2023 Synthesis of UNESCO Evaluations

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Abstract and Acknowledgements

Abstract

Over the past six years, UNESCO's Internal Oversight Services Evaluation Office has commissioned a Synthesis[1] of corporate and decentralized evaluations in the fields covered by the Organization's Major Programmes namely Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information, Programme-related and Corporate Services. The Synthesis enables the Organization to demonstrate its accountability to Member States through an impactful synthesis of performance against Outputs and Outcomes as defined in the 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 documents as well as against the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and impact, efficiency, and sustainability. The 2023 Synthesis of UNESCO evaluations draws on information contained in 36 evaluations – five corporate and 31 decentralized evaluations. The analysis shows that the Organization is making good progress in a range of areas including demonstrating a sharper focus on SDGs, developing fast as an agile, flexible, learning Organization, reimagining its convening power and influence, and deepening and diversifying partnerships. Good progress was also noted with sixty-one percent of the evaluations considered covering programmes and projects that respond to Global Priority Africa, focused entirely or in some part on the continent, and spread across all areas of UNESCO's mandate. The 2023 Synthesis also identifies areas of improvement particularly with respect to quality and use of monitoring data, continued attention to Global Priority Gender Equality, focus on priority groups and inclusion and improving internal coherence. The Management Response to these issues can be found in Appendix 4 of this report and demonstrates UNESCO's commitment to accountability and learning.

The Synthesis also assessed the quality of evaluations, and the findings show improvement in this regard particularly with respect to decentralized evaluation reports. Targeted capacity building and ongoing backstopping support including webinars and on-site capacity building in field offices continue to make an important contribution to lifting the quality of evaluation practice. The Synthesis also notes the emergence of innovative practices to inspire evaluation commissioners and practitioners when thinking about design and implementation of evaluations.

Acknowledgements

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1. These reports were previously referred to as yearly Synthetic Reviews of UNESCO evaluations.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Acronyms

ARNEC	Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
BIOPALT	Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project
BSP	Bureau of Strategic Planning
CASIE	Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education
CEART	Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CI	Communication and Information Sector
CILAC	Open Science Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean
CLT	Culture Sector
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CST	Competency Standard for Teachers
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FO	Field Office
HQ	Headquarters
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GEC	Global Education Coalition
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPGE	Global Priority Gender Equality
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IHP	Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOS	Division of Internal Oversight Services

IOS/EVA	IOS Evaluation Office
KFIT	Korean Funds-in-Trust
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
MDP	Multi-Donor Partnership
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIL	Media and Information Literacy
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MOST	Management of Social Transformations
MP	Major Programme
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee
O3	Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of *the Conflict* in the Republic of *South Sudan*
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
SHS	Social and Human Sciences Sector
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
TBWG	Trans Boundary Working Group
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCF	United Nations Cooperation Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WHO	World Health Organization
QPR	Quadrennial Periodic Report

1. Introduction

1.   The UNESCO Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) provides the Director-General with independent and evidence-based advice on improvements needed in strategy, design, delivery, and operations of UNESCO's initiatives. Towards this end, IOS Evaluation Office has been providing leadership and oversight across a broad suite of evaluations undertaken from within the UNESCO family since 2017. This year's report draws on evidence and insights gathered from 36 (five corporate and thirty-one decentralized) evaluations covering a range of strategic outcomes and outputs as described in UNESCO 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2029 and the 41 C/5 Programme and Budget 2022-2025 documents.

1.1   Rationale

2.   Over the past six years, the UNESCO IOS Evaluation Office has commissioned a Synthesis[2] of corporate and decentralized evaluations in the fields covered by the Organization's Major Programmes namely Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information, Programme-related and Corporate Services. The Synthesis serves four key purposes:

- Demonstrates accountability and transparency to Member States and partners through a clear and impactful Synthesis of performance against Outcomes and Outputs as defined in the 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 UNESCO strategic and programming documents as well as against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. It also highlights areas where UNESCO contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals relevant to its mandate such as the 2063 African Union Agenda.

- Identifies cross-cutting issues and lessons learned that can be used to improve the delivery on initiatives, programmes and individual projects, enhance evaluation practice more broadly within UNESCO Headquarters (HQ) and Field Offices (FO), and continue to inform organizational policy and strategy.

- Builds a stronger evidence base about how programme initiatives, implementation modalities and ways of working contribute to the Outcomes and Outputs set for the Organization.

- Enables UNESCO's ability to continue its journey to build a 'culture of results' where it is better able to report on its performance and successes, learn from failures, and decisions are based on robust evidence of what works.

3.   The Synthesis also assesses the quality of UNESCO evaluations, as a contribution to the Organization's ongoing commitment to meeting high standards, aligned with the *UNESCO evaluation policy 2022-2029* and with *United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and standards.*

1.2   Synthesis Questions

4.   The Synthesis has analysed the evidence and information contained in the evaluation reports, both corporate and decentralized evaluations, to provide answers to four key questions:

- What **Programme Results achievements** are evident against the Organization's Outcomes and Outputs as defined in the UNESCO 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 and the 41/ C/5 Programme and Budget 2022-2025?

- What is the overall assessment of **UNESCO activities and results against OECD/DAC evaluation criteria** in relation to relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability and their contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals relevant to its mandate such as the 2063 African Union Agenda?

- What **cross-cutting issues** emerge from the Synthesis to shed light on UNESCO's achievements and challenges and that appear to help and/or hinder UNESCO's performance against the C/5 Results?

- What overall conclusions can be made with respect to the quality of **UNESCO evaluation reports against the Quality Checklist of UNEG?**[3]

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2.   These reports were previously referred to as the yearly Synthetic Reviews of UNESCO evaluations.

3.   http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/607

1.3   Report Structure

5.   Over the years, the structure, and the analytical format of the Syntheses has evolved iteratively to ensure it is well-aligned to meet the needs of the Executive Board and other UNESCO stakeholders and to integrate important developments in the wider environment to better narrate the story of UNESCO's contributions by identifying achievements and challenges. These developments reflect the evolving, agile, learning principles that underpin the Synthesis and this year's report is a testament to these intentions. The structure and analysis of the 2023 Synthesis has been designed to reflect the spirit of the new UNESCO 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy and is organised around its four interlinked and cross-cutting strategic objectives (SOs)[4]. In addition, a fifth enabling objective[5] has been added to take account of evaluations undertaken to assess and monitor the Organization's responsiveness, preparedness, and adaptability to effectively implement its mandate from 2022 to 2029.

6.   This *Introductory Part I* is followed by:

- *Part II*, which provides an overview of the portfolio of evaluations considered in this Synthesis including coverage of Major Programmes, SDGs, and Outputs as described in 41 C/5 Programme and Budget

- *Part III,* which highlights cross-cutting issues that emerged and continue to be of significance for UNESCO and identifies challenges and opportunities for the Organization

- *Part IV,* which summarises achievements of UNESCO's actions against the outcomes and outputs as defined in the 41 C/5 Programme and Budget under the Major Programmes and the Programme-related and Corporate Services

- *Part V* which presents a high-level analysis of UNESCO's performance against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria; and

- *Part VI* which highlights the quality of the evaluations themselves against the UNESCO Quality Assessment Template[6]

1.4   Approach

7.   The IOS Evaluation Office played an important role in following up with the Executive Offices in the Programme Sectors, and with the relevant programme-related and corporate services and with Field Offices to access completed evaluations and undertook an initial pre-screening[7] to ensure the reports contained the relevant information and the minimum quality requirement that define an independent external evaluation to be considered for the Synthesis. Principles of collaboration and engagement underpinned every step of the approach to ensure the usefulness of the Synthesis for the various stakeholders.

8.   Thematic analysis of thirty-six evaluation reports was undertaken to gather the evidence against the key Synthesis questions identified in section 1.2. All evaluations were completed over 2022/early 2023 and common threads were identified across the evaluations relating to UNESCO's strategic objectives and outcomes including issues that helped and/or hindered the Organization's ability to achieve strong performance. An analytical framework was developed to map the evaluations across the appropriate outcome and output areas as defined in the 41 C/4 2022-2029 and the 41 C/5 documents and to the SDG's the evaluations primarily related to. This mapping was validated with the Executive Offices and the Programme-related and Corporate Services before proceeding to the thematic analysis.

9.   A second analytical framework was developed to analyze the findings contained in each report to identify achievements and challenges against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

10.   Lastly, the reports were analyzed against the UNESCO Quality Assessment Template.

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4.   SO1: Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era; SO2: Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage SO3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage SO4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards.

5.   Enabling objective: Foster an enabling environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO's priorities.

6.   This template reflects that UNEG quality checklist for evaluation reports and is adapted in line with specific requirements and priorities as defined in the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-29.

7.   Evaluation reports that did not meet the minimum quality requirements were disregarded.

1.5   Limitations

11.   The findings presented in this Synthesis are derived entirely from the analysis of the evaluation reports finalised during 2022/early 2023 and are intended to inform UNESCO's ongoing decision making and learning about its own performance and effectiveness. Consequently, readers should consider the following limitations:

- The evaluations included in this Synthesis do not represent the entire suite of evaluations undertaken from within the UNESCO family. It only includes independent external evaluations that were conducted in the period between 2022 and early 2023. Having said that the total number of decentralized evaluations included in the yearly Synthesis has consistently been increasing (from 12 in 2017, to 31 in 2023).

- The evaluations are not necessarily comparable, as they are of different scale and scope. They range from evaluations of a single project implemented in a confined geographic area to evaluation of regional and global programmes, and evaluations of strategic or thematic portfolios.

- The evaluations also use vastly different methodologies, and some are undertaken in tight timeframes[8] while others span over several months which makes comparison challenging. Some are conducted by individual consultants and others by multicultural evaluation teams covering a variety of expertise.

- Achievements are assessed differently across the evaluations. While some evaluations use the OECD-DAC criteria to frame the analysis, others do not apply the criteria systematically. In such instances, assessment is inferred by the evaluators conducting the Synthesis.

- The analysis presented in this Synthesis relies on information drawn from evaluations conducted in the period between 2022 and early 2023. It does not consider actions initiated by the Organization during this period to address wide ranging issues and this must be acknowledged.

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8.   Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu was completed over few working days.

2. Overview of the portfolio

12.   This year's Synthesis covered the largest number of evaluations since the IOS Evaluation Office began this series in 2017: a total of thirty-six evaluation reports were available for the Synthesis this year - five corporate and thirty-one decentralized evaluations. The steady increase in decentralized evaluations (refer to Figure 1) is heartening and a testament to the outreach work being done by the Evaluation Office. It also demonstrates the IOS Evaluation Office's commitment to convey the value of the Synthesis and the strengthened relationships with the field offices through the Evaluation Focal Point network, as well as enhanced evaluation capacity development activities. Another interesting development is the submission of reports from non-English speaking countries: this year's Synthesis has ten non-English reports that include several reports in Portuguese, Spanish and French. This development signals the growing value of the Synthesis across the Organization and an understanding of the need to include a balanced representation of different language reports from across the regions.

Figure 1. Total number of evaluations covered in a Synthesis since 2017

Evaluation reports (2017-2023)
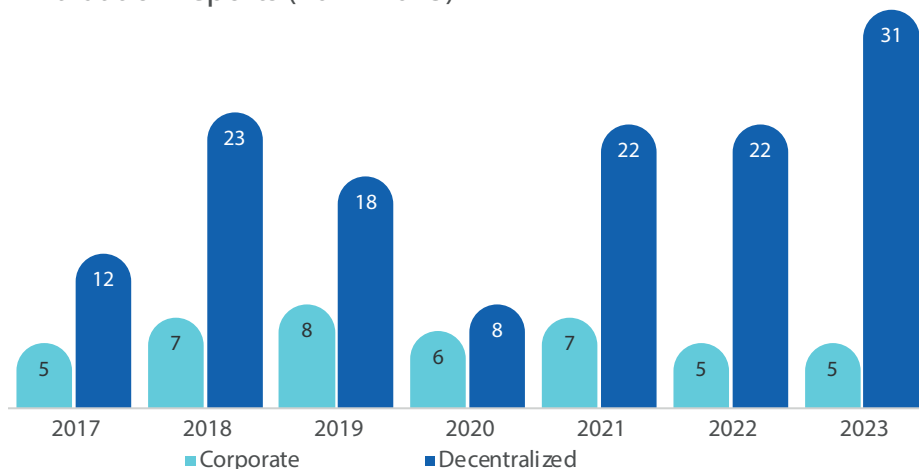
13.   Table 1 shows the coverage across outcomes and outputs as articulated in the Medium-Term Strategy 41 C/4. Past Synthesis reports have included an assessment of C/5 Expected Results in each Major Programme as articulated in the relevant Programme and Budget documents for the period. However, the COVID-19 crisis and the urgent need to accelerate progress against the 2030 Agenda further led the Organization to develop a new strategic framework that allows for increased synergies and interdisciplinary (inter/intrasectoral) approaches in UNESCO's fields of competence. The Medium-Term Strategy 41 C/4 represents the Organization's ambitions in this regard and is framed around four interlinked and cross-cutting strategic objectives corresponding to the challenges and opportunities of today. (Refer to diagram in chapter 4). While the evaluations included in the 2023 Synthesis cover many projects and programmes that were designed and implemented under the previous 37 C/4 MTS 2014-2021, the Synthesis maps and analyses the evaluations against the framework as defined in the current 41 C/4 MTS 2022-2029 to align with the new direction and reflect the current priorities of the Organization. The Mapping of the 2023 portfolio of evaluations across outcomes and outputs as articulated in the MTS 41 C/4 shows that ten of the eleven crosscutting Outcome areas defined in the 41 C/4 are covered in this year's portfolio of evaluations[9] and represents about half, i.e., twenty-two out of overall thirty-nine programmatic outputs defined under the four Strategic Objectives.[10]

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9.   Only Outcome area 2 is not covered in this year's portfolio. It is to be noted that evaluation coverage across all 41 C/4 Outcomes and Outputs shall be achieved over time, during the first quadrennium the 41 C/4 MTS period.

10. The mapping has primarily been perfomed against programme related sectoral outputs, as most of the interventions of this year's portfolio are designed from a sector specific perspectives. It is expected that future syntheses will increasingly refer evaluations to the five intersectoral outputs when covering interventiions that are designed and implemented in an intersectoral manner.

Table 1. A Mapping of the 2023 portfolio of evaluations across Outcomes and Outputs as articulated in the Medium-Term Strategy 41 C/4 shows coverage (✓) of Outputs across all four Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective	Outcome	41 C/4 Outputs covered in the 2023 Synthesis portfolio of evaluations (✓)[11]							
SO 1	01 Lifelong learning	✓ 01 ED 1	01 ED2	✓ 01 ED 4	✓ 01ED 5	✓ 01 ED 6	01 SC 6	01 SHS 6	
	02 SDG 4 Coordination	02 ED 7	02 ED 9	02 UIS 1	02 UIS 2	02 UIS 3			
SO 2	03 Climate action	✓ 03 SC 1	03 SC 3	✓ 03 SC 2	03 IOC 1				
	04 Science, Technology and Innovation	✓ 04 SC 4	✓ 04 SC 5	02 UIS 4					
SO 3	05 Heritage and cultural expressions	05 CLT 1	05 CLT 2	05 CLT 3	✓ 05 CLT 4	✓ 05 CLT 5	05 CLT 6	05 CI 1	02 UIS 5
	06 Expression and information	✓ 06 CI 2	✓ 06 CI 3						
	07 Inclusion	✓ 07 SHS 1	✓ 07 SHS 2	07 SHS 3	✓ 07 SHS 4	✓ 07 ED 3			
SO 4	08 Knowledge sharing	✓ 08 ED 8	08 CI 4	✓ 08 CI 5					
	09 Ethics	✓ 09 SHS 5	09 CI 6						
Enabling Objective[12]	10 Partnerships, outreach and advocacy	✓ 010 PAX 1 S2	010 PAX 2	010 PAX 3	010 PAX 4	010 PAX 5	010 PAX 6	010 BSP 2	010 BSP 3
	11 Management	✓ 011 GE 1	✓ 011HR 1	011 BSP 1					

11. It is to be noted that evaluation coverage across all 41 C/4 Outcomes and Outputs shall be achieved over time, during the first quadrennium of the eight year period of the 41 C/4 MTS.
12. It is to be noted that outputs covered under other corporate services such as BFM, OPSI, DBS, CLD and MSS are not typically subject to evaluation and hence not included in the table.

14.   UNESCO needs to align and report on its efforts in relation to the 2030 Agenda and towards this end, the Organization encourages through its RBM Institutional Guidance including project templates all programmes and projects it implements to indicate its relationship and demonstrate its contribution to individual SDGs. However, this is challenging as many projects and programmes contribute to multiple SDGs. Figure 2 depicts the coverage of evaluations across SDGs. Initiatives covered in this year's portfolio are aligned with all the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with many of the evaluations contributing to SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and SDG 5 Gender Equality. (See also Appendix 2 SDG Alignment[13])

Figure 2. This year's portfolio demonstrates a focus on SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 16 Peace and Justice and SDG 5 Gender Equality.[14]
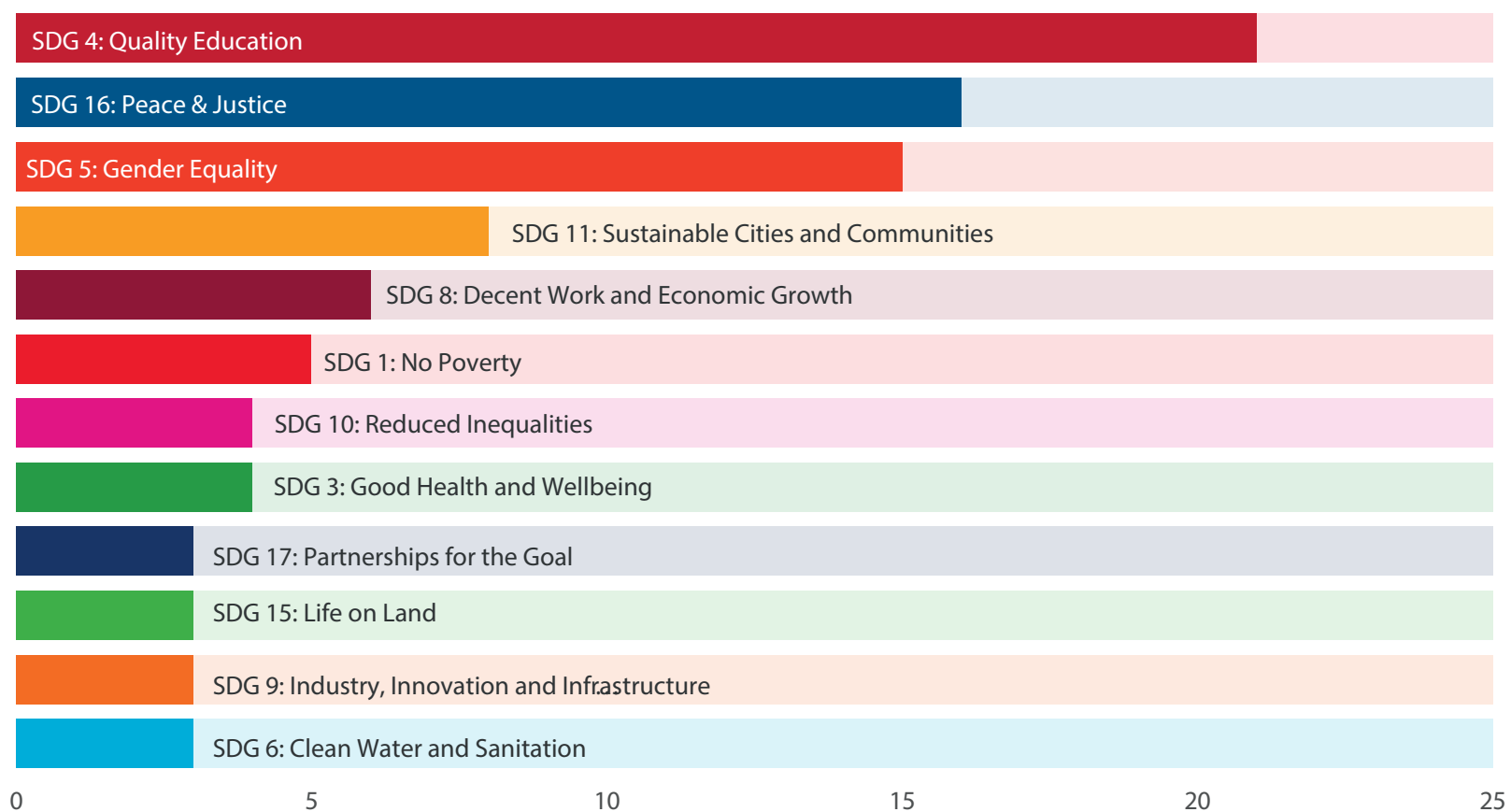
13. Programmes/projects are considered aligned with an SDG when (1) the SDG is either named in the evaluation report and/or (2) it was identified by the review team or the MP staff during the validation. Some programmes/projects contribute to several SDGs. A full list of alignment of SDGs by evaluation is available in Appendix 2 SDG Alignment.

14. SDG2 (Zero Hunger), SDG7, (Affordable and clean energy) SDG13 (Climate action) and SDG14 (Life below water) were considered relevant in two of the evaluations of this year's portfolio, and SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) in one report. These are not included in the above figure 2.

3. Crosscutting findings

15.   This section presents the crosscutting findings and identifies common issues and themes reported across the evaluations relating to UNESCO's performance. The analysis provides an important opportunity for UNESCO to reflect on its strengths, including its comparative advantages vis-a-vis other multilateral actors as well as identifies areas where there is room for improvement. The thirty-six evaluations considered in this year's Synthesis are a rich source of information to guide the Organization's future direction and strategy, particularly as it adapts to achieving its aspirations as stated in the 41 C/4's Medium-Term Strategy.

3.1   UNESCO demonstrates a sharper focus on SDGs

16.   The COVID-19 crisis has severely impacted global progress towards SDGs and heightened urgency around supporting Member States to accelerate and/or scale-up efforts where required. UNESCO's 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 documents respond to these emerging challenges by reflecting and refocusing the contribution of the Organization in all relevant areas of work, strengthening interdisciplinarity and synergies, and encouraging joint programming and implementation where appropriate. These efforts by the Organization appear to have contributed to a sharpened focus on SDGs across the evaluations reviewed in this Synthesis. All the evaluations identify both the primary and secondary SDGs the initiatives contribute to including articulating the underpinning rationale for these assertions. This is well illustrated in the *Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project implemented in Wau, South Sudan*. While the project has a line of sight to SDG 16 owing to its peacebuilding focus, the evaluation also discusses its relevance vis-a-vis SDG 4 given the project's focus on promoting youth engagement in social and economic fabric of their communities through vocational training and livelihood-related activities.

17.   Similarly, the *Evaluation of the Technical and Financial State of Implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project* notes that the project contributes to multiple SDGs, particularly SDG 1 and SDG 16 through strengthening the capacity of Member States to develop sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and coordinated management of the hydrological, natural, and cultural resources of the Lake Chad Basin. However, the actions implemented within the scope of the project also contributes to SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 11, SDG 13, and SDG 15.

18.   In contrast, the previous Synthesis showed some gaps vis-a-vis coverage against the SDGs. For instance, in the 2021 Synthesis, there was coverage of evaluated initiatives against 14 SDGs (all except SDGs 2, 7 & 9) while the 2022 Synthesis reported that the initiatives implemented covered sixteen of the 17 SDGS. The contribution to *SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable, and Modern Energy for All* was the notable exception in the 2022 analysis. However, in 2023, the evaluated initiatives cut across all SDGs and explicitly discuss contribution of most initiatives to more than one SDG. This sharpened focus on SDGs is a significant development and bodes well for UNESCO's ambition to respond to the challenges and opportunities in line with the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals.

3.2   UNESCO is progressing fast as an agile, flexible, learning organization

19.   MTS 41 C/4 commits UNESCO to a series of reform measures and corporate actions that are instrumental to implementing the Organization's mandate in a rapidly changing world. These measures are designed to ensure the Organization remains responsive, prepared, and adaptable. The evaluations considered in this Synthesis provide useful insights about the Organization's progression towards becoming an agile, accountable, and proactive entity to implement its transformative vision. Many of the changes initiated were accelerated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and it is timely for the Organization to find adequate ways to embed these changes in a post-COVID world.

20.   The *Evaluation of UNESCO's COVID Response* provides the most insights about the progression of UNESCO as an agile, flexible, and learning organization. The evaluation found that UNESCO successfully adapted its corporate governance to allow for virtual sessions during the pandemic: within the first month, rules of procedures were updated for the General Conference and the Executive Board to include an option for holding virtual sessions. While there were some initial concerns about equal participation and information security, new working methods and cyber security measures were developed to do this efficiently. The new practice of webcasting non-private Executive Board sessions outside UNESCO was identified as an important innovation and one that Member States would like to see continued.

21.   The evaluation also noted that UNESCO management ensured programmatic leadership and coordination during the pandemic. A staff survey showed significant

lift in the level of communication over the course of the first three months of the COVID-19 crisis. Improved coordination between HQ and FO was reported by Directors. Administrative procedures and risk management practices were adapted and updated including the introduction of e-signatures, digital processing of bids, an increase of the minimum budget amount for competitive bidding to up to USD 100,000 in emergency situations[15] were all important developments that enhanced efficiency. Importantly, some new practices have already become routine beyond the original intention. A "Zero-paper' administrative process is an example, as hard copies are not required and rarely requested by anyone since the pandemic.

22.   Investing in staff is key to ensuring excellence, responsiveness, and effective delivery of UNESCO's programmes. However, the evaluation found that staff resilience which was key to UNESCO's pandemic response may be eroding post the pandemic: for an international organisation, staff come from across the globe, and many felt isolated being far away from their home country and uncertainty around when they could join their families. More focused emotional and psychological support and assistance for staff during lockdowns could have helped to alleviate these negative feelings.

23.   The emergence of UNESCO as a flexible and responsive entity was also highlighted in the *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development*, which underlines the establishment of the Global Education Coalition as a timely and adequate global platform initiated by UNESCO that mobilised partners across the globe to engage in the development of a joint response to the learning crisis triggered by COVID 19 school closures.

3.3   Reimagining UNESCO's convening power, leadership & influence has contributed to repositioning the Organization

24.   Each of the Synthesis reports produced since 2017 draws attention to the importance of UNESCO's convening power and the power of its collaborative processes as its main assets. UNESCO's reputation, political neutrality, and expertise in key areas of its mandate has historically enabled the Organization to leverage its power for influencing policy and practice amongst Member States. Many of the evaluations in the past have described UNESCO's ability to engage with Member States on sensitive topics such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), its ability to engage with a variety of partners including senior Government officials and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and to bring competing voices together around the table as its main strengths. These observations are further reinforced in this year's Synthesis. The *Evaluations of the projects Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS in Rio de Janeiro*[15] *and Sau Paulo*[16] identify UNESCO as the most important actor in Brazil in the field of education and prevention of HIV. The evaluations stress UNESCO's convening power and ability to work with diverse stakeholders including CSOs and its professional expertise as critical ingredients that sets it apart from other international actors. The evaluation of the *Third Sector Ethical Connections*[17] project implemented jointly by UNESCO and Petrobas also focussed on strengthening governance and management of CSOs as a strength of UNESCO. The partnership was able to bring together 127 CSOs from across Brazil which was a significant achievement.

25.   However, the evaluations considered in this year's portfolio consistently report that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented UNESCO with a unique opportunity to reimagine and reassert its convening power to catalyse global action. Drawing on the technical expertise and experience of its staff, its reputation as a neutral broker and as a standard setter, the Organization was able to effectively reimagine and reposition itself in many instances and mobilize substantial resources to develop innovative responses to the emerging crises. The *Evaluation of UNESCO's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic* reported that the experience with the pandemic directly influenced UNESCO's strategic positioning and planning. UNESCO expanded the adoption of the concept of resilience in its new Medium-Term Strategy (41 C/4) to emphasise the need to foster resilience in crisis-affected and fragile countries as well as resilient educational systems whereas in the past UNESCO focused on resilience vis-a-vis climate change. The concept is now mainstreamed across all the Sectors in the Programme and Budget for the post-pandemic biennium.

26.   Global partners consulted in the *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* reported that the COVID-19 crises revealed UNESCO as an outreaching, agile and proactive partner showing strong leadership, very different from the common perception of the Organization as one with heavy administrative procedures that rendered collaboration more difficult. Stakeholders and partners the World Heritage Convention, unanimously recognized UNESCO's leadership, and comparative strengths in particular its role as

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15. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS Educação no Estado do Rio de Janeiro.

16. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação Preventiva e Comunicação Digital em saúde para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS no Município de São Paulo.

17. Original title in Portuguese: Projeto Conexões Éticas do Terceiro Setor.

a convenor, as a norm-setter, as a trusted partner for Member States who appreciate UNESCO's consistent engagement with them. Partners too particularly value UNESCO's convening power at both the global and national level. In the area of teachers, the evaluation notes UNESCO's comparative strength lies in covering the whole spectrum of work from normative work, advocacy, knowledge development, policy development to capacity building of teachers all underpinned by strong partnership approaches. The evaluation found that in some countries such as Jamaica, UNESCO's work in response to the pandemic has given the Organization more visibility and repositioned it in the region as a catalyst for international cooperation. However, it is the establishment of the Global Education Coalition by UNESCO in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that has given its convening power a new impetus and meaning.

27.   The Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project (BIOPALT) is regarded as a flagship project of UNESCO which integrates an interdisciplinary approach combining three historical programmes: Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), the World Heritage Convention, and Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). A key challenge for UNESCO is how to collect, manage and leverage the knowledge produced during this pilot and use it to guide future direction and development of its initiatives. The *Evaluation of Technical and Financial State of Implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad project* makes a series of recommendations for UNESCO to consider as it consolidates its leadership and comparative advantage.

3.4   Monitoring and evaluation practices are strengthening, but quality and use of monitoring data needs further improvement

28.   Over the years, the Synthesis has consistently identified the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation efforts to enable the Organization to better capture data against outcomes and facilitate learning. Some progress was reported in the 2022 Synthesis, for instance in the development of a robust theory of change to better connect the results of the Living Heritage and Education Programme to the overall 2003 Convention results framework. However, the 2022 review continued to echo concerns including gaps in tracking and assessing progress on outcomes, inconsistent efforts to situate initiatives within UNESCO's broader results framework, limited attention to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and limited M&E capacity and capability.

29.   The management response to these issues identified in the 2022 Synthesis reiterated the Organization's strong commitment to support M&E capability. BSP/RBM undertook to modernise Results-Based Management (RBM) Guiding Principles, the UNESCO RBM practice reference tools and the 2022 Project templates in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and UN good practices. RBM tailored coaching and capacity strengthening events were pursued of which 6 RBM intersectoral workshops reaching 190 colleagues from Headquarters and Field Offices. These were organised in collaboration with subject matter experts of which IOS/EVA. Work to establish a M&E Officers Network has also been initiated in collaboration with IOS/EVA as well as a roster of seasoned specialized internal RBM coaches. In addition, the IOS Evaluation Office continues its support for strengthening the decentralized evaluation function with dedicated backstopping activities, trainings, and webinars for focal points and programme staff and the upgrading of the Evaluation Knowledge hub.

30.   These efforts have contributed to lifting the overall quality of evaluations submitted for the 2023 Synthesis. However, at the programme or project level, gathering of monitoring data continues to be patchy and focused on activities/outputs which makes it often challenging to monitor and track progress towards outcomes. Examples include:

- The *Evaluation of the Support for the Participation of Women and Young People in Initiatives for the Consolidation of Peace, the Strengthening of Mechanisms for Social Cohesion, and Living Together in Cameroon*[18] which noted that while the project's logical framework is well designed, there was no monitoring and evaluation plan associated with the framework.

- The *External Evaluation of the Special Account: Multi Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists* noted that M&E continues to focus primarily on activities and outputs rather than outcomes and impact. The evaluation also found that the results framework did not include an impact statement or overall objective[19] and there was no transparency around how decisions were made as to which countries and projects received support under the MDP.

- The *Evaluation of the O3 Programme* found that a results framework formed the basis of the M&E and there was clear evidence of the use of M&E data for learning

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18. Original title in French: Evaluation finale du projet PBF : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et de vivre ensemble au Cameroun.

19. It must be pointed out that impact statements were not required for Special Accounts at that time.

and further shaping of programme activities. However, the evaluation noted challenges relating to lack of clarity around defining indicators, misinterpretation of indicators by programme staff and lack of consistency in reporting which meant comparisons across participating countries were not feasible.

31.   There were some exceptions. For instance, the *#Coronavirus Facts: Addressing the 'Disinfodemic' on COVID-19 in Conflict Prone Environments* project design had a well-integrated M&E framework and plan. As a result, regular M&E data was made available to decision-makers and the project team to track implementation and progress in different project countries and make necessary adjustments. In addition, a M&E reporting template was developed which ensured uniformity and consistency in reporting. These developments suggest a maturing of M&E approaches within the Organization but ongoing investments in terms of capacities and resources is needed to further enhance the progress made to date.

3.5   Attention to Global Priority Gender Equality shows significant progress but there is still much work to be done

32.   Gender Equality has been a global priority for UNESCO since 2008 and is fully embedded in the Organization's current Medium-Term Strategy and Programme and Budget Documents which provide the operational framework to advance gender equality both within UNESCO and in its work with Member States. UNESCO's vision of gender equality is in line with international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

33.   Previous Synthesis reports have consistently reported that while advances have been made, more needs to be done to embed Global Priority Gender Equality (GPGE) across all UNESCO work and resources. More support and mechanisms are needed to deepen capacity to adopt approaches that go beyond reporting on participation and activities. By contrast, this year's Synthesis indicates significant improvements in this regard across both corporate and decentralized evaluations. The corporate *Evaluation of the Global Priority Gender Equality Part II – UNESCO Field Offices in Action for Gender Equality* found that gender-related results on the ground tend to be positive. Many results were considered

'bold in context' when it came to addressing gender norms or institutionalizing ways to raise societal awareness on gender issues. The publication of the GEM Report on Inclusion can also be seen as evidence of UNESCO's ongoing commitment to GE. However, the lack of institutional mechanisms, and concrete guidance to support implementation of GPGE across Field Offices was an ongoing issue that needed ongoing attention so that GPGE can be used as a leverage tool for advocacy and dialogue with global and national level partners. Member States too sought more guidance and a more consistent approach to integrating and measuring gender equality and inclusion across many initiatives.

34.   The increase in consideration of GPGE in decentralized evaluations is a particularly positive development and can be attributed to the continuous efforts made across the Organization. The *Evaluation of Promoting the Use of Renewable and Efficient Energy Technologies in Households in Rural Areas of Cameroon*[20] placed gender at the heart of the project from its design and aimed to reduce housework for women regarding cooking and combustion. The findings of the evaluation showed a significant improvement in women's quality of life: the use of new technology reduced time and effort in cutting wood, reduced emissions when cooking, improved savings, improved safety, cleaner pots, and improved eye health. Another decentralized evaluation of the *Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad* reported a nuanced contribution of the project to the reduction of gender inequalities by systematically including women in counselling and training activities and targeting them for the income generation activities. Efforts were made to involve specialized association on the socio-economic development of indigenous women and many of the activities were carried out by women.

35.   *The Evaluation of UNESCO's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic* noted UNESCO's commitment to consider the impact of COVID-19 on women and the challenges experienced in terms of increased unpaid domestic work, increased stress and financial insecurity but also increased domestic violence. The wide range of actions and new initiatives included the launch of *Keeping girls in the picture* campaign, *Awareness-raising, and capacity building on prevention of domestic violence during the pandemic* campaigns, the publication of *Girls back to school guide*, and media campaigns focusing on issues related to gender-based and domestic violence and women's health and nutrition. The evaluation found UNESCO's response to be positive and alert to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in exacerbating inequalities including gender and risks to vulnerable groups. Women and girls were invited to online debates, to contribute to design of policies that directly affected them, and to participate in webinars on inclusion. The *Imagining the world to come* initiative by the Social and Human Sciences Sector questioned leading

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20. Original title in French: Projet de Promotion de l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables et des technologies d'efficacité énergétique dans les ménages des zones rurales du Cameroun (PUERTEM).

women about their vision of the post-pandemic future; the *Gender & Creativity* publication by the Culture Sector called for new commitments and transformative action and for governments to apply a gender equality perspective in their cultural policy responses to COVID-19. The Communication and Information Sector implemented a range of measures including radio programmes to inform people about gender-based violence, women's rights, and the importance of education for girls in India, Haiti, and Cameroon. Most importantly, forty out of the 41 National Commissions that responded to the specific question in the survey believed UNESCO continued to prioritize Gender Equality during the pandemic. This is indeed heartening to take note of.

36.   However, challenges remain as reflected in the *Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan* which noted that although training was conducted to sensitise youth on gender issues, many girls did not participate in the project activities owing to entrenched gender stereotypes in the community. For instance, the 'cash for work' activity involved youth engagement in road rehabilitation work and due to the physical nature of the work did not enlist girls and women in the activity. Of more concern is the evaluation finding that when asked about incidents of sexual and gender-based-violence, respondents claimed it was because girls were not being idle anymore. This reflects a lack of understanding amongst beneficiaries about gender norms and gender dynamics and highlights the ongoing challenge for UNESCO programme and FO staff to work effectively within these engrained cultural norms.

37.   The *Building Social Cohesion of Communities that Receive Returnee Youth as a Bridge Towards Peaceful and Effective Reintegration Evaluation* [21] noted that while gender was an integral part of the project and a clear focus for project activities, there was a lack of a strategy to promote gender equality beyond participation. Further, the project did not establish links with the National Civil Police and organisations that specialised in violence against women and referral networks. Training was focused on issues that reinforce deeply rooted gender roles in the communities, placing women in tasks traditionally assigned such as sewing.

3.6   The focus on priority groups & inclusion remains modest

38.   The central tenet of the 2030 Agenda – leave no one behind – is an ongoing consideration in UNESCO's strategic shift and vision as articulated in the new Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 that identifies youth, people with disabilities, Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and marginalized and disadvantaged people as priority groups across all areas of its mandate to build peaceful and inclusive societies. The question examined by the Synthesis was the extent to which the evaluations considered the impact of projects and programmes on key priority groups. The analysis shows that when initiatives have a focus on inclusion, or specifically targeted towards a priority group these issues are well addressed. Examples include *Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu*, *Support for the Participation of Women and Young People in Initiatives for the Consolidation of Peace, the Strengthening of Mechanisms of Social Cohesion, and Living Together in Cameroon*[22] and *Building Social Cohesion of Communities that receive Returnee Youth as a Bridge towards Peaceful and Effective Reintegration* [23]. For instance, given the explicit focus on youth in the latter evaluation, data on number of youth who participated across the range of activities was captured and reported.

39.   This is not sufficient. In the context of the 'leave no one behind' agenda, rights-based inclusion of persons with disabilities or people living in rural areas or isolated communities is gaining attention. However, this is not reflected in the evaluations and most evaluations are either silent on this issue and/or report minimally. The *Evaluation of Sustainable Development through Biodiversity – friendly livelihoods: Supporting Rural Communities in the Vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park* looked to broaden the scope to GSI (gender and social inclusion) dimensions (people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, immigrants, disadvantaged persons) beyond men, women, and youth. While the project acknowledged that these considerations contribute to more sustainable development impacts, the evaluation does not provide any insights in this regard but in fact recommends that more aspects of gender and social inclusion in and around the biosphere must be considered in the future.

40.   The *Water Security in Turkana* project implemented in Kenya is an exception as it considered gender and inclusion of people with disabilities both during design and

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21. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.
22. Original title in French : Evaluation finale du projet PBF : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et de vivre ensemble au Cameroun.
23. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

implementation. The evaluation reported positive impacts for vulnerable people in the community as it gave special attention to providing a safe and secure place for people with disabilities to access water easily.

41.   Regarding disability inclusion, UNESCO set up an Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Inclusion and Rights in January 2021, under the chair of the ADG/SHS. This Task Team has been active in reporting annually to the Secretary-General's Office on the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). In 2022, out of the 15 indicators of this "Accountability Framework", UNESCO is still lagging behind on four of the requirements and approaching another eight of the requirements, which leaves a significant room for improvement. According to the Global Mapping of UNESCO's work on Disability Inclusion (2022)[24],there is a need to design an organization-wide strategic approach in this field in order to provide more coherence, clarity, and guidelines to programme staff both in field offices and in HQ. UNESCO continues to enhance its involvement and leadership in designing and implementing Joint Programmes at the national and multi-country level, notably in the framework of the UN Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Donor Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF), in all its fields of expertise, except in culture. There has been a clear sign of UNESCO's increased participation and footprint in the UNCTs' Working Group at the national level. In terms of operations and administration, the highest level of the management has initiated an internal conversation with the team leaders on the priorities to be tackled in order to increase the Organisation's rating by mainstreaming disability inclusion across all policies.

3.7   Strong evidence of deepening and diversifying partnerships

42.   Partnerships and networks enable UNESCO to extend its reach and mobilize resources from a range of sources to deliver on its mandate. Over the years, the Organization, through its updated comprehensive partnership strategy and its multistakeholder partnerships and coalitions such as the Global Education Coalition, has been able to leverage both financial and non-financial, public, and private resources geared towards its strategic objective as set out in 41 C/4 MTS 2022-2029. This is well illustrated in the *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* which consistently assessed UNESCO's partnerships, cooperation, and resource mobilization as *fairly high*. The evaluation found that despite resources not being commensurate with the scope of the task on teacher development, UNESCO has been able to advance its agenda by leveraging its extensive partnerships to mobilise resources from a small number of mainly bilateral donors to support specific initiatives. This is generally initiated through UNESCO HQ and Category 1 Institutes but sometimes through Regional Offices. In addition, jointly with its partners UNESCO focused its efforts on more fundamental teacher development issues within comprehensive projects and approaches that address various aspects of teacher development such as the EU-funded project in the SAHEL, the Norwegian Teachers Initiative in Sub Saharan Africa or the framework of the Capacity Development for Education programme and other larger-scale projects funded by voluntary contributions such as the GPE-funded STEPCam project.

43.   *Empowering Early Childhood and Care Education (ECCE) teachers with a transformative vision of education* project's success lies in UNESCO Bangkok's efforts to identify and bring a range of diverse partners on board. A key partner at the national level was United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) owing to its involvement in ECCE level but also the agency's growing interest in (Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)). More importantly, UNESCO recognised Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) as a key partner for facilitating the work in all four pilot countries. The evaluation concluded that bringing ARNEC on contract was an effective way to harness their networks in the region and nationally while drawing on their expertise in the domain area.

44.   UNESCO's leadership role in the formation of the Global Education Coalition[25] (GEC) which focused on education responses to the COVID -19 pandemic is the most visible evidence of deepening and diversifying partnerships. This multi-stakeholder partnership including multilateral institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society actors, academia and international media groups can be seen as a programmatic and institutional innovation at UNESCO. Current membership of the coalition stands at over two hundred and the GEC is involved in 233 projects across 112 countries which represents significant reach into ultimate beneficiaries. UNESCO has also been able to effectively form new strategic partnerships or use its existing ones to manifest its role as a knowledge broker and convener on gender issues.

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24. Towards strategic orientations on disability inclusion: a mapping of UNESCO's initiatives (2014-2021), UNESCO, 2022.
25. https://www.unesco.org/en/global-education-coalition

3.8   While external coherence appears to be improving, there is room for improvement with respect to internal coherence

45.   The evaluations considered in this synthesis show that UNESCO HQ and FO staff pay close attention to external coherence during both design and implementation phases of their activities. Policy and implementation coherence is critical to ensuring an integrated and efficient response by multilateral partners to support Member States to achieve the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A deliberate and considered approach to coherence can foster alignment across local, national, and international actions and overcoming fragmentation or siloed delivery. The *Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan* noted that the project had been planned and implemented in line with the National Development Strategy for South Sudan, Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and United Nations Cooperation Framework. There were also other interventions by aid agencies in Wau at the time and care was taken to ensure this project filled gaps left by these interventions rather than duplicate efforts. The *External Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme* acknowledged that regional water cooperation was not always enshrined in national priorities, policies, and strategies. Consequently, programme activities were either directly linked to Ministries or embedded in institutions that report to Ministries and coordinated with other donor funded programmes. These evaluations show that putting building blocks that relate to structures, processes and working methods helped facilitate improvements in external coherence.

46.   However, achieving external coherence was not without its own challenges. For instance, the reported successful coordination of response initiatives with other actors including the establishment of the Global Education Coalition and coordination with UNICEF, World Bank, and the OECD on the four flagship surveys of how countries dealt with school closures. Despite these efforts, duplication did occur with respect to school closures and teacher vaccinations. A year after the pandemic broke out, the John Hopkins University, the World Bank and UNICEF launched the *Global Education Recovery Tracker*[26] and staff were dismayed by this duplication.

47.   Achieving internal coherence proved to be more challenging and while mobilization of expertise from across UNESCO's various HQ, field entities, networks and Category 1 Institutes had enhanced, the evaluations show there is room for improvement. UNESCO's ambition for an integrated, holistic approach requires much better coordination and distribution of responsibilities. There are instances where various entities compete for resources from donors e.g., Field offices and Category 1 Institutes which needs to be addressed through an organization-wide coordination and resource mobilisation strategy and a clearer division of roles and responsibilities on resource mobilization and partnership management internally, as well as strengthened coordination role for the Division of Partnership in BSP. In some programme areas there have been improvements towards this aim, for example with the establishment of a thematic Community of Practice (e.g., TVET, teachers) but it remains an issue.

48.   The evaluations also identified important issues with respect to internal coherence and mobilization of expertise particularly about the role and positioning of IICBA as the dedicated UNESCO Category 1 Institute for teacher capacity development in the African continent. Africa has always been a priority in UNESCO Teacher Development work, and the *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* confirms that activities of regional offices on the Continent, the support and backstopping from HQ and the contributions of IICBA are beginning to show positive change in teacher development in Africa. Various UNESCO entities that contribute to a thematic area should work towards a common Theory of Change in the respective fields of competence; many external stakeholders who interact with a specific UNESCO entity do not get a sense of ONE UNESCO as highlighted in the evaluation of UNESCOs work on teacher development.

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26. https://www.covideducationrecovery.global/

Examples of good practice with respect to internal coherence

The Evaluation of UNESCO/SIDA project strengthening Science Technology and Innovation Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa 2020-2022 reported that the project featured a rare, or maybe even the first and only collaboration between the SC and SHS sectors in the sense that it used extrabudgetary funding for a project which required shared resources, authority, and reporting. While it was challenging to balance the distribution of these aspects across the two sectors at the beginning, with intent and time, it became possible to function as a single project team. Staff reflected that the project serves as a good practice example to inspire other teams to follow a similar approach considering the many challenges facing the globe today required interdisciplinary and multisectoral approaches.

Reshaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions project established a project team across two units from the Entity for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: the Programme and Stakeholder Outreach unit (PO) and the Research and Statutory Meetings unit (SR) to lead and drive each of the two components of the project. To tap into UNESCO's transversal expertise in media, social media and knowledge management systems, the project partnered with the Communication and Information (CI) sector thus creating synergies between the Culture and CI teams. Additionally, both the CLT and CI sectors launched their respective global reports during a joint event, organized as part of the World Press Freedom Day 2022. At the HQ level, the project tapped into the expertise in culture, CI, and central services such as the communication and knowledge management systems.

3.9   Good progress with regard to Global Priority Africa

49.   UNESCO's MTS 2014-2021 (37 C/4) set out how UNESCO's work should address the Organization's Global Priority Africa and in MTS 2022-2029 (41 C/4), UNESCO defines a new vision to create synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. This calls for innovative thinking and a greater investment in young people and women in Africa in many areas of relevance to UNESCO's mandate such as e-learning and e-teaching strategies, media and literary programmes and skills related to TVET, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and science and technology and innovation (STI). The evaluations considered in this year's synthesis show a significant shift in UNESCO's actions in Africa, with twenty-two (sixty-one percent) of the evaluations

covering programmes/projects that respond to Global Priority Africa, focused entirely or in some part on the continent and spread across Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information. This is heartening and reflects UNESCO's commitment to respond to major global issues within its specific mandate, and across its field of competence through action where it has a unique comparative advantage.

50.   The *UNESCO/SIDA Project aimed at Strengthening STI Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa* was designed to contribute to not just the SDGs 9, 16 & 17 but also identified the African Union 2063 Development Agenda (Aspirations 1, 2 and 7). The analysis, framed by UNESCO's Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, also paid attention to the value of the project to participating countries and reported that UNESCO's comparative strengths in developing STI policies and strengthening normative frameworks of STI systems were essential for successful development of STI systems in Africa. The *Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance (TBWG) for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme* reported that the project established strong links with varying national, regional actors at the technical/sector levels and in some cases with international boundary water actors too.

51.   Africa's sustainable development is being severely tested by growing water stress and climate change and requires increased efforts to be made to preserve the continent's rich ecosystems and natural heritage and to help conserve its biodiversity in support of goal 7 of Agenda 2063 on environmental sustainability. The *Evaluation of the Technical and Financial State of Implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad* project provides important insights into UNESCO's efforts in this regard. The evaluation concluded that the project was designed to be consistent with national, regional, and international priorities and the combination of UNESCO's three historic programmes was an innovative integrative approach that aimed to address the multiple crisis facing the Lake Chad Basin in a cross-cutting manner.

52.   The *Evaluation of UNESCO's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic* also showed that Priority Africa was well embedded in UNESCO's programming, but low digital connectivity was a key challenge during the pandemic. These developments showed that progress is being made and UNESCO needs to continue to strengthen its work to address digital inequalities in Africa.

4. Contributions to UNESCO's Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

53.   The main contributions reported in this year's portfolio of evaluations are analyzed against UNESCO's strategic objectives and outcomes as outlined in the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-29 (41 C/4). Whilst almost all of the interventions were designed using the results framework set out in the UNESCO MTS 2014-2021 (37 C/4), the 41 C/4 sets out a new direction and vision for the Organization to create synergies and enhance coordination to achieve the objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union as well as those of other regional development frameworks. The four interlinked and cross-cutting strategic objectives, together with the enabling strategic objective, correspond to the challenges of present times and provide a useful structure for the Synthesis in line with the future direction of the Organization. While some of the evaluated interventions contribute to more than one of the 41 C/5 Output, they have been mapped against one primary output. (See Appendix 1: Mapping of evaluations across the Strategic Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs of 41 C/4 and 41 C/5).

Figure 3. UNESCO's strategic objectives and outcomes, Medium-Term Strategy 2022-29 (41 C/4)
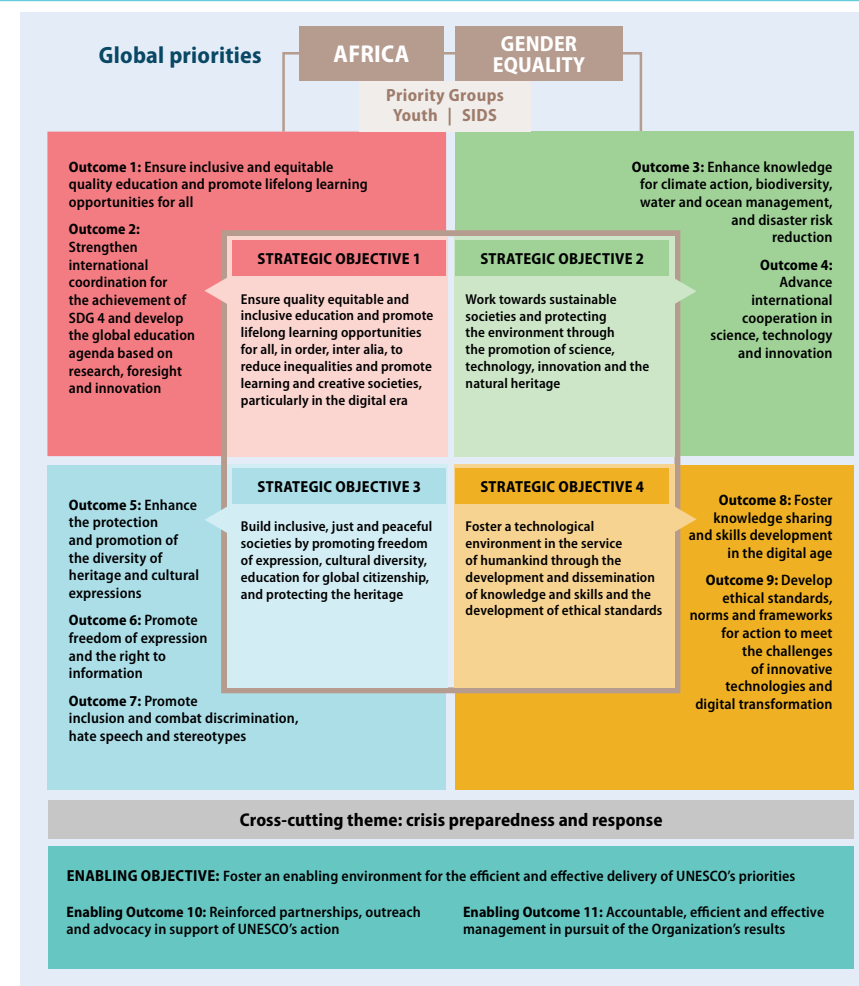
4.1   Meeting the education challenges & embracing opportunities

Strategic Objective 1. Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era

Outcome 1: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

54.   There are six evaluations that provide rich, meaningful insights into UNESCO's effectiveness in its support to Member States to improve education policies and frameworks, build resilient, quality, and gender-transformative education systems, strengthen skills, develop, and train teachers, and promote inclusion to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 4. Six of them map against Strategic Objective 1, some other against Strategic Objectives 2, 3 and 4 which testifies of the intersectoral relevance of many of the initiatives evaluated.

Output 1 ED 1: Education systems equipped to promote inclusion, address marginalization and advance rights, including in crisis-affected and post-disaster contexts

55.   In keeping with UNESCO's commitment to supporting rights-based, inclusive, and equitable education systems and targeting those at greatest risk of being left behind, including in crisis-affected and post-disaster contexts, UNESCO Iraq with funding support from the European Union implemented a project *Access to Quality Inclusive Primary and Secondary Education for IDPs, Returnees, Remainees and Refugees in Conflict Affected Areas of Iraq* between 2017 to 2021. It aimed at strengthening government and non-governmental capacity to implement education in emergencies and support educational access to Iraqi children affected by conflict. The project was implemented in six governorates of Iraq and involved enrolling out-of-school students, training teachers and parent teacher organizations, providing learning materials, renovating schools, providing catch-up classes and psychosocial support to children.

56.   The end of project evaluation reported positive results against the OECD DAC criteria. The findings indicated the project activities were tailored to meet needs of specific groups of beneficiaries, it successfully re-enrolled 1700 students who had not attended classes the previous year, distributed 501 teacher kits and 756 classroom kits to schools and trained approximately 4433 teachers on learner-centred pedagogy, teaching in crisis contexts and to provide psychosocial support to children. In addition, nine major school rehabilitation projects were completed.

57.   The use of a partnership approach between UNESCO and CSOs as the modality of implementation served the project well and enhanced efficiency. The presence of CSOs in remote areas built trust, and saved time and costs and the opportunity to work with UNESCO strengthened the capacities of CSOs. The weak financial, administrative, and due diligence procedures of CSOs did cause some delays in building the partnership but coordination and leadership provided by UNESCO helped overcome these challenges. Overall, the evaluation showed that the project made an important contribution to developing documents and strategies previously not available in the country such as the Iraq Education Cluster Strategy and a Unified Crisis Response. Perhaps most importantly, the project provided the platform for piloting training on conflict sensitive education and translating these into Arabic thus contributing to sustainability and transferability of learnings.

Output 1. ED 4 Learners equipped with relevant skills to meet individual, labour market and societal demands through literacy and TVET, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and Higher Education

58.   The *Final Evaluation of Horizontes Programme – Rural Secondary Education*[27] offers important insights about UNESCO's success in empowering learners with relevant skills, particularly the most vulnerable. The project funded by Dutch philanthropic organisation Porticus supported UNESCO Peru to implement the Horizons programme. The programme aimed to help adolescents in rural public schools complete their secondary education, strengthen their socio-emotional skills, reinforce their identity and

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27. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación final del programa de educación secundaria rural 'HORIZONTES'.

intercultural citizenship, and develop technical-productive skills to develop life plans. The final evaluation concluded that the project was highly relevant and consistent with national priorities for education, SDGs as well as UNESCO's policies and mandates. With respect to outcomes, it must be noted that the entire programme was implemented during COVID-19 which has severely impacted the programme's ability to achieve all intended outcomes. Despite these challenges, the evaluation finds positive impacts with respect to development of socio-emotional skills in students. Positive programme impacts include improvements in self-management, self-efficacy, social awareness, teamwork, perseverance, and responsible decision-making. These impacts are significant as it helped mitigate the impact of school closures on students and compulsory isolation resulting from the Covid -19 pandemic. Other outcomes achieved relate to an increase in the number of certifications and reduction in school drop-out rates.

Output 1 ED. 5: Teachers trained and supported to improve learning outcomes and address the changes brought forth by the digital and artificial intelligence transformation and the COVID crisis

59.   The achievement of SDG 4 relies heavily on teachers, yet a quantitative and qualitative gap remains a global challenge and in most acute parts of the world where increased educational quality for all is most needed. Dissemination of best teaching and learning practices designed to empower learners can help in establishing resilient education and learning systems and in this context, UNESCO plays a critical role helping Member States improve policies which support teachers, who work on the front line to ensure quality education.

60.   UNESCO's work regarding the development of teachers focuses on five areas: a) promotion and monitoring of relevant standards and international normative instruments; b) support to Members States in the development and review of teacher policies and strategies; c) developing human and institutional capacities; d) production and dissemination of knowledge and e) advocacy and knowledge sharing. The *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* represents an important step in consolidating UNESCO's understanding about the relevance and coherence of its work in the field of teacher development; key achievements to date; its contribution to Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality and the visibility and communication of the Organization's work on teacher development.

61.   The evaluation found that UNESCO's work on teachers is well positioned, relevant and largely coordinated with other organizations and thus contributing to significant developments at global, regional, and national levels. The Organization has contributed to several significant achievements including formation of the Global Education Coalition,

the Global Teacher Campus, the national and global commitments arising from the Transforming Education Summit, as well as the joint statements with partners on World Teachers Day. The monitoring and follow-up on normative work through the work of the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (CEART), the development of the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T) framework and the Organization's contribution to the advocacy and policy dialogue of the International Teacher Task Force also count among its key achievements.

62.   However, in an increasingly crowded development landscape that includes many longstanding but also new, emerging actors who are broadening their sphere of influence to include teacher development, UNESCO needs to constantly review and reaffirm its global leadership role. Majority of partners see UNESCO's role as mostly complementary to that of other global level stakeholders and see its strengths in its normative work, policy development and knowledge creation functions. However, it is UNESCO's convening power that allows projects to attract extra-budgetary resources.

63.   Another initiative in support of teachers is the *Empowering ECCE Teachers with a Transformative Vision of Education* project implemented in Asia Pacific region by UNESCO Bangkok and funded by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust initiative. The project aimed to produce a set of resources that draws on the wide-ranging global experience of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for use at all levels in the ECCE sector. The evaluation found that the project was highly successful in producing relevant and succinct sets of resources, which included a Handbook and its ten modules, and which resonates with Ministries, Teacher Education Institutes, and NGOs in Pilot countries. The resources are being implemented in practice, in a range of different contexts in all four pilot countries. However, COVID impeded plans to localise the materials at the country level and embed practices within at least one Teacher Education Institute. These developments could have strengthened the overall impact but were not fully tested. However, partnership forged with UNICEF in the implementation of this project can help mitigate some of these risks.

Output 1 ED 6: Resilient, quality and equity of education systems strengthened to flexibly respond to evolving learning environments and to better deliver on SDG 4 commitments

64.   Meeting UNESCO's ambition for skills development for youth and adults, particularly literacy, TVET, STEM and higher education requires support to countries to improve the relevance of their systems and ensure it is robust to help them address a range of global challenges. In keeping with this intent, the *UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust project* was developed to assist African higher education systems at the institutional, national,

and regional levels to further develop their Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms. QA mechanisms are a key enabler for African countries to achieve their development goals and an important tool to strengthen the quality of its higher education offer.

65.   The project included three components: support to the establishment of National QA Agencies; institutional capacity building of recently established QA Agencies and QA professionals and consolidating the existing QA Networks in Africa to implement the Addis Convention. The evaluation found that the overall project objective was well aligned to needs of participating countries and that the demand driven, flexible approach adopted during the design phase was appropriate for progressing these objectives. With respect to expected outcomes, the evaluation noted significant progress being made with respect to the establishment of national QA Agencies in participating countries. While Mali established the Malian agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Scientific Research (AMAQ-Sup), in Niger, while the creation of an agency is being finalised, the Government opted to keep the QA function within the Ministry with the establishment of a directorate for quality assurance. In Togo, decrees have been proposed to the Parliament for approval. These developments show important strides are being made with respect to addressing the challenges faced in the region. Furthermore, capacity building activities to consolidate national QA systems have led to establishing more operational guidelines and handbooks for carrying out QA activities and disseminated widely. The evaluation concludes that the project contributed to raising awareness across African nations on the importance of QA systems and offered insights on how to strengthen the systems.

66.   UNESCO office in Jordan in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) designed the second phase of the WebGIS SSMM implementation which was implemented between 2020 to 2022. The project *Technical assistance for the Ministry of Education's WEBGIS School Maintenance System* aimed at strengthening the Ministry's ability to make systematic, structured and evidence-based decision related to preventive and corrective public school maintenance and budget planning. Access to accurate, timely data is critical to ensure school leaders and officials can make informed decisions about investments in school infrastructure. This helps Member States contribute to SDG 4, in particular target 4.a: build and upgrade educational facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all and also support UNESCO in its mandate to lead and coordinate SDG 4.

67.   The evaluation found despite time and financial constraints, the project was effectively managed and coordinated and all resources, financial and human, were well utilized. UNESCO's role in coordinating with all stakeholders was described as an outstanding feature of this project: roles and responsibilities, decision-making and communication was clear and well balanced and conducive to the ownership of the project by the Ministry of Education. The project successfully trained Ministry staff in using WebGIS smart solution for school maintenance requests. The user-friendly and useful tool is currently in implementation.

Mainstreaming global priorities under Strategic Objective 1

As the lead agency for SDG 4, UNESCO has a commitment to maintain a sharp focus on driving an agenda that is transformative and aligned to its Global Priority Gender Equality and Africa. The Synthesis finds that four of the six evaluations considered under Strategic Objective 1 addressed GPGE and three evaluations focused on Africa. The evaluations showed that progress is being made with respect to both Global Priorities, but more efforts are needed to enhance gender-responsive and gender-transformative aspects in interventions. The Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development in particular, notes that the absence of deep-rooted integration of gender equality in teacher development work remains a challenge for UNESCO.

4.2   Meeting the environmental challenges & embracing opportunities

Strategic Objective 2. Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation, and the natural heritage

Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water, and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction

68.   UNESCO's multidisciplinary mandate and specialized expertise of its international and intergovernmental scientific programme places it in a unique position to mobilize action at the global, regional, and national level to reverse the decline in the natural environment and build a resilient future to achieve goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Towards this end, UNESCO implements a range of activities including through intersectoral cooperation to build institutional and human capacities in basic sciences, technology, research, innovation, and engineering. This section presents evidence from four decentralized evaluations that tell a compelling and credible story about UNESCO's contributions towards this outcome.

Output 3 SC.1: Inclusive knowledge and capacities of Member States strengthened to advance and apply science for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and restoration, and disaster risk resilience

69.   *The Biosphere and Lake Chad Heritage Project (BIOPALT)* was launched in May 2017 by UNESCO and the Lake Chad Basin Commission towards "Applying the model of transboundary biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites to promote peace in the Lake Chad Basin through the sustainable management of its natural resources". The project implemented in five countries in Africa is designed as a multisectoral and interdisciplinary response involving all sectors of the Organization, both at Headquarters and in the field and the tools of the Man and the Biosphere Programme[28] and its biospheres, the World Heritage Convention, and the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme. The project aspires to develop an inclusive, sustainable, equitable and coordinated management of the Lake Chad Basin to enable biodiversity conservation and prevent the degradation

of natural ecosystems and promote cooperation. In addition, the project also focuses on supporting States in the preparation of a dossier for the creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve in the basin and a proposal for the inscription of the lake as a World Heritage site.

70.   An evaluation of the project found the project was designed and delivered in line with local, national, and international priorities for the region, it supports the strengthening of regional cooperation, the preservation of ecosystems and the human development of the territory. The evaluation described BIOPALT as a pioneering UNESCO project in that it combines the three historical programmes of the Agency (the World Heritage Convention, Man and Biosphere and the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme). In keeping with its mandate, UNESCO made capacity building a central component of BIOPALT and consequently local experts and institutions were trained and integrated into knowledge production activities which in turn fostered ownership of key results both by institutions and local populations.

71.   Perhaps most importantly, the capacity building activities targeted local populations to increase their capability to preserve their environment and maximize gains made from the income generating activities implemented within the framework of the project. Despite facing implementation challenges (due to security situation in the region and governance and cooperation with the Lake Chad Basin Commission), the evaluation concluded the BIOPALT was a flagship and innovative project whose intersectoral approach and institutional focus have added value in the context of multiple crises in the region. Based on the positive evaluation findings, plans for an extension and replication of the project has already been envisaged.

72.   Another initiative that was implemented using the approaches of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme is the *Sustainable Development through Biodiversity-Friendly Livelihoods: Supporting Rural Communities in the Vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park*. It aimed to support women and youth of the communities in and around the park to

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28. The MAB programme is an intergovernmental scientific programme that aims to establih a scientific basis for enhaning the relationship between people and their environments. It combines the natrual and social sciences with a view to improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

operate green alternative livelihoods and income generating activities thus enhancing biodiversity conservation, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development in the Norther region of Togo. The project is significant in that it not only contributes to several SDGs (SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 8, and SDG 15), it also contributes to African Union's Agenda 2063, particularly to the components relating to the sustainable management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance and preservation of peace.

73.   The evaluation reported that the holistic approach deployed within the framework of the project and the involvement of local communities in sustainable management of biodiversity and the effective mobilization of technical expertise were hugely significant in advancing biodiversity conservation in the areas in and around the park. In terms of effectiveness and impact the evaluation reported satisfactory results, with over 80% of the output indicators being met. The project has improved knowledge on the socioeconomic aspects, biodiversity and the market for the sustainable management of the park, strengthened technical and institutional capacities of national and/or decentralized structures, and contributed to the creation of eco-enterprises (beekeeping, breeding and the development of non-timber forest products in particular shea) involving 624 direct beneficiaries covering men and women.

74.   Another project that aimed at *Promoting the Use of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficient Technologies in Households in Rural Areas of Cameroon*[29] funded by India-UN Development Partnership Fund was implemented with the Ministry of Water and Energy with the support of UNESCO. The objective of the project was to improve access to energy in the regions of the North and the Far North, through the promotion of solar energy and biomass systems, the introduction of solar equipment, the production and use of biomass briquettes and improved stoves. The evaluation found the results achieved were in line with expectations: thirty-six trainers were selected and trained, reduced time spent by women and children in the collection of wood, reduced/elimination of risks of burns for women and children during cooking, and reduction of fire and disease caused by smoke fumes. These changes were described as significant, and the technologies introduced within the framework of the project are now part of people's lives and economic activities have emerged around the results of the project. The evaluation also reported positive results on sustainability owing to managers being well versed with the project and having ownership and the formation of 05 Mama-Solar.

Output 3 SC.2: Water science, innovation, education, management, cooperation and governance bolstered for a water-secure world in a changing environment

75.   Improving scientific knowledge and capacities on water resources is paramount for evidence-based decisions in addressing the complexity around the sustainable use of water. Scientific research incorporating human interactions with nature is required to better understand water cycles and hydrological processes including those related to floods and droughts when managing water resources. The need of the hour is for water management and governance efforts to be implemented through inclusive approaches ensuring all key stakeholders are included in the process. UNESCO embarked on a two-year project in Turkana North and Kibish sub counties, with funding from Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. Launched in 2020 the project aimed at providing access to adequate, clean and safe water to improve livelihoods, promote sanitation and hygiene for communities in Turkana.

76.   An *End of Project Evaluation of the Turkana Water Project* implemented by UNESCO provides useful insights about UNESCO's contributions in this regard. Through investments and use of innovative technologies such as installing boreholes with solar and wind pumps, rehabilitation of old and dilapidated water technologies and rehabilitation of earth pans, the project makes significant contributions to (1) improvements in health, sanitation, hygiene and environmental protection (children and parents able to bath daily; washing utensils), (2) use of alternative energy sources, and (3) diversification of economic activities, beyond pastoralism such as agriculture, briquette making, and making compost from household and toilet waste. In addition, there were other unintended impacts such as skills acquisition, adoption of new technologies and food security. Serving as a laboratory of ideas and helping to develop institutional and community capacities, UNESCO has clearly made an enduring contribution to improving lives and livelihoods to the people living in Turkana.

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29. Original title in French: Projet de Promotion de l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables et des technologies d'efficacité énergétique dans les ménages des zones rurales du Cameroun (PUERTEM).

Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology, and innovation

Output 4 SC. 4: Member States' capacities strengthened to improve science, technology, and innovation (STI) policies and access to scientific and technological advancements and enhance knowledge sharing, including through open science

77.   UNESCO's role in providing advice to its Member States and advocating for investing in STI-enabled societies through effective national science policies and robust systems of governance is critical in addressing contemporary environmental and societal challenges. The multidimensional, interconnected, and holistic approach advocated through UNESCO's programming in the Natural Sciences sector but also in the Social and Human Sciences Sector makes an important contribution to strengthening Member States' capacities in the formulation of science policies. This is well evidenced in the *UNESCO/ SIDA Project Strengthening Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa 2020-2022*.

78.   Weak STI infrastructure has been identified as a contributing factor to the low scientific productivity and innovation in Africa. Addressing this requires enhancing interactions between the actors of STI systems in Africa and developing and implementing policy instruments and strategies that enable this. The SIDA-funded pilot project implemented in six pilot countries was designed with this intent in mind. It aimed to strengthen fragile science, technology and innovation systems and governance in selected African countries with the main goal of supporting poverty reduction and achieving SDGs. This was framed by the principles and standards contained in the UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers which calls for science ecosystems anchored in the universal values of human rights, equality, and inclusion. More importantly, the project represented a rare collaboration between SC and SHS sectors in UNESCO providing rich insights for inspiring other teams to adopt similar approaches and learn how to balance distribution of budget, roles, and responsibilities.

79.   The evaluation of the project showed very favourable results, with UNESCO's comparative strengths in developing STI policies, strengthening normative frameworks of STI systems, creating conditions for research activities, and developing human capital for research being identified by stakeholders as key elements of the project's success. Capacity and experience of UNESCO staff at Field Offices was also a key factor that contributed to the achievement of results. Overall, the evaluation concluded that despite the challenges faced by the project including insufficient consultation with UNESCO FO and other key stakeholders to tailor the project to different national conditions, it made remarkable contributions to strengthening STI policies and systems of the pilot countries towards the achievement of SDGs.

Output 4 SC. 5: Institutional and human capacities in basic sciences, technology, research, innovation, and engineering enhanced to advance knowledge for sustainable development

80.   The *Transboundary Waters Governance (TBWG) for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme* implemented in four phases was launched with an ambitious vision for a more water-secure world where transboundary waters are managed cooperatively contributing to achieving of SDG 6 and promoting water as an instrument of peace and cooperation through water diplomacy. The project was launched with three clear outcomes:

- transboundary surface and ground water cooperation is strengthened through joint frameworks, institutions, and agreements in a financially sustainable manner.

- transboundary and ground waters are managed, monitored, and assessed with data shared, in key transboundary basins respecting integrated water resources management principles in a changing climate, backing evidence-based dialogue and decision-making.

- awareness and support for transboundary surface and ground-water cooperation is an acknowledgement that Water Convention does make a difference.

81.   The programme has three partial actions, each implemented by a different organisation and the evaluation looked at selected projects within the partial actions. The evaluation concluded that the three partial actions implemented under the framework of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's TBWG programmes were highly relevant, effective, and coherent in terms of creating a favourable environment for countries to negotiate transboundary water management agreements. The programme demonstrates a relevant set of actions that comprise transboundary water programmes, what cooperation looks like in practice, and addressing the inevitable challenges that arise when bringing together different stakeholders around sharing water resources, under increasing pressures. The TBWG programme is well thought of and is described as an analytical and consistent programme with strong conceptual synergies across the actions. A key achievement identified relates to TBWG programme's adaptiveness to change supporting hydro diplomacy by taking non-linear approaches while considering

and responding to changing political, economic, and social conditions. In locations where actions were not possible, projects have shifted to focusing on smaller more strategic actions, and then mobilising when larger progress was possible. However, in terms of actual outcomes and impacts of the activities, there has been no systematic monitoring of outcomes.

82.   The *Strengthening Science and Mathematics in Primary Education in Timor-Leste*, a collaborative project between UNESCO Jakarta and the East Timorese Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, was designed to improve mathematics and science education at the basic level. Through a combination of Training of teacher trainers and student's supplementary materials, the project raised awareness of quality teaching and learning practices in relation to science and mathematics, improved subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge amongst teachers, built capacity, and strengthened existing connections and cultivated new strategic partnerships. The establishment of laboratories in thirteen districts is a significant development and will contribute to sustaining the outcomes. The project also responds to UNESCO's GP GE and ensures a focus on gender not just in terms of participation but also on the extent to which the materials themselves promote GE. This is promising.

Mainstreaming global priorities under Strategic Objective 2

Ensuring women and girls lead resolute action to tackle climate change challenges, advance in fields of science, technology and innovation and contribute their knowledge on the management of water resources and biosphere reserves is key for SDG 5 and 13. The evaluations showed all of UNESCO's actions with respect to Strategic Objective 2 have made efforts to integrate GPGE in programme design and delivery. The projects contributed to advancing women's careers in decision-making positions and serving as role models in sciences, build capacities on gender transformative STI policies and Open Science Policies, enhanced women's and girls' action for and resilience to sustainable management of natural resources and considered gender responsive ocean and water management and governance approaches.

Focus on Global Priority Africa was also evident with six of the seven evaluations considered focused on Africa.

4.3   Meeting the challenges of social cohesion and embracing the opportunities

Strategic Objective 3. Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage

Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions

Output 5 CLT 4: Member States' and communities' capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage

83.   The *Final Evaluation of the United Nations Joint Programme 'Citizenship and Social Protection in the Gabonese Republic'*[30] offers additional insights about UNESCO's contribution to this output. This joint programme implemented by six United Nations system agencies – UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNESCO covering the period from 2020-2021 was initiated in response to Gabon's need for support to accelerate the achievement of SDGs. Access to social protection and social services in Gabon is severely hampered by an important number of people not having a birth certificate.[31] Acquiring a birth certificate has been challenging as Gabonese law allows for a very short duration to register a birth, the high costs associated with registration and the distances to be travelled to initiate the administrative procedures.

84.   The Joint Programme was executed by the UN agencies with the current Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and other Ministries such as Justice, Interior, Economy and Recovery, National Education and other governmental and non-governmental institutions, and decentralized authorities such as town halls, local leaders, and communities. The evaluation found the national legal framework has been effectively improved to allow for more timely registration of birth post deliveries. The advocacy led by UNICEF and WHO led to the passing of a law extending the duration of declaration of births from 3 days to 30 days in rural areas and 3 to 15 days in urban areas. A Ministerial decree was also issued making birth certificates free in all health establishments in Gabon. Through the creation of one-stop shops, set up with the support of the Joint Programme, a total of 14,029 supplementary judgements were issued of which 11,757 were transcribed into birth certificates. Perhaps most importantly, the Joint Programme helped 4,021 people mainly children but also adults to obtain birth

certificates. Other impacts included the establishment of a social register, the mapping of populations with difficult access, and the enrolment in the National Health Insurance and Social Guarantee Fund (CNAMGS) of these populations. These developments were seen to constitute undeniable progress in the social protection process in Gabon.

Output 5 CLT 5: Member States' and civil society's capacities strengthened to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions through dynamic and inclusive cultural and creative industries

85.   The UNESO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by Member States in 2005 provides an international standard setting instrument that recognizes the sovereign rights of States to maintain, adopt and implement policies and measures to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions. In 2015 a monitoring framework was designed to incentivize and facilitate compliance around four key goals: governance for culture, flows and mobility of cultural goods and services, sustainable development and human rights. The SIDA-funded project *Reshaping Cultural Polices* was designed with the aim of supporting the development of systems of governance for culture at the national level that are aligned to the 2005 Convention and its monitoring framework. It does this by building capacities for evidence-based and participatory policy monitoring in sixteen countries and by supporting the elaboration of the Global Report series and its dissemination among government officials and CSOs. The project was implemented by UNESCO during 2018-2022.

86.   An evaluation of the project commissioned in 2022 found positive results with respect to strengthening capacities of Member States including their capacities to network with civil society, produce data and monitor cultural policies. Despite the pandemic all planned activities were implemented in all beneficiary countries and several synergies were established at unit and sector level and coordination between UNESCO HQ and FOs (CLT and CI sectors) was found to be excellent by all stakeholders. As a result of the engagement in the project, all participating countries submitted the Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR) and analysis of the measures integrated into the UNESCO policy monitoring platform

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30. Original title in French: Programme Conjoint Citoyenneté et Protection Sociale en République Gabonaise.
31. According to estimates provided in the evaluation, at least 10% of the population on the territory of Gabon is not in possession of a birth certificate.

showed that SIDA II countries are more likely to report measures and relevant information than other developing countries. More concerted efforts to include marginalized groups in the QPR process, CSOs and regional activities to sustain results in countries graduating from SIDA support are likely to enhance the impact of this project.

87.   Realizing UNESCO's mission of building open and peaceful knowledge societies depends on the mobilization of all the areas of its mandate. As the only United Nations agency responsible for culture, UNESCO has a responsibility to promote, safeguard and protect diverse cultural expressions and types of heritage (built, movable, underwater, documentary, and intangible). COVID-19 has further exacerbated inequalities between and within countries. In this context, UNESCO's work to support the creation of and access to cultural goods and services and raising awareness of Member States about the economic potential of culture and advising on the field of creative economy is invaluable.

88.   The *Final Evaluation of Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga, and Vanuatu* offers some insights into UNESCO's timely and targeted support to Member States in the framework of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The project was developed in response to the contraction of tourism industries after the pandemic outbreak to support the cultural and creative industries to grow the informal economy in the four participating countries. The activities carried out under the responsibility and oversight of UNESCO working in partnership with ILO and IFAD included upskilling artists and cultural producers of different sub-sectors of the creative and cultural industries through training in product development and branding and assistance to Resiliart debates[32], UNESCO's global effort to promote awareness of the far-reaching impact of the pandemic on the culture sector as well as the importance of cultural and creative industries for economic development and social cohesion. The evaluation found at least 153 people were trained and while the participants included a mix of gender and age groups, the training was predominantly limited to urban centres. This was disappointing as many people working in the informal sector often reside in rural, and even remote settings.

89.   In terms of effectiveness, the evaluation reported that the most palpable impact was in the successful formalization of the two professional associations – the Viti Association of Visual Arts and the Fiji Islands Dance Alliance as well as in the strengthening of networks. Interestingly, the evaluation gathered several impact stories from participants to inspire other entrepreneurs in the region either through individual ventures or through the organisation of professional associations. The evaluation recommended that face-to-face projects that included an explicit focus on rural and marginalized areas of each country and incorporated a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) framework could be implemented for greater impact.

Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information

Output 6 CI 2: Member States have strengthened capacities and raised awareness to enhance norms and policies related to freedom of expression, press freedom, safety of journalists, including women journalists and the right to access information, online and offline

90.   Freedom of expression, and media development in particular are core to UNESCO's constitutional mandate to advance 'mutual knowledge and understanding of people, through all means of mass communication' and to promote 'free flow of ideas by word and image.' Through fostering free, independent and pluralistic media, UNESCO contributes to peace, sustainability, poverty eradication and human rights while keeping its global priorities: Africa and Gender at the top of its agenda. UNESCO is uniquely placed to promote press freedom working with professional media organisations, civil society actors and national authorities in its Member States.

91.   The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of access to information, fundamental freedoms and the safety of journalists for the creation of a peaceful, just and inclusive societies, under Goal 16. The issue of journalists' safety has become a priority not only for UNESCO but also for the UN system, with the adoption in 2012 of a UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity spearheaded by UNESCO. Considering this, a *Multi Donor Programme on Freedom of Expressions and Safety of Journalists (MDP)* was approved by UNESCO's Executive Board in its 200th session to help facilitate UNESCO's contribution to this important area.

92.   The External Evaluation completed in 2022 found that the design and implementation of the MDP project was highly relevant and despite the change in context with the outbreak of COVID-19 and other events, MDP was able to adjust and adapt its work to country specific challenges including the Beirut port explosion in August 2020, a military coup in Myanmar in 2021, the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in 2020 and the outbreak of violence in April and May 2021 in Gaza. Coherence with other UNESCO programmes was established particularly through the creation of intersectoral synergies between Culture and Education sector and collaboration with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) at global and regional levels ensured external coherence. The evaluation also found significant progress against outcome 1: celebrations of key international days, publishing of the second edition of the World trends report and the creation and reinforcement of new structures and groups to strengthen media development and coordination in support of freedom of expression and outcome 2 focusing mainly on community media and media and information literacy. However, the

32. https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/debate_guide_en.pdf.

evaluation concluded that a drop in funding for MDP could have serious consequences for sustainability of benefits in the longer-term.

93.   The *Independent Evaluation of Strengthening Media Self-Regulatory Mechanisms in Timor-Leste* commissioned by UNESCO Jakarta also offers important insights into UNESCO's contribution to strengthening Member States Capacities for fostering an environment where free and independent media can flourish. Working in partnership with the Press Council, the Timor-Leste Journalists Association and journalism departments at two universities, UNESCO Jakarta implemented the project aimed at building the capacity of the Timor-Leste Press Council, facilitate exchanges with established regional and international press councils, train future journalists and promote public awareness of the media's self-regulatory mechanisms. The evaluation found that all components of the project were delivered on time and to high quality with the Timor-Leste Press Council reportedly becoming stronger and more confident and more internationally connected. Hundreds of students were trained during the two-week workshops run by a faculty from Indonesia's university journalism programmes and the Press Council together with the Association of Timor-Leste Journalists hosted several events and talk shows aimed at socialising and growing awareness of the public on the role of the Press Council, the problem of disinformation and the importance of self-regulation by the media.

94.   Another evaluation of UNESCO's *Building Trust in Media in Southeast Europe and Türkiye – Phase 2* implemented with the support of the European Union and in collaboration with 18 partners in seven countries and at a regional level confirms UNESCO's contribution to strengthening freedom of expression, free, independent and pluralistic media while empowering citizens, in particular youth to think critically about the information they receive through offline and online content. The evaluation found that project outputs were delivered effectively and the awareness raising activities implemented within the project improved beneficiaries' knowledge of media professionalism. Youth was prioritized in the project and many activities particularly Media and Information Literacy (MIL) curricula and coaching targeted youth directly. Key successes noted in the evaluation include the introduction of MIL in public education for the first time, official recognition of MIL by governments and public authorities, introduction of fact-checking methodology for the first time among journalists, development of a social media press code, and raised awareness of misinformation and how to address it.

95.   However, while the project built on existing activities of partners, UNESCO's role and expertise was deemed to be critical for sustainability. UNESCO is regarded as an internationally respected organization and its ability to hold dialogue with governments and public authorities on sensitive issues such as MIL was seen as significant.

Output 6 CI 3: Member States and media institutions enabled to strengthen media developments and media pluralism, including through the international Programme for the Development of Communication

96.   Overcoming social inequalities and weaknesses requires creating enabling environments for independent, pluralistic, viable media, their social role and their role in informing the public including through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The *Final Evaluation of the Local Development Support Project through Community Radio Stations*[33] examined UNESCO's contributions with respect to its support for media pluralism particularly community media in the context of Cameroon. The project was implemented with the aim to enable disadvantaged populations to participate fully in sustainable development strategies by supporting social transformations through empowerment of grassroot communities and reducing the digital divide. UNESCO as the lead agency in the field of communications and information implemented this project in partnership with the Government of Cameroon.

97.   The evaluation found that the activities carried out under the project respond to Cameroon's development priorities and consistent with the missions of the concerned Ministries. The involvement of community representatives in decision-making structures of the project, the close collaboration between UNESCO and key government agencies and UNESCO's technical assistance were seen as critical to effective delivery. The project's effectiveness and impact are evidenced in the fact that thirty-four new radio stations including twelve community multimedia centres were installed, seventeen radio stations were rehabilitated and over 340 broadcast radio staff were trained in the creation and production of themes relating to freedom of expression, ethics and the right to information. The evaluation also reported high level of satisfaction in the quality and content of the programmes particularly those relating to education of the child and youth and advancement of know-how for farmers. The combination of entertainment and broad instruction that promote social change were seen as the main factors in its ongoing appeal to the communities. The main weakness identified relates to the lack of adequate consideration to gender dimensions in the project.

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33. Original title in French: Rapport final d'évaluation : Appui au développement des radios communautaires

Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes

Output 7 SHS 1: Member States capacities strengthened to advance effective policies and practices to achieve inclusive development through the promotion of human rights, scientific freedom, intercultural understanding and by tackling all forms of discrimination and racism

98.   Between 2019 to May 2022, the International Organisation for Migration in partnership with UNESCO led the design and implementation of a project called *Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan*. The project was designed to address the growing culture of youth gangs in a still fragile post-conflict context which was hard bit by the civil wars in 2013 and 2016. Initial consultations with community representatives, civil society and state government in Wau town revealed that youth violence was a key priority and needed urgent attention, but the government and local actors did not have adequate resources nor the means to address it. The selection of youth gangs for peacebuilding within the framework of this project was seen as a bold and innovative move by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, going against the grain of the general expectation that only armed violent conflict deserves attention of peacebuilding programmes in South Sudan.

99.   The evaluation of the project showed strong results. It was well aligned to national priorities and South Sudan's National Development Strategy and developed in close consultations with the needs of the youth. It was delivered in collaboration with national partners and acknowledged the prior work done by other aid agencies on youth, street children and sexual violence in Wau. Participants described the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNESCO project's cash for work initiative as innovative and ensured that youth received money to support their livelihoods while also portraying them positively as productive members of the communities. As a result of their engagement in the project, gang members and their families and the wider communities in Wau town built trust and engaged in dialogue. Youth contribution to social and economic activities in their communities also increased including helping to clean roads and schools and supporting other vulnerable members in the community. Participating youth grew in their self-confidence and were engaged positively in day-to-day life of the community.

100. Perhaps most importantly, the project had a catalytic effect with UNESCO and IOM building on their experiences from this project to kick start new projects. The evaluation reported evidence of spread of the project's experiences beyond South Sudan with the projects' insights being discussed at the regional level and shared internationally. Several high-level visits, also from the UN PBF Secretariat provided first hand insights about the project's success.

Output 7 SHS 2: Member States capacities strengthened in applying social and human scientific frontier knowledge to devise effective policy solutions to advance an inclusive development agenda with the aim to improve the wellbeing of people, particularly the most vulnerable, addressing the legacies of the pandemic crisis and facing the social impact of climate change

101. The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Sector is tasked with deploying scientific endeavours to build inclusive and peaceful societies. Serving as a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO helps Member States adopt international standards and manages programmes that foster free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing. Producing and disseminating high quality knowledge is therefore a central activity of the SHS sector of UNESCO including the collection, analysis and production of data and information in the form of tools, databases, policy briefs, international norms and standards, thematic-research based publications. During the period 2018-2021, the SHS Sector produced more than one hundred knowledge products spanning across the Sector's thematic areas with a higher number of resources creation on the area of inclusion, rights, dialogue, social transformation and sport and anti-doping.

102. In 2022, the Assistant Director-General for SHS Sector requested an evaluation to assess the positioning and contribution of the Sector's Knowledge Products to SHS Strategic Objectives. The *Evaluation of the Knowledge Products of the Social and Human Sciences Sector* completed in March 2023 provides useful insights to guide the future development and direction of the suite of Knowledge Products produced by the Sector. Specifically, the evaluation found that the thematic coverage of the SHS knowledge products were consistent with UNESCO's mandates and global agendas and policies; however, their relevance to national strategies varied. This is partly due to limited capacities and resources which impeded SHS's ability to undertake a thorough needs assessment to inform the knowledge products under development and/or involve prospective users in testing and piloting to ensure relevance.

103. With respect to coherence, the evaluation found that while the products were coherent with the Sector's Strategic Objectives, synergies that resulted were more based on opportunity rather than by design and an overall binding narrative that holds the knowledge products together was missing. Their visibility was variable and approaches to foster use were also varied. Despite this, the evaluation identified several instances of the SHS knowledge products informing, influencing and enriching international policy dialogue and promoting innovative ideas. The Council of Europe for instance reportedly used the (draft) *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* in a report on the legal framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI) system.[34] Several SHS staff also highlighted the effectiveness of consultative processes to bring knowledge products into intergovernmental debates,

34. Council of Europe. 2021. *A Legal Framework for AI Systems*. Strasbourg. https://edoc.coe.int/en/artificial-intelligence/9648-a-legal-framework-for-ai-systems.html

such as with the UNESCO Youth Forum; the Global Forum against Racism; or the link of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme to Member States through the Intergovernmental Council, Ministerial Forums, and network of MOST National Committees. These developments are heartening.

104. The evaluation's recommendations and the Management's acceptance of the Recommendations illustrates the Organization's commitment to take a strategic approach to guide knowledge production & its dissemination, promote its use and elevating and strengthening knowledge governance.

Output 7 ED 3: Learners empowered to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative and responsible global citizens

105. The Programme and Budget document 41 C/5 states that in 2022-2025, UNESCO will be at the forefront of fostering transformative education, embodied under UNESCO's mission 4.7. This entails supporting Member States to place SDG 4 target 4.7 and other related targets at the heart of their education systems. More importantly, this output benefits intersectoral cooperation and contributes to the achievement of Outcome 7 and related Strategic Objective 3 as well as to Outcome 1 Strategic Objective 1. This year's Synthesis identifies three evaluations that contribute to this output. All three evaluations show strong results for UNESCO and demonstrate UNESCO's contribution to GP Africa and Gender Equality.

106. The *Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3)* Programme implemented by UNESCO uses a Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) lens to strengthen the capacity of national education systems to promote healthy lives for adolescents and young people in Sub-Saharan Africa, through improved sexual and reproductive health (SRH), greater gender equality, and improved education outcomes. O3 was implemented in thirty-three countries with four main objectives related to generating political commitment and support for CSE and SRH service access, delivering CSE programmes, supporting safe, healthier and more inclusive school and community environments, and strengthening the evidence base on CSE and safe school environments.

107. According to the *Final Evaluation of O3* completed in February 2023, the programme has had remarkable success in achieving its intended objectives despite challenges. The programme's coordinated action with multiple sectors and stakeholders at regional and country levels resulted in keeping CSE on the political agenda despite increased resistance to CSE on the continent. The programme contributed to new laws supporting Adolescent and Young People's (AYP's) sexual and reproductive health and rights, and creation of policies such as on learner pregnancy and readmission, school-related gender-based violence and

school health. A total of 87,455 pre-service and 545,033 in-service teachers across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) were trained. Perhaps most importantly, the programme contributed to the evidence base for CSE and safer school environments through commissioning research and improving the collection of HIV sensitive indicators in government owned data systems and training Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) officers in the collection, analysis and reporting of the data. However, challenges persist, and closer attention will need to be paid to sustain the benefits accrued from this programme by involving parents, offering continuous mentoring for countries to ensure the programme remains 'comprehensive' and working with educational authorities to ensure CSE does not fall off the curriculum.

108. The *GCED and ESD in Textbooks and School Materials for Basic Education in Mexico*[35] project implemented by UNESCO office in Mexico focused on developing educational materials that promoted learning related to SDGs (SDG 4 target 4.7 in particular) including Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The evaluation of the project focused on design, distribution and use of the materials and found strong alignment of the materials with the framework of the UNESCO-SEP agreement. The overall quality of the materials was reported to be credible and presented in appropriate ways. The lack of wrap around support in terms of teacher training and development hindered the use of the materials.

109. *Prevention of Extremism and its Resurgence amid the COVID-19 Pandemic through Education in Africa aligned with the Spirit of TICAD7 and NAPSA* was made possible through the support of the Government of Japan to UNESCO-International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and was designed to assist African Members States' efforts to prevent violent extremism and its resurgence in ten target countries. The evaluation found the project was highly relevant, project outputs were appropriate, reached almost half of the fifty-four countries in the African continent and contributed to growing awareness and understanding of education as a tool for preventing extremism. About 98% of participants confirmed that the project contributed to and formed part of the education agenda in their respective countries. The collaboration with IICBA served the project well and the involvement of local stakeholders including government departments and training institutions ensured peace education was integrated into the traditional training curriculum.

Output 7 SHS 4: Member States capacities strengthened to devise and prioritize effective youth policies and interventions that provide youth with opportunities to meaningfully engage in policymaking and to scale up youth-led solutions at global, regional, national and local levels

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35. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación del Proyecto: Educación para la Ciudadanía Mundial y educación para el desarrollo sostenible en libros de texto y material escolar para la educación básica en México.

110.   UNESCO's contribution to this output is well demonstrated in the implementation of the project *Support for the Participation of Women and Young People in Initiatives for the Consolidation of Peace, the Strengthening of Mechanisms for Social Cohesion, and Living Together in Cameroon*[36]. The project was developed by the Government with the support of UNESCO, UN Women and UNICEF at a time when Cameroon was facing multiple security challenges and inter-community conflicts and funded by the Peace Building Fund (PBF). The project was implemented over a 27-month period and covered thirty municipalities across ten regions of the country. In terms of relevance, the final evaluation of the project found that the project responds to a national need and is consistent with the priorities identified by the Cameroonian Government in its strategic frameworks. It is aligned with "Vision 2035", included in the new National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (SND30) which makes peace and security one of the pillars of the country's development (sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 of the chapter 6). UNESCO played the role of the lead agency for this project and, as such, coordinated the development of annual work plans for the project, ensured the preparation and consolidation of reports, organized regular project management.

111.   Despite the difficulties encountered in implementation, in particular due to COVID-19 and the crisis in certain regions of the country, the evaluation found satisfactory results. All the twenty-eight activities planned under this project were carried out with adjustments made as required. The findings showed engagement of youth and women in peacebuilding process had increased, there was renewed commitment to peace and dialogue in the community, and over 87% of beneficiaries surveyed report they have successfully contributed to conflict prevention or crisis resolution in their community. Several local youth and women's networks had been set up and municipal executives' and security forces capacity had been strengthened. The support of youth and women's CSOs in the development of their action plans for peace and social cohesion as well as the financing of these CSOs has strengthened their technical, managerial and institutional skills and has sustainably established their credibility. There was ownership of the mechanisms by the communities with strong involvement of young people, women, and traditional leaders. The activities carried out by the project to combat hate speech in the media and social networks are also likely to have long-term implications.

112.   Another evaluation that aimed at *Building Social Cohesion of Communities that Receive Returnee Youth as a Bridge Towards Peaceful and Effective Reintegration* [37] funded by PBF and executed jointly by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNESCO and IOM provides important insights into UNESCO's contribution to this output. The project was designed to promote an integrated and territorial approach to conflict prevention and effective reintegration of young returnees to support Guatemalan youth as well as institutions that work with youth and the agricultural sector.

113.   While the project's focus on youth and alignment to national peacebuilding priorities were critical, the evaluation finds its effectiveness is patchy. The findings showed that the project had given youth a voice, generated networks and placed the importance of finding opportunities for them on the agenda; however, there is no evidence on the results of the entrepreneurship projects or prevention of conflicts by returned migrants. In fact, during the implementation of the project it became apparent that the return of migrants in and of itself do not generate conflicts in the communities; it is the lack of economic opportunities and lack of psychosocial care that do. The project's focus in this regard made an important contribution to promoting participation, empowerment, and support for youth.

Mainstreaming global priorities under Strategic Objective 3

The evaluations considered under Strategic Objective 3 encompass programmes and projects that address discrimination, freedom of expression and cultural diversity towards building peaceful and inclusive societies. Twelve out of the fourteen evaluations considered against this strategic objective considered gender and contributed to address gender-based threats, violence, discrimination; equip learners and learning environments to be safe and healthy; and improve women cultural and media professionals' working condition and economic, cultural and social rights. However, lack of guidance on mainstreaming gender equality continues to pose challenges as reflected in the evaluation of the *Building Social Cohesion of Communities that Receive Returnee Youth as a Bridge Towards Peaceful and Effective Reintegration* 38 project which reported that while the project had a "non-negotiable" premise of ensuring women were included in all its activities, the project lacked an overarching strategy to promote gender equality, apart from including women in its implementation.

Eight of the fourteen evaluations were focused on Africa and covered youth, media, discrimination and violence, and promotion of intercultural understanding.

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36. Original title in French: Evaluation finale du projet PBF : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et de vivre ensemble au Cameroun.

37. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

38. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

4.4   Meeting the technological challenges and embracing the opportunities

Strategic Objective 4. Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards

Outcome 8: foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age

Output 8 CI 5: Member States have strengthened institutional and human capacities to integrate media and information literacy in policies, strategies and to bridge the digital and knowledge divides and competencies particularly in SIDS and among women and girls and different marginalised and vulnerable groups

114. The impact of digital technologies on societies is fundamentally changing the ways in which individuals produce, share and access information and knowledge. While new technologies and online platforms offer opportunities for free expression, access to media and for the active participation of citizens, it has also exacerbated challenges such as the spread of disinformation and misinformation. In this context, the design and implementation of the *#CoronovirusFacts: Addressing the 'Disinfodemic' on COVID-19 in Conflict-Prone Environments* is significant as it aimed to strengthen professional, diverse and independent media's capacity to report on the pandemic, strengthen local fact-checking organisations to debunk misinformation and empower youth and other citizens to critically process and counter harmful narratives linked to COVID-19 through training in media and information literacy. The project had a global scope and focused on nine countries across four regions (Latin America & the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, East/ Horn of Africa and West Africa) identified on the basis of a needs assessment conducted jointly by the EU Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, UNESCO and contracted parties. Not only does the project support UNESCO's strategic objectives and SDGs, but it also supported African Union Agenda 2063 and UNESCO's Global Priority Africa.

115. The evaluation found that UNESCO's leadership, expertise and experience in supporting freedom of speech and journalists worldwide and extensive networks contributed to buy-in and national ownership and timely implementation of the project. There is evidence to show the project contributed to strengthening both institutional and human capacities and building resilience to counter the challenges faced in reporting on COVID-19, improved media professionals' access to verified information, empowered

targeted CSO's and created fact checking platforms. The project benefited from a robust monitoring and evaluation and key decision-makers had access to periodic updates and progress reports to adjust where necessary. UNESCO's role and support for the establishment and/or revitalisation of resource and information hubs at local, regional and global level was seen a key strength of this project. For instance, at the global level, the resource hub is hosted by the Knight Centre which provides accessible, free of charge self-paced learning materials in a wide range of languages for journalists. Perhaps most importantly, as a laboratory of ideas and best practices, UNESCO has also supported the development of guidelines and codes of practice for covering the pandemic which served this project well.

116. The project also paid close attention to Gender Equality, youth and disabled and internally displaced individuals in the project design and implementation. The findings offer important lessons for Member States and UNESCO more generally. Participation of women in capacity building sessions, engagement of women's media associations, engagement with youth organizations and involving youth-led community centres were some of the strategies used within the scope of this project to ensure meaningful engagement.

Output 8 ED 8: Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective, and relevant learning

117. The global disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities for acceleration progress towards SDG 4. As lockdowns led to school closures worldwide, many countries shifted to online courses and TV/ radio programmes to support continuity of learning. This led to significant innovation and technological breakthroughs to improve access to education and promote quality education and learning opportunities for all. UNESCO's support to Member States in four projects illustrate the importance of developing digital competencies for teachers and students to foster technology-enhanced pedagogies and diversification of open educational resources (OER).

118. *ICT Transforming Education in Africa* is a project supported by the UNESCO-Korean-Funds-in-Trust (KFIT) contribution by the Republic of Korea. It strives to achieve systematic

transformation in education through the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education models in schools and improved institutional environments nationally, thus contributing to SDG 4. The project runs over 4 years and began in 2019 and is being implemented in three countries namely Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Senegal. A mid-term review was undertaken which showed all three participating countries were making good progress on implementation and have produced a range of outputs aligned to its objectives including policy frameworks, studies, teacher training packages, teacher training sessions, online platforms with access to open educational resources.

119.   The project used the pandemic as an opportunity and has created an ecosystem for ICT in education at the political, technical, and pedagogical level in participating countries. More specifically, the evaluation found that KFIT contributed to strengthening national coordination mechanisms for ICT in education, helped to structure the national institutional architecture of ICT in education, strengthened organisational capacities in ICT at the national level and grew Ministries of Education's understanding of the key role of ICT in education to support learning beyond the pandemic. These gains are significant and create a strong enabling environment for future success.

120.   While KFIT was relevant to GP Africa, it appears to be less relevant for contributing to GE. Some attention was paid to GE when developing materials and encouraging women's participation in training, however gender-specific activities have been implemented only in Cote d'Ivoire.

121.   Another initiative *Enhancing National Capacity to Foster Digital Citizenship Education in Asia Pacific Project - KFIT III* explored the issue of young people as digital citizens, capable of participating fully in a society that is increasingly digitized. The project had three components: the first component focused on developing a regional comparative research framework and toolkit to generate baseline information on children's perceptions, competency levels, behaviours and use of ICT in education settings; the second component focused on expanding national capacity building in developing,

implementing and monitoring competency-based ICT teacher training programmes; and the third component provided regional platforms for high-level policy dialogues to disseminate project outcomes and strengthen regional partnerships. The evaluation found that the project delivered successfully on all three components. UNESCO Bangkok together with its partners did deliver a research Framework and a toolkit which is now available to be used by Member States and acts as a baseline for the future. The approach adopted by UNESCO Bangkok to develop the ICT-Competency Standards for Teachers (CST) was found to be highly effective and has kick started Member States' efforts to design and approve of ICT-CST. UNESCO's area of expertise in this regard was regarded favourably in supporting the process at each country. High-level regional and sub-regional events, Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum and Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE) are highly valued and serve as important platforms for exchanging information.

122.   Other two projects aiming at the *Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS in Rio de Janeiro[39] and Sau Paulo[40]* envisaged an innovative and coherent strategy through training workshops for Youth, and communication and dissemination via social media and the development of a digital tool for mobile phones. While the evaluations confirmed some positive impact of the initiatives for the training participants, some challenges such as a reduced execution capacity, among other as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, prevented the envisaged impact on the population on a larger scale which had been foreseen in the planning phase. The evaluations identified UNESCO as the most important actor in Brazil in the field of education and prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS, underlining UNESCO's strengths such as its convening power and ability to work with diverse stakeholders including CSOs and its professional expertise as critical ingredients that sets it apart from other international actors. The evaluations also found that to ensure a more effective long-term education and prevention effort, cooperation and communication between the local health, social communication, and education authorities were key, and that a more interdisciplinary approach to promote learning on complex topics such as STD/HIV/AIDS was a precondition for success.

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39. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS Educação no Estado do Rio de Janeiro.
40. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação Preventiva e Comunicação Digital em saúde Para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS no Município de São Paulo.

Outcome 9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation

Output 9 SHS 5: Member States capacities and policies strengthened to benefit from AI, gene editing, neuro-technologies, and other frontier technologies, and to address the associated risks, including inequalities and discrimination, in line with international ethical standards, recommendations and frameworks

123. UNESCO in partnership with Petrobas carried out the *Third Sector Ethical Connections Project*[41] aimed at strengthening the governance and management of civil society organizations working in the social and environmental areas in Brazil. The project is an important initiative in the achievement of SDGs and in line with UNESCO's institutional mission. Through a series of face-to-face and online training modalities, the project covered 127 organizations and a total of 254 members of civil society organizations. An evaluation commissioned to capture results achieved by the project found the courses and training offered met the expectations of participants of all classes and expanding their knowledge and understanding of the different dimensions of governance and management of their institutions including fund raising, administrative and financial procedures and legal aspects and security.

124. The evaluation recommended that such training should be part of ongoing institutional development and built into the course calendar well in advance to ensure engagement. A combination of face-to-face and online training enabled organizations from across the five regions of Brazil to participate and must be retained in future editions of the training. Promotion of peer-to-peer learning and platforms for exchanging and sharing of ideas were also suggested.

Mainstreaming global priorities under Strategic Objective 4

GPGE with respect to Strategic Objective 4 focused on fostering equitable and gender responsive access to and use of information and knowledge in the digital environment, and empowering women and girls with digital skills and competencies. The projects addressed these aspirations through inclusion of gender-sensitive perspectives in curricula, frameworks and teaching and learning materials including gender responsive principles in content production and use of visuals and attention to gender balance in representation in the project. Efforts were made to align these with partners' own gender strategy where feasible. Two of the five evaluations were focused on Africa with good success.

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41. Original title in Portuguese: Projeto Conexões Éticas do Terceiro Setor.

4.5   Strengthening impact and partnerships

Enabling objective. Fostering an enabling environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO priorities

Outcome 10: Reinforced partnerships, outreach and advocacy in support of UNESCO's action

Outcome 11: Accountable, efficient and effective management in pursuit of the Organization's results

OUTPUT 10.PAX1 Coordinated, comprehensive and strategic policy advice continuously provided to the Director-General and senior management as regards relations with Member States, United Nations system organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, National Commissions for UNESCO and field offices

OUTPUT 10.PAX2 Sustainability of the field network strengthened to respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of Members States, in accordance with the specific characteristics and needs of each region and subregion and with UNESCO's global priorities and priority groups[42]

125.   UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 41 C/4 elaborates the Organization's commitment to a series of reforms and measures and corporate actions that are critical to implementing its mandate. The principles and measures set out above form the enabling objective and together with the outcome 10 & 11 ensures the Organization is well positioned to respond to the fast-changing environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO's priorities. The pandemic demanded a comprehensive and multi-faceted response and UNESCO responded by adapting its working methods, its corporate governance and how it managed itself. New implementation modalities, initiatives, partners and management approaches were tested. UNESCO's performance and its ability to prepare, respond and adapt programmatically across all of its sectors is well illustrated in the *Evaluation of*

UNESCO's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The evaluation was focused on deepening understanding and learning about two key dimensions of UNESCO's response:

- programmatic response of the Organization in terms of how UNESCO developed, tailored, and adapted its projects and programmes to support Member States and partners in overcoming the disruption caused by COVID-19 in the areas of its work; and

- institutional response of the Organization in terms of how UNESCO adapted itself and its working methods to ensure business continuity.

126.   The evaluation results were favourable on both counts. The evaluation team found UNESCO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to be highly relevant and the reviewed response activities consistently addressed important challenges caused by the pandemic with some seen as globally exceptional in terms of their relevance. Further UNESCO remained alert to the impact of the pandemic in exacerbating inequalities and risks to vulnerable groups which was recognised by all Member States. Most importantly, COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the relevance of UNESCO's mandate for enhancing crisis resilience of societies.

127.   In terms of programme effectiveness, the evaluation found that UNESCO successfully mobilized funds though not for all its sectors and several of the response initiatives contributed to significant positive change for example ministerial meetings, initiatives collecting, analysing, and publishing pandemic-related data and information, and flagship reports and frameworks. The Global Education Coalition successfully and effectively mobilized collective action with the private sector but lacks more structure going forward.

128.   However other response initiatives such as webinars, video testimonials and projects providing technical equipment had a rather limited reach which impacts their potential effectiveness. While UNESCO's ongoing programming work remained adequately funded, it was significantly impacted by pandemic-related delays and cancellations. Many

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42. The programmatic response to Covid 19 also concerns the work across all sectors and also relates to programmes in crisis situations covered across several programmatic outputs.

programmes moved online which had consequences for their effectiveness. Overall, the evaluation found that these factors reduced UNESCO's Major Programmes from achieving their strategic objectives and expected results.

129. As an institution, UNESCO successfully ensured business continuity during the pandemic. UNESCO's management provided the necessary leadership and coordination during the pandemic and administrative procedure, IT and risk management processes were swiftly updated. Staff resilience and entrepreneurship enabled the Organization's performance during the pandemic. However unanticipated lockdowns, uneven staff capacity to work from home and at times higher and more complex workloads eroded staff morale and resilience since the pandemic began in 2020.

130. The evaluation identified several key lessons and innovations and many of these have ongoing relevance and value for ensuring effective, efficient, and inclusive delivery of the Organization's mission. Among the most important programmatic innovations worth maintaining after the pandemic were online consultations, innovative blended online formats such as the 2021 Latin American and Caribbean Open Science Forum (CILAC), and the Global Education Coalition. Institutionally agile teams, teleworking, virtual Executive Board Sessions and several simplifications and digitalisations of administrative procedures were among the most useful innovations. At a more conceptual level, the evaluation found that UNESCO developed new conceptual framings during the pandemic aimed at orienting its initiatives and the global discourse towards strengthening resilience to the current and future crises.

Output 11: GE1: Global Priority gender equality is advanced in and through education, science, culture and communication and information

131. Gender Equality has been a global priority for UNESCO since 2008 and is explicitly mainstreamed throughout the Organization's current Medium-Term Strategy and Programme and Budget documents. The Organization employs a three-pronged approach for implementing gender equality: gender mainstreaming in all programmes and projects, gender-specific programming and striving gender transformative actions.

132. The relevance and impact of UNESCO's actions with respect to this global priority relies on coherent and empowered field staff capable of addressing the programmatic needs of Member States and effectively contributing to SDG 5. Towards this end, UNESCO undertook an evaluation focusing on gender results from a Field Office perspective. The aim was to look at country and sector portfolios in sampled countries to document what results have emerged from gender-responsive and gender-transformative projects and programmes and what enabled such results in terms of institutional mechanisms and partnerships.

133. The evaluation findings are heartening and indicated that gender-related results on the ground tend to be positive. Most Field Offices showed improvements in filling Gender Equality Markers (GEM) scores over the evaluation period across their country portfolios and focusing on a small number of sampled projects showed there was a high degree of contribution to gender-transformative results and almost half of the identified results could be deemed gender-responsive. Many results were considered 'bold in context' when it came to addressing gender norms. However, limited human and financial resources combined with lack of institutional mechanisms and concrete guidance to support and implement GPGE across Field Offices hamper achievement of consistent results. Such constraints also affected communication between HQ and Field Offices on gender issues and the role of Field Offices as the torch bearers of implementing GPGE is not acknowledged. The evaluation recommends that Field Offices should be incentivized to systematically track, report, and communicate progress on GE outcomes across sectors. Additionally, UNESCO Field Offices should be encouraged to leverage their role as knowledge broker and convener on gender issues in areas where they have track record and expertise in the country context.

Output 11: HRM1: Staffing, learning and development and staff wellbeing policies developed and implemented in support of a more diverse, efficient, and agile working environment

134. Investing in staff is key to ensuring the excellence, responsiveness and flexibility required to deliver on UNESCO's work. For too long, inadequate staffing capacity in UNESCO Field Offices has impeded the Organization from delivering effectively on its programmes and maintaining relevance vis-a-vis Member States governments and other multilateral partners. UNESCO's greatest resource is its skilled, motivated, dedicated and highly competent workforce and attracting and retaining staff to support the Organization's delivery of the SDGs has been an ongoing priority. Towards this end, UNESCO launched its Human Resource Management Strategy in November 2017 with two key objectives: strengthening of staff capabilities to meet the SDGs and the creation of an enabling and engaging work environment.

135. In 2022, UNESCO undertook an evaluation of this strategy to inform the next iteration of the Human Resource Management (HRM) strategy covering the period 2023-2027 and ensure it is grounded in UNESCO Medium Term Strategy for 2022-2029. The evaluation also enables UNESCO to fulfil its accountability commitments to Member States and other relevant stakeholders. The evaluation findings indicated that across the Organization awareness of the HRM strategy was low and even amongst those who were aware of the HRM strategy, just over half (57%) considered that it was relevant to UNESCO's mandate. Perhaps most importantly, the HRM Strategy only covered staff with regular contracts

when more than half of UNESCO's workforce has other types of contracts, and therefore fell outside of the human resources framework.

136. With respect to coherence, the evaluation found that while the HRM Strategy was aligned to United Nations norms and standards and UNESCO's regular participation in the UN's Human Resource Network meetings ensured UNESCO's standards and approaches were consistent with the broader UN system/approach, key policies and initiatives that support the HRM Strategy were implemented inconsistently and/or with a time lag. As a result, different workstreams proceeded at a different pace and the extent to which policies and related initiatives were prioritised and sequenced was not immediately apparent to staff. Components of the HRM Strategy that had made most progress included the competency framework, learning and ethics/standards of conduct, managed mobility, and gender parity at all levels though there were mixed views regarding the relative success of each of these components. The availability of competency-based interview guides, increased options for learning and training and opportunities for mobility both within UNESCO and for interagency exchanges with UN peers was regarded positively by staff. However, challenges remain with respect to UNESCO's aspirations to building a geographically diverse workforce and some regional groups remain underrepresented.

Going forward, UNESCO needs to take a holistic approach that balances competence, merit and diversity.

137. The evaluation concluded by noting that the HRM Strategy 2017-2022 was relevant to fulfilling UNESCO's mandate and mission, and while some challenges were faced with respect to implementation, substantial learning has been generated to guide the next HRM Strategy 2023-2027. The current Strategy had proved to be flexible enough to accommodate an unexpected global COVID-19 pandemic and enabled UNESCO to adapt its working arrangements relatively quickly to this unique situation. However, better linkages with the two objectives of the HRM Strategy, a more holistic approach to workforce diversity, integrating non-staff contracts within the new HRM Strategy and improved communication can go a long way in supporting the Organization to achieve its vision as set out in 41 C/4. While a monitoring and evaluation of the HRM Strategy framework is in place, current Key Performance Indicators only measure the second objective and there were no coherent measures of the first objective on how UNESCO's workforce was supporting the achievement of relevant SDGs in UNESCO's MTS. This too needs to be addressed.

5. UNESCO Performance against OECD-DAC evaluation criteria

138. The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation has defined six evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The criteria provide a normative framework used to determine the worth or merit of an intervention (policy, programme, project, or activity) and serve as the basis on which evaluative judgements are made. UNESCO commits to using these criteria to guide its evaluation efforts in its evaluation policy 2022-2029.[43]

139. The strategic value of evaluations within UNESCO is recognized and explicitly articulated in the Organization's approved 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy for the 2022-2029 period which states that "evaluations (…) will inform Senior Management and Governing Bodies, staff and partners on actions that need to be undertaken to improve the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of UNESCO's actions". The Synthesis forms an integral part of this feedback loop to decision-makers about the Organization's performance and thus fulfilling three main purposes as stated in the Revised Evaluation Policy 2022-2029: learning, accountability and contributing to decision-making to lift performance and practice across the Organization. The Synthesis finds that the criteria is used variably across the evaluations – some use it explicitly and some implicitly making comparisons across evaluation quality a bit more challenging. This is an area where improvements could be considered to enable future synthesis to tell an aggregated story of achievements across the criteria.

5.1   Relevance

The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities and continue to do so, if circumstances change

140. Almost all evaluations found that the design and modalities of delivery selected for the initiatives were relevant and responded well to the needs and concerns of the Member States and aligned to commitments and ambitions reflected in regional priorities such as the African Union Agenda 2063 and international policies and frameworks. This is well illustrated in the *Strengthening Science and Mathematics in Primary Education in Timor-Leste* which was initiated in response to the Timor-Leste education reform framework in the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 that sought to make science learning more approachable whilst also bringing back the spirit of Timor-Leste. These principles were embedded in the supplementary materials and in the training delivered to primary science and mathematics teachers within the context of this project. By contrast the *#CoronavirusFacts: Addressing the 'Disinfodemic' on COVID-19 in Conflict-Prone Environments Project* responded to global needs to fight the pandemic and "strengthen the immunity of our societies against the virus of hate"[44] in project target countries. In the context of conflict, disinformation could fuel social, economic, and political instability and the strategic focus of this project in conflict-prone areas helped media and fact checking organisations to verify and debunk disinformation thus contributing to peace and security.

141. The *UNESCO Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust Project to Strengthen Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa 2017-2022* and the *Evaluation of Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Information Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga, and Vanuatu* demonstrate a different facet of relevance. Both were designed in response to concerns from the region. While the Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust project was designed in close collaboration with stakeholders from participating countries in response to growing concerns about the rise in the creation of institutions without particular attention to Quality Assurance (QA) the latter was designed to support the human resources of the informal creative sector economy severely impacted by COVID-19. In both instances the needs were identified locally which enhanced relevance.

142. Looking across the evaluations, it is evident that identifying the right stakeholders, engaging early and consistently with all stakeholders including potential beneficiaries, good governance and clear communication make an important contribution to enhancing relevance for participants. The *Building Social Cohesion of Communities that Receive Returnee Youth as a Bridge Towards Peaceful and Effective Reintegration* [45] evaluation is an excellent illustration. Its focus on youth who had never been prioritized by any

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43. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381664
44. United Nations (2020) COVID-19 Response, https://www.un.org/fr/node/71022
45. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

project in the municipalities, the inclusion of an entrepreneurship component to expand employment opportunities, and cultural and recreational activities were critical to keeping youth engaged, motivated, and connected and contributed to relevance. The *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* also shows strong relevance as UNESCO is the only organization that has a global mandate that covers all levels of education and all issues relating to teacher development. Factors that appear to hinder and/or erode relevance include inadequate attention to local realities, including constraints on partner resources and capacities.

5.2 Coherence

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution. There are two types of coherence:

- **Internal coherence refers to the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by UNESCO as well as their consistency with relevant international norms and standards to which UNESCO adheres.**

- **External coherence refers to the consistency of UNESCO's interventions with those of other actors in the same context […] This includes complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.**

143. While many more evaluations addressed coherence compared to the 2022 Synthesis, the evaluations collectively show that external coherence was stronger than internal coherence. Strong external coherence is demonstrated in evaluations across the Sectors:

- In the *Reshaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,* external coherence was achieved through structured collaboration with International Non-Governmental Organizations focused on the media, freedom of expressions, etc at national, regional, and global level in the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), legislation, and advocacy around freedom of expression and Media and Information Literacy. Significant levels of coordination with other UN agencies globally and national NGOs were noted as critical features that contributed to coherence.

- The *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* noted that UNESCO actively seeks complementarities with other development organisations in its work in teacher development at a global and national level which is valued by partners. Good alignment at the global level is achieved through a variety of mechanisms that draw on its convening power as demonstrated by UNESCO's initiative and leadership of the Global Education Coalition.

- The *Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan* examined the issue of coherence by looking at synergies with other UNESCO and International Organisation on Migration interventions in Wau and South Sudan in general and the existence of similar initiatives by other partners in Wau. The evaluation found the project was implemented in line with the National Development Strategy, Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) provisions and United Nations Cooperation Framework. While there were several other aid agencies working with youth, street children and sexual violence in Wau, the evaluation concluded that the UNESCO and IOM project filled gaps left by these other interventions.

- The *External Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme* noted that at the conceptual level coherence was strong, but more could be done at the implementation level.

144. Findings on internal coherence shows a slightly different picture. Internal coherence can be demonstrated through highlighting general alignment of the programme or project with UNESCO's MTS 37 C/4 2014-2021 and where relevant MTS 41 C/4 2022-2029 and the corresponding Programme and Budget documents, but very few evaluations referred to the Strategic Objectives and even fewer identified the Outputs they contributed to. References to Global Priority Gender Equality and Africa or to UNESCO Priority Groups such as Youth, SIDS, or indigenous peoples were minimal. *The External Evaluation of the Special Account: Multi Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP) 2018-2021* is perhaps an exception. The evaluation not only discusses MDP's positive contribution to UNESCO's Global Priorities – Africa and Gender Equality, it also favourably assesses the programme's contribution to three of the five functions of UNESCO: catalyst for international cooperation, capacity-builder and standard-setter. The evaluation concludes there is less evidence of MDP contributing to UNESCO's function as a clearing house and/or serving as a laboratory of ideas.

145. Internal coherence is a result of effective coordination between UNESCO entities (between HQ and FO, between UNESCO and Category 1 Institutes, between different

sections within a Sector and across Sectors) but this is often hampered by limitations in human resources, reporting structures, fund-raising structures, and governance structures. This is well illustrated in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development which notes that a substantial number and variety of UNESCO entities work on teachers. Each entity has their own priorities and reporting lines and even autonomy to mobilise resources in the case of the Category 1 Institutes and Category 2 Centres. This makes it challenging to ensure organisational and programmatic coherence across UNESCO particularly in terms of working towards and delivering joint results, creating synergies, and facilitating effective cooperation and internal mobilisation of expertise.

5.3   Effectiveness & Impact[46]

Effectiveness – the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups, and taking into account their relative importance.

Impact – the extent to which the intervention has generated, or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. [Impact refers to]... effects of the intervention that are longer-term or broader in scope than those captured under effectiveness

146. Assessment of effectiveness across the evaluations is very diverse and includes a mix of outputs and outcomes reporting. This is to be expected given the breadth of the programmes and activities covered by the evaluations. Across the evaluations, outcomes reported include introduction of new laws and rulings supporting SRHR in participating countries; to creation of materials, toolkits and resources; establishing/revitalising networks; enhancing knowledge and understanding; building profile and visibility; growing the capacity of national government and other partners and officials at different levels within the administration; to introduction of electronic monitoring of school maintenance systems. However, reports varied markedly in how these outcomes were reported and the evidence provided to support it. While a growing number of evaluations are using a Theory of Change to anchor the analysis and reporting, most others did not use a Theory of Change or a results framework when reporting on effectiveness which

makes it challenging to draw a line of sight between the project's activities and reported results.

147. In terms of analysis a few evaluations used rating and/or ranking scales and/or temperature scales when reporting on achievements against key criteria. While these tend to be helpful, the assessments lack transparency, and it is not clear how and when they were developed and whose voice is represented in the assessments of these judgements. For instance, the *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* and the *Evaluation of Sustainable Development Through Biodiversity-Friendly Livelihoods: Supporting Rural Communities in the Vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park* use a 5-point score to assess the performance of the project against the criteria ranging from no progress/unsuccessful to extensive progress/highly successful. Going forward it would be helpful to develop the rubrics for assessment in advance of implementing the evaluation with input from key stakeholders to enhance transparency and validity of these assessments.

5.4   Efficiency

The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way (i.e., conversion of funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc., into outputs and outcomes). Responding to the question: "Are we doing things, right?'

148. Most evaluations continue to assess programme efficiency by looking at whether the project was delivered effectively, within budget and within expected timelines and whether the impact of governance and project management structures in facilitating effective implementation and use of human and financial resources was considered.

149. Analysis of findings relating to efficiency across the evaluations show most projects were delivered within budget and time. Selection of appropriate partners (existing and new) and implementation modality during the design stage was identified as key in enhancing efficiency as it helped leverage local networks, cost-sharing and combining the technical expertise from across a range of partners, thus reducing burden on any single entity. Where there were delays, these were caused due to COVID-19 which imposed restrictions on travel, some bureaucratic delays in seeking funding approvals, and/or limited access to expertise. While some evaluations noted access to funding

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46. These are treated together as many evaluations use the terms interchageably. Impact is interpreted by many evaluations as the extent to which the intervention made a difference to the status quo. However, establishing causality within the timeframes and resources allocated to the evaluations is far more challenging.

and staff shortages within UNESCO were identified in some evaluations as impeding efficiency, other evaluations note that UNESO's flexible approach and adaptation to online modalities contributed to improved efficiencies.

150.   For instance, the *Final Evaluation of O3 Programme* noted it was cost efficient as the guidance and technical assistance provided within the scope of the programme served thirty-three countries. In the *Access to Quality Inclusive Primary and Secondary Education for IDPs, Returnees, Remainees, and Refugees in Conflict Affected Areas in Iraq* partnerships with CSOs and strong governance and management structures were identified as enablers to efficient implementation.

151.   Adaptability is beginning to emerge as a key feature in the assessment of efficiency in a small number of evaluations. Adapting and adjusting the programme activities to better meet the contextual, cultural, and local conditions enables the project to respond to emerging opportunities and not be too rigid in its approach. However, assessment against these criteria is not consistent, and more can be done in building understanding and capability to explore new, innovative ways of assessing efficiency.

5.5   Sustainability

Sustainability – the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue

152.   Evaluating sustainability of UNESCO's programmes and initiatives is challenging given the contexts in which it operates and the magnitude of the change it is working to effect. It is therefore not surprising that many evaluations are unable to consistently comment on sustainability.

153.   Despite these challenges, contributions to the potential for sustainability can be inferred from evaluations particularly from those that report a strong sense of national ownership, creation of an enabling ecosystem as an anchor for programmes where feasible, aligning efforts to existing policies and strategies, use of co-design principles and reports of tangible benefits accrued from investment in capacity development activities. Equally, there are some evaluations that clearly state that without UNESCO's ongoing contribution in terms of its expertise and resources, the gains made could be lost. Members States will struggle to embed new ideas, policy frameworks, and tools and in their institutions which takes time and perseverance.

154.   There are a few exceptions. The *Evaluation of UNESCO/SIDA Project strengthening Science Technology and Innovation Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa 2020-2022* finds that it made significant contributions to the strengthening of the STI policies and systems of the pilot countries towards the achievement of SDGs. However, it also notes that countries need continued support from UNESCO to put the policies into practice, implement the action plans, further develop STI capabilities and expand national and regional networks. It goes on to recommend a second phase be designed to consolidate the gains and ensure longer-term sustainability. The *External Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme* reports creating the pre-conditions for sustainability (in terms of progressively building trust and capacity which can often lead to joint plans and agreements) is a critical first step. In the context of Transboundary Waters Governance, achievement of the agreement is the largest contributor towards a long-term legal framework and will be the enduring legacy of this project.

6. Quality of UNESCO evaluations

6.1 Overview

155. The evaluations in this year's portfolio were assessed using the revised UNESCO Quality Assessment Template[47] in line with the UNEG Checklist for Evaluation Reports (see Appendix 3) to ensure consistency with previous Synthesis and with UNESCO's 2022-2029 Evaluation Policy which states that "the most important foundational document guiding and harmonizing evaluation practice across the United Nations (UN) system, and which UNESCO adheres to, is the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation." While Corporate evaluations are quality reviewed by the UNESCO Evaluation Office team and validated by an external consultant in the context of the synthesis, the QA processes adopted for decentralized evaluations tend to be more variable. Since 2019 Evaluation Focal Points (EFPs) have been established to support the overall quality of decentralized evaluations by acting as the main point of reference for all evaluation-related matters in their respective administrative unit. The IOS Evaluation Office also increasingly supports quality assurance of decentralized evaluations before these are finalised.

Figure 4. The Assessment of evaluation reports against UNEG Quality Criteria shows an overall improvement compared to previous years' synthesis

Quality assessment of evaluation reports
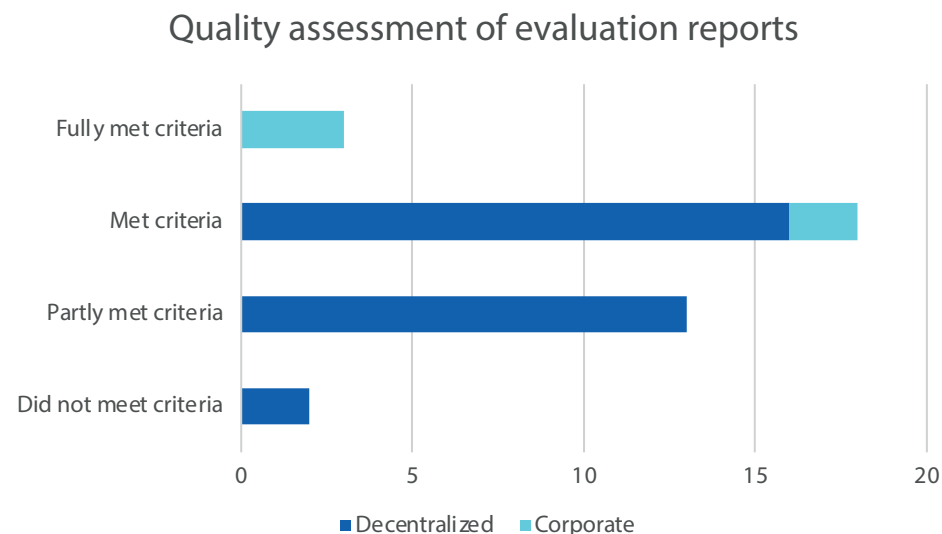
156. Overall, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of evaluation reports, particularly with respect to decentralized evaluation reports[48]. This is a significant development and reflects UNESCO's growing commitment to accountability and learning. Our analysis of the reports against the UNESCO and UNEG Checklists shows that while all reports make an important contribution in terms of findings on achievements, some of the evaluations submitted in other languages than English require the most improvement in relation to several of the quality criteria. More recently IOS has ensured targeted capacity

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47. The Revised Quality assessment template is aligned with the principles, norms, and standards in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, and the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender to Evaluations. In addition it considers UNESCO-specific principles and priorities set out in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 and the UNESCO Evaluation Policy. It applies a weighted four-point rating scale i.e.; highly satisfactory 81%-100%, satisfactory 61%-80%, partly satisfactory (45%-60%), unsatisfactory, less than 45 %, replacing the previous three-point rating scale). The new QA template was applied for the first time to assess the quality of the portfolio of evaluation reports in the 2023 Synthesis.

48. Overall, three reports were found as highly satisfactory, 18 reports as satisfactory, 13 as partly satisfactory and two reports were found as not satisfactory.

building and backstopping support also in French, Spanish and Portuguese. Recent efforts also include webinars and on-site capacity building in field offices across the UNESCO regions which is expected to make an important contribution to lifting the quality of evaluation practice. In summary, the synthesis finds that:

▶ **Report structure** – Most reports have a clear, logical structure with a well written Executive Summary and relevant annexes. A few reports were missing an Executive Summary and a list of acronyms, and the annexes did not include the data collection instruments or stakeholders interviewed. Example of good practice: *Final Project Evaluation of Water Security for Turkana, Kenya* funded by UNESCO Nairobi.

▶ **Object of evaluation** – The description of the *evaluand* is comprehensive and some reports include the scale and complexity of the wider social, economic, and political context. The presentation of the Theory of Change and/or expected results chain is variable. Example of good practice: *UNESCO/SIDA Project Strengthening Science Technology and Innovation Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa 2020-2022* can serve as a guideline for this indicator.

▶ **Evaluation purpose, objectives, and scope** – The evaluation reports assessed for the Synthesis show good understanding of the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation with some exceptions. The use of the OECD-DAC criteria while not mandatory can help guide and focus the evaluation intent, but its use is variable. Objectives that address issues of gender and human rights are generally weaker. Example of good practice: *Evaluation of the Technical and Financial State of Implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project*.

▶ **Evaluation Methodology** – most evaluations used multi-methods approach that include a desk-based review, a survey component, and a qualitative research component. However, there is minimal description of how the survey sample is selected or how the stakeholders are identified for interviews and the implications of these choices on the credibility of the findings. Ethical considerations regarding consent or privacy are also weak in most reports. Example of good practice: *Final Evaluation of the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) Programme* and *Review and Evaluation of Strengthening Science and Mathematics in Primary Education in Timor-Leste*.

▶ **Findings** – the use of the evaluation criteria to structure the findings is invaluable for both clarity and demonstrating robustness in the interpretation of the data. While by and large most evaluations used the criteria, gaps and limitations in the data were not always fully discussed. Example of good practice: *Final Project Evaluation of Sustainable Development through Biodiversity Friendly Livelihoods: Supporting Rural Communities*

in the vicinity of Fazao-Mulfakassa National Park demonstrates triangulation of data gathered from qualitative interviews with data from reports and other documents.

▶ **Recommendations** – Majority of the evaluations have clear, well written recommendations that link back to the evaluation objectives and findings. A few evaluations have a long list of recommendations which read more like actions and some prioritising is required. All the corporate evaluations can serve as exemplars for presenting actionable recommendations and clearly stating the priorities for action with responsibilities.

6.2   Areas that need strengthening

157.   The above analysis indicates several areas of improvement that can be considered by IOS, Evaluation Focal Points and Evaluation Managers as it continues to embed the new Evaluation Policy within the Organization to lift the quality of evaluations commissioned by UNESCO HQ and Field Offices. Many of these are already discussed in the Synthesis. In this section, the issues are organised under the four key steps of an evaluation process as depicted in the schema below.

Figure 5. Areas that require improvement across the evaluation cycle
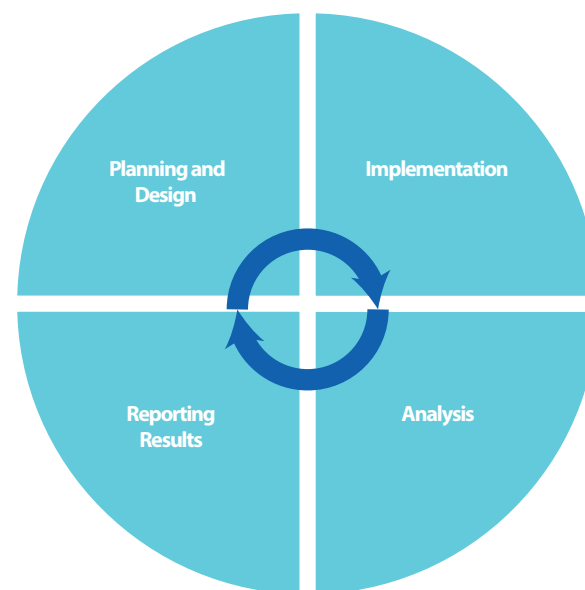
Evaluation Planning & Design

158.   The Synthesis indicates the following three areas for improvement with respect to evaluation planning and design phase:

▶ Timing of evaluations – planning at the outset ensures the evaluations are undertaken within realistic timeframes and sufficient time is built in for validation of the findings. This year's Synthesis included evaluations that were undertaken in unreasonably tight timeframes or during school holidays which meant key voices from the education sector were not captured. Evaluation Commissioners can benefit from planning early as delivering a quality evaluation product takes time and allows for a validation phase which is key to building credibility and promoting use of the findings.

▶ Evaluation governance and quality assurance – adequate governance mechanisms can provide quality assurance and oversight for the evaluation and commissioners of evaluations need to consider setting up these mechanisms with appropriate membership at the start of any evaluation project.

▶ Agreed analytical framework – while many more evaluations refer to a theory of change, many reports do not provide any detail on how and when these were developed nor are there any clear instances of using them to inform and guide analysis. These aspects could be discussed and agreed during the planning and design phase of an evaluation.

Evaluation Implementation

▶ Identifying the limitations of the evaluations – any research and evaluation endeavour has limitations and consideration of these limitations, including limitations in scope and methodological limitations, is critical to ensure the findings are understood in context and not generalized.

▶ Mainstreaming of gender equality in evaluation – most evaluations do not systematically integrate global priorities GE and priority groups in the implementation of the evaluation and often do not explicitly align with GEAP II. The guidance on GPGE needs to be applied flexibly and sensitively and tailored to the cultural context of the participating countries and stakeholders. Also, evaluation teams' capacity to integrate and assess gender equality needs to be lifted.

▶ Mainstreaming of additional elements – The UNESCO quality assessment template foresees to collect information on the extent to which other UNESCO Priorities (Global Priority Africa, and Priority Groups including People with Disabilities, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, LDCs, SIDS), the impact of COVID or other crisis and environmental considerations are mainstreamed in evaluations, in particular in evaluations of topics that do not necessarily focus on these priorities. Only few of the evaluations in this portfolio report on these elements and strengthening the mainstreaming of these priorities in interventions and in the evaluations remains work in progress.

Analysis

▶ Use of the OECD-DAC criteria – while there are more instances of the OECD-DAC criteria being used to guide the evaluation, understanding of these criteria appears to vary. This impacts on the quality of the analysis and comparability of the reports for the Synthesis. IOS needs to continue to progress its work relating to building evaluation capacity and deepen the understanding of the criteria and how they shall be applied in the context of an evaluation.

▶ Mixed-methods or multi-methods – While most evaluations refer to mixed-methods and include a desk review, survey and qualitative data collection strand, the findings from the different data collection strands are not fully integrated in the analysis. The findings from the various data sources are often presented as stand-alone and not integrated nor used to triangulate to enhance validity of the findings. The use of Monitoring within M&E is also light, and very few evaluations actually utilise monitoring data or information into consideration when evaluating results achieved. Monitoring information can serve as a validity check for evaluation assessments.

Reporting

▶ Develop a communications plan at the outset – it is worthwhile to agree to a communications plan with commissioners in advance which indicates how the findings will be communicated and presented in ways that are accessible to different audiences, with visual graphics, and attention to privacy concerns while at the same time making evaluation knowledge public.

▶ Management Response – as per the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029, all UNESCO evaluations, whether corporate or decentralized, require a Management Response and Action Plan. The Management Response is the evaluand's management overall acknowledgement of the findings and recommendations outlined in each report. However, in practice this does not yet occur systematically, and this year's portfolio of evaluations show only the corporate evaluations include a Management Response (MR) while none of the decentralized evaluations included a MR. Some evaluation managers report an ongoing process for the development of a management response that is initiated after the finalisation of the report. It is expected that this practice will change with the systematic roll-out of the new evaluation policy across the Organization and ongoing work being led by IOS Evaluation Office to build evaluation capacity and provide technical advice to decentralised evaluations across the Organization.

6.3   Emergence of innovative practices in evaluation

159.   The evaluations contained many examples of good practice. Some of these have been summarised below and is intended to inspire evaluation commissioners to think creatively and innovatively about evaluation and reporting on progress towards outcomes.

Table 2: Examples of innovative methods and approaches used in evaluations

Community-based monitoring (CBM)
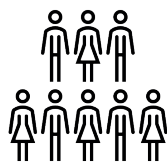
Use of CBM in the Project *Building Social Cohesion of Communities that Receive Returnee Youth as a Bridge Towards Peaceful and Effective Reintegration* 49*:* encouraging communities to collect, assess and triangulate data and observations about their experiences with a programme or a service enables funders to access information from vulnerable and marginalized groups that they don't often have access to. Training young people in M&E and actively including them in the development of data collection instruments and conducting the interviews served the needs of the project well. It contributed to empowerment of young people and an awareness of their role as leaders in the community. The evaluation concluded that CBM is valued as an innovative strategy with great potential to be replicated.

Impact stories

The *Final Evaluation of Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu* used impact stories to highlight the importance and value of the initiative for the creative sectors in the South Pacific. They were collected and communicated widely to inspire entrepreneurs in the region and also used to identify future areas of focus for the sector.

Rating or temperature scales

The use of a *rubric*50 to assess levels of performance is a growing practice in evaluation. Using labels such as *very poor* to *very strong* or *fairly high* to *fairly low* to describe the performance of an initiative helps to make evaluative judgements about an initiative. The *Evaluation of UNESCO's Work on Teacher Development* and the *Sustainable Development through biodiversity-friendly livelihoods: supporting rural communities in the vicinity of Fazao-Mulkakassa National Park* demonstrates the use of this approach to emphasise overall achievements. However, to ensure transparency and legitimacy of the results, the processes by which the scale is developed, whose voice is included and/or not included and who is involved in the judgements must be made explicit.

Case studies

The use of case studies to capture the value of the initiative for participants and/or participating country is an incredibly useful tool particularly for multi-country evaluation. It allows evaluators to be alert to any similarities but also differences across the contexts, so that the analysis is credible and robust. The *External Evaluation of the UNESCO Shenzhen Fund in Trust project to strengthen quality assurance in higher education in Africa*, *UNESCO/SIDA Project Strengthening Science Technology and Innovation Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa* and the *External Evaluation of the Special Account: Multi Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists* are strong examples of the use of this approach.

Social Network Analysis (SNA)
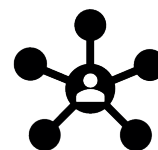
The UNESCO/SIDA Strengthening Science Technology and Innovation Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa evaluation incorporated SNA to identify new linkages created among project participants as well as the reinforcement of existing connections within the framework of the project. The intensity of these connections was assessed by participants and confirmed in the focus groups. The analysis from SNA showed STI ecosystems were enhanced through the creation and strengthening of linkages between stakeholders.

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49. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.
50. https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/rubrics

Appendixes

Appendix 1.
Mapping of evaluations across the 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 Strategic Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs

1.   The following table presents the thirty-six evaluations included in the Synthesis. The reports are organized by the strategic objectives and outcomes in line with the 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029). It identifies the evaluation category (corporate or decentralized) and alignment with the Outputs from the 41 C/5 Programme and Budget. It must be noted that while many of the evaluations refer to Expected Results as outlined in the previous 40 C/5, for the purposes of this Synthesis efforts have been made to describe UNESCO's contributions vis-a-vis 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 to reflect the future direction and mission of the Organization.

SO	Thematic area	Objectives	Outcome	Evaluations	Outputs	Description
1	Meeting the educational challenges and embracing the opportunities	Strategic Objective 1 Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies particularly in the digital era	Outcome 1: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	(ED) Access to quality inclusive primary and secondary education for IDPs, returnees and refugees in conflict affected areas in Iraq	Output 1. ED 1	Education systems equipped to promote inclusion, address marginalization and advance rights, including in crisis-affected and post-disaster contexts
				(ED) Horizons - Rural Education in Secondary Schools in two regions in Peru (Grant 2)[1]	Output 1 ED.4	Learners equipped with relevant skills to meet individual, LM and societal demands through literacy and TVET, Sc, tech, engineering and maths & higher education
				(ED) Empowering ECCE Teachers with transformative vision of education	Output 1 ED5	Teachers trained and supported to improve learning outcomes and address the changes brought forth by the digital and artificial intelligence transformation and the COVID crisis
				(ED) (Corporate) Evaluation of UNESCO's work on Teacher Development	Output 1 ED 5	Teachers trained and supported to improve learning outcomes and address the changes brought forth by the digital and artificial intelligence transformation and the COVID crisis
				(ED) External Evaluation of the UNESCO Shenzhen Funds in Trust Project to Strengthen Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa	Output 1 ED.6	Resilience, quality and equity of education systems strengthened to flexibly respond to evolving learning environments and to better deliver on SDG 4 Commitments
				(ED) External Evaluation of the Technical Assistance for the Ministry of Education's WEBGIS school Maintenance System: UNESCO-Jordan Extra Budgetary Project	Output 1 ED 6	Resilience, quality and equity of education systems strengthened to flexibly respond to evolving learning environments and to better deliver on SDG 4 Commitments
			Outcome 2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation			

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1.   Original title in Spanish: Evaluación final del programa de educación secundaria rural 'HORIZONTES'.

SO	Thematic area	Objectives	Outcome	Evaluations	Outputs	Description
2	Meeting the environmental challenges and embracing the opportunities	Strategic Objective 2 Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage	Outcome 3: enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction	(SC) Evaluation of the technical and financial state of implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project (BIOPALT)	Output 3 SC.1	Inclusive knowledge and capacities of Member States strengthened to advance and apply science for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and restoration and disaster risk resilience
				(SC) Sustainable Development through Biodiversity – Friendly Livelihoods: Supporting Rural communities in the vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park	Output 3 SC.1	Inclusive knowledge and capacities of Member States strengthened to advance and apply science for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and restoration and disaster risk resilience
				(SC) Promoting the Use of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficient Technologies in Households in Rural Areas of Cameroon[2]	Output 3 SC.1	Inclusive knowledge and capacities of Member States strengthened to advance and apply science for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and restoration and disaster risk resilience
				(SC) Water Security for Turkana, Kenya	Output 3 SC.2	Water science, innovation, education, management, cooperation and governance bolstered for a water-secure world in a changing environment
			Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation	(SC) UNESCO/SIDA Project strengthening science technology and innovation systems for sustainable development in Africa 2020-2022	Output 4 SC. 4	Members states' capacities strengthened to improve science, technology and innovation [STI] policies and access to scientific and technological advancement and enhance knowledge sharing, including through open science
				(SC) External Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme	Output 4 SC. 5	Institutional and human capacities in basic sciences, technology, research, innovation, and engineering enhanced to advance knowledge for sustainable development
				(SC) Strengthening Science and Mathematics in primary education in Timor-Leste	Output 4 SC. 5	Institutional and human capacities in basic sciences, technology, research, innovation, and engineering enhanced to advance knowledge for sustainable development
3	Meeting the challenges of social cohesion and embracing the opportunities	Strategic objective 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage	Outcome 5 Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	(CLT) Final Evaluation of the United Nations Joint Programme 'Citizenship and Social Protection in the Gabonese Republic'[3]	Output 5 CLT 4	Member States' and communities' capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage
				(CLT) Reshaping cultural policies for the promotion of fundamental freedoms and the diversity of cultural expressions	Output 5 CLT 5	Member States' and civil society's capacities strengthened to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions through dynamic and inclusive cultural and creative industries
				(CLT) Inclusive economic recovery through sustainable enterprises in the informal economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu: Regional Consultation on the cultural industries]	Output 5 CLT 5	Member States' and civil society's capacities strengthened to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions through dynamic and inclusive cultural and creative industries

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2. Original title in French: Projet de Promotion de l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables et des technologies d'efficacité énergétique dans les ménages des zones rurales du Cameroun (PUERTEM).

3. Original title in French: Programme Conjoint Citoyenneté et Protection Sociale en République Gabonaise.

SO	Thematic area	Objectives	Outcome	Evaluations	Outputs	Description
			Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information	(CI) External Evaluation of the special account: Multi Donor Programme on the Freedom of expression and safety of journalists 2018-2021	Output 6 CI 2 (also 6.CI3 below and 8.CI5*)	Member States have strengthened capacities and raised awareness to enhance norms and policies related to freedom of expression, press freedom, safety of journalists, including women journalists and the right to access information, online and offline
				(CI) Independent Evaluation of Strengthening Media Self-Regulatory Mechanism in Timor-Leste	Output 6 CI 2	Member States have strengthened capacities and raised awareness to enhance norms and policies related to freedom of expression, press freedom, safety of journalists, including women journalists and the right to access information, online and offline
				(CI) External Evaluation for building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Türkiye – phase 2	Output 6 CI 2 (Also 8.CI5*)	Member States have strengthened capacities and raised awareness to enhance norms and policies related to freedom of expression, press freedom, safety of journalists, including women journalists and the right to access information, online and offline
				(CI) Final Evaluation of the Local Development Support Project through Community Radio Stations[4]	Output 6.CI3	Member States and media institutions enabled to strengthen media development and media pluralism, including through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) * 8CI5 Member States have strengthened institutional and human capacities to integrate media and information literacy in policies, strategies, and to bridge the digital and knowledge divides through the development of digital skills and competencies particularly in SIDS and among women and girls and different marginalized and vulnerable groups
			Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes	(SHS) Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan	Output 7 SHS1	Member States' capacities strengthened to advance effective policies and practices to achieve inclusive development through the promotion of human rights, scientific freedom, intercultural understanding and by tackling all forms of discrimination and racism
				(SHS) (corporate)Evaluation of the knowledge products of the social and human sciences sector	Output 7 SHS 2 (Also: Various outputs across Outcome 7)	Member States capacities strengthened in applying social and human scientific frontier knowledge to devise effective policy solutions to advance an inclusive development agenda with the aim to improve the wellbeing of people, particularly the most vulnerable, addressing the legacies of the pandemic crisis and facing the social impact of climate change
				(ED) Final Evaluation of Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future Programme (O3)	Output 7 ED.3	Learners empowered to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative & responsible global citizens
				(ED) Final Evaluation: GCED and ESD in textbooks and school materials for basic education in Mexico[5]	Output 7 ED.3	Learners empowered to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative & responsible global citizens
				(ED) Prevention of Extremism and its Resurgence amid the COVID-19 Pandemic through Education in Africa (IICBA)	Output 7 ED.3	Learners empowered to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative & responsible global citizens
				(SHS) Support for the Participation of Women and Young People in Initiatives for the Consolidation of Peace, the Strengthening of Mechanisms for Social Cohesion, and Living Together in Cameroon[6]	Output 7 SHS 4	Member States' capacities strengthened to devise and prioritize effective youth policies and interventions that provide youth with opportunities to meaningfully engage in policy-making and to scale up youth-led solutions at global, regional, national and local levels
				(SHS) Building social cohesion of communities that receive returnee youth as a bridge towards peaceful and effective reintegration[7]	Output 7.SHS4	Member States' capacities strengthened to devise and prioritize effective youth policies and interventions that provide youth with opportunities to meaningfully engage in policy-making and to scale up youth-led solutions at global, regional, national and local levels

4. Original title in French: Rapport final d'évaluation : Appui au développement des radios communautaires.
5. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación del Proyecto: Educación para la Ciudadanía Mundial y educación para el desarrollo sostenible en libros de texto y material escolar para la educación básica en México.
6. Original title in French: Evaluation finale du projet PBF : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et de vivre ensemble au Cameroun.
7. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

SO	Thematic area	Objectives	Outcome	Evaluations	Outputs	Description
4	Meeting the technological challenges and embracing the opportunities	Strategic Objective 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards	Outcome 8: foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age	(CI) Terminal Evaluation: Addressing the Disinfodemic on COVID-19 in Conflict prone environment	Output 8 CI 5 and 6.CI2 and 6. CI3	Member States have strengthened institutional and human capacities to integrate media and information literacy (MIL) in policies and strategies, and to bridge the digital and knowledge divides, through the development of digital skills and competencies, particularly in the small island developing States (SIDS), and among women and girls and different marginalized and vulnerable groups
				(ED) KFIT Mid Term Review; ICT Transforming Education in Africa Phase II	Output 8 ED 8	Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning
				ED) KFIT III: Summative Evaluation 2018 to 2022 Enhancing National Capacity to Foster Digital Citizenship Education in Asia Pacific Project	Output 8 ED 8	Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning
				(ED) Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS – Rio de Janeiro[8]	Output 8.ED8	Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning
				(ED Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS - Sao Paulo[9]	Output 8.ED8	Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning
			Outcome 9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation	(SHS) Third Sector Ethical Connections[10]	Output 9.SHS5	Member States' capacities and policies strengthened to benefit from AI, gene editing, neuro-technologies, and other frontier technologies, and to address the associated risks, including inequalities and discrimination, in line with international ethical standards, recommendations and frameworks

8. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS Educação no Estado do Rio de Janeiro.
9. Oiginal title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação Preventiva e Comunicação Digital em saúde para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS no Município de São Paulo.
10. Original title in Portuguese: Projeto Conexões Éticas do Terceiro Setor.

SO	Thematic area	Objectives	Outcome	Evaluations	Outputs	Description
5	Strengthening impact and partnerships	Foster an enabling environment for the efficient and effective delivery of UNESCO priorities	Enabling outcome 10: Reinforced partnerships, outreach and advocacy in support of UNESCO's action	(All sectors) (corporate) Evaluation of UNESCO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic [the report covers both enabling Outcome 10 and 11].	Output 10 PAX 1 Output 10 PAX 2	OUTPUT 10.PAX1 Coordinated, comprehensive and strategic policy advice continuously provided to the Director-General and senior management as regards relations with Member States, United Nations system organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, National Commissions for UNESCO and field offices OUTPUT 10.PAX2 Sustainability of the field network strengthened to respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of Members States, in accordance with the specific characteristics and needs of each region and subregion and with UNESCO's global priorities and priority groups The programmatic response to Covid 19 also concerns the work across all sectors and also relates to programmes in crisis situations , covered in several outputs such as ; OUTPUT 1.ED1 Education systems equipped to promote inclusion, address marginalization and advance rights, including in crisis-affected and post-disaster contexts OUTPUT 1.ED2 Gender transformative education systems empower learners, ensure safe learning environments and address the educational barriers, particularly for girls and women, exacerbated by the learning crisis OUTPUT 1.ED5 Teachers trained and supported to improve learning outcomes and address the changes brought forth by the digital and artificial intelligence (AI) transformation and the COVID-19 crisis OUTPUT 8.ED8 Technologies and digital innovations leveraged to ensure more inclusive, effective and relevant learning. OUTPUT 5.CLT3 Member States' capacities strengthened for better preparedness, mitigation and response to emergencies affecting culture, including in situations of armed conflict and disaster OUTPUT 7.SHS2 Member States' capacities strengthened in applying social and human scientific frontier knowledge to devise effective policy solutions to advance an inclusive development agenda with the aim to improve the well-being of people, particularly the most vulnerable, addressing the legacies of the pandemic crisis and facing the social impact of climate change
			Enabling outcome 11: Accountable, efficient and effective management in pursuit of the Organisation's results	All sectors) (corporate) UNESCO Field Offices in Action for Gender Equality	Output 11 GE1	OUTPUT 11.HRM1 Output 11.GE1. Global Priority gender equality is advanced in and through education, science, culture and communication and information BUT could also be related to and gender equality Global priority across sectors Also related to: Output 10.PAX2. Sustainability of the field network strengthened to respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of Members States, in accordance with the specific characteristics and needs of each region and subregion and with UNESCO's global priorities and priority groups Output 11.BSP1 Effective strategic planning, monitoring, reporting and coordination of cross-cutting matters ensured in support of improved programme design and delivery. As well as to Global priority Gender Equality across sectors (in HQ and FOs)
				(Corporate services) (corporate)Evaluation of UNESCO Human Resources Management strategy 2017-2022	Output 11 HRM1	Staffing, learning and development, and staff well-being policies developed and implemented in support of a more diverse, efficient and agile working environment.

Appendix 2. SDG alignment

2.   The table below indicates the alignment of the evaluations in the 2023 synthesis with the SDGs[11].

Corporate Evaluations	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 9	SDG 10	SDG 11	SDG 12	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
Evaluation of UNESCO's work on Teacher Development				✓													
Evaluation of the Knowledge Products of the Social and Human Sciences Sector			✓		✓						✓					✓	
Evaluation of the Global Priority Gender Equality (Part II)					✓												
Evaluation of UNESCO's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic (2020-2021)				✓	✓					✓						✓	
Evaluation of the UNESCO Human Resources Management Strategy 2017-2022				✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Decentralized Evaluations	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 9	SDG 10	SDG 11	SDG 12	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
(ED) KFIT III Summative evaluation: Enhancing National Capacity to Foster Digital Citizenship Education in Asia Pacific project				✓													
(ED) KFIT Mid Term Review; ICT Transforming Education in Africa Phase II				✓													
(ED) Final Evaluation: GCED and ESD in textbooks and school materials for basic education in Mexico[12]				✓	✓			✓		✓							
(ED) Summative Evaluation: Empowering ECCE Teachers with a Transformative Vision of Education				✓													
(ED) External Evaluation of the 'Technical Assistance for the Ministry of Education's WebGIS School Maintenance System' UNESCO Jordan Extra-Budgetary Project				✓													
(ED) External Evaluation of the UNESCO Shenzhen Funds in Trust Project to Strengthen Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (2017 2022)				✓													
(ED) End-of-Project External Evaluation Report: Prevention of Extremism through Education in Africa				✓												✓	

11. Programmes/projects are considered aligned with an SDG when (1) the SDG is either named in the evaluation report and/or (2) it was identified by the review team or the respective MP staff during their validation of the SDG alignment proposed by the review team. Some programmes/projects contribute to several SDGs.

12. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación del Proyecto: Educación para la Ciudadanía Mundial y educación para el desarrollo sostenible en libros de texto y material escolar para la educación básica en México.

Decentralized Evaluations	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 9	SDG 10	SDG 11	SDG 12	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
(ED) A final evaluation of the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) programme			✓	✓	✓											✓	
(ED) Final External Evaluation of UNESCO Project: Access to quality inclusive primary and secondary education for IDPs, returnees, remainees and refugees in conflict affected areas in Iraq				✓				✓								✓	
(ED) Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS - Rio de Janeiro[13]			✓	✓													
(ED) Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS - Sao Paulo[14]			✓	✓													
(ED) Horizons - Rural Education in Secondary Schools in two regions in Peru (Grant 2)[15]				✓	✓												
(SC) UNESCO/SIDA Project strengthening science technology and innovation systems for sustainable development in Africa 2020-2022					✓				✓							✓	✓
(SC) Strengthening Science and Mathematics in primary education in Timor-Leste				✓	✓												
(SC) Sustainable Development through Biodiversity – Friendly livelihoods: Supporting Rural Communities in the vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park	✓	✓		✓				✓							✓		
(SC) Water Security for Turkana, Kenya	✓				✓	✓											
(SC) Promoting the Use of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficient Technologies in Households in Rural Areas of Cameroon[16]							✓		✓			✓	✓				
(SC) Evaluation of the technical and financial state of implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project	✓				✓						✓		✓		✓	✓	
(SC) External Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓							✓			
(CLT) Final evaluation report: Reshaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions				✓	✓			✓		✓	✓					✓	✓

13. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS Educação no Estado do Rio de Janeiro.

14. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação Preventiva e Comunicação Digital em saúde para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS no Município de São Paulo.

15. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación final del programa de educación secundaria rural 'HORIZONTES'.

16. Original title in French: Projet de Promotion de l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables et des technologies d'efficacité énergétique dans les ménages des zones rurales du Cameroun (PUERTEM).

Decentralized Evaluations	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 9	SDG 10	SDG 11	SDG 12	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
(CLT) Final Evaluation of the United Nations Joint Programme 'Citizenship and Social Protection in the Gabonese Republic'[17]											✓						
(CLT) Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓						
(SHS) Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan				✓												✓	
(SHS) Building social cohesion of communities that receive returnee youth as a bridge towards peaceful and effective reintegration [18]											✓					✓	
(SHS) Third Sector Ethical Connections [19]								✓									
(SHS) Support for the Participation of Women and Young People in Initiatives for the Consolidation of Peace, the Strengthening of Mechanisms for Social Cohesion, and Living Together in Cameroon[20]					✓						✓					✓	
(CI) Final Evaluation of the Local Development Support Project through Community Radio Stations[21]																✓	
(CI) Terminal Evaluation: #CoronavirusFacts Addressing the "Disinfodemic" on COVID-19 in conflict-prone environments																✓	
(CI) Independent Evaluation of "Strengthening Media Self-regulatory Mechanisms in Timor-Leste"																✓	
(CI) Final Evaluation Building Trust In Media in South East Europe and Turkey				✓												✓	
(CI) External Evaluation of the Special Account: Multi Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP) 2018-2021				✓	✓											✓	

17. Original title in French: Programme Conjoint Citoyenneté et Protection Sociale en République Gabonaise.

18. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

19. Original title in Portuguese: Projeto Conexões Éticas do Terceiro Setor.

20. Original title in French: Evaluation finale du projet PBF : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et de vivre ensemble au Cameroun.

21. Original title in French: Rapport final d'évaluation : Appui au développement des radios communautaires.

Figure 6. SDG alignment across evaluated Initiatives

■	SDG4 (21)	Quality education
■	SDG16 (16)	Peace, justice and strong institutions
■	SDG5 (15)	Gender equality
■	SDG11 (8)	Sustainable cities and communities
■	SDG8 (6)	Decent work and economic growth
■	SDG1 (5)	No poverty
■	SDG10 (4)	Reduced inequalities
■	SDG3 (4)	Good health and well being
■	SDG17 (3)	Partnership for the goals
■	SDG15 (3)	Life on land
■	SDG9 (3)	Industry, innovation and infrastructure
■	SDG6 (3)	Clean water and sanitation
■	SDG14 (2)	Life below water
■	SDG13 (2)	Climate action
■	SDG7 (2)	Affordable and clean energy
■	SDG2 (2)	Zero hunger
■	SDG12 (1)	Responsible consumption and production

Appendix 3.
Quality assessment of UNESCO evaluation reports

3.   The tables below summarize the performance of this year's portfolio of five corporate and thirty-one decentralized evaluations against the revised UNESCO Quality Assessment Template which is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Checklist for Evaluation Reports. This ensures consistency with previous syntheses and with UNESCO's 2022-2029 Evaluation Policy. The two types of evaluation are presented in separate tables considering the differences between the evaluations in context, scale, and resources and the procedures for quality assurance.[22]

Legend[23]

Highly satisfactory (81% -100%)	Satisfactory (61%-80%)	Partially satisfactory (45%- 60%)	Unsatisfactory (<45 %)

UNEG Scores Corporate Evaluations

Corporate Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB)	Gender Equality	Management Response
(ED) Evaluation of UNESCO's work on Teacher Development	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
(SHS) Evaluation of the Knowledge Products of the Social and Human Sciences Sector	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
(Intersectoral) Evaluation of the Global Priority Gender Equality (Part II)	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
(Intersectoral) Evaluation of UNESCO's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic (2020-2021)	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
(Corporate service) Evaluation of the UNESCO Human Resources Management Strategy 2017-2022	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory

22. The corporate evaluations are systematically quality assured by IOS and undergo a detailed quality assessment by external consultants and/or IOS during their finalisation, which is validated in the framework of the synthesis. Decentralized evaluations are quality assured by the respective evaluation managers and their reference groups with support from the Evaluation Focal points and IOS. Systematic quality assessment for decentralized evaluations is conducted in the framework of the synthesis. (See also Chapter 6 "Quality of UNESCO evaluations).

23. The 2022 updated Quality Assessment Template introduced a 4-point rating scale (replacing the previous 3-point rating scale). This revised UNESCO QA template was applied to assess the quality of the portfolio of evaluation reports in the 2023 Synthesis.

UNEG Scores Decentralized Evaluations

Decentralized Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommen-dations	Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB)	Gender Equality	Management response
(ED) Final Evaluation: GCED and ESD in textbooks and school materials for basic education in Mexico[24]											
(ED) Summative Evaluation: Empowering ECCE Teachers with a Transformative Vision of Education											
(ED) External Evaluation of the 'Technical Assistance for the Ministry of Education's WebGIS School Maintenance System' UNESCO Jordan Extra-Budgetary Project											
(ED) External Evaluation of the UNESCO Shenzhen Funds in Trust Project to Strengthen Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (2017 2022)											
(ED) End-of-Project External Evaluation Report: Prevention of Extremism through Education in Africa											
(ED) KFIT III Summative evaluation: Enhancing National Capacity to Foster Digital Citizenship Education in Asia Pacific project											
(ED) KFIT Mid Term Review; ICT Transforming Education in Africa Phase II											
(ED) A final evaluation of the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) programme											

24. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación del Proyecto: Educación para la Ciudadanía Mundial y educación para el desarrollo sostenible en libros de texto y material escolar para la educación básica en México.

Legend: ● = teal (assessed/present), ◐ = grey, blank = light blue

Decentralized Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommen-dations	Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB)	Gender Equality	Management response
(ED) Final External Evaluation of UNESCO Project: Access to quality inclusive primary and secondary education for IDPs, returnees, remainees and refugees in conflict affected areas in Iraq	◐	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
(ED) Evaluation of the Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS – Rio de Janeiro[25]		◐	◐			◐		◐			
(ED) Evaluation of the Implementation of Innovative Education Technologies for the Prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS - Sao Paulo[26]		◐	◐			◐		◐			
(ED) Horizons - Rural Education in Secondary Schools in two regions in Peru (Grant 2)[27]	◐	●	●	◐	●	●	●	◐			
(SC) UNESCO/SIDA Project strengthening science technology and innovation systems for sustainable development in Africa 2020-2022	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	
(SC) Strengthening Science and Mathematics in primary education in Timor-Leste	●	●	●	●	●	●	◐	●	◐	◐	
(SC) Sustainable Development through Biodiversity – Friendly livelihoods: Supporting Rural Communities in the vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
(SC) Water Security for Turkana, Kenya	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◐

25. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS Educação no Estado do Rio de Janeiro.
26. Original title in Portuguese: Implementação de Tecnologias Inovadoras de Educação Preventiva e Comunicação Digital em saúde para Prevenção das IST/HIV/AIDS no Município de São Paulo.
27. Original title in Spanish: Evaluación final del programa de educación secundaria rural 'HORIZONTES'.

Decentralized Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommen-dations	Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB)	Gender Equality	Management response
(SC) Promoting the Use of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficient Technologies in Households in Rural Areas of Cameroon[28]	▢	▩	▩	▢	▢	▩	▢	▢			
(SC) Evaluation of the technical and financial state of implementation of the Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad Project	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▢	▩	
(SC) External Evaluation of the Transboundary Waters Governance for Sustainable Development and Blue Peace Programme	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩			
(SHS) Building social cohesion of communities that receive returnee youth as a bridge towards peaceful and effective reintegration[29]	▢	▩	▩	▢	▢	▢	▩	▢			
(SHS) Third Sector Ethical Connections[30]	▢	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▢			
(SHS) Support for the Participation of Women and Young People in Initiatives for the Consolidation of Peace, the Strengthening of Mechanisms for Social Cohesion and, Living Together in Cameroon[31]	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▢	▢	
(SHS) Terminal Evaluation for the Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion Project in Wau, South Sudan	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▩	▢	▢	

28. Original title in French: Projet de Promotion de l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables et des technologies d'efficacité énergétique dans les ménages des zones rurales du Cameroun (PUERTEM).

29. Original title in Spanish: Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva.

30. Original title in Portuguese: Projeto Conexões Éticas do Terceiro Setor.

31. Original title in French: Evaluation finale du projet PBF : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et de vivre ensemble au Cameroun.

Decentralized Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB)	Gender Equality	Management response
(CLT) Final evaluation report: Reshaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
(CLT) Final Evaluation of the United Nations Joint Programme 'Citizenship and Social Protection in the Gabonese Republic'[32]	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
(CLT) Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu											
(CI) Final Evaluation of the Local Development Support Project through Community Radio Stations[33]		●	●				●				
(CI) Terminal Evaluation: #CoronavirusFacts Addressing the "Disinfodemic" on COVID-19 in conflict-prone environments		●					●				
(CI) Independent Evaluation of "Strengthening Media Self-regulatory Mechanisms in Timor-Leste"		●	●					●			
(CI) Final Evaluation Building Trust In Media in South East Europe and Turkey	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
(CI) External Evaluation of the Special Account: Multi Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP) 2018-2021	●	●	●	●		●	●			●	

32. Original title in French: Programme Conjoint Citoyenneté et Protection Sociale en République Gabonaise.
33. Original title in French: Rapport final d'évaluation : Appui au développement des radios communautaires.

Appendix 4.
Management response to crosscutting finding

4.   Since 2018, when the Synthesis was first undertaken, the structure and analytical format of the report has evolved iteratively to ensure it is well-aligned to meet the needs of the Executive Board and other UNESCO stakeholders and integrate important developments in the wider environment to better tell the story of UNESCO's contribution. A key development has been the inclusion of the Management Response to the crosscutting findings identified in the Synthesis following a request by the 207th session of the Executive Board (See Decision 207 EX/Decision 5.IIA para 5).[34]

5.   It must be reminded that the Synthesis does not cover the entire work of UNESCO but provides insights from a limited number of initiatives that were designed and implemented a few years ago and have been evaluated in 2022. Consequently, the findings in the Synthesis do not fully reflect all the recent and ongoing organizational and sector-level reforms that have been implemented, among other in follow up to the recommendations of individual evaluations. This consolidated management response is intended to provide insights on the Organization's initiatives that address the crosscutting issues that were emerging from this Synthesis. This consolidated management response is intended as an overall organizational response that provides examples across sectors but is not intended as an exhaustive report that refers to all of UNESCOs interventions.

1.   UNESCO demonstrates a sharper focus on SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

6.   UNESCO's 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 documents provide clear direction to staff to reflect and refocus the contribution of the Organization to SDGs in all relevant areas of work, strengthen interdisciplinarity including synergies, and encourages joint programming where appropriate. Efforts by the Organization through the different Sectors have made an important contribution in this regard and a sharpened focus on SDGs clearly emerged. Almost all evaluations included in this year's Synthesis make explicit references to their contributions to SDGs when compared to the past when only few evaluations indicated such a reference. Relevant initiatives include:

- Enhanced RBM (Results Based Management) resources, workshops and coaching led by BSP (Bureau for Strategic Planning) RBM Unit have consistently supported the integration of the 2030 Agenda SDG targets and indicators together with other Internationally Agreed Development Goals relevant to UNESCO's mandate. The emphasis placed on strongly anchoring to the 2030 Agenda SDGs when developing concept notes, projects and programmes has proven crucial in this regard.

- Spearheading global advocacy within the UN (United Nations) system and beyond to integrate culture as a stand-alone goal in the post-2030 development agenda. This action was triggered by the monitoring of SDG indicator 11.4.1 that advanced culture-related data while also highlighting the need to diversify and strengthen the measurement of culture's impact on urban development.

2.   UNESCO is progressing fast as an agile, flexible, learning Organization

7.   While COVID-19 created significant challenges for implementation of various activities, it also created opportunities for UNESCO to accelerate the reform measures and corporate actions to respond to a rapidly changing world. These measures were designed to ensure the Organization remains responsive, prepared, and adaptable. UNESCO's progress in this regard has been facilitated by the RBM resources and events initiated by BSP RBM Unit that consistently support the integration of good practices and lessons learnt in future planning and programming, emphasizing the role of institutional learning for strong risk management, evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and adaptive management. There is also evidence of a growing culture of evaluation, triggered among other by several webinars and targeted training events and enhanced resources, including an updated UNESCO Manual for evaluation management, which is available on the Evaluation Knowledge Hub. More systematic planning, and resourcing of decentralized evaluations as well as an enhanced use of evaluation findings and recommendations during project design and enhanced implementation rates of recommendations are notable results.

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34. Also invites the Director-General to present in future periodic reports on Internal Oversight Service (IOS) evaluations a management response on how the Organization will respond to cross-cutting issues that emerge consistently across the evaluations, either by building on its comparative advantages or by taking corrective measures where there is room for improvement and a need for continued management attention.

8. In addition, special efforts were made by all Sectors with respect to adaptive programming, flexible implementation modalities, flexible procurement procedures, mobilization of human resources at HQ and Field Offices and inclusion of local NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) as implementing partners to ensure continued delivery. For instance, the SHS Sector has systematized and streamlined its knowledge production efforts, which were scattered before, concentrating on key issues. Efforts are being made to ensure these developments are embedded into the Organization's operating model in the future.

9. A significant change in the Organization's internal processes was the shift to the digital environment. As a result, many internal and external meetings now occur online through web-based platforms including capacity-building, monitoring activities, emergency response actions and awareness-raising campaigns. This shift has been important as it has enabled the Organization to reach more beneficiaries and stakeholders than ever before and has expanded the lifespan and sustainability of its capacity-building activities. However, the Organization acknowledges that more can be done with respect to recruitment of project staff and creating increased opportunities for learning to share learnings and encourage cooperation between Member States.

3. Reimagining UNESCO's convening power, leadership and influence has contributed to repositioning the Organization

10. UNESCO was well placed to seize the opportunities that emerged out of the pandemic to reimagine and reassert its convening power to catalyze global action. The technical expertise and experience of its staff, its reputation as a neutral broker and as a standard setter enabled the Organization to effectively reimagine and reposition itself in many instances and mobilize substantial resources to develop innovative responses to the emerging crises. This is well illustrated in the Evaluation of Teacher Development with UNESCO's leadership role in the formation of the Global Education Coalition and the Global Teacher Campus and in the BIOPALT project in which UNESCO demonstrated its leadership in sustainable livelihoods (renewable energy and green economy), through involvement with local rural communities and indigenous peoples, who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Through fostering specific normative standards and strategic policy approaches, such as the UNESCO Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue, the Organization through the SHS sector has elevated its contribution and mobilization of knowledge in key social development debates. In the framework of the annual Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination, UNESCO has been able to position itself as a leading institution in this fight, convening high-level decision makers and knowledge partners, and delivering concrete and far-reaching results such as the North American

Partnership for Equity and Racial Justice and the Global Coalition against Systemic Racism and Reparations. Similarly, UNESCO's recent Global Sports Ministers Conference (MINEPS VII) was an opportunity to showcase the Organization's unique convening power.

11. UNESCO's leadership and convening of 150 countries for the World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 is an excellent example of its ongoing influence. The MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration is widely supported by governments and key stakeholders and reflects UNESCO's ongoing efforts to anchor culture in sustainable development policies.

4. Monitoring and evaluation practices are strengthening but quality and use of monitoring data needs further improvement

12. UNESCO acknowledges these findings and has initiated a number of actions to further improve monitoring and evaluation practices including delivering RBM technical support and awareness/capacity strengthening including RBM intersectoral 'From project design to implementation' workshops and strategic tailored coaching for staff in HQ and Field Offices; development of a global monitoring framework for the Global Report by the Culture Sector; and paying closer attention to monitoring and results framework when funding Phase 2 of projects. For instance, in the Strengthening STI (Science, Technology and Innovation) systems in Africa project, a more detailed monitoring and implementation plan was included as part of the concept note.

13. UNESCO agrees that a clear monitoring and evaluation framework with SMART performance indicators integrated into the project documents can set a clear direction for implementing partners and generate quality data for monitoring and evaluation. Along these lines, consultations are being pursued to institutionalize a robust Monitoring Function facilitating use of results information for learning, decision-making and adaptive management, notably with regards to developing monitoring resource allocation mechanisms and enriching the Organizational assessment process, further strengthening its evidence basis. Monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of standard-setting instruments are also being revised, such as for the UNESCO's International Convention against Doping in Sport, or the normative instruments concerning the teaching profession, i.e., the Recommendation on the Status of Teachers (1966) and the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997).

14. A revised Evaluation Policy and enhanced evaluation training initiatives as well as an increasing level of coordination between IOS and BSP to better align their respective guidance documents and leveraging opportunities for using high quality monitoring and evaluation data into design and planning processes are also well underway. These

developments reflect an awareness of the need to continuously enhance M&E practices across the board. For instance, in response to the findings from the external evaluation of the MDP project, the CI Sector undertook to revise the results framework of the Special Account, including the addition of an impact statement and revising performance indicators of outcomes and outputs. This is currently being reviewed by the RBM Unit and the aim is to share the final version with donors after the General Conference.

5.   Attention to Global Priority Gender Equality shows significant progress but there is still much work to be done

15.   Work has been initiated towards the elaboration and piloting of an Integrated Priorities/Groups approach to ensure harmonized integration of UNESCO Global Priorities and Priority Groups (such as Youth and SIDS), as well as specific groups (e.g., indigenous peoples, youth) and cross-cutting approaches (e.g., Human Rights-Based approach; environmental sustainability) throughout the Results Framework (results, key activities, and associated performance indicators as well as key underlying assumptions).

16.   Building on the IOS Evaluation of Global Priority Gender Equality Part I and II, new modalities of work have been established to adapt the current internal planning, monitoring, and reporting system SISTER to better reflect the achievements towards Global Priority Gender Equality. A comprehensive Framework for Global Priority Gender Equality aligned with UNESCO's four Strategic Objectives and cross-cutting themes is under development in coordination with the Programme Sectors and Programme-related and Corporate Services. Actions and peer-to-peer learning mechanisms are also underway to make 'Gender Equality everyone's business' and promote intersectoral work and synergies between HQ and FOs at the leadership and operational levels.

17.   To reinforce staff capacity on gender equality and reinvigorate the gender equality culture, a mandatory e-learning course on gender equality has been expanded and a centralized space facilitating access to learning modules and tools has been created in the UNESCO website in 2022 and is regularly updated. In addition, gender equality is a common thread through all learning initiatives deployed including the "Gender Equality Story Circles" workshops and training offered in 2022 and 2023 for staff at both HQ and in the field. In light of contemporary challenges, the Women for Ethical AI Network (Women4EthicalAI) was launched at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and a seminal report on the "Gendered Impacts of AI: Policies and Safeguards

to Regulate New Technologies, Mitigate Risks and Protect Rights" was produced for this purpose.[35]

6.   The focus on priority groups and inclusion remains modest

18.   As noted earlier, the Organization has initiated work towards the elaboration and piloting of an Integrated Priorities/Groups approach which builds on the Global Priority Gender Equality comprehensive framework and guiding questions elaborated with subject matter experts to further operationalize Global Priorities, Priority groups (such as indigenous peoples, youth) and cross-cutting approaches (including environmental considerations) throughout the programme cycle. In addition, UNESCO commits to improving its work on equality, diversity and inclusion in future projects and programmes across the Sectors and pays closer attention to engaging with youth and other underrepresented groups during design and implementation. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is one of the four pillars of the Organization's HR strategy and will be integrated into all aspects of its implementation.

19.   The Youth Section at the Social and Human Sciences Sector coordinates youth as a priority group across the Organization and implements youth programming within its portfolio. This includes both, the mainstreaming of youth issues and needs across all programmes, youth-focused programming, as well as the partnering with young people to engage them meaningfully in UNESCO's work. UNESCO aims at ensuring that youth are actively and meaningfully engaged as change-makers, knowledge-holders, and partners, through a focus on four key pillars.[36]

20.   Lessons can be learnt from the Culture Sector which has sought to engage proactively with priority groups SIDS and Youth. The Sector has been working to protect and promote SIDS' culture and heritage in all its forms to build resilience and advance sustainable development and inclusion of youth in design and implementation to harness the potential of culture and heritage to address global challenges. Through the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum, World Heritage Volunteers Initiative, and the first UNESCO MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development, the Sector is drawing youth interest and passion to safeguard their cultural heritage. The Education sector is also making efforts for increasingly mainstreaming aspects of inclusion in its normative guidance and has been further integrating the inclusion and equity dimensions in the monitoring and reporting

35. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/EP.9%20Elettra%20Ronchi%20et%20al.pdf

36. I.e., youth-led knowledge brokering, youth-related policy solutions, youth-led action, and relevant capacity building of young people and youth stakeholders.

processes of corresponding instruments, particularly in the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education.

21.   Through the Anti-Doping Convention, the Social and Human Sciences Sector is providing tailored support to SIDS countries, and a specific funding category, dedicated to SIDS and LDCs facing difficulties in the implementation of the Convention is envisaged as of 2024. Through UNESCO's International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, intercultural dialogue and learning methodologies are developed to address the complex issues of discrimination faced by migrants and refugees.

22.   Regarding disability inclusion, UNESCO set up an Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Inclusion and Rights in January 2021, which is chaired by the ADG/SHS. This Task Team has been active in reporting annually to the Secretary-General's Office on the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). In 2022, out of the fifteen indicators of this "Accountability Framework", UNESCO fulfils three, is approaching eight, and is still missing four of the UNDIS requirements which leaves significant room for improvement. According to the Global Mapping of UNESCO's work on Disability Inclusion (2022)[37] there is a need to design a whole-organization strategic approach in this field in order to provide more coherence, clarity, and guidelines to the programme staff both in Fields Offices and in Headquarters. UNESCO continues to enhance its involvement and leadership in designing and implementing Joint Programmes at the national and multi-country level, notably in the framework of the UN Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Donor Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) in all its fields of expertise, except in culture. There has been a clear sign of UNESCO's increased participation and footprint in the UNCTs Working Groups at the national level. In terms of operations and administration, senior management has initiated an internal conversation with the team leaders on the priorities to be tackled in order to increase the Organization's rating by mainstreaming disability inclusion across all policies.

7.   There is strong evidence of deepening and diversifying partnerships

23.   Deepening and diversifying partnerships lies at the core of the Organization's work and over the years, the Organization, through its updated comprehensive partnership strategy and its multistakeholder partnerships and coalitions has been able to leverage both financial and non-financial, public, and private resources geared towards its strategic objectives. This focus on building collaborative partnerships with sector leaders has proven useful in positioning UNESCO as a thought leader as illustrated in UNESCO's leadership role in the formation of the Global Education Coalition and in the approach

taken with the Institute for Economics and Peace, a recognized global leading institution in peace statistics. The Institute was engaged as an implementing partner in developing and fundraising stage of the UNESCO Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue which added immense value and helped advance the project at speed. Another flagship initiative, the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination has helped elevate the anti-racism global movement at the vanguard of international agendas and has achieved concrete commitments from high-level representatives including from Governments, the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), UN agencies, Civil society, and the private sector. Other innovative partnerships are being established, such as with the European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform (DG Reform) which secured the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab as an expertise provider to support critical and high-priority reforms in Member States and is also opening new resource mobilization avenues for the Organization.

24.   The Organization will continue to maintain and deepen its partnerships with governments, regional organizations, UN partners and agencies, NGOs, development agencies, private sector actors, corporate and philanthropic foundations, and media organizations.

8.   While external coherence appears to be improving, there is room for improvement with respect to internal coherence

25.   UNESCO acknowledges that achieving internal coherence continues to be a challenge and notes that while mobilization of expertise from across HQ, field entities, UNESCO networks and Category 1 Institutes has enhanced, there is room for improvement with respect to internal coherence. The Organization commits in its MTS and continues to foster learning across the Organization including through the various BSP initiatives. Several responses to individual evaluations also highlight that efforts are made to supporting external and internal coherence. For instance, strategic tailored coaching meetings facilitated by the BSP/RBM Unit in 2022 led to the development of 20 Thematic Theories of Change and/or Results Framework further articulating 41 C/5 results and the framing Field Offices' work. In addition, UNESCO has established and enhanced the management of focal point networks and communities of practice within and across sectors (e.g., gender, disability, thematic communities of practice). With respect to Teacher Development for example, the ED/PLS/TED will continue leading and operating the internal community of practice on teachers, comprising the TED team, as well as field office and Institution focal points for promoting knowledge exchange, collaboration, and coordination of work

37. Towards strategic orientations on disability inclusion: a mapping of UNESCO's initiatives (2014-2021), UNESCO, 2022.

around teacher issues. These processes have proved crucial for shedding light on the role and importance of external and internal relationships in the achievement of results.

26. Intersectoral actions have been initiated by the different sectors within the Organization to promote internal coherence and several need to be noted. For instance, cooperation between Culture and Communication and Information Sectors are being pursued to support Member States' capacities in monitoring and developing cultural policies in the context of the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as a pre-requisite to the creation and distribution of diverse cultural expressions, in support of SDG 16. Culture and Education Sector are also working together towards the elaboration of the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education. The role of culture in climate change mitigation and adaptation continues to be addressed with the Culture and Natural Sciences Sector working together. This includes work with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and protection and transmission of intangible cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge, particularly in the context of the decade for Indigenous Languages (2022-2032).

27. The development of the Roadmap on anti-racism and anti-discrimination has been made possible with contributions from all programme sectors. SHS and CI are cooperating under the Intersectoral Programme 5 (IP5) to translate UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI into national institutional and regulatory frameworks. This collaboration, funded through extrabudgetary sources, aims to provide sustained technical assistance to countries, facilitating the implementation of the Recommendation, and a similar initiative is being developed for SIDS. However, promoting and sharing of good practice examples on internal coherence can be further enhanced as evidenced in the 2023 Synthesis.

9.   Good progress is noted about Global Priority Africa

28. UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 41 C/4 defines a new vision to create synergies and enhance coordination to achieve the objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union through the deployment of broader interdisciplinary and integrated approach to sustainable development, peace, and security in Africa. The decentralized budget distributions within sectors also demonstrate the focus on Africa. The Organization continues to support staff, notably through RBM Institutional Guidance, to operationalize this vision throughout its programming cycle by anchoring the initiative's Theory of Change to the 2063 African Union Agenda. Projects implemented between 2022-2023 show remarkable progress being made with respect to Priority Africa and continue to gain recognition at regional and national levels in Africa well beyond its

conclusion as illustrated in the evaluations of UNESCO/SIDA, Turkana project, BIOPALT and PUERTEM project.

29. African Member States, also a priority for the implementation of the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, received significant technical support and the prototypes of the EIA and Readiness Assessment Methodologies were showcased at subregional events. The Readiness Assessment tool is now being piloted in over 50 Member States with a focus on Africa and SIDS.

30. In the framework of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, the Culture Sector has developed an implementation strategy for Flagship Programme 3 "Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development". An internal working group comprising Priority Africa and External Relations Sector as well as the Culture Sector at HA and in the African Field Offices was established in Autumn 2021 to advance the implementation of the Flagship Programme. Other actions include an inclusive 5-year Mentorship Programme for African World Heritage professionals; multi-stakeholder consultations and meetings with national focal points in Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Rabat, Dakar and South Africa, experts, universities, and key partners to inform the Flagship Programme and support for preparing nomination dossiers for identified sites in Comoros, Eswatini, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan.

31. The Social and Human Sciences Sector multistakeholder consultations led to the identification of five priority axes for a Strategy on Sport and Priority Africa,[38] to help unleash the potential of sport as a driver for sustainable and inclusive development. On the occasion of MINEPS VII Conference, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in June 2023, African Ministers adopted an agreed approach to an action plan for Sport and Priority Africa, which will form the basis for innovative initiatives moving forward.

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38. Sport & Culture; Promotion of Sport Values through Education; No Youth Left Behind; Development of Sport professions and Knowledge production and sharing.

Appendix 5. Consultants biodata

Meenakshi Sankar is Principal Consultant at Buddhi Consultancy Limited which she set up in 2013 after working in the New Zealand public and private sector for over 15 years. Meenakshi has a master's degree in social work and extensive experience in designing and implementing research and evaluation assignments for a range of clients in the public sector as well as non-government agencies and multilateral agencies such as the OECD and UNESCO. Over the years she has deployed her evaluation and research expertise in a range of thematic areas including but not limited to education, international development cooperation, social development, employment, climate change and community development.

Sankar Ramasamy, PhD has been working in the New Zealand and international public sector since 2000 as an Evaluation and Research professional. Sankar obtained his PhD in Political Science from India and studied Public Policy at Victoria University of Wellington. Sankar has designed and managed strategic mixed method evaluations and worked in several domains including welfare, employment, migration and settlement, and education. Sankar currently holds the position of Evaluation Practice Lead at the Strategy and Insights Group, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand to help build evaluation best practices and capability. Sankar has been an associate at Buddhi Consulting since 2016.

Rehana Mohideen-Brown is a highly skilled and creative design professional with more than 10 years of experience working across the NZ public sector, she contributed to the development of communication outputs. She has extensive experience in graphic design, typography, information design and strategic design. She has a master's degree in visual communication design and is currently working as a senior information designer at the Ministry of Social Development and from time to time she contributes to consultancy assignments.