

22. **The global reference group:** To be appointed by the Director, Evaluation Office, a global reference group will provide oversight of the evaluation, with members responsible for receiving updates on a pre- determined schedule as the evaluation reaches certain milestones (e.g., inception phase, end of data collection phase); reviewing selected evaluation products (inception report, evaluation brief and final/penultimate report) and providing written comments to the evaluation team through the evaluation manager; and, contributing to the post-evaluation management response, action plan and dissemination strategy. Membership of the reference group will be eleven members (9 from UNICEF and two external) as follows:

    a. Director/Senior Advisor, Evaluation (Evaluation Office, HQ), who will be the chair for the reference group;

    b. Two Senior Advisors (Education Section, HQ);

    c. Two Senior Advisors (other PD Sections);

    d. Three Senior Advisors based at regional offices (Two Regional Education Advisors and one Regional M&E Advisor); and,

    e. Evaluation Specialist, (Evaluation Office, HQ), also the evaluation manager and secretariat for the reference group.

    f. Two external members from UNESCO and GPE.

23. **Field level consultation and review:** In case study countries where field work will be conducted, a consultation mechanism should be established by the UNICEF Country Office. Where feasible, existing structures such as the education sector team should be used for the purpose of drawing the attention of national actors to the evaluation, and engaging them on substantive issues. This structure should receive the inception report and a plan for field-based activities before they commence, receive a briefing at the end of field data collection activities, and receive the draft case study report for comments.

VI. Evaluation products/deliverables

24. Several products will be expected from the evaluation activities: 1) an inception report; 2) a report of the document review analysis containing initial evaluation findings; 3) the final report of the evaluation report (complete first draft to be reviewed by the Evaluation Manager; second draft to be reviewed by reference group, and a penultimate draft). Outlines and descriptions of each evaluation products proffered in this section are meant to be indicative3. The proposed timeframe and expected products will be discussed with the evaluation team and refined in the inception report.

25. The UNICEF Evaluation Office reserves the right to ensure the quality of products submitted by the external evaluation team and will request revisions until the product meets the quality standards as expressed by the Evaluation Office (as guided by UNEG quality standards).

26. **Inception report:** The inception report will be instrumental in confirming a common understanding of what is to be evaluated, including additional insights into executing the evaluation. At this stage evaluators will refine and confirm evaluation questions, confirm the scope of the evaluation, further improve on the methodology proposed in this terms of reference and their own evaluation proposal to improve its rigor, as well as develop and validate evaluation instruments. The report will include, *inter alia*,

    a. Evaluation purpose and scope – confirmation of objectives and the main themes of the evaluation;

    b. Evaluation criteria and questions – final set of evaluation questions, and evaluation criteria for assessing performance;

    c. Evaluation methodology: namely the sampling plan, description of data collection methods, data analysis plan, and a description of the quality review process4, including a discussion on how to enhance the reliability and validity of evaluation conclusions, and a discussion on the limitations of the methodology

    » **Sampling plan,** which articulates criteria for sampling (i) partner countries that will be the subject of the desk-review, and a subset of countries that will host a data collection mission; (ii) evaluation participants within implementing partners (both government partners and intended beneficiaries), and, (iii) individuals to participate in a validation survey (or a comparable technique) to test to confirm and/or test the generalizability of evaluation findings.

    » **Data collection methods** and data sources, both desk-based and field-based (including a rationale for their selection); the field visit approach,

    » **Data analysis plan** that includes a mapping that identifies descriptive and normative questions and criteria for evaluating evidence

    d. Proposed structure for the final report;

    e. Evaluation work plan and timeline – a revised work and travel plan;

    f. Resources requirements – detailed budget allocations, tied to evaluation activities, work plan, deliverables.

    g. Annexes (organizing framework for evaluation questions, data collection toolkit, data analysis framework)

    The inception report will be 12 - 15 pages in length (excluding annexes), and will be presented at a formal meeting of the reference group.

27. **Desk-review and document analysis report (also the first draft of the final report):** This report will present the following

    a. An summary of key issues in out-of-school children from global literature and

    b. An review of OOSCI studies: mainly a summary/synthesis of key barriers identified by the studies and a mapping of the recommendation accompanied by an assessment of the extent to which they address the barriers;

    c. Additional insights from UNICEF documents, (planning documents, national education sector documents, workplans);

    d. Evidence from other evaluations, both UNICEF and non-UNICEF, and other similar resources should also be presented.

The report should be 20 - 30 pages in length (excluding annexes, if any).

28. **Field report:** Substantively the methods section of the final evaluation report, this report will present a consolidation of activities that were conducted in all the different partner countries, data that was collected, and the limitations encountered the field. The report should not exceeding 5 pages of substantive text (excluding annexes), and two annexes (a revised outline of the study report, and a list of persons that were interviewed in each partner country).

29. **Final evaluation report:** Not to exceed 60 pages, **excluding** the executive summary and annexes, this will be an updated version of the desk-review report. The complete draft report will include:

    a. Summary of the status out-of-school children and progress made (excerpted from global literature review);

    b. An analysis of key issues in out-of-school children (excerpted from the desk review report);

    c. An assessment of UNICEF's mandate, strengths and weaknesses relating to education access and work on out-of-school children, against agreed evaluation criteria;

    d. evaluation findings and conclusions, well substantiated by the data and evidence, cross-referenced against evaluation themes and evaluation criteria;

    e. a parsimonious set of actionable recommendations that correspond with evaluation conclusions, and a description of how they were validated;

    f. bibliography and list of background materials used; and

    g. annexes (evaluation terms of reference; annotated description of methodology; data analysis framework, list of people interviewed, etc.).

30. **PowerPoint presentations:** The inception report and the final evaluation report should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation that can be used in stakeholder consultations.

31. **Data, live data tables and graphics** will be submitted to the Evaluation Office as part of the evaluation deliverables.

32. Reports will be prepared in English, according to the UNICEF House Style (to be shared with the winning bidder) and UNICEF standards for evaluation reports as per GEROS guidelines (referenced in Footnote 10). The first draft of the final report will be received by the evaluation manager who will work with the team leader on necessary revisions. The second draft will be sent to the reference group for comments. The evaluation manager will consolidate all comments

on a response matrix, and request the evaluation team to indicate actions taken against each comment in the production of the penultimate draft.

33. **Payment will be made only upon UNICEF's acceptance of the work performed**, and in accordance with agreed schedule of payment and/or contract milestones. Additional budget request will only apply to new tasks not already covered in the contract, with clear authorization for the additional tasks.

34. The terms of payment are **net 30 days, after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work**. Where the need arises, earlier payment may be negotiated between UNICEF and the contracted institution, on the terms indicated in the RFPS.

APPENDIX 2

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

This Annex presents a brief outline and basic overview of the evaluation purpose, objectives and scope, its design and methodology, including a brief description of the evaluation matrix, the sampling approach, the document analysis including the QCA, and finally the collection and analysis of primary data during the field visits and at UNICEF HQ.

1 Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

The purpose of the evaluation of OOSCI was to test the validity of the programme theory of change and its assumptions, to provide a formative assessment of progress towards the achievement of the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school, and to strengthen the programme logic. The three objectives defined in the evaluation terms of reference were as follows:

- To examine the efficacy of strategies supported by UNICEF towards realising the goal of universal participation in basic education[36], and to determine whether pathways to reaching the intended goal are articulated clearly, and are aligned with those of key-partners.

- Determine the extent to which OOSCI studies generated credible evidence on out-of-school children, influenced key policy changes, and facilitated the selection of effective strategies and interventions for various programming contexts, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming.

- To assess UNICEF's contribution in building individual and institutional capacities to address barriers to entering and staying in school, assess their adequacy, and evaluate efforts at building capacities of key partners.

The three objectives were translated into evaluation questions, which were in turn aligned with the three programme outcomes of OOSCI:

- Sustainable **capacity and robust processes** developed by partner countries for **deriving profiles of children out of school and for analysing the barriers** that have led to their exclusion;

- Effective **policies and strategies identified and implemented** to increase the number of children who attend school, and mobilise necessary resources to enable completion of at least primary and lower secondary education, and to integrate necessary changes within education sector plans;

- International **attention increased, advocacy enhanced and translated into commitments** (national and international) to address the issue of out-of-school children.

A fourth category of 'change management' was developed to emphasise the formative nature of the evaluation, and to assess whether the necessary response strategies were put in place.

Organised around OOSCI programme outcomes, descriptive and normative evaluation questions are presented in detail in the evaluation matrix in Appendix 3. The evaluation

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36 Basic education: primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 1-2, i.e. ISCED-P).

addresses the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency** and **sustainability**. It also addresses two additional criteria; ***coherence***, to enable assessment of the formative aspects of OOSCI and the evolving nature some concepts and tools, and, ***utility***.

In terms of scope, the evaluation included all OOSCI partner countries that completed their studies by 2016, estimated at 40 of 87 countries. It also included all UNICEF regions. Partner countries are at different stages of OOSCI implementation (conducting their studies, policy level work, etc). The evaluation will also cover activities of all key partners (i.e., UNESCO and the GPE).

2 Evaluation Design

Due to its scope and formative nature as outlined above, the evaluation followed a theory-based approach (see Chapter 2.2). First, the OOSCI theory of change was reconstructed on the basis of the available documents and information as provided by the initiative's management staff. Then, the results model was operationalised by developing empirically measurable indicators to answer the evaluation questions (see the Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 3).

Since the initiative does not follow a program-like approach, with a limited set of activities in a defined regional environment, but is implemented worldwide with from country to country varying strategies, it was not possible to apply a experimental or quasi-experimental design that would have allowed direct attribution of impacts to OOSCI studies and activities.

Thus, the evaluation employed a contribution analysis[37] in order to answer the evaluation questions. This contribution analysis was based on anecdotal and statistical evidence provided in the OOSCI studies, government and other donors' publications, as well as in-depth interviews with OOSCI country staff, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders (see Appendix 8). In addition to this mixed-methods approach, analysis tools included a qualitative content analysis, a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), and a quantitative, descriptive analysis on key education sector indicators, and perceptions of education staff in UNICEF country offices (gathered through an online survey).

3 Evaluation Matrix

Appendix 3 contains the full evaluation matrix with all the evaluation questions and subsequent details on indicators, scaling/measurement, means of verification (MoV), evaluation themes and evaluation criteria. In particular, the table shows the related MoRES determinants for the evaluation questions and indicators[38] The Evaluation Matrix formed the basis for all consultations and subsequent analyses, and also has been the guideline and prime resource for drafting this evaluation report.

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[37] Contribution analysis is a summary term for approaches that aim at assessing causal questions and inferring causality in cases where an attribution analysis is not possible. CA can be based on qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative approach applied in this case follows (more or less) the approach as propagated by Mayne 2001, consisting of six steps from (1) identification of the attribution problem (here: evaluation question), (2) developing/reconstructing the Theory of Change, (3) collecting (empirical) evidence that the intervention contributed to the observed change/impact, (4) assessing the likeliness of the contribution and alternative explaining factors, (5) checking for further evidence, to finally (6) describing the (most likely) contribution of the intervention based on the available information.

[38] Indicators are both at a very high level and mostly generic, i.e. without specific timelines and targets. Whenever indicators start with "Degree of…" or "Value of…", these have been scored on the basis of a scoring grid developed during the course of our implementation. The qualitative assessment of the benefits, values etc., has then been expressed in a quantified manner during the QCA process.

4 Document sampling

4.1 Country sampling

A sample of 42 partner countries was selected for the document review. Twenty-one countries (21) had completed and published their OOSCI studies, while studies for the remaining 21 countries were at various stages of development, as indicated in Appendix 4.

To ensure a preferably high contextual representativeness of this sample, the following selection criteria were used:

- Existence of an EMIS

- Appropriate geographical representation of countries (i.e. at least 50 percent of OOSCI countries from a particular region are included in the sample)

- Representation of countries with very high/ high, medium, low levels on the Human Development Index (HDI)[39]

- Representation of countries with different levels of Fragile States Index (more stable/ stable, warning/elevated warning, high warning/alert, high alert/very high alert)

The HDI is a widely-used proxy to appreciate heterogeneity in development levels. As strata variable, it highlights the different dimensions of development (i.e. economic, education, health) at one sampling stage. The Fragile States Index (FSI) captures different dimensions of fragility, including uneven economic development, weak human rights and/or rule of law, state legitimacy and demographic pressure, etc. Taken together, HDI, FSI and regional distribution adequately reflect the heterogeneity of the universe of OOSCI countries.

The sampled OOSCI partner countries were subject to a 'light' qualitative document review of available OOSCI studies and government publications. For two countries in the sample no documents were available (Belize and Costa Rica). Therefore, these countries could not be part of the document analysis and the sample consists of forty countries. The review primarily focused on those evaluation questions that deal with the partners' attitudes towards universal access to education, their strategies, progress and contributions. It focused particularly on those factors which influence the effectiveness of their efforts and how differences between progress and observable changes can be explained. Furthermore, the contribution of the OOSCI studies on those changes was assessed with the help of a Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

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[39] Comparing single HDI scores does not adequately reveal whether one country is ahead of another because measures such as the Gini coefficient or the share of out-of-school children that are not included into the index. Nevertheless, the HDI reveals global patterns and is therefore an appropriate selection criterion. Caribbean island countries were aggregated to avoid overrepresentation of small islands with low population count and relatively high HDI levels.

TABLE 17   Country selection for document analysis[40]

	All OOSCI countries	Sample	percent
Regional distribution*			
East Asia and the Pacific	11	6	54%
Eastern and Southern Africa	10	5	50%
Europe and Central Asia	4	3	75%
Latin America and the Caribbean	12	8	67%
Middle East and Northern Africa	12	6	50%
South Asia	6	5	83%
West and Central Africa	17	9	53%
Fragile State Index			
(45-58,5) countries classified as stable or more stable	6	3	50%
(60-79,8) countries classified as warning or elevated warning	29	13	44%
(80-99,8) countries classified as high warning or alert	35	18	51%
(>100) countries classified as high alert or very high alert	11	6	54%
Human Development Index			
(>0,701) countries classified as high or very high	18*	9	50%
(0,550-0,699) countries classified as medium	29	20	68%
countries classified as low	26	13	50%

* The regional distribution is made in line with UNICEF's grouping. For the FSI we differentiated between the four levels (1- stable or more stable, 2- warning or elevated warning, 3- high warning or alert, 4- high alert or very high alert) and for the HDI between the three levels (1- high or very high, medium and low). As the percentage show, our sampling complies with the selection criteria (i.e. at least 50 % of OOSCI countries from a particular region, at least 50 % of OOSCI countries from a particular HDI level and at least 40 % of OOSCI countries from a particular FSI level).

4.2 Document sampling

Due to the vast number of potentially relevant documents on one hand, and limited data capture resources on the other, the document analysis focused on a selection of countries that reflected the bandwidth of the different contextual conditions within which the initiative operates (political, societal, economic), while providing sufficient information on OOSCI implementation progress and effects.

A total of 215 documents were reviewed. These comprised 49 OOSCI studies (27 at country 22 at regional level), and 35 other documents from UNICEF or UNESCO. Furthermore, there were 28 education sector plans, 7 joint sector reviews (7), and 61 publications from partner organisations. An additional 35 documents were retrieved from governments.

5 Document review and analysis

The document review followed an approach oriented at the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM)[41]. Following this approach, evaluation questions were operationalised into indicators

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40   Small Caribbean islands have been aggregated to avoid overrepresentation of countries with very low population count. FSI and HDI not for all countries available. Hence, total numbers differ from total number of OOSCI countries.

41   *Cf* inter alia, GLASER/STRAUSS 1967, 1998; MEY/MRUCK 2007.

as reflected in Appendix 2. Analytical catego-ries were mostly determined beforehand by UNICEF and the evaluation team. Nevertheless, the underlying approach of the GTM was applied analogously.

5.1 Document retrieval/harvesting

Documents containing qualitative data e.g. OOSCI studies, UNICEF country office and regional annual reports, government and part-ner publications, sector reviews) constituted the analytical 'cases' where relevant content was extracted and coded to answer individual evaluation questions.

To assure maximum transparency meta-data (e.g. document name, chapter/section, region, further context information) was added to each code. Each code was then assigned to one or more categories for which it provides information (e.g. country's engagement in OOSCI, indications in national ESPs, partners' capacities). Where they could not be immediately assigned to a partic-ular category, coding was deferred temporarily and reintroduced in a subsequent cycle.

5.2 Document analysis

Since a number of evaluation questions were explicitly aiming at identifying (causal) relations between individual characteristics of the initia-tive and its effects, in the first step the analysis focused on identifying factors that influence the effectiveness of the initiative, with attention paid to designs and context related aspects and differences between partner regions/countries. The next step of the analysis was to search for repeating combinations of particular character-istics and measurable effects.

After identifying relations between external factors and the effectiveness of the initiative, the findings were integrated into overarch-ing concepts that allow conclusions regarding common factors of success and failure, which again made it possible to develop general recommendations for the future strategy of the OOSCI (see chapter 9). The following figure illustrates the approach with a simple example:

This approach provided a formalised framework for identifying the influence of different factors, which determine the success of the initiative.

FIGURE 11   **Content analysis approach**

Identification of country specific OOSCI characteristics and other influential factors
(e.g. ownership of partner government, donor coordination etc.)

▼

Search for repeating combinations of characteristics and measurable effects (e.g. countries with high level of government ownership, good donor coordination etc.)

▼

Analysis of patterns of OOSCI characteristics and observed effects
(e.g. reduction of number of out-of-school children)

▼

Conclusions regarding common factors for success and failure
(e.g. by comparing OOSC development in countries with high/low level of government ownership, good/bad donor coordination etc.)

Following this approach ensured the transparency and traceability of the evaluation results as well as their objectivity, since the **findings are not the result of intuitive conclusions of individual researchers but are based on a structured and theoretically founded approach**.

6 Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

In addition to the qualitative content analysis, key documents were analysed with the QCA approach. Because different development paths can lead to the same outcome by QCA employs Boolean algebra (i.e. principle of equifinality) to identify typical patterns among various cases to explain specific outcomes,

In the case of OOSCI, the QCA allows to identify factors (i.e. causal conditions) which affect the success of OOSCI in terms of its desired outcome of achieving a considerable reduction of out-of-school children (i.e. main outcome variable).

The first step of the analysis was to outline a grid with four categories for each theoretically-grounded explanatory factor (e.g. defining out-of-school-children profiles, identification of barriers, deriving recommendations). Second, a 'truth table' containing the results for each possible combination of conditions was developed for each outcome indicator of interest.[42] Third, an assessment of the significance of the contribution of individual conditions was conducted. Lastly, the different so-called recipes of the QCA are interpreted against the assumptions made by the theory of change and other empirical results.

7 Primary data collection and analysis

Primary data was obtained from two sources:

- Online survey with all UNICEF country offices (i.e. full population survey)

- Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), selected upon recommendation of UNICEF HQ and country offices in the visited countries

Online survey: Executed concurrently with the document review/retrieval, the purpose of the survey was to gain information about the offices' perception of the initiative, how they got involved in it and which kind of measures/activities it triggered in their work.

7.1 Online survey with UNICEF country offices

The survey was also used to investigate additional data sources available at the national level, and to triangulate with the results of the document analysis. It also improved the external validity of the evaluation results in that all OOSCI partner countries were targeted.

The majority of the survey questions were closed-ended and presented as item-batteries which allow for efficient data entry, accompanied by open questions for qualitative aspects that cannot otherwise be surveyed.

The online survey was implemented with oFB SoSci Survey® on a dedicated IT-platform in the institute's facilities at the Saarland University, and administered to 88 UNICEF country offices, Sixty-eight of 88 country offices returned a completed questionnaire, which equals a net-response rate

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42 It was then checked, which combinations provide consistence, whereby consistency scores of either 1 or 0 indicate perfect consistency for a given row, while a score of 0.5 indicates perfect inconsistency. A threshold level was specified according to which 'not perfect' consistency (here 0.7) was regarded as sufficient. Once the inconsistent cases were identified, they were analysed further regarding their differences. The differences that explain the inconsistency are then included in the truth table so that the number of consistent cases increases. This can be understood as an iterative process.

of about 77 percent. While most regions had relatively high response rates, the response rate for the Eastern and Southern Africa region was low as indicated in the table below.

TABLE 18	Response rate by region		
Region	Number of OOSCI partner countries	Participation in Survey	Response Rate (in percent)
CEE/CIS	5	4	100
EAP	12	12	100
ESA	13	8	62
LAC	17	14	82
MENA	11	8	73
SA	7	5	71
WCA	23	17	74
Total	**88**	**68**	**77**

7.2 Analysis of survey data

Survey data was analysed quantitatively by calculating mean values and standard deviations.

Analyses on a regional level were possible only in few cases as often the number of responses was too low to come to unbiased results.

At 88.2 percent, the overwhelming majority of respondents were education personnel as presented in Table 19. Those falling in the "Other" category were staff working with child protection issues, adolescents, or M&E positions.

TABLE 19	Job titles of survey respondents	
Job Title	Subtotal	Percent
Education Chief	13	19.12
Education Specialist	37	54.41
Education Officer	10	14.71
Consultant	1	1.47
Other	7	10.29
Total no. of respondents	**68**	**100.0**

Other job titles: Acting Chief Education, Child Protection Specialist in Education, Adolescent Development Specialist, M&E specialist, Youth Officer acting Education, Communications, M&E Officer

Source: Online survey of UNICEF Country Offices

Out of 81 reports of consulting another person for additional information in the process of completion of the questionnaire, education personnel were mostly consulted 36 times (44 percent), while government counterparts were consulted by 25 percent of the time. At 31 percent (25 times), reports of completing the questionnaire without assistance was significant.

As presented in Table 20, the majority of persons that responded to the questionnaire (80.9 percent) were themselves OOSCI focal points or persons supervising and/or overseeing OOSCI activities. On the downside, the majority of the respondents started their position in the last two years (61 percent), while only about a fifth serving longer than three years in their positions.

TABLE 20	Current role on OOSCI by survey respondents	
Current Role	Subtotal	percent
OOSCI Focal Point	25	36.76
Overseeing/supervising OOSCI activities	30	44.12
Other	13	19.2
Total no of respondents	**68**	**100.0**

Source: Online survey of UNICEF Country Offices

7.3 Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Evaluation questions which addressed progress made in the stated outcomes and procedural aspects were answered by additional background information that could not be found in publications. To that end, consultations with key stakeholders were undertaken to substantiate the evaluation results with further primary data. This data is collected in three ways:

- (a) exploratory face-to-face and telephone interviews at UNICEF HQ in New York,

- (b) semi-structured phone/Skype interviews with UNICEF regional office representatives,

- (c) guideline-based in-depth interviews during the eight envisaged country visits.

Exploratory interviews: Face-to-face interviews were conducted with UNICEF staff at the global level, while telephone and/or Skype-interviews were conducted with GPE, UNESCO/UIS and *Understanding Children's Work Initiative* (UCW) representatives. Based on an earlier draft of the evaluation matrix and guidelines, the interviews served to sensitise the team about the evaluation approach, and to identify potential further data sources.

Regional level interviews: Semi-structured phone/Skype interviews with UNICEF regional office representatives were conducted. These interviews served to provide information about OOSCI work in regional offices, the support given to OOSCI countries in each region, and additional studies and/or activities that were implemented outside the initiative with regard to out-of-school children.

Country level interviews and focus group discussions: At the country level, UNICEF country office staff and government partners in policy-making positions provided key informant interviews. To the extent possible, key partners such as members of Education Sector Working Groups (ESWGs), donors and beneficiaries were also consulted. The selection of interviewees was based on suggestions by UNICEF during the preparation of the country visits, with the support of the local consultants. To the extent possible, the focus group discussion and/or round table discussion format was utilised.

Data gathered during the stakeholder consultations was subjected to a qualitative content analysis, structured according to the evaluation questions and analysed according to the evidence standards in the evaluation matrix.

APPENDIX 3
EVALUATION MATRIX

Legend:

Evaluation Theme:		Evaluation Criteria:	
1 – Universality: A shared goal?		1 – Relevance	4 – Utility
2 – Evidence generation and utility of OOSCI studies		2 – Effectiveness	5 – Coherence
3 – Strengthening education systems		3 – Efficiency	6 - Sustainability

#	Evaluation Question	Indicators	Code	
Programme outcome 1: Sustainable capacity and robust processes developed by partner countries for deriving profiles of children out of school and for analysing the barriers that have led to their exclusion				
2.1.a	How effective were OOSCI studies in generating accurate and comprehensive profiles of children that are out of school (Normative)	Proportion of out-of-school children identified, disaggregated by categories of OOSC Degree of consistency of generated OOSC profiles	**2.1.a Generation of OOSCI profiles**	
2.1.b	How effective were OOSCI studies in identifying appropriate and relevant barriers (e.g. coverage of categories called for by the OOSCI and eventually spelled out in the 2015 Manual)	Completeness in the description of barriers, disaggregated by types of OOSC Degree of consistency between the characteristics of different OOSC subgroups (profile) and the barriers identified for them Evidence from the country reports that the MoRES system was used to identify barriers	**2.1.b Identification of barriers**	
3.1	Did OOSCI result in improvements in administrative data collection systems (, e.g. to use techniques such as GIS mapping, to collect sub-national data, and to collect student level data)? (Descriptive)	Degree of improvement in administrative data collection systems Degree to which extent these improvements were triggered by OOSCI studies and activities Degree to which improved data collection systems are used in routine data collection (EMIS, etc.).	**3.1. Improvements in administrative data collection systems**	
Programme outcome 2: Effective policies and strategies identified and implemented to increase the number of children who attend school, and mobilise necessary resources to enable completion of at least primary and lower secondary education, and to integrate necessary changes within education sector plans				
2.4	To what extent did national government counterparts and partners use the data and evidence generated by OOSCI studies to develop new policies? What is the implementation status of those policies (Descriptive)	Degree to which new policies reflect content of OOSCI studies Degree to which policies and programmes have been or are being implemented Degree to which OOSC have been reached through policy implementation	**2.4. Use of data and evidence of OOSCI studies**	

	Scale levels and descriptors	Evaluation Theme	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources
	3 - profiles comprehensively outlined including means for verification and indicators 2 - mentioned completely but not operationalised 1 - not completely mentioned 0 - no profiles mentioned at all	2	2	OOSCI studies Expert assessments regarding empirical foundation and applicability of profiles and barriers in respective socio-cultural contexts
	3 - Barriers identified and in consistency with the OOSC profiles defined in the respective study 2 - Barriers identified completely (with regard to rural/urban areas, gender aspects, cultural and socio-economic factors) 1 - Barriers not completely identified (no regard to region, gender and socio-economic factors) 0 - Barriers were not identified at all	2	2	OOSCI studies Detailed perceptions from key informants Expert assessments regarding empirical foundation, relevance and applicability of barriers in respective socio-cultural contexts
	3 - Improvements comprehensively operationalised and resulting in better understanding of the OOSC problem 2 - Improvements mentioned and operationalised in programmes and projects 1 - Improvements mentioned in terms of planning and policy development 0 - No improvements mentioned at all	3	6	OOSCI studies Narrative evidence (incl. practical examples) from interviews and document analysis
	3 - Direct reference in governmental/partner papers and implementation of programmes/projects based on OOSCI findings and recommendations 2 - Direct reference of OOSCI in policy development and planning in governmental/partner documents 1 - Mention of OOSC findings in governmental/partner documents, without direct reference of OOSCI 0 - No mention of findings from OOSCI studies in governmental/partner documents	2	4	Interviews with government counterparts and partners Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications

#	Evaluation Question	Indicators	Code	
2.5	Did OOSCI studies influence the inclusion of programmes and/or interventions for children that are out of school in education sector plans? Are these programmes accompanied by clear result frameworks and reasonable pathways to achieving the intended results? (Descriptive and normative)	Degree to which OOSC interventions appear in ESPs after OOSCI studies. Degree to which OOSCI studies influence OOSC interventions Degree to which OOSCI studies influence ESP interventions Degree to which new programmes/ interventions for OOSC are accompanied by clear results frameworks and reasonable pathways.	**2.5. Studies' influence on including OOSC interventions in ESPs**	
2.6	Did OOSCI studies generate recommendations that address the key barriers/issues? Were there deliberate processes to ensure country ownership of the recommendations, and were the recommendations actionable? (Descriptive and normative)	Quality of recommendations addressing key barriers Degree of country ownership Value of change as a consequence of recommendations Degree of actionability of OOSC policy recommendations	**2.6. Generation of recommendations addressing barriers**	
Programme outcome 3: International attention increased, advocacy enhanced and translated into commitments (national and international) to address the issue of out-of-school children.				
1.1	To what extent is universal access to basic education specified as a goal, outcome or result of OOSCI partner countries? (Descriptive)	Degree to which ESPs/JSRs focus on Universal Access to Education (UAE) Degree to which ESPs/JSRs focus on improved access and completion Degree to which ESPs/JSRs focus on basic education outcomes Degree to which government documents are describing UAE programmes Availability of specifications in publicly available documents Availability and quality of empirically verifiable indicators for measuring goal achievement	**1.1. UAE goal of partner country**	
1.2	Have OOSCI partner countries articulated clear and coherent strategies, input and outputs towards the outcome universal access to basic education? (Descriptive)	Clarity of strategies for universal access to basic education Coherence of strategies for universal access to basic education Availability of definitions and timelines in publicly available documents Documentation of strategy implementation and output monitoring	**1.2. Strategies, input & output towards universal access to BE**	

Scale levels and descriptors	Evaluation Theme	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources
3 - Programmes and interventions for OOSC were based on OOSCI studies and implemented, accompanied by timelines and monitoring and evaluation designs 2 - Programmes and interventions for OOSC were mentioned and implemented based on OOSCI studies without specification to their level of results based management 1 - Programmes and interventions for OOSC were mentioned in theory and are intended to be implemented based on OOSCI 0 - No mention of programmes and interventions for OOSC based on OOSCI	2	4	Education Sector Plans of target countries Interviews with government counterparts and partners
3 - Complete sets of recommendations were developed, generating ownership of the partner country as well as ensuring the actionability of it 2 - Complete sets of Recommendations were mentioned, in consistency with the barriers and profiles defined in the OOSCI studies 1 - Recommendations were mentioned, not complete (not regarding all barriers, and not in consistency with the OOSCI profiles) 0 - No recommendations developed based on OOSCI findings	2	2	OOSCI studies Government and partner publications Stakeholder consultations FGDs Qualitative expert assessments
3 - Universal access to education mentioned clearly in governmental documents (ESP/ other publicly available docs/ statements of officials) and emphasised on, with direct reference to the OOSC 2 - Universal access to education mentioned clearly in governmental documents (ESP/ other publicly available docs/ statements of officials) and emphasised on, without direct reference to the OOSC 1 - Universal access to education mentioned vaguely in any governmental documents (ESP/ other publicly available docs/ statements of officials) without direct mention of OOSC 0 - Universal access to education not mentioned in governmental documents	1	1	Education Sector Plans of target countries MoE websites, annual plans/reports and announcements Government documents Newspaper/Magazine articles NGO newsletters/annual reports
3 - Governmental strategies and interventions to ensure universal access to education reported and outlined thoroughly as well as monitored and evaluated with specific outcomes transparent in governmental documents 2 - Governmental strategies and interventions to ensure universal access to education reported and outlined thoroughly in governmental or partner documents 1 - Governmental strategies and interventions to ensure universal access to education reported vaguely about in any document at all 0 - Governmental strategies and interventions to ensure universal access to education not mentioned in any documents	1	5	Education Sector Plans Sector Wide Approach Programme (SWAP) project papers/appraisal documents (GPE/World Bank or UNICEF) Policy papers Expert review Sector plans and annual reports NGO programme descriptions Stakeholder interviews FGDs

#	Evaluation Question	Indicators	Code	
1.3	What are the different ways in which countries have engaged in OOSCI, and how much progress has been made towards achieving OOSCI objectives (Descriptive)	Degree to which environment can be regarded as "enabling" Degree of engagement Degree of achievement of goal indicators Degree of attitudinal change	**1.3. Country's engagement and progress in OOSCI**	
1.4	Does support from UNICEF and partners constitute a clear added value to government efforts in providing access to basic education? (Normative)	Ratings of core partners' contributions to OOSCI	**1.4. Added value of UNICEF's and partners' efforts**	
1.5	How has each of the OOSCI core partners (National Governments, UNICEF, UIS, GPE, UCW [Understanding Children's Work initiative]) contributed to the initiative, and what efficiencies have been realised as a result of that division of responsibilities?	Ratings of core partners' contributions to OOSCI) Efficiency of partnership of tasks	**1.5. OOSCI core partners contributions**	
1.6	Is there alignment and complementarity between government efforts, UNICEF support, and support of key partners in providing access to basic education? Are there areas of justifiable misalignment? (Normative)	Comparisons between government statements about positions and objectives Degree of alignment and complementarity of efforts as described in respective publications	**1.6. Alignment and complementarity of partners' efforts**	

Scale levels and descriptors	Evaluation Theme	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources
3 - The respective country has not only been cooperative in providing data and governmental reports on OOSC, it has also provided interviews with state officials (Ministry of Education) 2 - The respective country has been actively cooperative in providing data and governmental reports on OOSC 1 - The respective country has been approving of the study but was rather a passive observant throughout the process 0 - There is evidence that the respective country has opposed the OOSCI and stopped the data collection/processing of the OOSCI team	1	5	List of OOSCI activities undertaken by OOSCI countries (within Country Studies and other kinds of involvement) Mapping of discourse procedures and policies Country OOSCI reports and related statistical data Academic journals Perceptional assessment
3 - The governmental documents include clear statements about the added value of the OOSCI showing aspects of deficiency in terms of universal access to education that needs to be worked on as well as concrete pathways that derivate from the recommendations in the OOSCI study 2 - The governmental documents include clear statements about the added value of the OOSCI in terms of further showing aspects of deficiency in terms of universal access to education that needs to be worked on 1 - The governmental documents or the statements of the governmental officials show a vague or general appreciation of the OOSCI 0 - The governmental documents show no evidence of perceived added value or appreciation of the OOSCI	1	1	Interviews with government counterparts and partners, e.g. government officials (MOE, MOF, Min Planning), partner agencies, NGO representatives, and academics Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications
3 - The documents show a clear and distinct division of the different work areas of each of the partner organisations, and evaluate this distinction as positive in any way 2 - The documents show a clear and distinct division of the different work areas of each of the partner organisations, yet do not discuss the consequences of this division or evaluate this division as negative in any way 1 - The documents mention all the partner organisations and the vague division of work, yet no concrete areas of work 0 - There is no clear division of work that can be understood from the documents	1	3	Interviews with government counterparts and partners OOSCI and agency documents (plans and progress reports Key partner informants perceptions including those about division of responsibilities and any efficiencies derived from them Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications
3 - There is clear evidence of the cooperation between the government, UNICEF and the further partner organisations. The cooperation was evaluated as rather positive and well aligned 2 - There is clear evidence of the cooperation between the government, UNICEF and the further partner organisations. Yet the cooperation was evaluated as rather negative and misaligned 1 - There is clear evidence of the cooperation between the government, UNICEF and the further partner organisations. Yet no evaluation of this cooperation was discussed 0 - There is no clear evidence of the cooperation between the government, UNICEF and the further partner organisations	1	1	Interviews with government counterparts and partners Stakeholder feedback Perceptions by key informants in government and UNICEF and its partners Government and partner publications

#	Evaluation Question	Indicators	Code	
3.5	To what extent has advocacy around OOSCI work resulted in international commitments and actions to address the problem of out-of-school children?	Degree to which advocacy work of OOSCI contributed to the development of international commitments and actions	**3.5. Successes of advocacy work**	
3.2	Did OOSCI result in greater integration and/or collaboration between the different sectors and line ministries to address issues of out-of-school children? (Descriptive)	Degree of integration and/or collaboration between the different sectors and line ministries Degree of improvement of collaboration with other Ministries regarding OOSCI studies/activities Key education sector informant perceptions of interaction/ cooperation	**3.2. Integration & collaboration between sector & ministries**	
3.3	To what extent has OOSCI strengthened capacities and processes of government counterparts to generate reports, interpret and use the data for programming and decision-making? (Normative)	Degree of developed capacities of national counterparts and partners Degree to which OOSCI contributed to strengthening capacities	**3.3. OOSCI contribution to strengthening government**	
3.4	To what extent has there been a demand for OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF education staff to participate in and influence policy dialogue? (Normative)	Degree to which UNICEF education staff participated in policy dialogue with government officials (technocrats) Degree to which UNICEF education staff participated in high level policy dialogue with decision-makers and/or politicians	**3.4. Demand for OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF team**	

The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)

Scale levels and descriptors	Evaluation Theme	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources
This EQ will be answered through an analysis of official statistics (means of verification).	3	6	Official statistics about earmarked commitments and disbursements Interviews with government counterparts and partners Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications
3 - Much greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries is mentioned clearly as a consequence of or based on the OOSCI study 2 - Slightly greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries is mentioned vaguely as a consequence of or based on the OOSCI study 1 - Greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries has resulted, not certainly as a consequence of or based on the OOSCI study 0 - No mention of greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries is mentioned	3	6	Interviews with government counterparts and partners Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications
3 - Mention or evidence of very much strengthened capacities and processes of generating reports, interpret the data and using for programming and decision-making, with direct reference of OOSCI 2 - Mention or evidence of slightly strengthened capacities and processes of generating reports, interpret the data and using for programming and decision-making, with direct reference of OOSCI 1 - Mention or evidence of strengthened capacities and processes of generating reports, interpret the data and using for programming and decision-making, but with no direct reference of OOSCI 0 - No mention or evidence of strengthened capacities and processes of generating reports, interpret the data and using for programming and decision-making	3	6	Feedback from national counterparts and partners Experts assessment of capacities of national counterparts and partners
3 - OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF team through policy talks with governmental officials after the publication of OOSCI studies 2 - OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF team through feedback talks with governmental officials after the publication of OOSCI studies 1 - OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF team through interviews with governmental officials during data collection stage 0 - No mention or evidence of OOSCI to have strengthened UNICEF team capacities in this regard	3	6	Feedback from UNICEF staff Feedback from national counterparts and partners Experts assessment of capacities of national counterparts and partners

#	Evaluation Question	Indicators	Code	
2.7	Did OOSCI studies and activities make any identifiable contribution to the reduction in the number of out-of-school children in partner countries? (Normative)	OOSCI contribution to international commitments and actions	**2.7. Contribution of OOSCI studies to reduction of OOSC**	
		Number/share of OOSC		
		Number of publications of OOSCI studies in country		
		Correlation between partners' contributions and value added by OOSCI		
		Correlation between partners' contributions outcomes/objectives		
		Correlation between efficiency of division of tasks and outcomes		
		Correlation between coordination/ complementarity of collaboration and outcomes and objectives		
		Value of unintended consequences		
Change Management				
2.2	Have there been changes in policies, financial planning, or programming practices as a result of OOSCI, and what are the conditions that made those changes possible in some contexts and not others? (Descriptive)	Influence of contextual conditions on data collection	**2.2. Changes in policies, financial planning or programming**	
		Influence on linking OOSC profiles to participation in basic education		
		Degree to which OOSCI studies are reflected in ESPs and policies, and in actions and practices at country level		
2.3	What is the significance of those effects in terms of coverage and/ or reach, both in development and humanitarian contexts? (Normative)	Value of change in terms of coverage and/or reach	**2.3. Significance of effects**	

Scale levels and descriptors	Evaluation Theme	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources
3 - There is evidence of a significant reduction in the number of OOSC in the respective country and with reference to OOSCI studies 2 - There is evidence of a slight reduction in the number of OOSC in the respective country and with reference to OOSCI studies 1 - There is evidence of a reduction in the number of OOSC in the respective country, yet with no mention to OOSCI studies 0 - No mention of a reduction in the number of OOSC in the respective country	2	7	
3 - There is change in policies, in financial planning, and programming practices evident, with direct reference to the OOSCI 2 - There is change in policies, in financial planning or programming practices evident, with direct reference to the OOSCI 1 - There is change in policies, financial planning or programming practices evident, yet with no direct reference to the OOSCI 0 - No change in policies, financial planning or programming practices is evident in any of the documents	2	2	Mapping of discourse procedures and policies Country OOSCI reports Stakeholder feedback Perceptional assessment International statistical data
Answers will be based on stakeholder interviews, feedback, and FGDs.	2	4	Stakeholder feedback Interviews FGDs

APPENDIX 4
EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS DESCRIPTORS

Question	Code (Sub-Indicator)	
Chapter 1: Progress towards Universal Basic Education (UBE)		
1.1 To what extent is universal access to basic education (UBE) specified as a goal, outcome or result of OOSCI partner countries?	**UBE goal of partner country**	
1.2 OOSCI partner countries articulate clear and coherent strategies, input and outputs towards the outcome universal access to basic education?	**1.2. Strategies, input & output towards universal access to UBE**	
1.3 What are the different ways in which countries have engaged in OOSCI, and how much progress has been made towards achieving OOSCI objectives	**1.3. Country's engagement and progress in OOSCI**	
Chapter 2: OOSCI Partnerships		
1.4 Does support from UNICEF and partners constitute a clear added value to government efforts in providing access to basic education?	**1.4. Added value of UNICEF's and partners' efforts**	
How has each of the OOSCI core partners (governments, UNICEF, UIS, GPE) contributed to the initiative? What efficiencies were realised as a result of that division of responsibilities?	**1.5. OOSCI partner contributions**	
1.6 Is there alignment and complementarity between government efforts, UNICEF support, and support of key partners in providing access to basic education?	**1.6. Alignment and complementarity of partners' efforts**	

	Scale levels and descriptors			
	3	**2**	**1**	**0**
	*Clear reference to UBE in government documents and official statements of officials; emphasis and direct reference to **out-of-school children***	*Clear reference to UBE in government documents and official statements; no direct reference to **out-of-school children***	*UBE vaguely mentioned in government documents and official statements; no mention of **out-of-school children***	*UBE not mentioned in government documents*
	Government documents indicate clear strategies and interventions to achieve UBE; monitoring indicators indicated; outcomes clearly specified	*Governmental documents indicate clear strategies and interventions to achieve UBE; no monitoring*	*Government documents mention strategies and interventions to achieve UBE on vaguely*	*Completely no mention of UBE in government documents*
	*Country cooperative in providing data and government reports on **out-of-school children**; provided interviews with government officials*	*Country actively cooperative in providing data and governmental reports on **out-of-school children**;*	*Country approved OOSCI study, but passive observant of the process*	*No evidence of OOSCI activities, or approval by government*
	Government documents have clear statements on added value of the OOSCI; identify deficiencies in UBE strategies; indicate concrete pathways to implement recommendations from OOSCI studies	*Governmental documents have clear statements on added value of the OOSCI; identify deficiencies in UBE strategies*	*Government documents and official statements on OOSCI initiative vague or non-committal*	*No mention of OOSCI in government documents and official statements*
	Documents mention of all partner organizations and a clear distinction of division of work; mention of results and clear contribution of OOSCI	*Documents mention of all partner organizations and a clear distinction of division of work; no mention of results or contribution*	*Documents mention all partner organisations; vague division of work or contribution*	*No mention of partner organizations or their contribution*
	Clear evidence of cooperation between government, UNICEF partners; coordination evaluated positively; activities well aligned	*Clear evidence of cooperation between government, UNICEF partners; coordination evaluated negatively; activities misaligned*	*Clear evidence of cooperation between government, UNICEF partners; no evaluation of coordination or alignment*	*No evidence of cooperation between government, UNICEF partners*

Question	Code (Sub-Indicator)	
Evidence of utility of OOSCI		
2.1a How effective were OOSCI studies in generating accurate and comprehensive profiles of children that are out of school?	**2.1.a Generation of OOSCI profiles**	
2.1b How effective were OOSCI studies in identifying appropriate and relevant barriers (e.g. coverage of categories in the 2015 OOSCI Operation Manual)	**2.1.b Identification of barriers**	
2.2 Have there been changes in policies, financial planning, or programming practices as a result of OOSCI? What conditions made those changes possible in some contexts and not others?	**2.2. Changes in policies, financial planning or programming**	
2.3 What is the significance of those effects in terms of coverage and/or reach, both in development and humanitarian contexts?*	**2.3. Significance of effects**	
2.4 To what extent did national government counterparts and partners use the data and evidence generated by OOSCI studies to develop new policies? What is the implementation status of those policies	**2.4. Use of data and evidence of OOSCI studies**	
2.5 Did OOSCI studies influence the inclusion of programmes and/or interventions for children that are out of school in education sector plans? Are these programmes accompanied by clear result frameworks and reasonable pathways to achieving the intended results?	**2.5. Studies' influence on including OOSC interventions in ESPs**	
2.6 Did OOSCI studies generate recommendations that address key barriers/issues? Were there deliberate processes to ensure country ownership of recommendations?	**2.6. Generation of recommendations addressing barriers**	
2.7 Did OOSCI studies and activities make any identifiable contribution to the reduction in the number of out-of-school children in partner countries?	**2.7. Contribution of OOSCI studies to reduction of OOSC**	

* Answers will be based on stakeholder interviews, feedback, and FGDs.

	Scale levels and descriptors			
	3	**2**	**1**	**0**
	Profiles comprehensively outlined, indicators and means for verification outlined	*Profiles complete, but not operationalised*	*Profile mentioned, but incomplete*	*Profiles not mentioned at all*
	Barriers identified consistently with OOSC profiles defined in the respective study	*Complete identification of barriers; disaggregation by gender, locality; cultural and socio-economic factors considered*	*Barriers identified not complete (i.e., no disaggregation by gender, locality; cultural and socio-economic factors not considered*	*Barriers were not identified at all*
	Change in policies, planning, or programming practices; direct reference to influence of OOSCI (not contribution)	*Change in policies, planning or programming practices evident, with direct reference to OOSCI*	*Changes in policies, planning or programming practices evident, no direct reference to OOSCI*	*No mentioned of changes in policies, planning or programming practices*
	Direct reference in governmental/partner papers and implementation of programmes/projects based on OOSCI findings and recommendations	*Direct reference of OOSCI in policy development and planning in governmental/partner documents*	*Mention of OOSC findings in governmental/partner documents, without direct reference of OOSCI*	*No mention of findings from OOSCI studies in governmental/partner documents*
	Programmes and interventions for OOSC were based on OOSCI studies and implemented, accompanied by timelines and monitoring and evaluation designs	*Programmes and interventions for OOSC were mentioned and implemented based on OOSCI studies without specification to their level of results based management*	*Programmes and interventions for OOSC were mentioned in theory and are intended to be implemented based on OOSCI*	*No mention of programmes and interventions for OOSC based on OOSCI*
	Recommendations were developed, generating ownership of the partner country as well as ensuring the actionability of it	*Recommendations were mentioned, in consistency with the barriers and profiles defined in the OOSCI studies*	*Recommendations were mentioned, not complete (not regarding all barriers, and not in consistency with the OOSCI profiles)*	*No recommendations developed based on OOSCI findings*
	Evidence of a significant reduction in the number of OOSC: contribution of OOSCI studies acknowledged	*Some evidence of reduction in the number of OOSC; vague reference of OOSCI*	*Some evidence of a reduction in the number of OOSC, no mention OOSCI*	*No mention of a reduction in the number of OOSC*

Question	Code (Sub-Indicator)	
Sustainability		
3.1 Did OOSCI result in improvements in administrative data collection systems (e.g., to use techniques such as GIS mapping, to collect sub-national data, and to collect student level data)?	**3.1. Improvements in administrative data collection systems**	
3.2 Did OOSCI result in greater integration and/or collaboration between the different sectors and line ministries to address issues of out-of-school children?	**3.2. Integration & collaboration between sector & ministries**	
3.3 To what extent has OOSCI strengthened capacities and processes of government counterparts to generate reports, interpret and use the data for programming and decision-making?	**3.3. OOSCI contribution to strengthening government**	
3.4 To what extent has there been a demand for OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF education staff to participate in and influence policy dialogue?	**3.4. Demand for OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF team**	
3.5 To what extent has advocacy around OOSCI work resulted in international commitments and actions to address the problem of out of school children?*	**3.5. Successes of advocacy work**	

* This EQ will be answered through an analysis of official statistics (means of verification).

	Scale levels and descriptors			
	3	2	1	0
	Improvements comprehensively operationalised and resulting in better understanding of the OOSC problem	Improvements mentioned and operationalised in programmes and projects	Improvements mentioned in terms of planning and policy development	No improvements mentioned at all
	Much greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries is mentioned clearly based on OOSCI, or the OOSCI study	Slightly greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries is mentioned vaguely based on OOSCI, or the OOSCI study	Greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries has resulted, but not associated with OOSCI	No mention of greater integration/collaboration between the different government sectors and line ministries is mentioned
	Abundance of evidence of strengthened capacities and processes, with direct reference of OOSCI	Some evidence of strengthened capacities and processes, with direct reference of OOSCI	Evidence of strengthened capacities and processes, but no reference to OOSCI	No evidence of strengthened capacities and processes
	OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF team through policy talks with governmental officials after the publication of OOSCI studies	Capacities of UNICEF team strengthened through OOSCI activities	Capacities of UNICEF team strengthened through other means, not OOSCI	No mention or evidence of OOSCI to have strengthened UNICEF team capacities in this regard

APPENDIX 5
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OOSCI STUDIES, BY THEME AND SUB-CATEGORY

1. Inclusiveness in education	WCAR	ESAR	CEE/CIS	ROSA	MENA	EAPR	LACR	Total
1.1. Teachers training and recruitment to include minorities	3	2	4	3	3	3	2	**20**
1.2. Cultural/gender sensitive text-books; special needs accommodations	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	**7**
1.3. Building capacity on inclusion for education sector personnel	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	**8**
1.4. Enrolment campaigns; campaigns against exclusion, stereotyping	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	**5**
1.5. Multi-sectoral governmental committees (NGOs, Ministries etc.)	3	1	2	1	1	2	2	**12**
1.6. Community engagement; organizing school life around community	4	2	2	3	4	1	3	**19**
1.7. Targeted funding for out-of-school children	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	**13**
Total	**14**	**7**	**13**	**12**	**14**	**13**	**11**	**84**

2. Private sector engagement	WCAR	ESAR	CEE/CIS	ROSA	MENA	EAPR	LACR	Total
2.1. Outreach programmes to groups affected by exclusion and conflict	2	0	1	2	3	1	2	**11**
2.2. NGO involvement in vocational training	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
2.3. Peer mentoring: in-school children and out-of-school children	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
2.4. NGO-led campaigns to change perception on value of education	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	**5**
Total	**5**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**19**

3. Financial/material subsidies for households	WCAR	ESAR	CEE/CIS	ROSA	MENA	EAPR	LACR	Total
3.1. Mitigate costs through demand-side subsidies (e.g., scholarships)	1	1	3	4	2	0	1	**12**
3.2. Mitigating cost through supply-side subsidies (e.g., school fees abolition)	2	1	3	2	1	3	0	**12**
3.3. Analyze the expenditures that try to benefit OOSC and assess them	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
3.4. Analyze and tackle unofficial school costs due to corruption	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
3.5. Communicate subsidy-programs effectively	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	**3**
3.6. Aid from private schools	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	**3**	**2**	**7**	**9**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**29**

4. Improvement of data systems and processes	WCAR	ESAR	CEE/CIS	ROSA	MENA	EAPR	LACR	Total
4.1. Capacity building for MoE personnel, advocacy work	2	1	1	0	3	2	2	11
4.2. More data disaggregation to identify most-vulnerable children	4	3	3	2	3	1	3	19
4.3. Conduct local studies and using systematic qualitative research	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
4.4. Building open-source data platforms/opening for education data	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	5
4.5. Strengthen EMIS and M&E of educational programs	2	2	4	2	4	2	4	20
Total	9	8	8	5	13	5	10	58

5. Improvement of infrastructure and school environment	WCAR	ESAR	CEE/CIS	ROSA	MENA	EAPR	LACR	Total
5.1. Improve school buildings, equipment and facilities, etc.	2	3	0	2	3	2	0	12
5.2. Investment in quality pre-primary and primary education	0	2	3	2	2	2	2	13
5.3. Increase extra-curricular activities to motivate student attendance	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
5.4. Provide schools with social workers	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
5.5. Combatting gender-based violence; safety to and from school	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	3	6	4	4	7	4	3	31

6. Shaping of policy and strategies	WCAR	ESAR	CEE/CIS	ROSA	MENA	EAPR	LACR	Total
6.1. Gender equality and empowerment of girls in education settings	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	7
6.2. Enhance prestige of the teaching profession	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
6.3. High-intensity short-term school-readiness programs	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
6.4. Introduce non-formal education programs for children who work	0	0	1	3	1	1	1	7
6.5. International community to address gender/disability sensitive school policy	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	6
6.6. Enact school-based child protection and children's rights policies	3	0	1	2	3	0	0	9
6.7. Hold communities accountable for child rights offenses	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
6.8. Policy accommodations for pregnancy; penalties for excluding disabled persons	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Total	10	1	9	9	4	4	3	40
Full total	44	26	42	41	44	32	32	261

APPENDIX 6
OOSCI PARTNER COUNTRIES

(in two sections in alphabetical order, beginning with the countries selected for the document review)

Region	OOSCI Partner countries	Status of OOSCI-Study	Data source
ROSA	Bangladesh	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
LAC	Belize	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
LAC	Bolivia	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
WCA	Burkina Faso	Published	Document Review, Online Survey, Field Visit
EAPR	Cambodia	Completed	Document Review, Online Survey
WCA	Cameroon	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
LAC	Costa Rica	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
WCA	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
LAC	El Salvador	No study	Document Review, Online Survey
ESA	Eritrea	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
ESA	Ethiopia	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
WCA	Gambia	Under preparation	Document Review
WCA	Ghana	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
LAC	Honduras	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
EAPR	Indonesia	Completed	Document Review, Online Survey, Field visit
MENA	Iraq	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
ESA	Kenya	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
CEE/CIS	Kyrgyzstan	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
WCA	Liberia	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
ROSA	Maldives	No study	Document Review
WCA	Mauritania	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
MENA	Morocco	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
EAPR	Myanmar (Burma)	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
ESA	Namibia	Completed	Document Review, Online Survey
ROSA	Nepal	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey, Field visit
WCA	Nigeria	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
ROSA	Pakistan	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
MENA	Palestine	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
LAC	Panama		Document Review
EAPR	Papua New Guinea	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
EAPR	Philippines	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
CEE/CIS	Romania	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
WCA	Senegal	Completed	Document Review
ROSA	Sri Lanka	Published	Document Review
MENA	Sudan	Published	Document Review, Online Survey, Field Visit
LAC	Suriname	Under preparation	Document Review, Online Survey
MENA	Tunisia	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
CEE/CIS	Turkey	Published	Document Review, Online Survey
EAPR	Vietnam	Published and under revision	Document Review, Online Survey
MENA	Yemen	Published	Document Review
ESA	Zambia	Published	Document Review, Online Survey

Region	OOSCI Partner countries	Status of OOSCI-Study	Data source
ROSA	**Afghanistan**	No study	Online Survey
MENA	**Algeria**	Published	Online Survey
LAC	**Barbados**	No study	Online Survey
WCA	**Benin**	Completed	Online Survey
LAC	**Brazil**	Published	Online Survey
ESA	**Burundi**	No study	
WCA	**Cape Verde**	No study	
WCA	**Central African Republic**	No study	
WCA	**Chad**	Published	Online Survey
LAC	**Colombia**	Published	Online Survey
ESA	**Comoros**	No study	
WCA	**Cote d'Ivoire**	Completed	Online Survey
MENA	**Djibouti**	Under preparation	
LAC	**Dominica**	No study	Online Survey
LAC	**Dominican Republic**	Approved by government, but not yet published	Online Survey, Field visit
MENA	**Egypt**	Published	Online Survey
WCA	**Equatorial Guinea**	No study	Online Survey
LAC	**Guatemala**	No study	
WCA	**Guinea**	Under preparation	
WCA	**Guinea-Bissau**	Under preparation	Online Survey
LAC	**Guyana**	Under preparation	Online Survey
LAC	**Haiti**	Conducted but not yet approved by the government	Online Survey
ROSA	**India**	Published	Online Survey
MENA	**Jordan**	Published	
EAPR	**Laos**	Under preparation	Online Survey
MENA	**Lebanon**	Under preparation	Online Survey
EAPR	**Malaysia**	Under preparation	Online Survey
WCA	**Mali**	Completed	
EAPR	**Marshall Islands**	No study	Online Survey
LAC	**Mexico**	Completed, under revision	Online Survey
ESA	**Mozambique**	Completed	
LAC	**Nicaragua**	Completed	Online Survey
WCA	**Niger**	Under preparation	Online Survey
LAC	**Paraguay**	Completed	
WCA	**Republic of the Congo**	No study	Online Survey
ESA	**Rwanda**	No study	
WCA	**Sao Tome and Principe**	Under preparation	Online Survey
WCA	**Sierra Leone**	Published	Online Survey
ESA	**South Sudan**	Under preparation	Online Survey
ESA	**Swaziland**	Under preparation	
CEE/CIS	**Tajikistan**	Published	Online Survey
ESA	**Tanzania**	Under preparation	Online Survey
EAPR	**Thailand**	Under preparation	Online Survey
EAPR	**Timor-Leste**	Completed	Online Survey
WCA	**Togo**		Online Survey
CEE/CIS	**Ukraine**	Published	
EAPR	**Vanuatu**	Under preparation	Online Survey
ESA	**Zimbabwe**	No study, but national assessment of out-of-school children conducted in 2015	Online Survey, Field visit

Sampling steps

1   Taking the countries selected by UNICEF for field visits.*

2   Separating the other countries according to OOSCI study published or not.

3   Drawing a random sample of 18 countries without OOSCI study published. Resulting together with 3 field visit countries without OOSCI study in a sample of 21.

4   Drawing a random sample of 16 countries with OOSCI study published. Resulting together with 5 field visit countries with OOSCI study in a sample of 21.

    Thus, having a sample of 42 countries.

5   Checking for appropriate regional representativeness. This means at least 50 percent of OOSCI countries of a particular region are covered in the sample.

6   Discovering over-representativeness of Latin America and the Caribbean and South Asia and under-representativeness of East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa and Middle East and Northern Africa.

7   Withdrawing the four countries with the highest random score in the sample from Latin America and the Caribbean and the country with the highest random score from South Asia.

8   Replacing them with the country of East Asia and the Pacific with the next lowest random score, with the two countries of Eastern and Southern Africa with the next lowest random score and with the two countries of Middle East and North Africa with next lowest random score.

9   Checking whether equal distribution of countries with and without OOSCI study published is maintained.

    This is the case.

10 Checking for appropriate representativeness according to four levels of FSI classification. This means at least 40 percent of OOSCI countries of a particular level are covered in the sample.

11 Discovering slight under-representativeness of highest level (level 1).

12 Rejecting earlier withdrawal of the country with the best FSI score and replace withdrawal with the country with the next lower random score and a worse FSI level from the same region.

    Checking for appropriate representativeness according to three levels of HDI classification. This means at least 50 percent of OOSCI countries of a particular level are covered in

13 the sample.

    This is the case when aggregating 7 small Caribbean islands with on average higher HDI scores to avoid overrepresentation of countries with low population count. (Otherwise 37.5 percent)

* According to the ToR and the Inception Report.

APPENDIX 7
PERSONS INTERVIEWED

	Government	UNICEF + Partners	NGO	DPs	Teachers	Students	Parents	Total
Global/Regional	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	**16**
Burkina Faso	16	3	4	4	1	15		**43**
Dom. Republic	20	2	8	2	3	35	20	**90**
Indonesia	5	1	3	8	1	10		**28**
Nepal	10	5	3	5	1	7	4	**35**
Romania	7	2	10	1	3	10	4	**37**
Sudan	20	6	20	9	2	15	5	**77**
Zimbabwe	2	5	3	2	3	10	4	**29**
Total	**80**	**40**	**51**	**31**	**14**	**102**	**37**	**355**

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL	
Organization	**Name**
UNICEF	• Baudot, C, Regional Education Adviser, ESARO • Fortin, A, OOSCI Focal Point, ESARO • Craissati, D, Regional Education Adviser, MENA • Benavides, F, Former Regional Education Adviser, LACRO • Bell, S, OOSCI Focal Point at CEE/CIS (formerly UIS) • Reuge, N, Regional Education Adviser, WCAR • Jean Luc Yameogo, Focal Point for Out-of-School Data, WCAR • Sakar, U, Regional Education Advisor, ROSA • Coursac, Y, OOSCI Focal Point, EAPRO • Bourne, J, Global Chief of Education, UNICEF New York • Waltham, M, Senior Adviser and OOSCI Focal Point, New York • Wridt, P, Evaluation Specialist, New York • Bonnet, G, Education Specialist, New York
GPE	• Prouty, R, former Secretary of GPE • Bilagher, M, GPE, Team Lead: Monitoring and Evaluation, Washington, DC,
UNESCO	• Huebler, F, Statistician, UIS

INDONESIA	
Government ministries and projects	• Mr. Subandi, Deputy Minister for Human Resource Development and Culture, National Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) • Sofiah, S, Head of the Data and Statistic Utilization and Services Centre (PDSPK); • Sidar, I, Planning Office, Bone Regency in South Sulawesi Province • Suban, B, Planning Office, Bone Regency in South Sulawesi Province • Ratna, I, Planning Office, Bone Regency in South Sulawesi Province • Simanjuntak, E, Managing Director, Willi Toisuta and Associates
NGOs	• Gupta, P, Country Director, Helen Keller International • Nurdyana, N, Program Officer, Helen Keller International • Elkenans O, W, Junior Program Officer, Helen Keller International
Researcher/ Consultants	• Nomi, S, Consultant (OOSCI Qualitative Researcher) • Cahyono, E, Consultant (OOSCI Qualitative Researcher)
UNICEF	• Suhaeni Kudus, OOSCI Focal Point, UNICEF Indonesia Country Office

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	
Organization	**Name**
Various Organizations	• Celucci, A, Technical Director, Consejo Nacional de Discapacidad • España, S, Head of planning and institutional relations, Educacion para todos Kit, I, Education Information Specialist, Educacion para todos • Peña, D, Education specialist, Entrena • Reyes, Y, Alerta Joven Project Programs Specialist, Entrena • Lo Conte, L, Program Official, EU • Waitz, W, Representative • Ferreras, J, UNFPA, official of the program Gender and Adoloscence • Taveras, M, World Vision, Coordinator of Education, World Vision • Veras, C, Directora Escuale de Educación, Universidad Iberoamericana • Doñe, S, National consultant, Universidad Iberoamericana
Government ministries and projects	• Ávila, C, Extended School Day Directorate (Dirección de Jornada Escolar Extendida), MINERD • Beato, E, National Institute for Comprehensive Early Childhoodhood Care (Instituto Nacional de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia (INAIPI)) • Castillo, S, Directorate General for Early Childhood Education (Dirección General de Educación Inicial), MINERD • Cruz, R, Dominican Institute for Evaluation and Research of Education Quality (Instituto Dominicano de Evaluación e Investigación de la Calidad Educativa), MINERD • De los Santos, S, Viceminister (Viceministro), Ministry of Higher Education • Estrella, A, Director of Statistics, MINERD • Gómez, O, Directorate General for Primary Education (Dirección General de Educación Primaria), MINERD • Gutierrez, J, Student Welfare Institute of the MINERD • Lara, D, National Planning Office (Oficina Nacional de Planificación), MINERD • Medina, E, Social Policy Department (Gabinete de Políticas Sociales) • Mendozo, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (Ministerio de Economía Planificación y Desarrollo) • Mercedes, A, Deputy Technical Director (Subdirector técnico), DIGEPEP • Mercedes, H, Director of Information, Analysis and Forecasting Studies (Director de Información, Análisis y Estudios Prospectivos), MINERD • Polanco, G, General Directorate of Secondary Education (Dirección General de Educación Secundaria), MINERD • Pumarol, L, Director at DIGEPEP • Rivas, C, Directorate General of Curriculum (Dirección General de Currículo), MINERD • Sanchez, V, Viceminister (Viceministro), MINERD • Scheker Mendoza, A, Directorate of Evaluation for Quality Education (Dirección de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación), MINERD • Soto, G, Directorate for Decentralization (Dirección de Descentralización), MINERD • Valera, S, National Office for Educational Planning and Development (Oficina Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo Educativo), MINERD
UNICEF	• Elcarte, R, UNICEF, Representative • Núñez, L, UNICEF, Focal Point

ROMANIA	
Organization	**Name**
Government ministries and projects	• Cârstea, I, Public Policy Directorate • Dascalu, V, Principal of School No. 64 Ferdinand the 1st Bucharest • Irimia, T, Director, Pre-university Education Directorate • Petrescu, P Constanta County School Inspectorate • Popescu, V, Director, Strategic Management and Public Policy Directorate • Tunegaru, C, Teacher at Petricioaia School • Duminica, G, Executive Director, Impreuna (Community Development Association)
NGOs	• Fartusnic, C, General Director, Institute for Educational Sciences • Miulescu, M, Researcher, Institute for Educational Sciences • Anghel, M, Data Officer, National Institute for Statistics • Balteanu, L, Director, National Institute for Statistics • Ionescu, M, Project Manager, PACT, Foundation for Community Development • Vrasmas, E, Education Specialist, RENINCO • Dumitru, A, Education Specialist, Roma Education Fund • Vlasceanu, D, Founder, Stela and Dana Community Center • Tarnovschi, D, Researcher, Center for Public Innovation • Ungureanu, A, President, Association for Developemnt and Social Inclusion • Iosifescu, S, Chair, ARACIP
SUDAN	
Government ministries and projects	• Abdelhameed, N E, MoE, M&E • Alengoumi, A, MoE • Ali, A A MoE, M&E • Ali, O E, MoE • Ebrahim, F, MoE • Elsadig, A, MoE, State Minister • Eltayeb, H, MoE , Adult Education • Elzen, A, MoE , Adult Education • Elzien, I S, MoE, M&E • Hamad, M, National Council • Hlil, Y A, MoE • Hussen, M, MoE , Adult Education • Kiess Ali, A A, MoE , Adult Education • Mohamed Ahmed, F H, MoE , Adult Education • Mohamed, A, National Council for Literacy • Mohamed, M S, National Council • Rajab, M O, National Council for Literacy • Rigal, S, ECHO • Salim, M, MoE, Director of Planning and Policies • Sharef, Z M, MoE, Preschool Education
NGOs	• Mohamed, S. NIDAA • Gamil, L B. Pamoja REFLECT Net • Ismail, O A. PBA • Ibrahim, E. PLAN International Sudan • Musa, S A. SAHARI OFD

SUDAN continued	
Organization	**Name**
NGOs	• Adam, W. Save the Children • Ensaf Abdalla, SCEFA • Nagi Elshafe, SCEFA • Taif Taha Gasim, SCEFA • Mubarak Yahia Abbas, SCEFA • Babiker, A. SEF • Manal Hamid, SHOD • Saad, H, SOHA • Ahmed, E M, SOL • Hamad, F H, SOL • Piat, E, Triangle GH • Nourein, A, UMCOR • Elsiddig, A. UPO • Saeed, B, UPO • Shan, A. WCC • Alhassan, A.M. ZOA
UNICEF	• Chamdimba, P C, Education Specialist, • Eldood, A, Education Specialist • Naseer, H, Program Officer Education • Ndamobissi, R, Chief Planning, M&E • Salih, T, Focal Point: Youth, Emergency and Innovation • Yassin, M, Education Based Planning Pillar
NEPAL	
Government ministries and projects	Aryal, B, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education Kadel, D Curriculum Development Centre Khanal, S, Ministry of Education Krishna Shrestha, N, Ministry of Education Kumar Devkota, D, Ministry of Education Nath Paudel,B, Non-Formal Education Raj Paudel, K, Ministry of Education Regmi, D, Ministry of Education Regmi, M, Ministry of Education Sharma, D, Ministry of Education
NGOs	• Shrestha, Y, Director, Sammunat, Nepal • Kishore, Yadav, V. Representative, Aasaman, Nepal • Sharma, L, Secretary, Teacher Association of Nepal
UNICEF	• Acharya, P, Acting Chief, UNICEF Education Section • Alok Rauniyar, UNICEF Disabilities Section • Gurung, P, OOSCI Focal Point, UNICEF Education Section • Hozumi, T, UNICEF Country Representative • Khan, R, UNICEF Deputy Country Representative

The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)

ZIMBABWE	
Organization	**Name**
FAWE	• Lydia Madyirapanze, National Coordinator
Government ministries and projects	• Edson K. Mutuwira, Director NFE, MoPSE • Mollen Magorokosho, D/Director NFE, MoPSE
LASOF	• Erison Huruba, Director
UNICEF	• Gertrude N. Matsika, Planning Officer • Kenneth Russell, Education Specialist • Noemi Robim, Education Specialist • Simplicio Rwezuva, Education Specialist • Vikas Singh, Chief PME
UNESCO	• Moses T. Mukabeta, NPO Education
USAID	• Collen Marawanyika, OVC Specialist
WEI	• Auxillia Badza, National Education Coordinator
BURKINA FASO	
ANTBA	• Sankara, J, Executive Director (Directeur exécutif)/ANTBA • Seogo, O, Head of Department for Alphabetisation and Non-Formal Education (Chef de service de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education Non Formelle) /ANTBA
AU-CIEFFA	• Bissoonauth, R, Coordinator (Coordinateur) AU-CIEFFA
FDC	• Ilboudo, O, Representative (Représentant SSA/P) de FDC à Kongoussi
Government ministries and projects	• Ango, J, Director (Directeur) /DLVE/MFSNF • Dabire L, Primary school teacher (Enseignant à l'école primaire) « KWAME N'KRUMAH » • Djieni, H, Representative (Représentant) DPEFG/MENA • Kiema, M, Representative of the director General (Représentant du Directeur Général) DGESS/MENA • Nikiema, M, Representative (Représentant) /DGEFTP/MENA • Ouedraogo, F, DGENF/DAENF/MENA • Ouedraogo, V, OOSC Focal Point (Point focal OOSC), DCPP/DGESS/MENA • Pilga L, Director General for Youth (Directeur Général de la Jeunesse) /DGJEP/MJFPE • Sere, A, Head of Statistics Department (Chef de service statistique) / DGES/MENA • Sidibe, A, Coordinator (Coordinateur)/PREFA • Some, E T, Office for Intervention in Open Environements (Agent du Service Intervention en milieu ouvert) /DLVE/MFSNF • Tindano, P Y, Officer (Agent) /DESEC/SI/MENA • Toula, S, Head of Department (Chef de service) SPEV/DLVE/MFSNF • Yogo, B, Secretary General (Secrétaire Général) MJFPE • Zombre, A, Head of Department for Monitoring and Evaluation (Chef de service Etude-Suivi) / DLVE/MFSNF • Zongnaba, G L, SSA/P/DGREIP/MENA
UNICEF	• Guirlene, F C, Head for Childhood Protection (Chef Protection de l'Enfance) / UNICEF • Kafando, G, Education Program officer/UNICEF • Kinoshita, R, Deputy Representative/UNICEF

APPENDIX 8
OOSCI REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

I. East Asia and the Pacific

UN publications:

Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie [National Institute of Statistics and Demography] (2015) *Analyse thématique approfondie des données d'enquêtes. Inégalités d'accès l'éducation des enfants et leurs déterminants au Burkina Faso. [In-depth Thematic Analysis of Survey Data. Inequalities in Access to Education for Children and their Determinants in Burkina Faso].* Ougadougou: UNICEF/INSD.

Memoire, Aide (2015) Joint Government-Development Partners. Cambodia Education Sector Review. Phnom Penh: UNICEF/UNESCO.

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UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Out-of-school Children in Viet Nam: A Country Study.* Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Report on Out-of-school Children in Dong Thap Province.* Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Report on Out-of-school Children in Ho Chi Minh City.* Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Report on Out-of-school Children in Kon Tum Province.* Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Report on Out-of-school Children in Kon Tum Province.* Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Report on Out-of-school Children in* An Giang Province. Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *All Children in School by 2015. Global initiative on out-of-school Children. Report on Out-of-school Children in Dien Bien Province.* Hanoi: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2013) *Annual Report 2013 - Indonesia.* Jakarta: UNICEF.

Governmental documents:

Department of Education Papua New Guinea (2004) *Achieving Universal Education for a Better Future. Universal Basic Education Plan 2005 - 2014.* Port Moresby: Department of Education Papua New Guinea.

Department of Education Papua New Guinea (2009) *Achieving Universal Education for a Better Future. Universal Basic Education Plan 2010 - 2019.* Port Moresby: Department of Education Papua New Guinea.

Department of Education Papua New Guinea (2014) *Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Papua New Guinea.* Port Moresby: Department of Education Papua New Guinea.

Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation (2013) [Ministry of Education and Literacy] *Programme Sectoriel Education/Formation du Burkina Faso (PSEF: 2012-2021). [Sectoral Education/Training Program of Burkina Faso (ESDP: 2012-2021].* Ougadougou: MENA.

Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation [Ministry of Education and Literacy] (2013) *Annexes du document de programme soumis au Partenariat Mondial pour l'Education pour la mise en œuvre du Programme de Développement Stratégique de l'Education de Base au Burkina Faso. [Annexes of the Program Document Submitted to the Global Partnership Education for the Implementation of the Program for the Strategic Development of Basic Education in Burkina Faso].* Ougadougou: MENA.

Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation [Ministry of Education and Literacy] (2013) *Document de programme soumis au Partenariat Mondial pour l'Éducation pour la mise en œuvre du Programme de Développement Stratégique de l'Education de Base au Burkina Faso. [Program Document Submitted to the Global Partnership for Education for the Implementation of the Strategic Development Program for Basic Education in Burkina Faso].* Ougadougou: MENA.

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APPENDIX 9

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
(frequencies indicated)

Introduction

Thank you for participating in the survey for the formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), commissioned by UNICEF (Evaluation Office)!

As outlined in the invitation email, the purpose of this survey is to inform the external evaluation of OOSCI about the progress made towards the reduction of out-of-school children and the challenges the initiative faces in the participating countries.

The questions in the survey will ask you to provide your assessment of different aspects of OOSCI in the country where you work - its enabling environment, partnerships and implementation processes, the contribution that OOSCI has made in the education sector, as well as the improvements that are required. Please be assured that your feedback is essential for the evaluation and the further development and improvement of the initiative.

Filling out the questionnaire will take about 20 to 25 minutes. Your data will be treated confidentially and according to European privacy policy law (EU-GDPR). If you have further questions, please write an email to s.silvestrini@ceval.de.

1. General data

1.1 What is your current job title?

13 | Education Chief
37 | Education Specialist
10 | Education Officer
 1 | Consultant
 7 | Other, please specify

1.2 What is your current role in OOSCI?

25 | OOSCI Focal Point
29 | Overseeing/supervising OOSCI Activities
14 | Other, please specify

1.3 Please estimate the number of months you are working in this capacity at the current duty station?

_____

1.4 Who did you consult for additional information to complete this questionnaire?

24 | no one
20 | Education Chief/Specialist
16 | Education Officer
 8 | OOSCI Focal Point
20 | Government partner or counterpart
 9 | Other, please specify

1.5 Your response to the questionnaire is on behalf of which country office?:

→ *Drop down menu with all Country Offices to select one*

2. Country environment

2.1 On a scale from 1 = "completely unsatisfactory" to 4 = "completely satisfactory" how would you rate the **enabling environment** in the country where you work, before the onset of OOSCI?

	1 = completely unsatisfactory	2	3	4 = completely satisfactory	Not applicable, no opinion
Political environment					
Awareness of the problem out-of-school children and related issues at the political level)	7	22	33	5	1
Government ownership of programmes and projects to reduce the number of out-of-school children	6	31	27	3	1
Government's willingness to engage in dialogue with partners working on issues of out-of-school children	5	22	31	9	1
Policy framework for the work on out-of-school children	12	33	20	1	2
Regulation or enforcement of policies for the work on out-of-school children	16	35	13	2	2
Other, please specify	0	2	2	0	64
Economic environment					
Economic growth	7	30	20	3	8
Pro-poor economic development policies (including budgeting)	7	37	20	1	3
Other resources to address the problem out-of-school children and related challenges, such as:	2	31	10	1	24
Societal environment					
Public awareness of the problem out-of-school children and related issues	12	31	23	1	1
Public debate on the merits of providing education that includes all children	12	36	17	1	2
Other, please specify:	2	6	1	0	59

2.2 On a scale of 1= "deteriorated substantially" to 4= "improved substantially", how would you rate the enabling environment in the country where you work, at this point in the implementation of OOSCI?

	1 = deteriorated substantially	2	3	4 = improved substantially	Not applicable, no opinion
Political environment					
Awareness of the problem out-of-school children and related issues at the political level)	3	12	39	9	5
Government ownership of programmes and projects to reduce the number of out-of-school children	4	13	38	7	6
Government's willingness to engage in dialogue with partners working on issues of out-of-school children	4	13	30	14	7
Policy framework for the work on out-of-school children					
Regulation or enforcement of policies for the work on out-of-school children	5	19	28	8	8
Other, please specify	6	28	25	1	8
Economic environment					
Economic growth	6	29	20	2	11
Pro-poor economic development policies (including budgeting)	5	28	26	0	9
Other resources to address the problem out-of-school children and related challenges, such as:	4	16	13	0	35
Societal environment					
Public awareness of the problem out-of-school children and related issues	3	21	29	8	7
Public debate on the merits of providing education that includes all children	3	27	23	6	9
Other, please specify:	1	3	5	0	59

3. OOSCI implementation and progress made

3.1 Was there an **OOSCI Country Study** conducted in the country you are working in?

57 | Yes, in YYYY (year) → *Filter: 3.2*
11 | No → *Filter: 3.9*

3.2 Which age group was identified by the OOSCI country study as constituting the highest proportion of children that are out-of-school?

14 | Pre-primary school age children
13 | Primary school age children
15 | Lower secondary school age children
12 | Upper secondary school age children

3.3 How did the study describe the population from the question above?

9 | Majority of the children never attended school, and will never enter
13 | Majority of the children never attended school, but will enter late
25 | Majority of the children attended school, but dropped out
7 | Other, please specify

3.4 On a scale of 1= "very weak" to 4= "very strong", rate the strength of each barrier which is identified below with respect to the out-of-school children population in the country?

	Very weak			Very strong	Not applicable, no opinion
Personal physical characteristics (e.g. gender, (over) age, disability)	1	12	19	21	15
Personal cognitive characteristics (e.g. delayed cognitive development, learning impairment)	9	12	16	11	20
Personal history (e.g. traumatisation due to violence, civil conflict/war etc. experience)	15	17	13	4	19
Cultural background (e.g. norms, values, rules of behaviour, religion)	5	15	22	9	17
Economic background (e.g. wealth, involvement in domestic/farm/day labour)	0	4	17	30	17
Household characteristics (e.g. family disintegration, single or two-parent family, orphan/abandoned)	4	10	21	14	19
Parents' background (e.g. migrant (workers), refugees, displaced persons)	8	13	18	9	20
Vulnerability of child (e.g. due to ethnic origin, marginalisation, migration, displacement)	8	14	18	11	17
School accessibility (e.g. distance, physical barriers)	6	11	19	17	21
Safety and security concerns (e.g. violence on way to school, bullying in school)	9	13	19	9	18
Language of instruction	11	19	17	5	16
School culture/rules of behaviour	12	24	9	4	19
Other, please specify	0	0	4	5	59

3.5 Has there been a newly developed or revised Education Sector Plan at the national or subnational level since the recommendations of the OOSCI study were made available??

30 | Yes, in YYYY (year → *Filter: 3.6*
23 | No → *Filter:* 3.10

3.6 On a scale of 1= "no influence at all" to 4= "very strong influence", indicate the extent to which the results of the OOSCI country study influenced the content of the country's Education Sector Plan?

1 = No influence at all	2	2	4 = Very strong influence	Not applicable, no opinion
2	3	17	7	39

3.7 Describe briefly in headwords/bullet points, what actions, interventions/programmes or policies, if any, were incorporated into the education sector plan as a result of findings or recommendations from OOSCI country study.

1.

2.

Add button to add further lines.

3.8 If applicable, please describe briefly in headwords/bullet points, major findings of the OOSCI country study that were **NOT** incorporated into the education sector plan, and why?

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

3.9 Are there Joint Sector Reviews conducted in your country? If so, when was the last one conducted?

    33 | Yes, in YYYY (year → *Filter: 3.10*
    31 | No → *Filter: 3.12*

3.10 Describe briefly in headwords/bullet points, any main decisions and/or planned actions regarding OOSC in the latest Joint Sector Review related to findings or recommendations from the national OOSCI study.

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

4.   Partner contributions

4.1 On a scale of 1= "not at all engaged" to 4= "fully engaged", to what extent has the partner country government taken **ownership** of OOSCI activities with regard to the following?

	1 = not at all	2	3	4 = Fully engaged	Not applicable, no opinion
Assuming management and leadership of OOSCI activities	1	17	31	12	7
Being chair and/or convener of OOSCI meetings	2	15	21	20	10
Providing personnel to work in the OOSCI study	2	17	24	17	8
Proving existing education sector data	0	8	31	23	6
Other, please specify: _____	0	1	2	1	64

4.2 Please list three to five OOSCI **key partners** in the country you are working and start with the most important partner.

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

4.3 If applicable: In addition to the OOSCI **key partners**, please list further governmental or non-governmental institutions/organisations (such as other ministries, local associations, companies etc.) that contributed to the initiative:

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

4.4   What support has your Regional Office provided towards OOSCI? Please describe briefly.

   1.

   2.

Add button to add further lines.

4.5   What additional support would you require from your Regional Office? Please describe briefly.

   1.

   2.

Add button to add further lines.

4.6   On a scale of 1= "no contribution at all" to 4= "major contribution", how strongly did UNICEF's Partners as a whole **contribute to the elements of OOSCI** identified below?

	1 = No contribution at all	2	3	4 = Major contribution	Not applicable, no opinion
Funding	15	18	18	10	7
Technical assistance	4	14	25	16	9
Capacity building	4	16	28	11	9
Programme design	3	12	30	12	11
Programme implementation	2	12	27	14	13
Programme management	2	16	31	9	10
Monitoring and evaluation	3	19	27	7	13
Other, please specify: ___	0	1	2	0	65

4.7   On a scale of 1= "not efficient at all" to 4= "very efficient", rate the efficiency of the division of tasks between UNICEF country office and partners on **the elements of OOSCI** identified below?

	1 = Not efficient at all	2	3	4 = Very efficient	Not applicable, no opinion
Funding	7	26	14	6	15
Technical assistance	2	18	27	11	10
Capacity building	3	19	25	8	13
Programme design	4	11	29	10	14
Programme implementation	2	18	19	14	15
Programme management	2	16	25	11	14
Monitoring and evaluation	3	16	28	6	15
Other, please specify: ____	0	0	3	0	65

4.8   On a scale of 1= "not efficient at all" to 4= "very efficient" rate the efficiency of the division of OOSCI tasks between the country office and the partner government?

1 = Not efficient at all	2	2	4 = Very efficient	Not applicable, no opinion
3	20	30	6	9

4.9 On a scale of 1= "no coordination at all" to 4= "full coordination" rate the coordination and/or between the work of UNICEF, government, and partners who work on issues of out-of-school children?

1 = Not coordination/ complementarity at all	2	2	4 = Full coordination/ complementarity	Not applicable, no opinion
7	20	19	4	7

4.10 On a scale from 1= "no benefit at all" to 4= "major benefit", to what extent did the OOSCI benefit from the contribution of the key partners with regard to the following aspects?

	1 = no benefit at all	2	3	4 = major benefit	Not applicable, no opinion
Increased resources	7	20	19	4	18
more cost-effective use of resources	4	18	25	3	18
Expanded geographical coverage of activities/interventions	4	9	23	14	18
Improved quality of outputs	4	18	17	12	17
Other, please specify: _____	0	1	0	2	65

4.11 On a scale of 1= "no value added" to 4= "substantial value added" how much value did OOSCI bring/add to the government's efforts to extend access to basic education for children that are out of school?

1 = No value added	2	3	4 = Substantial value added	Not applicable, no opinion
1	10	29	14	14

5. Contribution of OOSCI towards improvement of education outcomes

5.1 On a scale from 1= "no contribution at all" to 4 = "major contribution", to what extent did the OOSCI activities **contribute** to the following aspects in the country where you work?

	1 = no contribution at all	2	3	4 = major contribution	Not applicable, no opinion
Improvement of data collection systems	0	14	28	8	18
Integration across sectors/line ministries in addressing issues of out-of-school-children	2	21	25	4	16
Cooperation between sectors/line ministries in addressing issues of out-of-school-children	4	21	21	7	15
Capacities of national counterparts for generating data	3	14	32	4	15
Capacities of national counterparts for analysing data and report writing	1	15	31	4	17
Capacities of national counterparts for using report results for programming and decision-making	3	14	27	6	18
Other, please specify: _____	0	2	0	0	66

5.2   Did OOSCI have any additional **positive unintended outcomes** in the education sector and beyond? Please describe briefly.

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

5.3   Did OOSCI have any **negative unintended outcomes** in the education sector and beyond? Please describe briefly.

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

5.4   Provide an estimate of the number of times that UNICEF has provided support to the government on the following, in the context of OOSCI**:**

- To explain and/or interpret data to decision-makers at the political level   _____
- To explain and/or interpret data to officials at the technical level   _____
- To discuss policy advice with the decision-makers at the political level   _____
- To discuss policy advice with the officials at the technical level   _____
- To sensitise communities on issues for out-of-school children   _____
- Other, please specify _____

5.5   Provide examples of commitments and/or government activities that were triggered by OOSCI:

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

5.6   Provide examples of commitments and/or activities of the private sector or other national entities that were triggered by OOSCI**:**

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

5.7   Provide examples of commitments and/or activities of international organisations/agencies that were triggered by OOSCI:

    1.

    2.

Add button to add further lines.

5.8   Overall, to what extent did the OOSCI achieve its overarching objectives in your working which country?

	1 = did not achieve it at all	2	3	4 = fully achieved it	Not applicable, no opinion
Creating greater awareness of the bottlenecks and solutions for OOSC among policymakers	0	7	34	10	17
Fostering statements by national governments or regional organisations on the needs of OOSC	0	16	26	7	19
Causing shifts in government systems or donor agency's priority countries or rules for funding	3	21	18	2	24
Changing resource allocation, MoE procedures or government policies that are in line with recommendations from an OOSCI country study	3	17	23	1	24
Changing national Education Sector Plans and policies to bring children into school	1	16	24	7	20
Changing actions and practices necessary to bring children into school	1	14	29	4	20
Initiating broader debates on education	1	14	27	4	22
Initiating broader advocacy work to highlight the issue of OOSC and influence donors and decision makers	3	13	26	6	20
Other, please specify	1	1	1	1	64

5.9   **If applicable: Please send us further (unpublished) documents that refer to the implementation and results of OOSCI in your country by using the upload function below.** You can upload documents with a maximum size of 1 MB. For larger documents (up to 30 MB), please send an email to s.silvestrini@ceval.de

5.10   Please provide additional information (including links to publications, websites etc.) that you'd like to bring to the attention of the evaluators on any aspect of your work in OOSCI in the country where you work, or on broader issues of out-of-school children.

Last page – closing
Thank you very much for participating in this survey!
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APPENDIX 10
FINDINGS OF THE QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS (QCA)

For the document analysis, the original sample comprised 42 countries. However, no documents were available for Belize and Costa Rica, which is why they were dropped from the sample. Hence the basis for this analysis was a review of 215 documents which included OOSCI studies (27 at country 22 at regional level), other documents from UNICEF or UNESCO (35), education sector plans (28) other government documents (35), joint sector reviews (7), and partner publications (61).

The descriptive analysis provided a concise and representative picture of the state of OOSCI according to key documents; while the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) also drew on selected variables assessed in the document review. For this purpose, the variables "profiles", "barriers" and "recommendations" were used by using the four-step scale already formulated in the evaluation matrix above. According to the theory of change, they are key drivers to reduce the number of out-of-school children. Also, the Fragile State Index (FSI), the Human Development Index (HDI) and OOSC data from the UIS database were used to perform the QCA.

As different development paths can lead to the same outcome, QCA employs Boolean algebra to identify typical patterns among various cases to explain specific outcomes. Please note that Boolean algebra displays logical relations between variables which are either denoted with the value of 1 for truth and 0 for false. In the case of OOSCI, the QCA allows to identify factors (i.e. the causal conditions) which affect the success of the OOSCI in terms of its desired outcome of achieving a considerable reduction of out-of-school children (i.e. the main outcome variable).

However, generally QCA only allows the analysis of bivariate outcomes i.e. yes/no (truth/false) -variables and is therefore often too simplistic to explain gradual differences. Therefore, we conducted a "fuzzy QCA" which retains the key features of the general QCA approach, but which introduces fuzzy membership scores. Such a score between 0 and 1 acknowledges that one variable is only partly true for one case. For example, country A may have uncovered barriers which are assessed as being not sufficiently comprehensive yet whereas country B has identified a complete set of barriers. In a fuzzy QCA we can differentiate between country B which would receive a score of 1 and country A which would receive a lower score e.g. 0.67. As fuzzy QCA requires a definition of fuzzy membership on a scale from 0 to 1 all conditions and outcomes have to be coded in advance. In line with the rating during the document review, we introduced four-step scales to differentiate whether a condition or an outcome is rather present (1), somehow present (0.67), somehow "not" present (0.33) and rather "not" present (0).[43]

According to the main scientific theories, the Fragile State Index (FSI) is an important determinant for the level of OOSC. This is also the case for the Human Development Index (HDI). Therefore, both indices (as of 2015) were taken as additional conditions in the course of the

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43   Where "not present" has to be understood as a set, in contrast to the pure logical interpretation as a single state.

The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)

QCA by applying the same ratings as in the above-mentioned four-step scale (i.e. re-coding): countries classified as "stable" or "more stable" (<60) were re-coded as 1, countries classified as "warning" or "elevated warning" (60-79.8) were re-coded as 0.67, countries classified as "high warning" or "alert" (80-99.8) were re-coded as 0.33 and countries classified as "high alert" or "very high alert" (> 100) were re-coded as 0 as displayed by Table 21.

TABLE 21	FSI level on a four-step scale (n=40)		
High or very high alert (0)	**High warning or alert (0.33)**	**Warning or elevated warning (0.67)**	**Stable or more stable (1)**
DR Congo	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Panama
Iraq	Burkina Faso	Dominica	Romania
Nigeria	Cambodia	El Salvador	
Pakistan	Cameroon	Ghana	
Palestine	Eritrea	Honduras	
Sudan	Ethiopia	Indonesia	
Yemen	Gambia	Maldives	
	Kenya	Morocco	
	Kyrgyzstan	Namibia	
	Liberia	Suriname	
	Mauritania	Tunisia	
	Myanmar	Turkey	
	Nepal	Vietnam	
	Papua New Guinea		
	Philippines		
	Senegal		
	Sri Lanka		
	Zambia		

Source: own calculation based on FSI

As shown in Table 22 a similar procedure was followed to categorise countries according to their HDI scores. We rated countries with a very high HDI (>80) as 1, with a high HDI (0.701-0.796) as 0.67, with a medium HDI (0.550-0.699) as 0.33 and with a low HDI (<0.497) as 0.

TABLE 22	HDI level on a four-step scale (n =40)		
Low HDI (0)	**Medium HDI (0.33)**	**High HDI (0.67)**	**Very high HDI (1)**
Burkina Faso	Bangladesh	Dominica	Romania
Cameroon	Bolivia	Maldives	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Cambodia	Panama	
Eritrea	El Salvador	Romania	
Ethiopia	Ghana	Sri Lanka	
Gambia	Honduras	Suriname	
Liberia	Indonesia	Tunisia	
Mauritania	Iraq	Turkey	
Nigeria	Kenya		
Papua New Guinea	Kyrgyzstan		
Senegal	Morocco		
Sudan	Myanmar		
Yemen	Namibia		
	Nepal		
	Pakistan		
	Palestine		
	Philippines		
	Vietnam		
	Zambia		

Source: own calculation based on HDI

Whereas we identified "profiles", "barriers", "recommendations", "FSI level" and "HDI level" as key conditions, the OOSC rate is one important pillar to analyse the outcome of OOSCI. Already for the online survey analysis we calculated the difference in OOSC rate between 2008/2009 and 2014/2015. We used this difference as the first outcome variable. Thus, we re-coded a more than 5 percent reduction in the OOSC rate as 1, a reduction between 3 and 5 percent as 0.67, a reduction of less than 3 percent as 0.33 and stagnation or increase over time as 0. However, given limited data availability, the difference in OOSC rate, (i.e. the reduction of OOSC in percentage points), could only be calculated for the thirteen countries of the sample as shown in Table 23.

TABLE 23	OOSC Difference on a four-step scale (n =13)		
Rather stagnation or increase (0)	**less than 3% reduction (0.33)**	**between 3 and 5% reduction (0.67)**	**more than 5% reduction (1)**
Bolivia	Indonesia	Bangladesh	Burkina Faso
El Salvador	Myanmar	Suriname	Dominica
Eritrea		Turkey	Ghana
Palestine			Pakistan

Source: own calculation based on UIS database

Additionally, to enhance the robustness of our analysis, we introduced a second outcome variable: the level of OOSC in 2015. We coded the countries with a level of more than 30 percent of OOSC as 1 which equals a very high level of OOSC, those with a level of between 20 and 30 percent OOSC as 0.67, those with a level of between 10 and 20 percent OOSC as 0.33 and those with a level of less than 10 percent of OOSC as 0 which stands for the lowest level of OOSC among OOSCI member countries. Once again, unavailability of data limited the use of this variable to the twenty countries out of the sample as displayed in Table 24.

TABLE 24	Level of OOSC on a four-step scale (n = 20)		
Less than 10% (0)	**Between 10 and 20% (0.33)**	**Between 20 and 30% (0.67)**	**More than 30% (1)**
Dominica	Bolivia	Bangladesh	Burkina Faso
Kyrgyzstan	El Salvador	Cameroon	Eritrea
Turkey	Ghana	Myanmar	Ethiopia
	Honduras		Mauritania
	Indonesia		Pakistan
	Nepal		
	Palestine		
	Romania		
	Suriname		

Source: own calculation based on UIS database

In summary: With fuzzy QCA we searched for typical combinations of the variables "profiles", "barriers", "recommendations", "FSI-level" and "HDI-level" (i.e. recipes) for the following outcomes: (i) achieving considerable reduction in OOSC percentage points and (ii) having a high OOSC rate. The advantages are twofold: (i) equi-finality, which means that different paths (in the sense of different combinations of variables in different degrees) can lead to the same outcome and (ii) asymmetry, meaning that the presence and the absence of the outcome, respectively, may require different explanations. We use the TOSMANA software (Conqvist, 2016) to perform the analysis with two small samples, 13 in the first case, and 20 in the last case.

The truth table for all logically possible configurations has 32 rows. Table 25 shows only those rows with real-world observations for the reduction of OOSC percentage points between 2008/9 and 20014/15. White dots point to rather "absence" of a case membership of the particular variable, while dark dots point to rather "presence". Taking El Salvador from row 2 below as an example, one can see that the country has not yet developed comprehensive "profiles, "barriers" and "recommendations; the fragile states index is quite high and the Human Development Index is ranked rather low whereas the observed difference of the OOSC rate is rather negligible.

TABLE 25 — Truth table for "reduction in OOSC percentage points between 2008/09 and 2014/15"

No.	Cases	PROFILES	BARRIERS	RECOMM.	FSILEVEL	HDILEVEL	Difference OOSC-%
1	Eritrea, Myanmar	○	○	○	○	○	○
2	El Salvador	○	○	○	●	○	○
3	Dominica, Suriname	○	○	○	●	●	●
4	Indonesia	○	●	○	●	○	○
5	Palestine	●	●	○	○	○	○
6	Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Pakistan	●	●	●	○	○	●
7	Bolivia, Ghana	●	●	●	●	○	●
8	Turkey	●	●	●	●	●	●

Note: Recomm: Recommendations, FSILEVEL: Fragile State Index (60 or less recoded as 1 = stable), HDILEVEL: Human Development Index (1= high).

To reduce the number of rows we set a consistency level of 0.7 and given our small number of cases we take a frequency threshold of 1 which are both kept throughout all analyses. This means that we do not exclude rows with only one case and only accept recipes i.e. combinations of conditions that explain 70 percent of the case analysed. At first sight, row six in the above table discloses that for some countries a common pattern produces the main outcome. To produce the estimates displayed in the below tables (26 29 and 31 - 32) the Quine algorithm was applied. In simple terms, the algorithm is used to translate long combinations of variables into shorter expressions (i.e. implicants).

TABLE 26 — Identification of set relationships for "reduction in OOSC percentage points between 2008/09 and 2014/15"

Prime Implicants	Consistency	Coverage
PROFILES * BARRIERS * RECOMM * ~HDILEVEL	0.7696	0.5007
PROFILES * BARRIERS * RECOMM * FSILEVEL	0.7767	0.3493
~PROFILES * ~BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * FSILEVEL * HDILEVEL	0.8584	0.2999

Note: ~= not present, Recomm: Recommendations, FSI: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high) * is interpreted as "and".

The first implicant is for roughly 77 percent of our observations consistent and covers about half of the cases. It states that countries which were rather successful in defining profiles, identifying barriers and deriving recommendations and which possess at the same time a rather low human development index have realised a rather considerable reduction of OOSC after becoming a OOSCI member country. The second implicant is equally consistent at roughly 78 percent and covers about 35 percent of cases in the sample. It states that countries which were rather successful in defining profiles, identifying barriers and deriving recommendations and which are at the same time rather stable have realised a rather considerable reduction of OOSC after becoming a OOSC member. Both implicants are in line with theoretical considerations and confirm the OOSCI theory of change. However, a third implicant discloses an alternative way to realise a rather considerable reduction in OOSC which is with 85 percent highly consistent and covers about 30 percent of the cases.[44] It states that countries which have rather not identified profiles, barriers and recommendations but which are at the same time rather stable and possess rather high

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44   Please be aware that several recipes may apply to one country, hence it is prohibited to add coverages.

levels of human development also reached a considerable reduction in OOSC.

Table 27 summarises a complex solution consisting of all three implicants. With both consistency and coverage at around 80 percent it has a considerable power to explain the reduction in OOSC percentage points since OOSCI came into being. Thereby two implicants are close to each other and highlight the outmost importance of "profiles", "barriers" and "recommendations" whereas the third implicant shows a totally different way highlighting the relevance of stability and development levels.

TABLE 27	Results for "reduction in OOSC percentage points between 2008/09 and 2014/15"	
Result	**Consistency**	**Coverage**
PROFILES * BARRIERS * RECOMM * ~HDILEVEL + PROFILES * BARRIERS * RECOMM * FSILEVEL + ~PROFILES * ~BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * FSILEVEL * HDILEVEL	0.8009	0.8021

*Note: ~= not present, Recomm: Recommendations, FSI: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high), * is interpreted as "and", + as "or".*

In addition, we calculated how combinations of the conditions yield to the contrary, i.e. rather stagnation in OOSC levels. Table 28 discloses two prime implicants. They have both in common that countries which lack clear profiles and recommendations rather stagnate at their OOSC levels.

TABLE 28	Identification of set relationships for "no reduction in OOSC percentage points between 2008/9 and 2014/15"	
Prime Implicants	**Consistency**	**Coverage**
~PROFILES * ~BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * ~HDILEVEL	0.9009	0.4739
~PROFILES * ~RECOMM * FSILEVEL * ~HDILEVEL	0.8759	0.3681

*Note: ~= not present, Recomm: Recommendations, FSI: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high), * is interpreted as "and".*

Table 29 shows the combined result and discloses that the two implicants together are highly consistent for 90 percent of the cases explained. Although it covers only about half of the cases, it supports the importance of "profile", "recommendations" and partly "barriers" and shows that the strong focus of OOSCI studies towards them is an important move towards the overall objective.

TABLE 29	Results for "no reduction in OOSC percentage points between 2008/09 and 2014/15"	
Result	**Consistency**	**Coverage**
~PROFILES * ~BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * ~HDILEVEL + ~PROFILES * ~RECOMM * FSILEVEL * ~HDILEVEL	0,9101	0,5276

*Note: ~= not present, Recomm: Recommendations, FSI: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high), * is interpreted as "and", + as "or".*

To contextualise these results, we finally perform a fuzzy QCA on the OOSC level as of 2015. Similar as above the truth table presented is limited to real-world observations and discloses at first sight common patterns in row 1 and 7.

Applying the Quine algorithm yields to three prime implicants. The first two implicants cover each a bit less than half of the cases whereas the third covers about a third. Consistency levels are for the first two implicants rather high with about 74 and 81 percent and for the third a bit lower with 66 percent. The first implicant states that countries which have identified profiles and barriers but are at the same time rather unstable and at lower development levels have a rather high level of OOSC. The third implicant is similar but highlights that countries which rather lack clear recommendations have a rather high level of OOSC when they are underdeveloped. At the same the identification of profiles and barriers is not sufficient to bring them on a different outcome path. Both implicants seem to be in line with the theory

TABLE 30 **Truth table for "high OOSC level"**

No.	Cases	PROFILES	BARRIERS	RECOMM.	FSILEVEL	HDILEVEL	High OOSC level
1	Cameroon, Eritrea, Mauritania, Myanmar	○	○	○	○	○	●
2	El Salvador	○	○	○	●	○	●
3	Dominica, Suriname	○	○	○	●	●	○
4	Indonesia	○	●	○	●	○	○
5	Kyrgyzstan, Palestine	●	●	○	○	○	●
6	Honduras	●	●	○	●	○	●
7	Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nepal, Pakistan	●	●	●	○	○	●
8	Bolivia, Ghana	●	●	●	●	○	○
9	Romania, Turkey	●	●	●	●	●	○

Note: Recomm: Recommendations, FSILEVEL: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDILEVEL: Human Development Index (1= high).

of change. The second implicant confirms this rationale as it states that countries which neither identified profiles, nor barriers, which did rather not derive clear recommendations and possess a lower HDI levels have rather high OOSC levels.

TABLE 31 **Identification of set relationships for "high OOSC level"**

Prime Implicants	Consistency	Coverage
PROFILES * BARRIERS * ~FSILEVEL * ~HDILEVEL	0.7350	0.4669
~PROFILES * ~BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * ~HDILEVEL	0.8124	0.4339
PROFILES * BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * ~HDILEVEL	0.6627	0.3307

Note: ~= not present, Recomm: Recommendations, FSI: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high), * is interpreted as "and".

Again, the results from Table 32 show that the prime implicants are quite powerful with a consistency of 74 percent and a coverage of 87 percent.
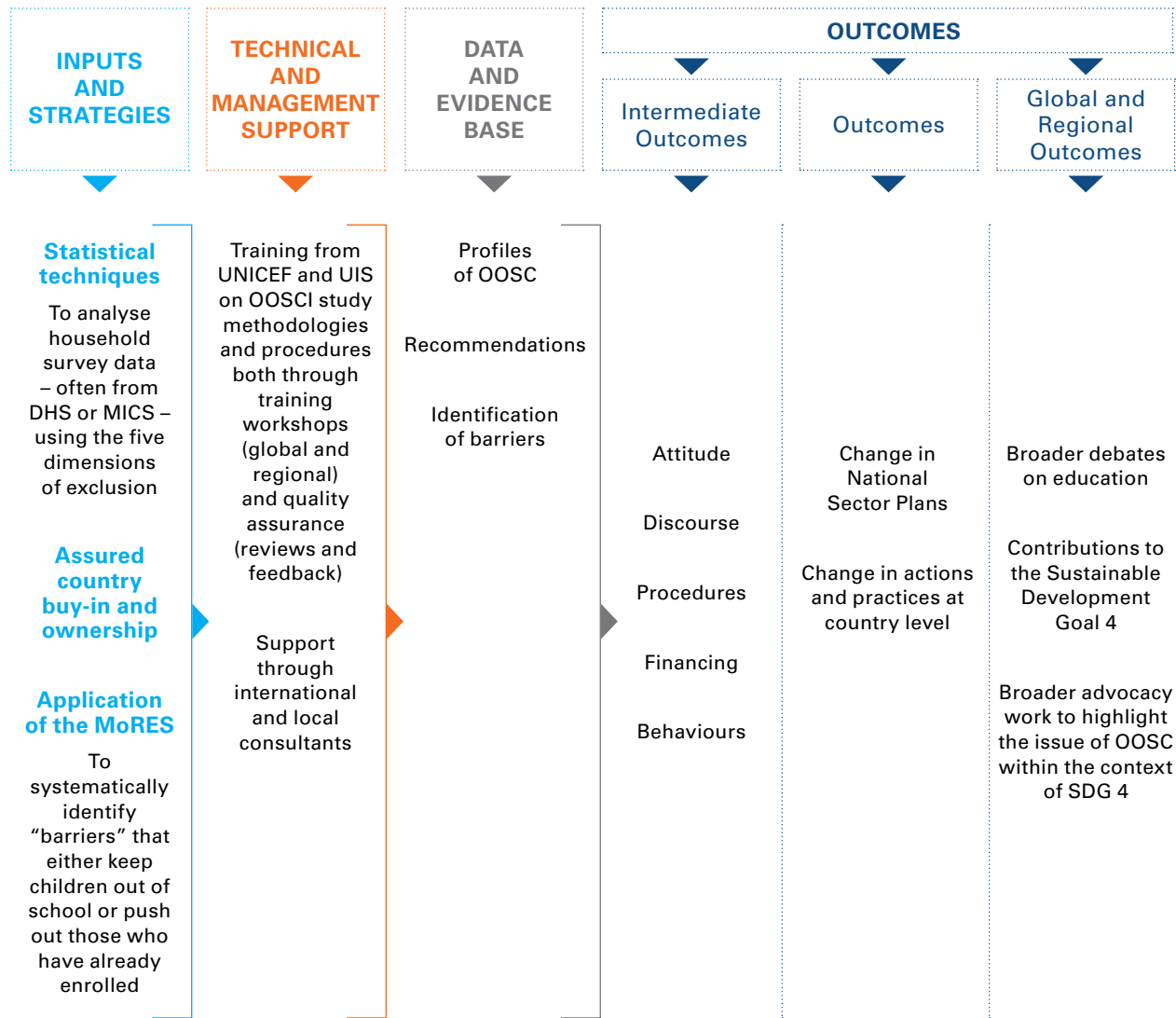
TABLE 32 **Results for "high OOSC level"**

Result	Consistency	Coverage
~HDILEVEL (PROFILES * BARRIERS * ~FSILEVEL + PROFILES * BARRIERS * ~RECOMM + ~PROFILES * ~BARRIERS * ~RECOMM * ~FSILEVEL)	0.7414	0.8677

Note: ~= not present, Recomm: Recommendations, FSI: Fragile State Index (1= stable), HDI: Human Development Index (1= high), * is interpreted as "and", + as "or".

Overall, the QCA supports the important role of "profiles", "barriers" and "recommendations" to contribute to the reduction of OOSC. However, it should be kept in mind that it does neither comprehensively identify nor fully assess all determinants contributing to the outcomes. Thus, complementary activities have not been taken into account. Moreover, are results limited to insights of the document analysis. Nevertheless, QCA sharps the focus on interaction patterns of OOSCI elements, i.e. it shows that a combination of identified profiles and barriers as well as clear recommendations is crucial.

APPENDIX 11
REVISED THEORY OF CHANGE

INPUTS AND STRATEGIES	TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	DATA AND EVIDENCE BASE	OUTCOMES		
			Intermediate Outcomes	Outcomes	Global and Regional Outcomes
Statistical techniques

To analyse household survey data – often from DHS or MICS – using the five dimensions of exclusion

Assured country buy-in and ownership

Application of the MoRES

To systematically identify "barriers" that either keep children out of school or push out those who have already enrolled | Training from UNICEF and UIS on OOSCI study methodologies and procedures both through training workshops (global and regional) and quality assurance (reviews and feedback)

Support through international and local consultants | Profiles of OOSC

Recommendations

Identification of barriers | Attitude

Discourse

Procedures

Financing

Behaviours | Change in National Sector Plans

Change in actions and practices at country level | Broader debates on education

Contributions to the Sustainable Development Goal 4

Broader advocacy work to highlight the issue of OOSC within the context of SDG 4 |