

GLOBAL STOCKTAKE OF UNICEF ENGAGEMENT IN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE, 2011–2015

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Global Stocktake of UNICEF Engagement in Decentralization and Local Governance, 2011–2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decentralization and local governance (DLG) are common public sector features in contexts where UNICEF operates. Recognizing the crucial service delivery mandates of local governments, UNICEF country offices (COs) need to routinely engage in DLG frameworks and processes in order to design and implement effective country programmes pertaining to all result areas. At the same time, UNICEF DLG engagement is a necessary element of the rights-based approach: DLG is a potentially transformative process through which communities, including women and young people, can be empowered to make their own development decisions.

Due to the complexity of DLG work, a strategic framework to guide CO activities would strengthen overall programming effectiveness. Such a framework should be pragmatic, addressing the *what*, *why* and *how* of DLG engagement, and should be strongly grounded in existing country-level projects and initiatives, building on organizational strengths, opportunities and lessons learned. However, despite some examples of longstanding DLG engagement, no systematic attempt has been made to document and analyze UNICEF initiatives in this area.

The purpose of this stocktake is to provide an overview of UNICEF DLG programming, to inform the development of a strategic

framework and to strengthen UNICEF's DLG work around the world, building on CO best practices and experience. At the same time, this report may also be useful to external stakeholders, including development partners, who seek to understand UNICEF work in this area.

This stocktake is based on an extensive analysis of UNICEF Country Office Annual Reports (2011–15) and responses to a DLG-centric questionnaire, completed by 68 COs. The analysis encompasses UNICEF engagement with local governments and with national decentralization policy and legal frameworks, but does not address work with sectoral departments independent of local government authority, as such support is primarily the domain of UNICEF sectoral teams. The stocktake maps UNICEF DLG work according to: (i) engagement in the national legal and policy decentralization framework; and (ii) engagement in the three technical DLG spheres— political, administrative and fiscal (see Box I).

The stocktake finds that UNICEF DLG work takes many shapes and forms, involves diverse interventions and cuts across sectors. From middle-income countries to fragile states, more than 70 per cent of UNICEF COs work on DLG. In some UNICEF regions—including Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia—the share of COs engaged

in DLG reaches as high as 90 per cent. Stocktake questionnaire responses reveal that DLG work is most often undertaken by social policy, education, health and child protection teams. Responses highlight widespread linkages with communication for development, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding programming.

Key stocktake findings include:

- 21 UNICEF COs have engaged in and/or have influenced the development of a national decentralization framework, including through policy advocacy, evidence generation and technical assistance.
- 57 UNICEF COs support some type of programming in the political sphere of DLG. More than 20 per cent of COs have reported supporting mechanisms that enable communities to hold local government accountable; 26 COs ensure mainstreaming gender into local governance; and 43 COs work to facilitate child and youth engagement in local governance.
- 85 UNICEF COs provide support to administrative DLG processes and systems. UNICEF's often sectoral engagement in this area focuses on functional assignment (reported by 22 COs), modelling of service delivery functions, coordination (reported by nearly a third of all COs), capacity-building and training of local service providers; and local government data collection and monitoring and evaluation, reported by more than 40 per cent of all COs.
- 70 UNICEF COs are actively engaged in the fiscal sphere of DLG. Such engagement frequently focuses on high-level policy dialogue, technical assistance on national

Box I. Technical spheres of decentralization and local governance engagement

- The **political sphere** encompasses issues of participation in decision-making processes and political accountability.
- The **administrative sphere** focuses on local government operating systems, processes and procedures, including human resources management, technical capacity-building, data collection and coordination.
- The **fiscal sphere** includes local government budgeting and establishing local taxation or intergovernmental fiscal transfer systems.

intergovernmental fiscal transfer schemes (reported by 18 COs) and strengthening local level budgeting processes (reported by 44 COs).

- 75—approximately half of all—UNICEF COs report some type of thematic DLG engagement, including disaster risk reduction and local governance (reported by 40 COs); peacebuilding and local governance (18 COs); Child-friendly Cities initiatives (33 COs and 21 of the 34 existing UNICEF National Committees); and communication for development (33 COs).

Stocktake findings suggest that UNICEF DLG engagement plays a crucial role in achieving results for children. Questionnaire respondents note that DLG programming allows COs to reach out to the most vulnerable areas, children, families and communities; some even consider such programming a prerequisite to achieving country programme objectives.

Analysis of documented CO results confirms that DLG engagement leads to improved equity in resource distribution among local governments, increased local government expenditure for children and expanded basic social services.

The stocktake also identifies opportunities for UNICEF to build on its key DLG strengths. Strong national and sub-national presence has allowed UNICEF to make a unique contribution to social sector knowledge and leadership, and to bring an on-the-ground perspective to national policy dialogue, including in the area of decentralization. Local governments, which are frequently committed to providing strong services and meeting the needs of families and wider communities, make natural UNICEF partners. UNICEF is also well-placed to collaborate with development partners, adding value by bringing a child-centric and equity perspective to DLG policy and practice.

At the same time, the stocktake points to the need for a more strategic and systematic approach to UNICEF DLG engagement. To maximize the impact of DLG work on achieving

equity results for children, this stocktake recommends UNICEF strengthen analysis of the national DLG context; optimize linkages among programme areas and between programming on decentralization and on local governance; pursue strategic partnerships with national actors (e.g. ministries of local government, local government associations and civil service academies) and development partners (e.g. the United Nations and bilateral agencies); improve results-based programming with focus on demonstrating how DLG engagement translates into concrete results for children; and enhance internal capacities, including management and sector staff, for effective DLG engagement.

To support these recommendations, UNICEF headquarters will, as a first step forward, closely collaborate with COs and regional offices to finalize a series of technical documents and strategies to support COs' DLG programming. Forthcoming guidance includes a strategic framework for DLG engagement and a technical note series on select DLG topics. Further attention will also be given to DLG-focused learning and training events.

PART 1. BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This stocktake captures a wide range of UNICEF decentralization and local governance (DLG) initiatives. Activities reviewed cut across result areas; some are led by social policy sections, others by sectoral teams and again others are cross-cutting in nature. A common theme in DLG work is the entry point for engagement: the local government¹ level and/or the decentralization legal and policy framework that assigns the responsibility and decision-making authority over key public functions, including service-delivery, to local governments.

Although UNICEF engagement in DLG is not new, the recognition of its relevance has grown throughout the organization in recent years. While some country offices (COs) have longstanding cooperative relationships with local governments, DLG is not a historically prominent area of UNICEF work. In

1 This stocktake defines *local governments* as specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions, central or state-level legislation or executive order to deliver a defined range of services to a specific geographically delineated area (see Shah and Shah, 2006). Local governments usually have a certain level of autonomy from the central government, while operating within the bounds of the national legal framework. In this stocktake, the definition of local government includes all sub-national government levels (e.g. district or provincial), as well as rural (e.g. community, panchayat) and urban (i.e. municipal) local governments.

recent years, however, UNICEF's equity focus has increasingly relied on the critical function of governance in achieving children's rights. For example, the UNICEF Monitoring Results for Equity System² identifies an enabling environment—comprising governance, accountability and budgets/expenditures—as a key determinant in achieving results for the most disadvantaged children. In addition, UNICEF programmes have begun placing a stronger emphasis on strengthening systems.³ As a result, the role and importance of DLG is increasingly recognized.

Due to the complexity of DLG work, a strategic framework to guide CO activities would strengthen overall programming effectiveness. Such a framework should be pragmatic, addressing the *what, why* and *how* of DLG engagement, and should be strongly grounded in existing country-level projects and initiatives, building on organizational strengths, opportunities and lessons learned. However, despite some examples of longstanding DLG engagement, no systematic attempt has been made to document and analyze UNICEF initiatives in this area.

2 See, for instance, 'A compendium of country case studies on the application of the Monitoring Results for Equity System' (UNICEF, 2015).

3 For example, UNICEF work around child protection and health systems strengthening.

The purpose of this stocktake is to provide an overview of UNICEF DLG programming to inform and strengthen UNICEF's DLG work around the world, building on CO best practices and experience. This stocktake is the first effort to document a variety of UNICEF DLG initiatives. Specifically, this stocktake seeks to answer the following questions:

- Why should UNICEF engage in DLG?
- What are key trends in UNICEF DLG engagement?
- What are the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned?

And, based on the above:

- What are the key elements of the UNICEF strategic approach to DLG engagement?

The audience for this report is UNICEF staff across outcome areas interested in learning about options and strategies for DLG engagement. The report may also be useful to external stakeholders, including development partners, who seek to understand UNICEF work in this area.

This stocktake utilized a variety of qualitative approaches. Data collection methods included: a desk review of external and internal DLG documentation; an assessment of UNICEF DLG initiatives identified through a review of UNICEF Country Office Annual Reports (COARs) published from 2011 to 2015; discussions with country and regional office staff; and a questionnaire on DLG engagement, completed by 68 UNICEF COs (see Annex 1). A detailed description of the methodology is presented in Annex 2. Data from the COAR analysis and questionnaire responses was combined

to produce a set of UNICEF DLG programming country profiles (see Annex 4).

Data presented in this stocktake should be interpreted with some caution. The dataset is likely affected by both under- and over-reporting (see Annex 2). Despite the limitations, the data presented is sufficiently reliable to shed light on current country-level UNICEF DLG initiatives and related challenges and opportunities.

This stocktake is organized in four parts:

The remainder of Part 1 details the rationale for UNICEF DLG engagement, and presents the key definitions, scope and conceptual framework for assessing specific initiatives. Part 2 describes key engagement areas and trends. Part 3 focuses on challenges and opportunities. Part 4 provides recommendations, suggests a way forward and offers a brief conclusion.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR UNICEF DLG ENGAGEMENT

Most countries with UNICEF operations have some type of a decentralized governance system. Some 80 per cent of developing countries are estimated to have experimented with decentralization reform, and most countries have at least one level of elected local government.⁴ The degree and nature of decentralization varies greatly; some countries' local governments have many responsibilities and decision-making authority, while other countries' local government functions are more limited.⁵ Nonetheless, local gov-

4 James Manor (1999). "The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization", *Directions in Development*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

5 The degree of decentralization may even vary among sectors with a country. See Annex 3.

ernments and some degree of decentralization are common public sector features in contexts where UNICEF operates.

DLG is not only common, but also has implications for key child services. In decentralized or decentralizing environments, local governments frequently assume key service delivery roles, such as civil registration, emergency preparedness, primary health care, education, water and sanitation, and social welfare (see Table 1). Importantly, local governments are not merely implementers in all such contexts, but often have the authority to prioritize and manage the services they provide.

In many contexts, UNICEF engagement with local governments and the decentralization framework can be seen as a prerequisite to achieving equitable results for children. Because of the crucial service delivery mandates of local governments, UNICEF COs need a thorough understanding of national DLG frameworks in order to design and implement effective country programmes pertaining to all result areas. This not only includes a focus on local governance, but also on the decentralization legal and policy framework within which local governments operate, particularly as this framework has key equity implications.

However, UNICEF DLG engagement is not merely an approach to achieving results in service delivery, it is also a necessary element of the rights-based approach. Although strengthening services and systems is an important focus, DLG is also a potentially transformative processes through which communities, including women and young people, can be empowered to make their

own development decisions. DLG objectives of strengthened participation and accountability are in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and are emphasized within the Strategic Plan 2014–2017 as a way to achieve results in UNICEF’s key outcome areas. The importance of local accountability and participation is also highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. SDG 16 emphasizes the role of governance, inclusion, participation, rights and security in sustainable development. In particular, sub-goals 16.6 and 16.7 respectively aim to “develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels” and to “ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.”

1.3 DEFINITIONS, SCOPE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

There is no universally accepted definition of DLG. It is, therefore, crucial to establish a common language on key terms and definitions before analyzing UNICEF DLG engagement. For the purposes of this stocktake, *decentralization* is defined as a process in which the responsibility and authority for planning, management, fundraising, resource allocation and other functions are transferred from the central government to sub-national public sector actors.⁶ *Devolution* is type of decentralization that places governance functions in the domain of local governments, while *deconcentration* uses field offices of central ministries. Decentralization concerns mainly national processes. *Local governance*

6 Dennis Rondinelli, John Nellis and G. Shabbir Cheema (1983). *Decentralization in Developing Countries, A review of recent experience*. World Bank, Washington D.C.

Table 1. Common Functions of Local Governments

FUNCTIONAL AREA	COMMON LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	RELEVANT UNICEF OUTCOME AREA
Administration	Civil registration	Protection
	Certificates/licensing	Protection
	Archives	
	Census	Multiple
	Data	Multiple
Planning	Spatial planning and land-use management	Multiple
	Planning and budgeting	Multiple
	Emergency preparedness	Multiple
Revenue	Taxation	
Law and order	Police	Protection
	Local ordinances	Multiple
Public works	Local roads	
	Traffic lights	
	Street lighting	
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	Garbage collection and disposal	WASH
	Street cleaning	
	Sewage water treatment	WASH
	Local water supply	WASH
Education	Early childhood education	Education
	Primary school	Education
	Secondary schools	Education
	Literacy programmes	Education
Public health	Public health messaging	Multiple
	Primary health clinics	Health
	Referral hospitals	Health
Social affairs	Youth centres	Multiple
	Orphanages	Protection
	Social work	Multiple
Sports and leisure	Parks	Cross-cutting
	Play areas	Cross-cutting
	Sport grounds	Cross-cutting
	Libraries	Cross-cutting
	Museums	
Local economic development	Markets	
	Tourism development and licensing	
	Slaughterhouses	
	Agricultural development	
Public safety	Fire department	
	Emergency evacuation	Multiple
Natural resources	Forestry (reforestation, licensing)	
	Small-scale mineral extraction	

Source: Adapted from Gabriele Ferrazzi and Rainer Rohdewohld (2009). *Functional Assignment in Multi-Level Government, Volume I: Conceptual Foundation of Functional Assignment*, GTZ, Eschborn.

is the formulation and execution of collective action⁷ at the local level, involving formal and informal actors that can range from local government institutions to community-based organizations, respectively.⁸

When considering decentralization, this stocktake focuses primarily on UNICEF engagement in devolution. Examples include: technical assistance in the design of a national decentralization monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework; policy advocacy to promote the design of an equitable fiscal transfer system for local governments; and advisory services to guide national ministries in deciding which sectoral or management functions should be devolved to the local level (i.e. functional assignment). In contrast, the stocktake specifically does not consider UNICEF work in deconcentrated contexts, such as support to a national health ministry in transferring responsibilities for administering antiretroviral therapy from referral hospitals to local health clinics that function under formal ministry control, or technical assistance to an education ministry in the design of a financial allocation formula for the secondary schools it operates. The latter are examples of engagement with deconcentrated systems, the strengthening of which is frequently supported through UNICEF sectoral engagement and, therefore, is not covered here.

In discussing local governance, this stocktake focuses on UNICEF initiatives in which local governments and local

7 Anwar Shah and Sanah Shah (2006). *The New Vision of Local Governance and the Evolving Roles of Local Governments*. World Bank, Washington D.C.

8 See Annex 3 for a comprehensive overview of key DLG concepts.

government processes, whether supply or demand-driven, are the primary programming entry points. Examples include support to: promoting inclusive participation in local governments' planning processes; improving coordination between local governments and service providers; bolstering administrative data collection and management to inform local government decision-making; and strengthening the social welfare and health services managed and delivered by local governments. Again, the stocktake does not consider sectoral interventions—such as strengthening field office capacities of a national health ministry or establishing community-based water and sanitation committees—unless such interventions have formal local government links.

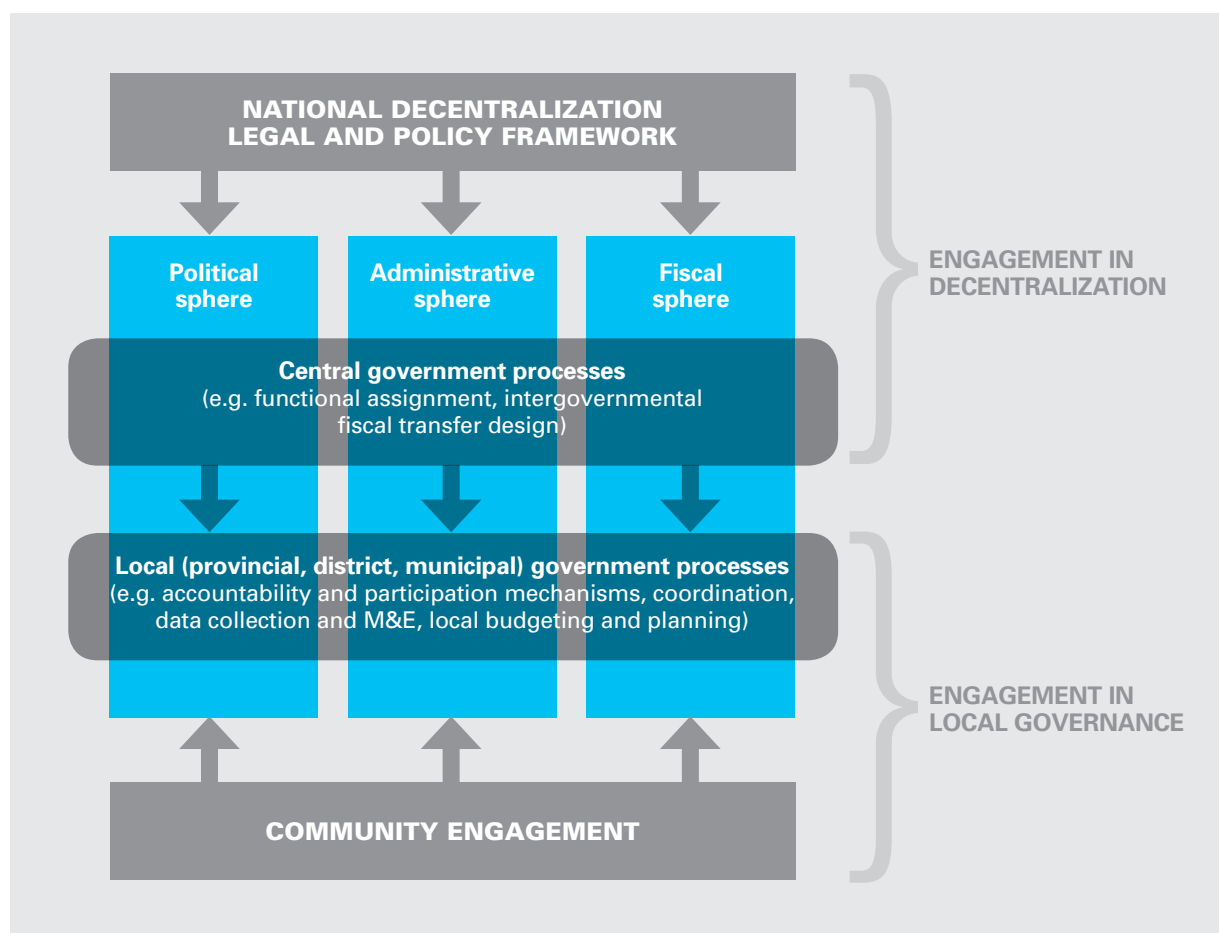
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This stocktake maps UNICEF DLG work according to: (i) engagement in the national legal and policy decentralization framework; and (ii) engagement in the three technical DLG spheres:

- **Political sphere;**
- **Administrative sphere; and**
- **Fiscal sphere** (see Figure 1).

The *political sphere* encompasses issues of participation in decision-making processes and political accountability. The *administrative sphere* focuses on local government operating systems, processes and procedures, including human resources management, technical capacity-building, data collection and coordination. Local government budgeting and establishing local taxation or intergovernmental fiscal transfer systems fall into the realm of the *fiscal sphere*. Distinguishing among these three spheres facilitates developing context-specific

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for assessing UNICEF DLG engagement



strategies for achieving expected UNICEF outcomes—specifically, ensuring inclusive participation in local government decision-making, strengthening local government service delivery and securing equitable local government financial resources.

In addition, this stocktake considers disaster risk reduction, Child-friendly Cities, communication for development, and peacebuilding as specific UNICEF DLG thematic focus areas. These are categorized separately from other types of DLG engagement, as they are not easily linked to the political, administrative or fiscal DLG engagement spheres but rather cut across all three.

Categorizing UNICEF DLG work does not imply that such categories exist in isolation. First, it is important to consider the influence of decentralization on local governance; for example, local government planning and budgeting are necessarily constrained by the functions assigned to local governments and the resources allocated by central governments under national decentralization laws and policies. Second, the three spheres are closely related in practice; for example, strengthening local government service delivery (administrative sphere) is often directly linked to inclusive participation (political sphere) and is critically dependent on the availability of adequate financial resources (fiscal sphere).

PART 2. UNICEF DLG PROGRAMMING BY ENGAGEMENT AREA

2.4 KEY ENGAGEMENT AREAS

NATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY DECENTRALIZATION FRAMEWORK

According to DLG questionnaire responses and COARs, 21 UNICEF COs have engaged in and/or have influenced the development of a national decentralization policy framework. Programming has focused on advocacy and policy dialogue, and on contributing to the formulation of national decentralization programmes and frameworks.

UNICEF legislative and policy-centred work frequently focuses on advocacy and policy dialogue with key decentralization stakeholders to ensure a child and equity perspective is integrated into ongoing reform processes. Where in place, technical working groups provide a strategic opportunity for advocacy and policy dialogue on decentralization reform. In Burundi, for instance, UNICEF is a member of the Thematic Group for Decentralization and Community Development and has effectively used this platform to advocate for the integration of child rights into various national and local development programmes and projects, as well as sectoral policies.⁹

9 Burundi COAR 2014; CO input.

National decentralization policies are often accompanied by detailed implementation programmes and plans, which offer specific opportunities for UNICEF engagement for child rights.

For example, UNICEF Moldova supported the development of the M&E component of the National Decentralization Strategy to measure decentralization progress and its impact on the most disadvantaged populations—including children. In Nepal, UNICEF mainstreamed the Child-friendly Local Governance approach into the design of the second phase of the country-wide Local Governance and Community Development Programme supported by 14 development partners.¹⁰

Piloting sub-national initiatives and using their results, best practices and lessons learned for upstream advocacy has emerged as a successful UNICEF programming approach. In Cambodia, UNICEF piloted Commune Committees for Women and Children in 422 communes in 6 provinces. Based on the success of these coordination bodies—comprising education and health representatives, elected local government councillors and other local stakeholders—

10 Nepal COAR 2014.

the government of Cambodia expanded the committees nationwide in 2008.¹¹

POLITICAL DLG SPHERE

Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs, 57 UNICEF COs support some type of political DLG engagement. In this area, the primary UNICEF focus has been on the local governance aspects of DLG, including capacity-building and training of elected local government representatives, strengthening participatory and accountability mechanisms for political decision-making, and supporting inclusive participation in local government decision-making processes.

UNICEF frequently supports elected local government representative capacity-building and training on child rights-related topics, either directly or through local partners. In Peru, for instance, UNICEF has collaborated with local universities to support the development and implementation of a series of diploma courses for local government officials. For graduates of the courses, UNICEF has also established a community of practice.¹² The courses have contributed to regional and local governments successfully assuming the responsibility and authority for the planning, management, and resource raising and allocation for the fulfilment of children's rights.¹³

In strengthening the capacities of local government officials, several UNICEF

11 Government of Cambodia (2008). "The Functioning of Commune Committees for Women and Children", National Committee for the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform.

12 <https://www.yammer.com/redaprecia>.

13 Peru CO inputs.

COs have partnered with local government associations and training institutions. A strategic partnership with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) in Kerala, India, exemplifies such engagement. KILA is a key institution mandated to provide training, research and consultancy services to local self-government institutions. Established in 2011, a Child Resource Centre functions as part of KILA, providing a reference point for all child governance matters, a capacity-building hub, and a platform for policy advocacy, research and networking.¹⁴

Through supporting local participatory processes, UNICEF COs provide communities, and vulnerable groups in particular, with the opportunity to express their needs and preferences to local decision-makers. This stocktake identified 8 COs with programming that supports community participation in local government decision-making.¹⁵ For example, UNICEF has been supporting the Government of Ethiopia in implementing the Integrated Community-Based Participatory Planning process, which allows community voices, including those of women and children, to be heard and their priorities to be reflected in local government development plans.¹⁶

More than 20 per cent of UNICEF COs support mechanisms that enable communities to hold local government accountable. Implemented either through civil society organizations or directly by UNICEF, 29 COs report programming on local

14 Akila Radhakrishnan (2015). Child Resource Centre: *An Innovation through UNICEF-KILA Partnership*. UNICEF Field Office for Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

15 Based on COARs and DLG questionnaire responses.

16 Ethiopia COAR 2014.

governance and accountability.¹⁷ In Ghana, for instance, UNICEF has used district level data to design a national social accountability tool, the Ghana District League Table, which makes public basic indicators on district development and service delivery, aggregating them into a single district ranking score. Since its introduction in 2014, the District League Table has highlighted substantial inequities between top- and bottom-ranking districts, and UNICEF Ghana is planning an advocacy strategy to elevate equity on the national development agenda.¹⁸

Local governance frequently offers a strategic opportunity to focus on gender, particularly in terms of equal participation and political representation, as local political processes may be more accessible than national processes. Of responding UNICEF COs, 26 have reported to support mainstreaming gender into local governance. However, it appears that such interventions

are largely part of other programming, such as the already exemplified participatory planning and accountability initiatives. Still, a few COs have reported a specific gender focus; for example, UNICEF participation in the Common Gender Fund in Burkina Faso has helped leverage funds to support five projects with civil society organizations, including a project that seeks to strengthen women’s participation in local decision-making bodies.¹⁹

A few COs focus on strengthening vulnerable groups’ participation in local governance. UNICEF Cambodia supports the inclusion of people with disabilities in local governance processes (see Box 1); UNICEF Chile reports local governance work with indigenous groups; and COs in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have various programmes aiming to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the region’s Romani minority.

Box 1. Local governance and people with disabilities in Cambodia

UNICEF Cambodia is the lead agency for the “Inclusive governance and inclusive community development” component of the Disability Rights Initiative. In close coordination with the Ministry of Interior and with additional collaboration from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth, the Cambodian Disabled People’s Organization and the Disability Action Council, UNICEF works to:

- Strengthen local decision-maker capacities to undertake disability-inclusive local governance and community development;
- Manage the Cambodia Disability Inclusive Development Fund, a small grants scheme that aims bolster cooperation between local governments and non-governmental and community-based service-provider organizations to improve services for the disabled; and
- Field-test the viability of a commune-level disability focal point to provide support to disabled children and adults.

Source: http://www.unicef.org/cambodia/12960_22938.html.

17 Based on COARs and DLG questionnaire responses.

18 Ghana COAR 2014.

19 Burkina Faso COAR 2014.

Creating opportunity for constructive child and adolescent participation in local government processes is a focus area for many UNICEF COs.

While this strategy results in improved local services for children, it also fulfils children’s right to government participation and strengthens young people’s civic engagement capacity. Largely as part of the Child-friendly Cities model, further discussed under thematic UNICEF DLG engagement, 43 COs have engaged in this area, and several of these support stand-alone child and youth engagement projects.

In supporting accountability and participation, UNICEF is increasingly utilizing information and communications technology (ICT) innovations and mobile technologies.

In Uganda, U-report—a free text-messaging system that allows some 300,000 young people to speak out on community issues and influence the national and local agenda—ranked into the world’s top 40 in mobile content excellence, receiving a finalist award at the 2015 global World Summit Award mobile. Well-established in several African countries (i.e. Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Nigeria and Zambia), U-report is being adopted and scaled up for other countries and regions; for example, Pakistan has a pool of 660 U-reporters as of July 2016. COs in Zambia and Cambodia are also exploring options to bolster accountability and participation through ICT and mobile technologies, which allow for real-time data collection and its dissemination beyond the immediate local level. However, the link between such technologies and local governments’ planning and decision-making processes is not always evident or intended.

ADMINISTRATIVE DLG SPHERE

Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs, 85 COs are engaged in supporting administrative DLG processes and systems.

UNICEF engagement in the administrative DLG sphere is often sectoral in nature. At the national level, UNICEF frequently focuses on functional assignment, whereas local governance programming prioritizes modelling service delivery functions, coordination, capacity-building and training of local service providers, local government data collection and M&E.

Functional assignment, a key aspect of decentralization reform, is the process of deciding which sectoral or managerial functions should be devolved or deconcentrated to the sub-national governance level.

In this stocktake, 22 UNICEF COs have reported engaging in functional assignment-related processes.²⁰ UNICEF supported Malawi’s Ministry of Youth in developing guidelines and standards to enable it to fully devolve its functions to local assemblies.²¹ In Moldova, UNICEF experts and technical advice have supported multiple ministries in elaborating sectoral strategies for the devolution of education and social services to the sub-national level.²² In addition to its role in DLG processes, functional assignment-related engagement presents an opportunity to strengthen systems; for example, the functional review of Moldova’s Ministry of Education and subordinate structures had identified gaps in the functions and roles of the education administration and provided recommendations for improving service effectiveness and efficiency.

20 Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs.

21 Malawi COAR 2014.

22 Moldova COAR 2013.

In some contexts, UNICEF supports functional assignment by piloting sectoral functions implemented by local governments. As part of the UN Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery, UNICEF Somalia has launched decentralized service delivery pilots in the health, education, and water and sanitation sectors in Puntland and Somaliland, increasing local government involvement in overseeing on-the-ground service delivery.²³ Following a comprehensive functional assessment, a number of service delivery functions are in the process of being officially devolved to local governments, with initial assessments demonstrating service quality improvement.²⁴

Devolution frequently requires improving coordination among multiple sub-national actors, as service delivery functions are often spread across a number of public sector stakeholders. Nearly a third (29 per cent) of all UNICEF COs report to support sub-national coordination processes.²⁵ UNICEF Bangladesh, for instance, has supported the establishment of Convergence Coordination Committees in 17 districts, 34 sub-districts and 134 unions. Composed of representatives from social sectors, civil society and elected local government, these committees enhance cross-sectoral coordination and integration, particularly where child-focused interventions from different sectors share the same delivery platform.²⁶

To facilitate local access to services, six UNICEF COs have developed and piloted

23 Somalia COAR 2014.

24 Based on the Somalia COAR 2014 and an interview with CO representatives.

25 Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs.

26 Bangladesh COAR 2013.

government one-stop shops providing a number of services through one local window. In Bangladesh, UNICEF has supported three Chittagong Hill Tract districts in establishing such one-stop service centres in 3,800 villages, including those in hard-to-reach areas. Similarly, UNICEF Lesotho has partnered with the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ) to support the Ministry of Local Government in piloting of a one-stop shop model aiming to bring services closer to the most vulnerable people and to provide such services together with information and referrals in one location. Operationally, Lesotho's model uses a permanent structure that provides multiple services—including birth registration, health, education and social protection—through community council offices, the lowest level of the country's government. Mobile service days, with government or its implementing partners' staff providing a range of services at community locations at a given date and time, are also a common operational tool. It is estimated that Lesotho's one-stop shop system has contributed to a 30 per cent increase in birth registration from 2014 to 2015 in the areas where it was piloted.²⁷

Some UNICEF COs pilot local service delivery models as part of a systems strengthening approach. For example, UNICEF Haiti aims to strengthen municipal social welfare services through the Kore Fanmi model (see Box 2).

Data and M&E information facilitate evidence-based local planning by UNICEF COs, which frequently engage in disaggregated sub-national data collection.

27 Lesotho COAR 2015.

Box 2. Strengthening municipal services in Haiti through the Kore Fanmi model

UNICEF Haiti's Kore Fanmi model is strengthening services for vulnerable families by consolidating all interventions to a single responsible agent accountable for families' overall wellbeing. A municipal team ensures oversight at the commune level and supervises, trains and guides the Kore Fanmi agents in their tasks. The same team is responsible for improving cooperation among partners and service providers, and for ensuring that local government authorities are informed of social service provision at the municipal level. The municipal team also maintains a unified and dynamic information system (*Système Intégré d'Information Sociale*), which integrates data from the Map of Opportunities (which lists existing community-based services and opportunities), Household Vulnerability Analysis, and Family Development Plan implementation. The system is updated by Kore Fanmi agents in real time, using mobile data collection technology.

Source: UNICEF Haiti via DLG questionnaire. For further information, see: https://www.unicef.org/lac/media_30642.htm

More than 40 per cent (55) of UNICEF COs report a focus on local government data collection and M&E.²⁸

Several UNICEF COs support local data collection, including on key child-related indicators, using DevInfo databases.²⁹

In Serbia, UNICEF has collaborated with the Republican Statistical Office to enhance child rights monitoring by launching a municipal DevInfo database containing 142 socio-economic indicators on 178 municipalities, disaggregated by gender and other variables. The data is available through an interactive Web application to guide municipalities and local institutions in planning, budgeting and monitoring. The application also enables precise national monitoring of disparities by geographic location.³⁰ Similarly, UNICEF Colombia support has resulted in the increased availability of sub-national information on children and adolescents through the continuous updating and expansion of

the Web-based DevInfo tool SINFONIA, which disaggregates data on more than a 100 indicators down to the municipal level.³¹

Where not using external tools such as DevInfo, UNICEF supports routine data collection and M&E by developing or further strengthening existing local government systems. In Morocco, UNICEF has been supporting the inclusion of child rights-related indicators in the Municipal Information System to assist municipalities in monitoring of the situation of children.³² In another example, UNICEF Burundi has provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Communal Development in preparing an M&E manual to assess the implementation of Communal Plans for Community Development. The manual is a strategic tool that embeds UNICEF in the country's DLG processes to ensure inclusive evidence-based planning and M&E in favour of the most disadvantaged people, including children and women.³³

28 Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs.

29 See <http://www.devinfo.org>.

30 Serbia COAR 2012.

31 Columbia COAR 2014.

32 Morocco COAR 2014.

33 Burundi COAR 2014.

Box 3. UNICEF advocacy around the design of Kenya's equalization formula

Kenya's 2010 Constitution devolved powers for a range of critical functions and services to 47 elected county governments. The devolved services included all health services below referral, nutrition services, rural water and sanitation, early childhood development and education, and childcare. The Constitution also stipulated a number of important conditions for devolved service financing. In particular, a Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA) was to be established to develop a revenue allocation formula for the horizontal distribution of resources among counties.

The formula has key equity implications. To influence the design of the new allocation formula, UNICEF engaged in a strategic partnership with the CRA and other UN agencies. Following UN supported advocacy and technical assistance in the form of workshops and consultations, the CRA revised its proposed formula. The revision increased the weight of the poverty gap variable to 20 per cent and gave greater weight to counties that were further behind in terms of interregional differences in service delivery and child-rights outcomes. The adjusted formula resulted in significantly increased resources for many of the counties with higher levels of child deprivation. UNICEF Kenya estimates the cumulative benefit to be in the region of \$67 million to the 12 counties with the highest levels of child deprivation.

Source: De Wijn (2016). "Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer," PF4C Technical Guidance Note No. 2. UNICEF. New York.

FISCAL DLG SPHERE

Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs, 70 UNICEF COs are actively engaged in the fiscal DLG sphere. Such engagement frequently focuses on high-level policy dialogue, technical assistance on national intergovernmental fiscal transfer schemes, and strengthening local level planning and budgeting processes.

Local governments often rely on fiscal transfers from the central government to fund local service delivery responsibilities. In this stocktake, 18 UNICEF COs report programming related to intergovernmental fiscal transfers.³⁴ In Kenya, for instance, UNICEF has engaged in a strategic partnership with the Commission for Revenue Allocation, the government agency responsible for the design of the revenue allocation formula, as well as with

key development partners (e.g. United Nations Development Programme) to participate in the design of Kenya's equalization formula (see Box 3).³⁵

Support to local government budgeting processes is another key DLG entry point for UNICEF COs. According to DLG questionnaire responses and COARs, 44 COs provide such support. Several COs focus on developing local planning and budgeting tools; for example, together with GIZ and the World Bank, UNICEF Benin is supporting the government in devising a format for Communal Development Plans, thereby ensuring the inclusion of a child perspective in local planning and budgeting.³⁶ Local government stakeholder capacity-building is another common focus area for UNICEF COs, including in the Dominican Republic,

34 Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs.

35 See Annex 3 for details on equalization formulas.

36 Benin COAR 2015.

where UNICEF formed a strategic partnership with the Dominican Federation of Municipalities to strengthen the institutional capacities of local governments and to incorporate a child perspective in municipal administration processes, specifically budgeting.³⁷

Some COs are strengthening local budgeting processes through programming that prioritizes participation and accountability. For example, UNICEF Burkina Faso has launched a monitoring project to facilitate citizen control of public spending on education in 70 municipalities with particularly low education rankings. The project has stimulated the participation of local stakeholders, including individuals and civil society organizations, by providing a new opportunity to influence the education budgets allocated to their communes. Data and information produced by decentralized citizen-led municipal monitoring teams are publicly debated with local authorities to identify locally appropriate methodologies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending and basic service delivery. The same data and information also provide evidentiary support for upstream policy advocacy with the central government.³⁸

2.5 THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT

Based on DLG questionnaire responses and COARs, approximately half (75) of UNICEF COs report some type of thematic DLG engagement, including the area of disaster risk reduction, peace-building, Child-friendly Cities and communication for development (C4D).

37 Dominican Republic COAR 2014.

38 Burkina Faso COAR 2014.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) has a strong local dimension and local governments frequently play a key role in assessment of local risks and hazards as well planning for these risks. The role of local governments in DRR has been emphasized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was adopted on 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan. The framework specifically acknowledges the role of local governments in risk reduction and emphasizes the importance of empowering “local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk, including through resources, incentives and decision-making responsibilities, as appropriate.”³⁹ 40 UNICEF COs report engagement in DRR at the local government level.

UNICEF DRR and DLG work frequently focuses on strengthening capacity of local government stakeholders to integrate child-focused DRR and preparedness and response measures into local development plans. In the Philippines, UNICEF is closely coordinating and supporting key national government agencies and selected local government units (LGUs) in strengthening systems for preparedness, assessment, and response planning, and overall disaster risk reduction management. As of late 2014, at least 21 LGUs, including 11 LGUs in Haiyan-affected areas, had started integrating child-centred disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in their Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans and local development plans.⁴⁰ In Bangladesh, UNICEF

39 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, United Nations, 2015, p.8.

40 Philippines COAR 2014.

supported local vulnerability assessments. Based on this assessment, 99 union-level disaster preparedness plans were developed and integrated within union development plans for implementation with locally available funds across 20 districts. As a result, 27 of 34 regions and 99 community groups (unions) in these regions developed their own emergency preparedness plans.⁴¹

PEACEBUILDING

In fragile and conflict-affected settings, DLG frequently represents a key entry point to support state-building and to strengthen social cohesion. Decentralization can be seen as a state-building exercise, extending the reach of public institutions and strengthening the social-contract by making provisions for participative and accountability processes at the local level. At the same time, improved delivery of basic social services such as education, health, clean water and sanitation, and child protection, can play a role in addressing root causes of fragility and/or conflict incentives. In addition, participatory local government processes may facilitate community dialogue, including among youth, thereby strengthening social cohesion.

In total, 18 UNICEF COs report to engage in peacebuilding and local governance. In Niger, for instance, an innovative approach to resilience building was jointly developed by the 3N High Commissioner,⁴² UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the Forestry and Agriculture Organization, with progressive buy-in from other partners. Focus is on addressing underlying and root causes of

41 Bangladesh COAR 2014.

42 3N (*Les Nigériens nourrissent les Nigériens*) is a Government of Niger initiative

recurrent crises (climate change, demographic pressure, conflicts) through a multi-sectoral and multi-actor approach, with focus on local government planning and service delivery as well as strengthening social cohesion, particularly through local government dialogue with adolescents and youth.⁴³

CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES

A Child-friendly City is a local governance model committed to fulfilling children's rights, including their right to influence government decision-making and to receive basic services, such as health care, education, water and sanitation, and protection.⁴⁴ Key Child-friendly City principles include child participation, a child-friendly legislative framework, a city-wide children's rights strategy, an official children's rights unit, and child rights-related awareness-raising and advocacy.⁴⁵ Implemented by both UNICEF COs and UNICEF National Committees,⁴⁶ the Child-friendly City methodology aims to encourage the creation of governance structures that take children and their rights into account within all facets of local governance.

UNICEF COs often structure programming around the Child-friendly City model, with 33 COs reporting so in this stocktake. UNICEF Turkey first implemented the model in 2014, supporting municipalities in designing rights- and evidence-based child-friendly policies and programmes. Youth-led child rights assessments informed municipal

43 Niger COAR 2014.

44 "Child-friendly Cities Promoted by UNICEF National Committees and COs – Fact sheet", September 2009, UNICEF.

45 See <http://childfriendlycities.org>, accessed November 2015.

46 See http://www.unicef.org/about/structure/index_nat_coms.html.

Box 4. UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval in Brazil

The UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval was launched in 1998 in the State of Ceará, Brazil. In 2005, the programme extended to include the 11 states of the country's semi-arid region; and the 2009 expansion included the municipalities of the Brazilian Legal Amazon region.

The Seal is a certification process that stimulates positive competition among municipalities and rewards success with visibility for their efforts and achievements that ensure child and adolescent rights and the sustainability of their well-being. The process prioritizes change in three areas: in the lives of children (social impact); in public policy formulation, decision-making, management and M&E; and in social participation. The Seal is awarded to a city only if it achieves the minimum pre-defined score in each of these three areas.

The Seal strategy focuses on mobilizing municipal officials, managers and technical experts to develop and implement public policies designed to ensure the full development and citizenship of children and adolescents. To support such goals, UNICEF provides technical advisory services to municipalities, contributing to mobilizing social actors to plan, implement and monitor policies and actions that ensure the rights of children and adolescents are at the core of the public policy agenda. At the state and federal levels, UNICEF advocates for political commitment to support the Seal initiative. State governments and line ministries actively support the initiative with their own investments for children.

A recent evaluation concluded that the Municipal Seal of Approval:

- Supports municipalities in implementing decentralized public policies and national programmes;
- Fosters collaboration among sectors with key roles in the promotion and guarantee of child and adolescent rights, such as health, education and social assistance;
- Promotes social participation and capacity development of rights-holders and duty-bearers to understand inequalities and vulnerabilities, as well as to claim, protect and guarantee rights for all children and adolescents; and
- Increases knowledge and promotes better use of social services for children and adolescents.

Most importantly, evidence demonstrates that municipalities successful in implementing the Seal methodology see faster improvements of social indicators than other regions and national averages.

Source: http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_80825.html, accessed November 2015.

action plans, and some municipal child budgets increased to improve access to playgrounds for children with disabilities.⁴⁷ In Morocco, a 2014 evaluation of the UNICEF-supported Child-friendly Cities initiative demonstrated improved preschool and primary school enrolment rates,

47 Turkey COAR 2014.

reduced dropout rates, and increased numbers of cultural and sporting events in five pilot municipalities.⁴⁸ UNICEF Brazil offers an example of a well-known, successful and long-running Child-friendly City model applications: the UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval (see Box 4).

48 Morocco COAR 2014.

Similarly, a 2015 stocktaking found that 21 of the 34 existing UNICEF National Committees engage in Child-friendly Cities implementation or similar efforts.

For National Committees, the Child-friendly City model is part of ongoing domestic work for children, viewed as a flagship advocacy strategy for children’s rights. In 2015, UNICEF National Committees endorsed an estimated 870 cities as child-friendly, and nearly 80 others were under consideration. In National Committee countries, an extremely wide and growing range of cities and municipalities are considered child-friendly; for example, small villages of 1,000–5,000 inhabitants have adopted the model in Austria, Finland and Slovenia. At the same time, there is a growing number of Child-friendly City implementation successes in cities with much larger populations—such as Auckland, New Zealand (estimated population of 1.4 million), and the Seongbuk-gu district in Seoul, South Korea (more than 0.5 million inhabitants).⁴⁹

COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Communication for development can potentially play a big role in decentralization and local governance, by creating demand for services, raising awareness and supporting public local government messaging. UNICEF COs in 33 countries report C4D-based DLG engagement. In the Philippines, cross-sectoral C4D programming targeted local governments, with training on C4D intervention planning and design provided to partner municipalities to help strengthen

49 Roger Hart, Pamela Wridt and Selim Iltus (2015). *Child-friendly Cities Initiatives in Countries with a UNICEF National Committee Presence: Stocktaking Assessment Report*, Children’s Environments Research Group, Graduate Centre, City University of New York, NY.

the communication component of their local nutrition and early childhood education programmes. Mayors and local councils received technical support in analyzing issues, identifying communication gaps, optimizing existing activities (i.e. adjusting in-progress activities to respond to changing conditions or new monitoring data), identifying new community outreach strategies, developing communications-specific M&E systems and producing low-cost communication materials. Results included demonstrable increases in local C4D budget allocations, food security interventions and day care teacher employment.⁵⁰

2.6 KEY TRENDS

UNICEF DLG engagement is widespread and varied, with 72 per cent (98) of COs worldwide implementing DLG-related initiatives. Engagement spans across regions and income levels, and includes fragile contexts (e.g. Box 5). However, DLG is particularly emphasized in CEE/CIS, East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), West and Central Africa (WCA) and South Asia (SA) regions, where over 70 per cent of COs are involved in some type of DLG programming (see Figure 2).

Despite some UNICEF COs’ longstanding DLG engagement, this work is relatively new for most. Of the 58 COs that reported having implemented some type of a DLG initiative when responding to the questionnaire, 23 have been working in this area for five or more years, 27 have two to four years of DLG support experience, while the remaining 8 COs have had minimal exposure of less than a year.

50 Philippine COAR 2014.

Box 5. UNICEF DLG engagement in fragile context: Libya, 2015

The armed conflict and political instability left UNICEF Libya and the United Nations Country Team at large with limited access to children or their families to assess and address their humanitarian needs. UNICEF needed a breakthrough strategy to implement and monitor programmes aiming to reach vulnerable women and children.

Launched in April 2015 in collaboration with 15 municipalities, the national Together for Children campaign aims to serve as a vehicle to deliver UNICEF interventions and raise awareness of UNICEF programmes and priorities, including: provision of psychosocial support to internally displaced children, establishment of child-friendly spaces, prevention of school dropouts, integration of school-based psychosocial activities, ensuring lack of child involvement in armed conflict, empowering young people and engaging their parents through community action. For example, the Janzour municipality supported and monitored the psychosocial support and child-friendly spaces, benefiting both displaced and host community families. The Tawergha municipality funded and completed a rapid assessment of water and sanitation infrastructure in nine internally displaced persons camps. Five municipalities became strategic UNICEF Libya partners in decentralizing the implementation of the Education Management Information System by facilitating software testing in ten schools.

Together for Children provided yielded three important lessons:

- During times of disputed national body legitimacy, resorting to elected local government bodies is an appropriate and effective service delivery and programme oversight strategy.
- Applying community-based approaches saves money and time while ensuring programme relevance, particularly in crisis situations.
- Decentralization remains a very efficient governance approach when the effectiveness of national ministries is compromised by political instability and insecurity.

Source: Libya COAR 2015.

When UNICEF COs do not engage in DLG support, the primary rationale is lack of relevance to the country context.

For example, decentralization efforts were underway in the Central African Republic prior to the 2013 crisis, but local government staff are no longer in place, and the fragile context does not lend itself to DLG programming.⁵¹ In some contexts, UNICEF COs opted not to engage while the legal and policy decentralization framework remained under development.

One CO raised the country's lack of political will to decentralize, while another cited gaps in UNICEF capacity as reasons for not pursuing DLG programming.

Most UNICEF COs see increasing demand for DLG engagement.

Of the 62 COs that responded to this question in the DLG questionnaire, 52 reported an increase in demand for DLG support, 7 characterized demand as stable, and only 1 CO expected demand to decrease.

⁵¹ DLG questionnaire responses.

Figure 2. UNICEF CO DLG engagement by region (%)



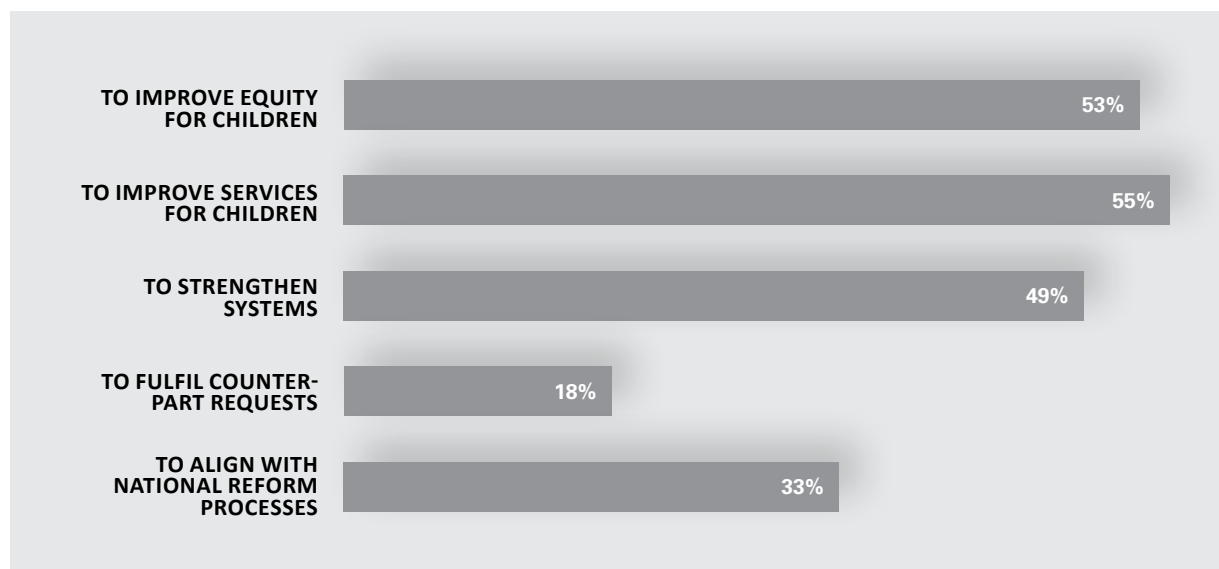
The central rationale for CO DLG engagement is strengthening service delivery and equity for children. Of the 58 COs that responded to this question, 55 stated that improving sectoral services for children was the primary goal of DLG programming. Other frequently cited goals included improving equity for children and strengthening systems, while alignment with national reform processes and local counterpart requests were cited less frequently (see Figure 3).

UNICEF DLG initiatives are largely multi-sectoral. Of the 68 COs responding to the DLG

questionnaire, more than half (36) describe DLG work as part of UNICEF social policy and inclusion outcome area. However, many COs also describe DLG engagement as sector-specific, with education, health and protection respectively cited by 28, 25 and 24 COs—and water, sanitation and hygiene cited less often, by 19 COs, despite local governments often performing WASH functions. As expected, UNICEF Result Assessment Module data indicates that UNICEF engagement in DLG tends to favour sectoral approaches in strongly devolved contexts and where local governments assume the responsibilities and functions of multiple sectors.

Figure 3. Rationale for DLG engagement

%, n=58, multiple answers possible



Source: DLG questionnaire responses.

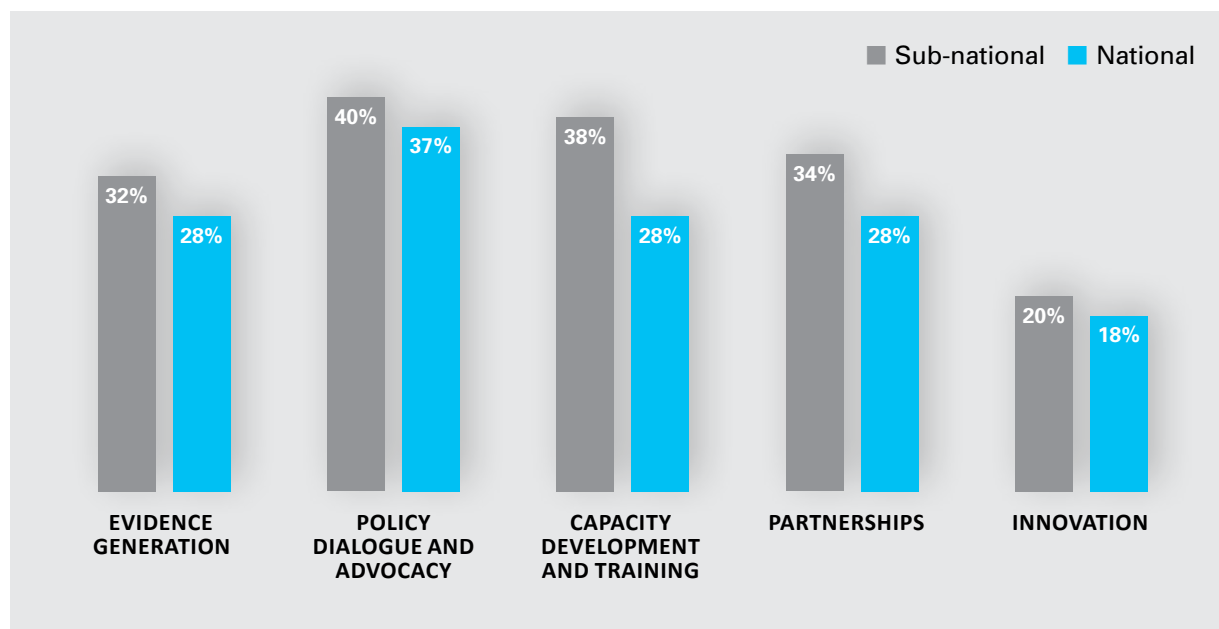
Although DLG is often discussed in key programme documents, such as United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), Country Programme Documents (CPDs) and annual reports, analysis of DLG processes or engagement strategies is less frequent. While 37 of the 58 responding COs reported integrating DLG issues in the customary Situation Analysis of Women and Children, only 10 conducted a comprehensive assessment of DLG processes beyond such integration, and only 15 developed a DLG-specific engagement strategy or framework. This suggests an ad-hoc and opportunistic approach to DLG, a finding echoed by a recent evaluation of UNICEF response to decentralization in East Asia and the Pacific during 2006–2012.⁵²

52 A.K. Shiva Kumar and Katherine Hay, 'Thematic Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to Decentralization in East Asia and the Pacific: 2006-2012', April 2013, New Delhi.

Local governance is the primary focus of UNICEF DLG engagement. Of the 57 COs responding to this question, 27 report a programming focus on local governance, 23 focus on both decentralization and local governance, and the remaining 6 concentrate on decentralization alone.

UNICEF COs employ a range of DLG implementation strategies. Frequently cited strategies include policy dialogue and advocacy, capacity development, training and technical assistance. In all support areas, UNICEF engagement concentrates on the sub-national level, in line with COs' reported primary focus on local governance (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. UNICEF DLG implementation strategies on national and sub-national levels
 Number of responses, n=58, multiple answers possible



UNICEF DLG partnerships favour traditional partners. At the national level, main UNICEF partners are the sectoral ministries for health (reported by 38 COs), education (41) and social welfare (35), followed by non-governmental organizations (36). Although less common, there are examples of engagement with non-traditional partners, such as the ministries of local government, planning and finance (respectively cited by 24, 28 and 21 COs), civil service institutions (16) and local government associations (19).

Similarly, sub-national UNICEF partners include local civil society actors, sub-national line ministry departments, and local government technical and administrative staff. Frequent partners include non-governmental, community- and faith-based organizations (cited by 41 COs of the 58 that answered this question), sub-national line ministry departments (41), and local government technical and administrative staff (41 and 43, respectively). Elected or appointed local representatives are less frequently identified as partners (respectively reported by 29 and 32 COs).

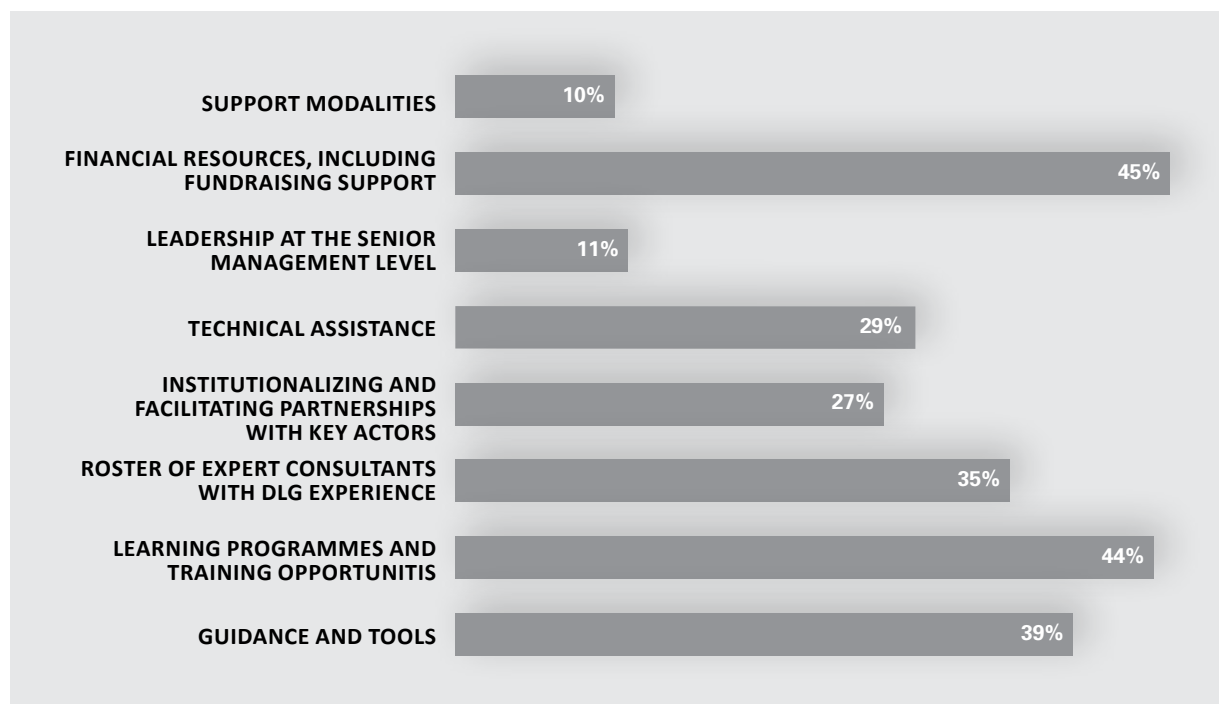
Most UNICEF COs report DLG-related collaboration with other development partners, which include UN agencies, international non-governmental organizations and bi-lateral institution such as GIZ (see Figure 5). However, 5 COs of the 57 answering this question reported no partnerships, and another 5 worked only with international non-governmental organizations. In addition, 15 COs were members or partnered with a DLG technical working group.

UNICEF COs require internal capacity-building across DLG themes. UNICEF COs indicated capacity development is needed in the

areas such as: assessing decentralization policies and their impact; local budgeting and planning; local M&E and data management; Child-friendly Cities implementation; and general decentralization theory and practice. Key CO-identified support needs focus on learning programmes and training opportunities, financial resources for DLG programming, and technical guidance and programming tools (see Figure 6).

Initial findings suggest great potential for UNICEF DLG engagement to yield concrete results for children. However, strengthening M&E frameworks would further emphasize the impact of DLG work. There

Figure 6. Key CO support needs
Number of responses, n=58, multiple answers possible



are several good examples DLG engagement delivering results for children: In Cambodia, UNICEF support to communes, the lowest level of local government, resulted in their social service expenditures increasing from 0 to 11 per cent of the local government budget during a 5-year programme ending in 2015 and totalling 2,076 distinct interventions targeting women and children.⁵³ UNICEF advocacy also led to the approval of the National Strategy on Child-friendly Local Governance by the Nepal Cabinet, ensuring that children's rights are prioritized in local planning and budgeting and directing national block grants worth more than \$311 million per year to disadvantaged children and women.⁵⁴ However, many of the available results statements and indicators focus on processes and outputs as opposed to results and impacts, a gap that can be bridged by improving M&E processes.

53 Cambodia COAR 2014.

54 Nepal COAR 2013.

PART 3. CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

3.7 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

UNICEF has the opportunity to build on its key DLG strengths, particularly those of existing national and on-the-ground engagement, partnerships and sectoral expertise. Strong national and sub-national presence has allowed UNICEF to make a unique contribution to social sector knowledge and leadership, and to bring an on-the-ground perspective to national level policy dialogue, including in the area of decentralization. Local governments, who are frequently committed to child rights, see UNICEF as a welcome partner. UNICEF is also well-placed to collaborate with development partners, specifically UN agencies, adding value by bringing a child lens and a social sector perspective to DLG policy dialogue. Furthermore, UNICEF programming processes may make it easier to finance local government activities than other development partner systems; for example, UNICEF Kenya was among the first agencies to conduct micro-assessments of newly established local governments, enabling it to

provide local government funding with agreed levels of risk and established risk management processes. Top CO-identified opportunities in DLG engagement include improving service delivery and the equity focus, participation and government accountability in DLG policies and processes.

UNICEF COs face DLG programming challenges of both contextual and operational natures. Contextual challenges typically pertain to the specific nature of a country's local government system and common decentralization reform issues, such as the slow pace of the reform process, incomplete implementation resulting in, for instance, unclear or overlapping authority and responsibilities, and underfunded or unfunded local government functions and services. Common CO-identified operational challenges include the time and capacity costs of engagement with multiple local governments, and difficulties with scaling up and ensuring the sustainability of UNICEF-supported local governance interventions. Table 2 summarizes CO responses in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) format.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of UNICEF DLG engagement

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
	Strengths	Weakness
Internal	<p>Strong UNICEF field presence</p> <p>UNICEF relationships with national and sub-national stakeholders</p> <p>UNICEF knowledge of and leadership in social sectors</p> <p>UNICEF relationships with other development partners</p>	<p>Gaps in UNICEF technical capacity (knowledge and number of staff) to effectively engage in DLG</p> <p>Insufficient internal financial resources for DLG programming</p> <p>Challenges in scaling up and ensuring the sustainability of UNICEF-supported DLG interventions</p> <p>Vertical programming silos</p> <p>Absence of clearly articulated entry points for UNICEF engagement</p> <p>Limited CO staff and management buy-in in DLG programming</p> <p>DLG agenda issues beyond UNICEF mandate and capacity</p>
	Opportunities	Threats
External	<p>Increased efficiency in service delivery</p> <p>Improved equity focus, government accountability and citizen participation</p> <p>National push for decentralization reform</p> <p>Demand for UNICEF engagement by local governments</p> <p>Local government willingness and commitment to child rights</p> <p>Conducive DLG environment for collaborating with development partners, including donors and financial institutions</p> <p>Sustainable Development Goals framework</p>	<p>Absence of political will to decentralize or pace the reform process</p> <p>Incomplete decentralization</p> <p>Fragmentation of DLG initiatives supported by various development partners</p> <p>Weak local government capacities</p> <p>Disconnect between local plans and budgets</p> <p>Lack of disaggregated local information and data for planning</p> <p>UNICEF not viewed as a DLG actor</p> <p>Deviation from the usual interactions with key social sector ministry partners</p>

3.8 LESSONS LEARNED

There is tremendous opportunity for DLG engagement to ensure child rights and entrench the equity agenda at the local level. Questionnaire respondents note that DLG programming allows COs to reach out to the most vulnerable areas, children, families and communities; some even consider such programming a prerequisite to achieving country programme objectives. From the perspective of the UNICEF Monitoring Results for Equity System, DLG is a key component of an enabling environment.

Political economy factors must be considered in decentralization support.

Country-specific political economy considerations were frequently raised by DLG questionnaire respondents. One comment stressed that key national decision-makers' political vision of DLG importance varies considerably in its strength. Another respondent noted that external factors, such as "the relatively stable political momentum and economic austerity [that] opened the floor for the policies that bring in efficiency gains," were conducive to successful DLG reform processes. Politics were also reported as a factor on the sub-national level; for example, one respondent observed that investment in hard infrastructure is favoured among local politicians, making it difficult—though not impossible—to prioritize investment for children. However, it was also noted that, to a large extent, local entities are willing to work together on common goals related to children's rights.

Thorough analysis of the country-specific situation—supported by an equally

thorough understanding of DLG theory and practice—is critical to successful programming. The administrative, political and fiscal DLG spheres should be treated comprehensively, as should relationships among different government tiers. In addition, sub-national DLG engagement should align with the national legal and policy framework, using existing sub-national structures and processes to the fullest extent possible.

Strategic partnerships are key. One DLG questionnaire respondent noted that the participation, synergy, and the technical and financial inputs of local partners and stakeholders are essential to complement UNICEF efforts to strengthen local government planning and implementation capacities. Partnerships with other development agencies can also yield important benefits; for instance, partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) may be particularly strategic. UNICEF COs also value strong collaborative relationships with national and regional stakeholders, such as finance and local government ministries. Partnerships with academia, civil service institutions and local government associations are particularly strategic; one respondent reported that partnering with local body associations to mainstream child rights has proven particularly effective, as such associations are responsible for capacity-building and wield influence over all policy changes related to local bodies in the national structures.

Ownership by local counterparts is of paramount importance to sustainability, even when final outputs are not of high quality by international standards.

Systematic capacity-building is essential to ensure that local governments can perform their functions. However, DLG capacity development is challenging for COs. Respondents frequently noted that DLG requires long-term support and investment not always available. One respondent stressed “a huge need for technical assistance to the district level to build capacities across all sectors and to monitor progress, but this implies an investment of staff or consultant time and resources [normally unavailable in quantities] sufficient to meet the real need.” Furthermore, COs found that high government employee turnover and frequent changes in local political leadership make it difficult to engage in capacity development that is sustainable over time.

“Integrated multi-sectoral approaches are vital and worthwhile but intensely challenging” was a CO comment that encapsulates many similar responses. Many COs emphasized the need for multi-sectoral integration in order for UNICEF engagement to make a difference.

UNICEF needs to make clear that its niche and added value to DLG is its child, equity and social sector perspective. DLG is a competitive field where other actors—such as GIZ, UNDP and the World Bank—often have longer-term experience, particularly in highly technical areas. Another CO reported that its DLG breakthrough was the result of UNICEF credibility achieved in its traditional support areas, and of the clear UNICEF intent not to pursue a leadership role but rather to provide support from a child, equity and social sector perspective.

Better documentation of initiatives and best practices is a frequently emphasized need. As articulated by one CO, “Documentation of good practices is essential for policy change at the national level, as well as for scaling or replicating interventions. Concrete achievements on the ground give substance to the national dialogue and trigger increased interest.” Being able to tell the story and document results may also be crucial in garnering internal UNICEF support for DLG programming, including the allocation of financial resources. However, some respondents felt that the long time it takes to see results of DLG engagement can pose challenges.

Engagement in decentralization is an approach new to UNICEF and, as such, may require a rethinking UNICEF positioning. COs suggested that UNICEF must balance support to strengthening local capacities and bottom-up planning with the need to maintain strong partnerships with central line ministries. One DLG questionnaire respondent noted that, while UNICEF remains well-positioned to work with line ministries, devolved environments would require “rethinking and strengthening of UNICEF presence at the local level”, with “the inevitable deviation from the usual interactions with key social sector ministry partners”.

Successful DLG engagement requires strengthened internal capacities. UNICEF staff need to be well equipped in decentralization theory and practice in order to ease policy dialogue and identify the UNICEF DLG niche in the process.

PART 4. RECOMMENDATIONS, WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

A more systematic and strategic approach to DLG engagement would strengthen UNICEF DLG programming aiming to achieve sustainable results for children.

This stocktake demonstrates the existence of a wide substantive base for UNICEF DLG engagement. Albeit ad-hoc and opportunistic, the current approach can be built on and leveraged to help local government and decentralization work for the most vulnerable children.

A systematic approach to UNICEF DLG engagement should include:

- **Thorough analysis of the national DLG context**, including political economy assessments, programming cycle evaluations (e.g. CPD/Mid-term Review) or, where the context warrants, stand-alone DLG analyses will help more accurately forecast and act on opportunities offered by DLG engagement.
- **Strengthening vertical and horizontal programming linkages**, to ensure that the relationship between decentralization and local governance, as well as the linkages among the political, administrative and fiscal DLG spheres, are explicitly recognized and taken into account. This includes, for example, better integration of social accountability in programming to reflect the role of communities and citizens in demanding accountability from local governments, as well as stronger links between ICT innovation and local government systems and processes.
- **Engaging with new strategic partners.** New strategic partners could include local government ministries, local government associations, civil service institutions and development partners such as GIZ, UNDP and World Bank. Such partnerships could potentially resolve some of the issues related to thinly spread resources and support scaling up and sustaining UNICEF DLG programmes. At the same time, these partnerships allow UNICEF to benefit from external DLG expertise while being able to contribute a child, equity and social services perspective.
- **Recognizing the multi-sectoral nature of DLG support** and the importance of DLG collaboration and coordination among UNICEF social policy and sectoral staff.

- **Adapting to the bottom-up DLG environment.** UNICEF engagement with local government should seek to empower communities and local governments to make decisions based on their specific context and priorities. Participatory processes, social accountability, but also data and evidence play important roles in this area.
- **Strengthening M&E of DLG projects and programmes** to not only capture outputs but also to demonstrate how these translate into concrete results for children.
- **Periodic reviews of ongoing DLG programmes to ensure their continued relevance and adjust them** in response to contextual changes or new data and information.
- **Strengthening UNICEF staff capacities**, including management and sector staff, for effective DLG engagement.

4.2 WAY FORWARD

As the first concrete step forward, UNICEF headquarters will closely collaborate with regional and country offices to finalize a series of technical documents and strategies to support CO decentralization and local governance programming. Guidance to be developed includes a strategic framework for decentralization and local government engagement. Also forthcoming is a technical note series on select decentralization and local government

topics; a [Technical Note on Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers](#) is already available, and notes on child participation, gender inclusion, social accountability, peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction are underway.

Further attention will be given to learning and training events on DLG topics. A learning programme on decentralization is currently available through the DLG development partner network (see <http://www.delog.org>). The UNICEF [Public Finance for Children learning course](#) includes a module on fiscal decentralization, and opportunities for a specific UNICEF DLG course are under consideration.

4.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

UNICEF has long recognized the importance of DLG engagement for the achievement of children’s rights. The relevance of DLG support is evidenced by extensive engagement, which has afforded UNICEF a wealth of experience on which to build to achieve tangible results for children.

UNICEF DLG engagement should prioritize transitioning into a strategic and systematic second phase, including: strengthening context analysis; improving vertical and horizontal linkages; engaging in new strategic partnerships with national counterparts and other development actors; bolstering M&E; and increasing internal UNICEF capacities for effective DLG engagement to make local governance and decentralization work for children and their families.

ANNEX 1. DLG QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE ON UNICEF ENGAGEMENT IN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Objective: to assess UNICEF engagement in DLG over the past 5 years, including challenges and opportunities for UNICEF Country Offices.

Use of data: to inform the development of a Stocktake and a Strategic Framework on DLG and to strengthen regional and HQ support for Country Offices.

Target audience: Deputy Representatives/Responsible Staff.

PART 1: BASIC INFORMATION

1 - Region ^{*55}

- CEE/CIS
- MENA
- EAP
- ESA
- WAC
- LAC
- ROSA

2 - Country: *

55 Questions marked with an asterisk are mandatory.

3 - Country status (Please check all that apply) *

- Fragile
- Low Income
- Lower Middle Income
- Upper Middle Income

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING YOUR COUNTRY CONTEXT

This part pertains to the national context only.

KEY TERMS

Decentralization: the transfer of powers, functions and resources from central ministries to line-departments, local governments, quasi-independent government organizations, NGOs and/or the private sector. Functions: tasks related to the delivery of services. This can be part of a service, e.g., the recruitment of primary school teachers; or it can be a full service, e.g., the delivery of primary education. Line-departments: sub-national offices of a central ministry (e.g., the provincial department of health) Local governance: actors, processes and institutions involved in local decision making. Local governments: autonomous institutions within a specific geographical area and within the national legal framework. Local governments are mandated to deliver a variety of services, which can range from waste management and civil registration to public health and education. Local governments typically consist of an appointed/elected representative body and an administrative arm.

4 - Has there been recent or ongoing national decentralization reform in your country? *

- No
- Yes
- Not Sure

5 - If yes, in what year (approximately) was the national decentralization process initiated?

6 - Does your country have a comprehensive decentralization legal and/or policy framework in place? *

- No legal/policy framework exists
- A legal/policy framework is currently under development
- There is a legal/policy framework but it is not functioning
- There is a legal/policy framework and it is functioning
- Not Sure

7 - Do local governments implement social sector related functions? *

- No
- Yes
- Not Sure

8 - If yes, what type of functions? (Please check all that apply)

- Civil Registration
- Social Welfare / Social Protection
- Planning
- WASH
- Education
- Health
- Not Sure
- Other:

PART 3: UNDERSTANDING UNICEF ENGAGEMENT IN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE (DLG)

9 - Is DLG reflected in the following programme processes? (Please check all that apply) *

- UNDAF
- SitAN
- CPD
- MTR
- Annual Reports
- None of the above

10 - Does the country office have or has the country office in the past 5 years had initiatives related to DLG? *

- No
- Yes

11 - If no, why not? If no engagement, this is the last question of the questionnaire

- Not relevant in country context
- No staff/internal capacity to engage
- No clear entry point for engagement
- Other:

12 - If yes, what is the rationale for UNICEF engagement? (Please check all that apply)

- To align with national reform processes
- Requested by counterparts
- To strengthen systems (health, education, child protection, etc.)
- To improve services for children
- To improve equity for children
- Other:

13 - Approximately how long has the country office been supporting DLG-related activities?

- 1 year or less
- 2-4 years
- 5 or more years

14 - Has the country office conducted a comprehensive assessment/analysis of DLG processes other than in the SitAn?

- No
- Yes – Please share the assessment/analysis when returning this questionnaire
- Other:

15 - Does the country office have a strategy/framework for DLG engagement?

- No
- Yes – Please share the strategy/framework when returning this questionnaire

16 - Is country office engagement aligned with a national decentralization plan/strategy?

- Yes
- No
- N/A
- Not Sure
- Other:

17 - Is the focus of country office engagement on national decentralization processes (the system of central-local relations), programming within decentralized environments/local governance (working with local governments on policy, advocacy, capacity building, monitoring, etc.), or both?

- Programming on decentralization processes
- Programming within decentralized environments
- Both
- Not Sure

18 - Does the country office engage in any of the following programme areas? (Please check all that apply)

- Local governance and C4D
- Local governance and gender
- Local governance and peacebuilding
- Local governance and disaster risk planning/reduction
- Local governance and climate change
- Other:

19 - Does the country office support any of the following activities? (Please check all that apply)

- On child rights, equity on child rights, equity assessment, impact of decentralization reform (e.g., on child rights, equity)
- Local government accountability
- Local government planning/integrated local planning
- Local government data collection and M&E
- Creating community demand for local government services
- Child/adolescent participation in local governance
- Child Friendly Cities/Municipalities/Local Governance
- Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors
- Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, re-deployment of personnel, etc.
- Local government one-stop windows
- Sub-national coordination
- Inter-governmental fiscal transfers
- Other topics related to fiscal decentralization
- Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)
- Other:

20 - What are the main types of DLG implementation strategies that the country office is engaged in at national and sub-national level? (please check all that apply)

- Evidence Generation - National Level
- Evidence Generation - Sub-National Level
- Policy Dialogue and Advocacy - National Level
- Policy Dialogue and Advocacy - Sub-National Level
- Capacity Development, Training, TA - National Level
- Capacity Development, Training, TA - Sub-National Level
- Partnerships - National Level
- Partnerships - Sub-National Level
- Innovation - National Level
- Innovation - Sub-National Level
- Other:

21 - Please mention the specific ways in which your country office develops the capacity of its key partners related to DLG? (Please check all that apply)

- Technical support
- Development of tools and guidance
- Workshops/training/conference
- In-country knowledge networks (study-tours, sharing innovation/good practice)
- International knowledge networks (exchange/study-tours)
- Through strategic partnerships e.g., NGOs, local government associations, learning institutes
- N/A
- Other:

22 - What would best describe the nature of DLG work in your country office? (Please check all that apply)

- Cross-sectoral
- Child-protection based
- Education based
- WASH based
- Health based
- Social policy based
- Other:

23 - What is UNICEF's added value in DLG-related activities? (Please check all that apply)

- Convening partners
- Relationships with sectors
- Supporting/financing pilots
- Ensuring a child focus
- Ensuring an equity focus
- Scaling up innovation
- Providing an 'on the ground' perspective
- Government capacity building
- Providing technical support
- Other:

24 - How does your office see the demand in the area of DLG over the next 2-3 years?

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Remaining the same
- Not sure
- Other:

25 - What are the key results of country office initiatives in DLG?

26 - What are the key lessons learned from country office engagement in DLG?

PART 4: PARTNERSHIPS IN DLG

27 - Who are your key partners in working on DLG on National Level? (Please check all that apply) *

- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Inter-ministerial committee on decentralization
- Civil service academy/local government learning institutes
- Local government association
- NGOs
- Media
- Other:

28 - Who are your key partners in working on DLG on Sub-National level? (Please check all that apply) *

- Sub-national line-ministries (e.g. department of education)
- Appointed representatives at sub-national level (e.g. governors)
- Elected representatives at local government level (e.g. alderman, councillors)
- Local government administrative staff (planning officers, financial officers)
- Local government technical/sector staff
- NGOs/CBOs/FBOs
- Community user groups/committees
- Media
- Other:

29 - Who are your key Development Cooperation partners in working on DLG? (Please check all that apply) *

- Bi-laterals (DFID, GIZ, etc.)
- Development banks (World Bank, ADB, etc.)
- UN agencies (UNDP, UNCDF, etc.)
- Other multilaterals (EU, etc.)
- INGOs
- Other:

30 - Is there a Technical Working Group (TWG) related to DLG in your country, and if so, is UNICEF a member? *

- No TWG
- Yes, but UNICEF is NOT a member
- Yes, and UNICEF is a member

PART 5: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNICEF ENGAGEMENT IN DLG

31 - In what areas does your office need additional internal capacity related DLG in terms of staff, resources or knowledge? (Please check all that apply) *

- General capacity on decentralization
- Assessment of decentralization policies/impact
- Accountability approaches
- Local (participatory) planning
- Child friendly local governance
- Child/youth participation in local governance
- Local M&E and data tracking
- Functional mapping/reassignment
- Local (participatory) budgeting
- Inter-governmental fiscal transfer
- Local governance and C4D
- Local governance and disaster risk reduction
- Local governance and resilience/peacebuilding
- Local governance and gender
- Local governance and climate change
- Other:

32 - Please name up to three main challenges for the country office in DLG work.

33 - Please name up to three opportunities for the country office in DLG work.

34 - What is the most needed support from Headquarters and your regional office? (Please check all that apply) *

- Guidance and tools
- Learning programmes and training opportunities (e.g. e-learning courses, conferences)
- Roster of consultants with expertise in the area of DLG
- Institutionalizing and facilitating partnerships with key actors (World Bank, UNDP, etc.)
- Technical assistance (e.g. planning and evaluation of programmes, analyses)
- Leadership at the senior management level
- Financial resources, including fundraising support
- Support modalities (e.g. role of zonal offices, financing modalities for local government initiatives)
- Other:

35 - Please rank top three support needs (as indicated in question 34):

36 - Please indicate available resource/reference materials from your DLG work. (Please check all that apply)

- Terms of References either for technical work or for partnerships
- Publications/Papers
- Case-studies detailing DLG work
- Advocacy materials (human interest stories, presentations)
- Evaluations
- Signed work-plans with government partners on DLG
- Other:

37 - Please provide website links to resource/reference materials below:

38 - Please provide any additional details on the country office DLG-related activities, including any initiatives supported by the country office that you consider innovative practice (in 500 words or less):

39 - Please provide any comments on the questionnaire you may have here:

ANNEX 2. STOCKTAKE METHODOLOGY

UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW

Country Office Annual Reports (COARs) for 2011–2015 were reviewed by searching for key DLG terms and phrases, including: decentralization, decentralisation, devolution, local government, local governance, participatory planning, social accountability, sector decentralization, functional mapping, functional review, functional assignment, functional reassignment, social budgeting, and participatory budgeting. Results were reviewed, and relevant information was organized by CO and type of initiative (i.e. political, administrative or fiscal) in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Limitations: While comprehensive, COARs rarely reflect the entire scope of UNICEF work on the ground. In this stocktake, there are instances where a particular COAR reports limited or no DLG engagement but the DLG questionnaire reveals quite significant programming. Furthermore, information available in COARs is often condensed, creating the possibility of misinterpretation. Finally, categorizing COARs data according by DLG spheres and level of engagement makes the data more manageable, the categories are at times artificial.

Table A1. COAR Review

REPORTING YEAR	DLG TERM INCIDENCE	COARS REVIEWED	PAGES REVIEWED	COs REPORTING DLG ENGAGEMENT IN COARs
2011	952	108	224	52
2012	904	109	212	49
2013	1,014	118	218	46
2014	1,325	111	277	57
2015*	319	116	141	48

Note: In 2015, the COAR reporting format was changed, reducing the overall length of COARs and thereby resulting in a reduced number of DLG related ‘hits’.

Table A2. Internal interviews

COUNTRY OR REGION	CONTACT	INTERVIEW VENUE
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	Elena Gaia	Skype
Middle East and North Africa	Samman Thapa	Skype
East Asia and the Pacific	Dominik Horneber	EAP regional Skype discussion
Latin America and the Caribbean	Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman	Skype
South Asia	Alessandra Heinemann	Skype
Bangladesh	Thomas George	Skype
India	Tejinder Sandhu	Skype
Nepal	Anjali Pradhan	Skype
Pakistan	Gillian McFarland	Skype
Iraq	Alexandra De Sousa	In person
Albania	Alketa Zazo	Skype
Armenia	Artur Ayvazov	Skype
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Selma Kazic	Skype
Bulgaria	Milena Harizanova	Skype
Kyrgyzstan	Gulsana Turusbekova	Email
Moldova	Elena Laur Veronica Sandu	Skype
Romania	Eduard Petrescu	Skype
Tajikistan	Yusufkhoja Kurbonkhojaev	Skype
Turkey	Iraz Öykü Soyalp	Skype
Ethiopia	Remy Pigois	Skype
Uganda	Diego Angemi	In person
Somalia	Diana Vakarelska	Skype

COUNTRY AND REGIONAL OFFICES AND REGIONAL INTERVIEWS

In 2014 and 2015, several formal and informal discussions took place with country and regional offices, providing the opportunity to learn about UNICEF CO DLG work in more depth than the COARs could provide.

DLG QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was developed to receive more in-depth information (see Annex 1). The questionnaire was reviewed and tested by select COs (Albania, Bangladesh, India and Myanmar).

The questionnaire was targeted at deputy representatives in order to get a cross-sectoral perspective of programming. In East Asia and the Pacific and in West Africa, social policy network members were contacted instead. Several emergency situations in Middle Eastern and North African countries allowed only a select number of COs to complete the DLG questionnaire.

A total of 117 UNICEF COs were contacted, and 68 COs completed the questionnaire in mid-2015.

Limitations: While the questionnaire required minimal technical knowledge, it is possible that differences in understanding led to an over- or under-reporting of initiatives. The lack of a cross-sectoral perspective among respondents, time constraints in completing the questionnaire, or a tendency to over-report initiatives to UNICEF headquarters may have caused additional errors.

This stocktake includes several examples of CO DLG programming. Examples were derived from the material included in COARs and DLG questionnaire responses. In some cases, examples were taken from CO-provided documentation. Example selection was primarily based on relevance, clarity, availability of results and impact information, and attaining a fair regional representation with the overall example set. While included examples may constitute best practices, inclusion itself does not imply any endorsement of the approach or warranty that it represents best practice.

ANNEX 3. KEY DLG CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

DEFINITION OF DECENTRALIZATION

There is no universally accepted definition of decentralization. Before analyzing UNICEF DLG engagement, it is therefore crucial to establish a common language on key terms and definitions.

Decentralization can be defined as the transfer of responsibility and authority for planning, management, fundraising, resource allocation and other functions from a central government and its agencies to: (a) levels of local government; (b) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; (c) nongovernmental and voluntary organizations; and/or (d) field units of central government ministries or agencies.⁵⁶

TYPES OF DECENTRALIZATION

The three different types of decentralization are devolution, delegation and deconcentration.⁵⁷

- **Devolution is the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions to levels of (elected) local government** (e.g. communes, municipalities, panchayats, counties, district and provincial councils). In devolution, local governments are considered autonomous and independent,⁵⁸ operating within the bounds of the national legislative framework. However, in most cases, central oversight and control persist in various forms, including funding conditionalities. Devolution is strongly associated with political decentralization.
- **Delegation is the transfer of responsibility for public functions to semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations (e.g. public housing corporations) and/or non-governmental and voluntary organizations.**⁵⁹ In delegation the central government exercises its control through a contractual relationship that enforces accountability from the receiving authority.⁶⁰ However, through

⁵⁶ Based on Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1983).

⁵⁷ In addition to these forms, services are often localized by *direct provision* by the central government (see Boex and Edwards 2015) or through *divestment*, which involves contracting out partial service provision or administrative functions, deregulation or full privatization of service delivery functions.

⁵⁸ Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1983).

⁵⁹ In some contexts, delegation is used in reference to local governments. It describes situations where local governments have limited discretion over devolved functions due to, for instance, conditional funding.

⁶⁰ Aaron Schneider (2003). "Decentralization: Conceptualization and Measurement," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Fall 2003, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 32–56.

this contractual arrangement, delegation also allows for some autonomy in decision-making, albeit less than devolution. Responsibility for the transferred function ultimately lies with the authority that delegated the function.⁶¹

- **Deconcentration is the transfer of responsibility for public functions from the central government to field units of central government ministries or agencies** (e.g. district health department or provincial department of education). It is a shifting of the workload from centrally located officials to staff or offices outside of the national capital.⁶² Under deconcentration, the central government retains authority over the field office and exercises that authority through the hierarchical channels of the central government bureaucracy.⁶³

A country may have a predominant focus on a particular type of decentralization, but in practice decentralization typically entails a mix of devolution and deconcentration. The predominant type of decentralization may differ by sector: some sectors may be more devolved, whereas others are more deconcentrated. A particular service may even be partly devolved, delegated and deconcentrated. For instance, in the delivery of primary education, a central education ministry may be responsible for policy development and regulation (centralized function); the provincial department of education may be responsible for inspection of primary schools (deconcentrated function); the actual delivery of primary

61 Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1983).

62 Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1983).

63 Schneider (2003).

education may be the responsibility of both municipalities (devolved function) and charter schools (delegated function); while the maintenance of school buildings may again fall under municipalities (devolved function). In other contexts, the situation may be more straightforward; for instance, in Indonesia, most social and economic functions, including primary education and health services, are fully devolved to local district and municipal governments.⁶⁴

There are important differences between devolved and deconcentrated structures.

Local governments are political entities with decision-making power, which can be held accountable by their electorate. Deconcentrated bodies are implementing agents of the central government, with limited decision-making power and direct accountability to the central government.

Whether a function is devolved or deconcentrated has key programming implications.

In a devolved context, the bottom-up approach empowers local governments and communities to make decisions based on local needs and preferences. Deconcentrated systems can take a much more top-down and uniform approach. (See Table A3).

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES OF DECENTRALIZATION

The theoretical argument for decentralization focuses on bringing government and decision-making closer to citizens.

It proposes that local governments with close proximity to their constituencies are better

64 Jamie Boex (2015). "The Vertical Assignment of Functions and Expenditure Responsibilities," Working Paper. Local Public Sector Initiative.

Table A3. Devolution vs. deconcentration

CHARACTERISTICS	DEVOLUTION	DECONCENTRATION
Local entity	Local government	Local administration
Legal characteristics	Corporate body (can own assets, engage in financial transactions, bring suit and be sued in its own name)	Part of national or state administration
Political characteristics	Own political leadership (typically elected local council and/or executive); adopts own budget	No political decision-making power
Administrative characteristics	Local government appoints own officials and has discretion over own human resources	Local staff are hierarchical part of national civil service
Fiscal characteristics	<p>Has own budget (separate from higher-level government)</p> <p>Has own budget account; can carry forward balance from year to year</p> <p>Can raise funds and retain own revenues in own budget</p> <p>Can incur liabilities by borrowing on own account</p>	<p>Budget is part of national budget as (sub-)organization</p> <p>Budget is approved by higher level government (e.g. parliament)</p> <p>Finances are part of the Consolidated Treasure Account</p> <p>Any revenue belongs to the central government</p>

Source: Adapted from Boex (2015).

aware of local resources, needs and preferences, including the needs and preferences of vulnerable groups. Local governments are considered more responsive and efficient in matching the provision of local services to the needs of their constituents than a remote central government.

Specific objectives of decentralization reform may include: i) the deepening of democracy through the establishment of additional layers of democratic governance and enhancing opportunities for local participation; ii) improving service delivery through more efficient local decision-making, better coordination and closer oversight of service providers; and iii) more efficient and effective use

of public resources. In the long term, decentralization is argued to contribute to local economic development, economic growth and overall poverty reduction.

In practice, various social, political and economic reasons may contribute to the initiation of decentralization reform processes. For instance, in some countries, decentralization has come as a result of internal conflict or from pressure for more regional/ethnic control in political processes. In other cases, decentralization may have been seen as a way to garner political support at the local level, or may have resulted from donor pressure.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Per Tideman and Jesper Steffensen (2010). ‘Source material on decentralisation and improved service delivery for the poor’. Danida.

DECENTRALIZATION SPHERES

As alluded to in its three objectives, decentralization has political, administrative and fiscal spheres of support.

Ideally, a reform process involves all three spheres, as they are interdependent. However, in many countries, and depending on the rationale for decentralization reform and the political economy factors, certain aspects may be emphasized over others.

Political decentralization refers to the transfer of political power and decision making authority to the local level through the establishment of (elected) local governments. Political decentralization is sometimes referred to as democratic decentralization.

Political decentralization is the primary mechanism through which citizen preferences are represented in local public decision-making.⁶⁶ Political decentralization can be divided into four components: 1) institutional arrangement for separation of powers among executive, legislative and judicial bodies at the local level; 2) election laws and electoral systems; 3) the nature (existence and functioning) of party systems and party laws; and 4) local participation and accountability mechanisms.⁶⁷

66 Gurkan, Asli, Serdar Yilmaz, and Ghazia Aslam. 2010. "How to Note: A Framework for the Assessment of Political Decentralization." *Social Development Notes* 124. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

67 Jamie Boex and Serdar Yilmaz (2010). *An Analytical Framework for Assessing Decentralized Local Governance and the Local Public Sector*, The Urban Institute Center on International Development and Governance.

Administrative decentralization⁶⁸ refers to "the institutional architecture—structure, systems and procedures—that supports the implementation and management of responsibilities under the formal control of sub-national actors."⁶⁹

It encompasses the transfer of public service delivery responsibilities to sub-national actors (functional assignment),⁷⁰ coordination among local actors; administrative functions such as procurement and local financial and human resource management; local service delivery; and data collection and M&E.

Fiscal decentralization involves the reallocation of resources from the central government to levels of local government and field units of central line ministries and agencies. Fiscal decentralization "is the set of rules that defines roles and responsibilities among different levels of government for fiscal functions, including planning and budget preparation, budget execution, revenue generation, the intergovernmental allocation of budgetary resources and public borrowing."⁷¹ Fiscal decentralization is a crucial form of decentralization, as it provides the necessary financial resources for the imple-

68 There are multiple interpretations of administrative decentralization. In addition to the definition provided here, the term "administrative decentralization" can alternatively describe: (a) the sub-national territorial-administrative structure of the public sector; (b) the downward transfer of administrative authority and responsibility; and (c) deconcentration.

69 See USAID (2009). *Democratic Decentralization Programming Handbook*.

70 Functional reassignment and expenditure assignment are similar, but functional reassignment can be broader in scope. Expenditure assignment often treats functions as one-dimensional, e.g. "primary education." However, functions can be further unbundled in functional areas, such as policy and regulation; financing; provision and production. See for instance Boex (2015).

71 Boex and Yilmaz (2010).

mentation of transferred public functions. This is often referred to as “finance follows function” principle.

Fiscal decentralization is traditionally divided into four ‘pillars’, including: 1) the assignment of expenditure responsibilities; 2) local government’s own revenue sources and their administration (such as levying local taxes, and imposing fines or user fees); 3) the transfer of finances such as grants and subsidies from central to lower levels of government, and the development of formulas that allocate such finances among local governments (e.g. equalization formulas); and 4) arrangements for local government borrowing and debt management.

Political, administrative and fiscal decentralization each hold specific relevance for UNICEF. Political decentralization is important, as it plays a critical role in inclusive participation and accountability. Essentially, political decentralization aims to ensure that local preferences, including priorities identified by women, children and the most vulnerable groups, are represented in local decision-making. Administrative decentralization is highly relevant to UNICEF, as it supports the management and implementation of key responsibilities under the formal control of sub-national actors, including service delivery responsibilities that have a key impact on children. Fiscal decentralization is equally relevant, as it provides the financial resources

Table A4. Decentralization opportunities and risks

DECENTRALIZATION TYPE	OPPORTUNITIES	RISKS
Political decentralization	Participation by children, women and vulnerable groups Improved transparency and strengthened accountability	Local elite capture Increase in/consolidation of existing gender and social inequality gaps
Administrative decentralization	Strengthened (effective and efficient) service delivery systems More effective and equitable use of public servants (teachers, doctors, and so on) More transparent and accountable procurement Enhanced sub-national data	Insufficient or overlapping assignment of service delivery functions, resulting in service delivery gaps Reduced technical quality of services due to insufficient transfer of technical and management capacity
Fiscal decentralization	Equitable geographical distribution of financial resources Increased fiscal space through local tax collection Faster economic growth	Insufficient or unequal distribution of financial resources between geographical areas and within a community

for service delivery, including to children, and also has important implications in terms of equitable geographical distribution of financial resources, as well as the distribution of financial resources within a community.

DECENTRALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

Decentralization is essentially a political exercise that entails a redistribution of power and resources. As such, different push and pull factors may exist in varied national contexts. The outcome of the process may therefore reflect a political compromise rather than the best contextual fit.

When implemented well, decentralization presents some key opportunities, including for children. Similarly, haphazard implementation may present some key risks (see Table A4). UNICEF DLG programmatic responses in should strive to minimize the risks and capitalize on the opportunities the reform process has to offer to strengthen outcomes for children.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Local governance involves local actors, mechanisms, processes and institutions. It refers to how local decision-making is carried out. Essentially, local governance is about:

- Who is participating in decision-making, how this process is organized and to what extent decisions reflect community needs;
- How decisions are translated into action and who is involved in the implementation process; and
- Available resources and their allocation.

Decentralization creates a framework for local governance. The local level cannot be seen in isolation, as it is influenced by vertical decentralization processes (political, administrative and fiscal decentralization). This also implies that root causes of local bottlenecks to child rights may lie elsewhere. UNICEF engagement in local governance should therefore ideally be framed within the context of a national decentralization framework.

ANNEX 4. UNICEF DLG PROGRAMMING COUNTRY PROFILES

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Albania	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2012)	Policy dialogue and advocacy for child rights in national decentralization reform framework	Local government accountability	Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Local government one-stop windows Local government data collection, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Strengthening social services (child protection)	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	
Angola	ESA	COARs (2014, 2013, 2011)	Policy dialogue for child rights in decentralization reform framework			Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Child-friendly Cities/municipalities
Argentina	LAC	COAR (2015, 2014, 2012, 2011)		Child participation Community participation	Capacities of local officials in the management of social policies specifically aimed at children and adolescents through the development of three manuals: 1. Coordination and articulation of social policies and programmes 2. Municipal planning and management 3. Evaluation and monitoring of social policies and programmes.	Local government planning and integrated local planning [Participatory] municipal budgeting	
Armenia	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013)			Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Azerbaijan	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire		Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender			Local governance and Communication for Development (C4D) Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Bangladesh	SA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012)	Policy dialogue equity	Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Local government one-stop windows Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery, e.g. water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health services	Fiscal grants (WASH) Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Belarus	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire		Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Belize	LACRO	COARs (2015, 2014)	Establishment of national steering committee	Strengthening participatory local governance and institutionalizing accountability mechanisms Local governance and gender	Rapid Assessment of Local Government's Capacities tool focused on five pre-selected institutional capacity sub-dimensions: 1) Legal framework 2) Local public policies 3) Public services 4) Transparency and accountability 5) Citizen participation		Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance Environmental sustainability
Benin	WCA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014)	Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity) Development of guidance for preparing Communal Development Plans (in collaboration with WB and GIZ)	Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Local government one-stop windows Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Bhutan	SA	COAR (2011)			Local government service delivery		
Bolivia	LAC	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning and budgeting	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Bosnia and Herzegovina	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Brazil	LACRO	DLG questionnaire (COAR 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Bulgaria	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2012, 2011)	Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Burkina Faso	WCA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2011)		Local government accountability Social accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Other topics related to fiscal decentralization	Local governance and C4D Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Burundi	ESA	COARs (2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Policy dialogue/advocacy for child rights in national decentralization reform framework		Strengthen local government service delivery (WASH)	local government planning	
Cambodia	EAP	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Policy dialogue and advocacy for child rights in national decentralization reform framework Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance community participation Gender and local governance Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, re-deployment of personnel, etc. Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Cameroon	WCA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Sub-national coordination Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery (WASH)	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
CAR	WCA	DLG questionnaire			Sub-national coordination: sub-national cluster coordination in WASH, nutrition, education and child protection		Focus on early humanitarian recovery in a context where state authorities are yet to redeploy
Chad	WCA	DLG questionnaire			Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and peacebuilding

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Chile	LAC	DLG questionnaire COAR (2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance			Participation and indigenous people Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
China	EAP	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2011)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Local government one-stop windows Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance Local governance and disaster risk reduction
Colombia	LAC	COARs (2015, 2014) Discussions Documents provided by CO		Local government accountability Child participation	Local government data collection and M&E Support planning and services (mine action)	Local government planning and integrated local planning and budgeting Budget transparency	Local governance and peacebuilding/mine-action
Costa Rica	LAC	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Advocacy for child rights in decentralization reform framework		Strengthening service delivery (child protection)	Local government planning and integrated local planning/budgeting	Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance Peacebuilding and violence prevention
Croatia	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COAR (2011)			Creating community demand for local government services		Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Local governance and climate change Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Cuba	LAC	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014)			Sub-national coordination		Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Dominican Republic	LAC	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2012)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Sub-national coordination Strengthening local government service delivery (education, child protection) Creating community demand for local government services	Participatory planning and budgeting	Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
DRC	WCA	DLG questionnaire COAR (2015)		Local governance and gender	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and peacebuilding
Ecuador	LAC	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013)	Advocacy for child rights in decentralization reform framework		Strengthening service delivery	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and Disaster risk reduction
El Salvador	LAC	COARs (2014, 2013)			Sub-national coordination	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Ethiopia	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Local governance and gender Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Community participation	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Gambia	WCARO	DLG questionnaire (no engagement reported) COAR (2011)					Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Local governance and C4D
Georgia	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COAR (2011)			Strengthening service delivery (education)		Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Ghana	WCA	COARs (2015, 2014, 2012)		Local government accountability	Local government data collection and M&E	Local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	
Guatemala	LAC	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Strengthen local government service delivery (child protection and WASH) Modelling of child protection services Inter-institutional coordination		Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Guinea	WCA	DLG questionnaire		Local government accountability Local governance and gender	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Guinea Bissau	WCA	DLG questionnaire	Assessment impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance and climate change Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Guyana/ Suriname	LAC	COAR (Suriname 2015)		Participatory planning			Local governance and gender
Haiti	LAC	DLG questionnaire		Local government accountability	Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Sub-national coordination Strengthening service delivery (social welfare) Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Honduras	LAC	COARs (2015, 2013)			Strengthening service delivery for education, early childhood development (ECD) and WASH Creating community demand for local government services	Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) WASH	
India	SA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Policy dialogue on child rights	Local government accountability community participation Local governance and gender	Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery (WASH)	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and disaster risk reduction

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Indonesia	EAP	COARs (2015, 2014-2011)	Advocacy and policy dialogue (policy briefs) Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)		Local government data collection and M&E Strengthen local government service delivery (ECD, child protection and education)	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Iran	MENA	COAR (2011)			Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Iraq	MENA	COAR (2014)				Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	
Jamaica	LAC	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2012)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Local government data collection and M&E Strengthen local government service delivery (child Protection)	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local sport for development
Jordan	MENA	DLG questionnaire COAR (2012)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services		Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Kazakhstan	CEE/CIS	COARs (2014, 2012, 2011)			Local government data collection and M&E		Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Kenya	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Sub-national coordination Strengthening and modeling local government service delivery Creating community demand for local government services M&E	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Kyrgyzstan	CEE/CIS	COARs (2015, 2014, 2012)		Community participation	Strengthen local government service delivery (ECD and health)	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and peacebuilding

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Kosovo	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COAR (2014)	Assessment impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination strengthening service delivery Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Lao PDR	EAP	COARs (2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)			Strengthening local government service delivery	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers (operational block grants) Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Lebanon	MENA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2012, 2011)			Local government one-stop windows Sub-national coordination		Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Lesotho	ESA	DLG questionnaire COAR (2015)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Local government one-stop windows Development of council level referral systems (one stop shops) and integrated community development Creating community demand for local government services		Local governance and C4D
Liberia	WCA	COAR (2013)			Strengthening local government service delivery (HIV/AIDS, child protection, ECD)		
Libya	MENA	COAR (2015)			Strengthening service delivery (education) 'Together for Children', a national campaign encompassing 15 municipalities, aimed at serving as a vehicle to deliver UNICEF's interventions and advocate for children's rights at the community level		Local governance and peacebuilding
Malaysia	EAP	COAR (2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance			
Maldives	SA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013)	Assessment impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)		Local government data collection and M&E Results-based management	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Local governance and climate change

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Malawi	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Functional assignment (youth, education) Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Mali	WCA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013)	Support decentralization policy	Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Sub-national coordination Strengthen service delivery (WASH)	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	
Mauritania	WCA	COARs (2014, 2011)			Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Mauritius	ESA	COAR (2012)				Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Moldova	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Support national decentralization and local governance framework Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional reassignment (education) Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Other topics related to fiscal decentralization	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Mongolia	EAP	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Montenegro	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2012)			M&E Establishment of functional services for vulnerable children at local level		Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Morocco	MENA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Community participation Local governance and gender	Local government data collection and M&E	Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Myanmar	EAP	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)			Strengthening local government service delivery (education, health, WASH) Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and peacebuilding
Nepal	SA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery (WASH)	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction (climate change) Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Nicaragua	LAC	COARs (2015, 2012)		Mainstreaming child rights focus in municipal policy and programmes (regional policy for children and adolescents in Southern and Northern Autonomous Regions in the Caribbean Coast) Child participation	Local government data collection and M&E		
Niger	WCA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance Gender and local governance Participatory planning	Functional review/mapping Strengthening service delivery (HIV/AIDS, social services) Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding
Nigeria	WCA	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2011)		Local government accountability Gender inclusion and local governance	Strengthening service delivery, e.g. Model Local Government Authority (LGA) Approach, WASH LGA performance contracts Child survival		Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Pacific Islands	EAP	COAR (2014)			Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Strengthening service delivery (birth registration, social welfare)		
Pakistan	SA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Local government data collection and M&E Functional mapping (child protection) Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery (birth registration, child protection, health)	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Local governance and climate change

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Panama	LAC	COARs (2015, 2011)			Strengthening service delivery (health, WASH)	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and indigenous people Local governance and climate change
Peru	LAC	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Consensus-based monitoring (government and civil society)	Sub-national coordination Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Regional and local policies and budgets for children	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Philippines	EAP	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Local government accountability Participation in local planning and budgeting	Civil service reform, including merit-based systems, redeployment of personnel, etc. Sub-national coordination Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government data collection and M&E strengthening service delivery (child protection, ECD, health, justice, nutrition, social welfare, WASH)	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Resource mobilization	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
PNG	EAP	DLG questionnaire COAR (2014)			Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Romania	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COAR (2011)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Russian Federation	CEE/CIS	COAR (2011)					Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Rwanda	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E	Local government participatory planning/integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Senegal	WCA	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)	Policy dialogue for child rights in decentralization reform framework Training on decentralization reform	Child and adolescent participation in local governance Community participation (including through U-report)	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Strengthening local government services (child protection) Local government data collection and M&E (including through innovation)	Local government, participatory planning and integrated local planning Local government and [participatory] budgeting (including budget tracking)	Child-friendly local governance C4D innovation (e.g. U-report)
Serbia	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Local government data collection and M&E	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Sierra Leone	WCA	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012)		Local government accountability	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Strengthening local government services (child protection) Local government data collection and M&E	Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Somalia	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Local government accountability Community participation Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination Modelling of decentralized service delivery – delegation of functions form central to local government Strengthening service delivery Creating community demand for local government services Data & M&E	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Local government budgeting (including budget tracking) Local government Participatory planning and integrated local planning	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Civic education/C4D
South Africa	ESA	COARs (2013, 2011)			Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors		
Sri Lanka	SA	COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2011)			Functional mapping (ECD) Strengthening local government service delivery (child protection, nutrition, WASH) Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E		
Sudan	MENA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2012, 2011)			Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Child-friendly Cities (as of 2012)

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Tajikistan	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance	Local government data collection and M&E Strengthening service delivery	Local government planning and integrated local planning Financial management	Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance and disaster risk reduction Local government planning and child rights Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Tanzania	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2013, 2012, 2011)			Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Strengthening service delivery (birth registration, nutrition)	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Thailand	EAP	COAR (2014)				Local government planning and integrated local planning;	Local governance and peace-building
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COARs (2012, 2011)			Local government data collection and M&E	Fiscal transfers from the central to the local government in the area of education Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	CO was engaged in Child-friendly Cities but decided to pull out after 2 years (see DLG questionnaire response to question 16)
Turkey	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire Discussion with CO COARs (2014, 2013, 2011)					Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Uganda	ESA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011)		Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender Social accountability (via U-report)	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Sub-national coordination Strengthening service delivery (birth registration, ECD)	Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance and peacebuilding Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction

COUNTRY	REGION	SOURCE	NATIONAL DLG FRAMEWORK	POLITICAL DLG	ADMINISTRATIVE DLG	FISCAL DLG	THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT
Ukraine	CEE/CIS	COAR (2015)			Coordination		
Uruguay	LAC	COAR (2011)				Local government planning and integrated local planning	
Uzbekistan	CEE/CIS	DLG questionnaire COAR (2015)		Local government accountability	Sub-national coordination Local government data collection and M&E Creating community demand for local government services Local governance and child rights monitoring	Inter-governmental fiscal transfers Other topics related to fiscal decentralization Local government planning and integrated local planning Local government budgeting (including budget tracking)	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction
Venezuela	LAC	COAR (2012)					Local governance and C4D
Viet Nam	EAP	DLG questionnaire COARs (2014, 2013, 2011)	Policy dialogue in decentralization reform framework Assessment of impact of decentralization reform (e.g. on child rights, equity)	Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Functional mapping/reassignment with sectors Sub-national coordination Strengthening service delivery (education) Local government data collection and M&E	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D Local governance, disaster risk planning and risk reduction Child-friendly Cities, municipalities and local governance
Yemen	MENA	DLG questionnaire COARs (2015, 2014, 2013)		Local government accountability Child and adolescent participation in local governance Local governance and gender	Sub-national coordination	Local government planning and integrated local planning	Local governance and C4D

ACRONYMS

C4D	Communication for development
CBO	Community-based organization
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	[UNICEF] Country office
COAR	Country Office Annual Report
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRA	Commission for Revenue Allocation (Kenya)
DfID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DLG	Decentralization and local governance
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
EU	European Union
GIZ	German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation
HQ	Headquarters
ICT	Information and communications technology
KILA	Kerala Institute of Local Administration
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LGU	Local Government Unit (Philippines)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SA	South Asia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SitAn	Situation Analysis
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WCA	West and Central Africa

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