

Evaluation Service



Evaluation of UNHCR's implementation  
of three of its protection strategies: the  
Global Education Strategy, the  
Updated SGBV Strategy, and the  
Child Protection Framework

July 2017

Full Report

ES/2017/02

Commissioned by UNHCR Evaluation Service and  
Conducted by Oxford Policy Management



**Oxford** Policy Management

## UNHCR Evaluation Service

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Published by UNHCR  
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## Acknowledgements

This evaluation was commissioned and managed by the UNHCR Division of International Protection (DIP) and UNHCR Evaluation Service.

We are grateful for the time and effort colleagues from UNHCR and affiliated non-government partners have exerted to support the production of this report. Most importantly we would like to thank Francesca Bonino and Gita Swamy Meier-Ewert, who have accompanied this project from inception to its conclusion. Additionally, we would like to thank Betsy Greve, who has provided important guidance in the finalisation of the evaluation report.

Further, in no particular order, we would like to thank the following colleagues from UNHCR: Maria Gabriela Espinosa (Bangladesh), Maria Bances del Rey (Egypt), Marat Atamuradov (Iran), Matin Mortazavi (Iran), Anya Victoria (Mexico), Jose Sieber Luz (Mexico), Nathalie Bussien (Rwanda), Jean Nic Beuze (Canada), Daniela Cicchella (Jordan), Brian Gorlick (Malaysia), Mimi Zarina Azmin (Malaysia), Thulasi Munisamy (Malaysia), Kavita Belani (India), Jeanette Zuefle (Syria), Hector Malonga (Chad), Catherine Hamon Sharpe (Kenya), Esther Kiragu (Uganda), Marta Bellini (Zambia), Monika Sandvik-Nylund (HQ), Joanina Karugaba (HQ), Ita Sheehy (HQ), Margriet Veenma (HQ) and Tayyar Sukru Cansizoglu (HQ).

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The contents and conclusions of this evaluation report are those of the evaluation team only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the UNHCR. The publication of this report does not imply endorsement by UNHCR of the content presented.

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Evaluation information at a glance	
Title of the evaluation:	Evaluation of UNHCR's implementation of three protection strategies: The Global Education Strategy, the Updated SGBV Strategy and the Child Protection Framework
Timeframe covered:	2012– mid-year 2016
Type of evaluation:	Global policy and strategy evaluation
Countries covered:	Global scope with evaluation missions in Bangladesh, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico and Rwanda, and study of ten additional countries: Chad, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Uganda, and Zambia.
Evaluation initiated by: Funded by:	UNHCR Division of International Protection UNHCR Evaluation Service
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# Executive summary

## Overview and approach

In 2011-12, UNHCR developed and issued three protection strategies: the Global Education Strategy, the Updated Strategy on Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV), and the Child Protection (CP) Framework. The three strategies define organizational objectives and were expected to provide strategic guidance for developing country-level strategies and to address protection challenges and interventions directly related to education, SGBV and CP.

The objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Gather evidence on whether and how the three strategies have been working together, addressing cross-cutting protection challenges that required joint approaches to maximise protection outcomes;
- Learn from different countries' experience in receiving and implementing the strategies;
- Learn about enabling and constraining factors to the realisation of the strategies;
- Document and assess the quality of design of the strategies and how they have been set-up, including the monitoring and reporting functions.

The three headline evaluation questions were:

- A. **Quality:** Are the three Strategies relevant, coherent, informed by evidence, and adequately designed?
- B. **Implementation:** To what extent have the Strategies been implemented?
- C. **Contribution to results:** What were the results of the Strategies?

The evaluation selected fifteen countries of study. Five countries were visited: Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Mexico and Rwanda. The additional ten countries studied were: Chad, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Uganda, and Zambia.

The evaluation team drew on the following sources of evidence:

- Sector expert reviews of the global strategies, undertaken by education, child protection and SGBV sector experts to assess the technical content of the global strategies;
- Document review of HQ-level documents, including a review of monitoring and reporting documents, meeting agendas, as well as interagency policies and frameworks;
- Document review of 15 country operations, centred on country-level strategies and drafts, and Country Operation Plans (COPs) for 2012 and 2016 (data at mid-year);
- Interviews with HQ staff, undertaken during two missions to Geneva and follow-up interviews;
- Interviews with staff from 15 Country Offices: conducted face-to-face in country in the five case-study countries visited, as well as remotely for the additional ten study countries;
- Interviews with government interlocutors, UNHCR partners and Persons of Concern (PoCs) in the five case-study countries visited (through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, household case studies, and Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation Research conducted with women in countries implementing the SGBV strategy).

Some limitations related to data collection and analysis included:

- Challenges in identifying interviewees best placed to provide insights on strategy roll-out and country-level adaptation, requiring additional efforts to ensure adequate coverage of the evaluation issues.

- Analysing CO-level data given the inconsistency of indicators reported on.
- Challenges in establishing the strategy as an influencing and contributory factor in specific operational decisions, as well as results at the PoC level.
- Constraints during country visits included: lack of access to refugees in camps; low representativeness of samples selected by some Country Offices and partners; and risk of bias given the presence of government officials or UNHCR staff during some interviews and focus group activities.

## Findings and conclusions

The evaluation found that:

- The three strategies have been useful in that they have provided frameworks of guidance to country offices on how to approach three critical areas of protection policy. They have, to varying but significant degrees, been adapted and implemented in almost all the pilot countries whose experience has been reviewed as part of the Evaluation.
- The process of support to adaptation was appreciated by country offices. This has resulted in country-level strategies and the inclusion of some specific action areas in COPs.
- It is however difficult to identify results and changes that can be clearly attributed at the country level to the strategies. Changes identified in the protection provided to PoCs appeared principally to reflect national contextual factors rather than being clearly driven by the strategies.
- The strategies are not based on clearly articulated assumptions or theories of change and insufficient guidance has been provided about how to interpret and implement them in very different operational contexts.
- The frameworks of objectives set out in the strategies are of varying degrees of precision and measurability.
- UNHCR's corporate monitoring and reporting system, which provides a high level of discretion to country offices in the selection of indicators, makes it difficult to track performance in relation to the strategies over time or compare performance across countries.
- There was significant uncertainty and confusion regarding the role and purpose of the strategies among both HQ and Country Office staff. Further, there was lack of clarity about the precise status and purpose of the strategies and their relationship to other strategic guidance.
- UNHCR Country Offices may lack the skills and resources to fully adapt and implement the strategies.
- The COP process based around a single year budget with considerable uncertainty about, and fluctuations in, resource availability militates against coherent strategy planning and implementation.
- The strategies (and the supporting documentation and processes) may be seen as insufficiently prescriptive while also not providing sufficiently structured guidance on how to deal with the sorts of challenges that Country Offices in fact encounter.

## **Are the three strategies relevant, coherent, informed by evidence, and adequately designed?**

The approaches set out in the strategies are well-aligned with relevant current international agendas, emphasise partnerships and the need for a multisectoral approach, and are coherent with international law on refugees and relevant international targets and conventions. They were considered by country offices to be relevant to national contexts and compatible with government approaches. The strategies do not however set out a clear pathway specifying how the suggested activities will contribute to the strategic objectives, or the key assumptions that underlie the envisaged causal links. The strategies also do not sufficiently acknowledge the different types of needs faced by persons of concern, and the implications of this for how strategies could be implemented. The strategies are coherent with each other despite their separate preparation processes and differences in terminology and structure. They do not systematically present evidence to make a case for how strategic objectives were developed, and why they are being proposed.

The Education Strategy sets out clear goals while those of the Child Protection Framework are more broadly formulated, and the SGBV Strategy does not propose clear or measurable objectives.

The goals, objectives and action areas of the three strategies are embedded in UNHCR's Results Framework only to a very limited extent. Guidance notes and tools provided limited guidance or support to country operations about how to generate data on indicators.

## **To what extent have the strategies been implemented?**

The strategies were adapted to a significant extent in the 15 countries studied, particularly through the creation of standalone thematic strategies which adopted at least half of the strategy action areas and goals. This was done for twelve out of thirteen piloting countries for Education, ten out of twelve for SGBV and for all seven for Child Protection.

In relation to the inclusion of activities in COPs, the SGBV Strategy had the greatest influence, while being a SGBV Strategy pilot country increased the likelihood that Child Protection activities were incorporated in the COP. With regards to the Education Strategy, nearly all the countries that were implementing any education activities corresponding to strategy action areas were already including these in the COP in 2012. It is therefore difficult to ascertain the degree of influence of the Education Strategy on programming developed after its rollout.

Most of the five case study countries are implementing activities that cover all the action areas but are not reporting against most of these in their COPs. For child protection, reporting against indicators which include activities actually being implemented is uneven, while for SGBV the inputs monitored and reported in the COP most precisely cover the activities being implemented.

## **What were the results of the strategies?**

UNHCR's monitoring and reporting system has significant limitations for assessing the results achieved either at system or PoC-level. This reflects the fact that reporting does not take place against a consistent set of indicators directly related to strategy objectives either across countries or over time.

The SGBV and child protection strategies do appear to have had some positive influence on country operations since various goals and actions areas had not previously been a clear focus of country operations activities. As most education activities and objectives were already included in various COPs at the time of the issuance of the Education Strategy, there is no conclusive evidence of the strategy directly influencing country operations, improvements in capacity, internal coordination or monitoring. This may have to do with the fact that education systems relating to the action areas in the Global Education Strategy were already generally in place in pilot countries prior to the global strategy rollout.

There was limited evidence of the strategies contributing to improvements in the enabling environment. Generally, positive developments occurred only in countries which already had relatively favourable environments and where this occurred it did not appear that the strategies contributed significantly to change. While there was some evidence of strengthened partnership arrangements in the case study countries it was not possible to identify a way in which the strategies had contributed to this.

The comparison of the COPs for 2012 and 2016 for the five case study countries did not allow a conclusive assessment of progress because of a lack of consistency in the indicators reported. There was no clear evidence of improvements in performance against objectives for the countries for which data was available in relation to Global Education Strategy, and SGBV reporting was too incomplete to allow any conclusions to be drawn. It was clear from interviews and reviews of other information that major unresolved protection issues in the areas covered by the three strategies remained for PoCs in the five case study countries.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure a clear purpose, target audience and consistent approach and terminology of protection strategies.**

UNHCR should ensure that if thematic protection strategies are developed in the future, these protection strategies:

- (a) include a clear statement on purpose;
- (b) specify the target audience and how the protection strategy should be used;
- (c) apply a coherent and consistent approach and terminology both within each strategy document and across different strategies; and
- (d) are effectively led and consistently supported across UNHCR at all management levels.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure measurability of thematic protection strategies.**

To the extent that thematic protection strategies define global level objectives (or outcomes) in support of advancing global strategic directions, UNHCR should ensure that:

- (a) the logic model or casual pathways and related assumptions showing how the types of action proposed are anticipated as contributing to achieving the objectives are made explicit;
- (b) a set of core indicators to be used across all countries is defined and agreed *prior to* the issuance of the strategies;
- (c) the necessary systems, approaches and capacities to measure progress are identified, taking into consideration differences in the operational contexts for Country Offices; and

- (d) the set of core indicators should be prescriptive to allow for comparisons over time, as well as between countries where the same frameworks have been rolled out. COs should have discretion to add additional indicators.

**Recommendation 3: Improve communication on protection strategies.**

UNHCR should improve communication across the organisation about the purpose of protection strategies both as they are issued and during roll-out and adaptation.

**Recommendation 4: Plan and provide appropriate guidance and support.**

UNHCR should provide appropriate forms of support and guidance to assist Country Offices in strategic planning and prioritization, incorporating protection strategies into programmatic and strategic decision-making and implementation (roll-out and country-level adaptation), while ensuring an integrated approach across protection and with other protection units. The forms of support and guidance required should be responsive to expressed Country Office needs and preferences and are expected to include guidance on prioritization and on addressing interlinkages across strategies and functional areas.

**Recommendation 5: Appropriate resourcing of strategy implementation.**

UNHCR should review the staffing and other resource implications for country operations to be able to adapt and implement thematic protection strategies. This would include assessing when and how additional staff should be deployed/contracted.



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## List of abbreviations

AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
AoR	Area of Responsibility
BIA	Best Interests Assessment
BID	Best Interests Determination
BPRM	US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
COP	Country Operations Plan
DIP	Division of International Protection
DPSM	Division of Programme Support and Management
EMI	Education Management Information
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GSPs	Global Strategic Priorities
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFT	Multi-Functional Team
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PEER	Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research
POC/s	Person/People of Concern
PPG	Population Planning Group
RBM	Results-Based Management
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

# 1 Introduction

1. In 2011/12, UNHCR developed and issued three protection strategies: the Education Strategy, the Updated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Strategy and the Child Protection Framework. Developed to cover a period of five years,<sup>1</sup> the three strategies define organisational objectives and were expected to provide strategic guidance for developing country-level strategies and to address protection challenges and interventions directly related to education, SGBV and child protection.
2. In implementing the three strategies, priority countries were selected for initial roll-out based on expressed needs for support in specific operational contexts that required dedicated attention. Actions to support implementation of the strategies included roll-out workshops, dedicated deployments and capacity support to pilot countries, technical and advisory services, and information management and monitoring support. Three global strategy monitoring reports covering all three strategies were issued by UNHCR's Division of International Protection (DIP) in 2013, 2014, and 2016. As at 2015, 33 pilot countries were implementing at least one of the three protection strategies.<sup>2</sup>
3. This evaluation was requested by the DIP, commissioned by the UNHCR Evaluation Service, and co-managed by DIP<sup>3</sup> and the Evaluation Service. The evaluation was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of consultants from Oxford Policy Management (OPM), and drew on the advice of thematic experts from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Evaluation quality assurance processes were followed in line with OPM's internal procedures, as well as with UNHCR pilot quality assurance.<sup>4</sup> The full evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) are in Annex A.
4. The objectives of the evaluation were to:
  - Gather evidence on whether and how the three strategies have been working together, addressing cross-cutting protection challenges that required joint approaches to maximise protection outcomes;
  - Learn from different countries' experience in receiving and implementing the strategies;
  - Learn about enabling and constraining factors to the realisation of the strategies; and
  - Document and assess the quality of the design of the strategies and how they have been set up, including the monitoring and reporting functions.
5. The three headline evaluation questions were:
  - A. Quality:** Are the three strategies relevant, coherent, informed by evidence, and adequately designed?
  - B. Implementation:** To what extent have the strategies been implemented?
  - C. Contribution to results:** What were the results of the strategies?
6. The main expected uses of the evaluation results were identified as follows:
  - Generate evidence and analysis of UNHCR's processes, systems and tools for drafting, implementing and monitoring global thematic strategies; and

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Child Protection Framework, which does not include a specific timeframe.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2015) *Global Strategy Implementation Report*, [www.refworld.org/pdfid/559d1e124.pdf](http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/559d1e124.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Until November 2016.

<sup>4</sup> A quality assurance review was carried out on the evaluation report, but it was not required and carried out on all the materials included in the annexes.

- Inform UNHCR's global strategic planning process for child protection, education and SGBV following 2016.
7. The evaluation primarily targets UNHCR's internal audience including DIP and UNHCR senior leadership in protection and operations. More specifically, the audience of the report includes Advisory Group members, the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, and DIP staff who focus on global policy and strategy development. Ultimately, the most important stakeholders of this evaluation are the refugees and persons of concern (POCs)<sup>5</sup> in need of effective responses to their education, SGBV and child protection needs. Primary data collection from refugees took place in five case-study countries.
  8. The report has eight chapters including this Introduction. Chapter 2 offers an overview of the strategies and the UNHCR's planning process. Chapter 3 presents the evaluation approach. Chapter 4 presents evaluation findings on the quality of the strategies, Chapter 5 on the adaptation and implementation of the strategies, and Chapter 6 on the contribution of the strategies to UNHCR protection results. Chapter 7 sets out the overall conclusions. Finally, Chapter 8 identifies recommendations.
  9. **Annex A** presents the ToR of the evaluation. **Annex B** provides the evaluation matrix along with an explanation of its development. **Annex C** provides detail on the process followed to complete the document review. **Annex D** presents the ethics protocol followed. **Annexes E, F, G, H and I** present details on the five country visits – including the field mission programme and stakeholders interviewed. **Annex J** provides a list of all stakeholders interviewed, including interviews with UNHCR HQ staff, as well as staff from the ten additional countries studied in this evaluation.

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<sup>5</sup> Under UNHCR's mandate, this term refers to: a) 'refugees, as defined in relevant international and regional legal instruments; b) asylum-seekers, on the basis that they may be in need of international protection, pending the determination of their claims; c) returnees (i.e. POCs who have returned voluntarily to their countries and/or places of origin or habitual residence); d) stateless persons and – under the mandate to prevent statelessness – persons at risk of becoming stateless; e) internally displaced persons (IDPs) in certain circumstances and as part of broader cluster responsibilities; and, f) persons threatened with displacement or otherwise at risk in certain circumstances (including on a "good offices" basis).'

## 2 The global strategies and UNHCR’s planning process

### 2.1 Overview of the strategies

10. This chapter provides a summary overview of the global protection strategies and their place in UNHCR’s wider strategy and planning process.
11. Circumstances of forced displacement create risks to people’s safety, health, and well-being. UNHCR’s mandate for protecting POCs is to ensure that ‘individuals can access safety inside their own countries or in foreign territory; for refugees, that their claims to international protection are determined fairly and expeditiously and for IDPs, that their needs are properly assessed; that they are received and treated with dignity and humanity, including the enjoyment of rights; and that opportunities to resume a normal life are available as early as possible’.<sup>6</sup> The global strategies have been developed as part of the process of ensuring that POCs are effectively protected according to consistent policies and approaches.
12. UNHCR’s protection systems include, but are not limited to, the Education Strategy,<sup>7</sup> the Updated SGBV Strategy<sup>8</sup> and the Child Protection Framework.<sup>9</sup> Between 2011 and 2012 these three global strategies were conceptualised, formulated, and issued. They were expected to support country-level strategies and related implementation.
13. As at 2015, country-level implementation had taken place in 33 UNHCR ‘priority’ or pilot countries. Table 1 provides an overview of the three protection strategies that are the focus of this evaluation. Further details about each strategy document are described in the following sub-sections.

**Table 1: Overview of the education, SGBV and child protection strategies**

Strategy	Six objectives/ action areas	Target population, context and roll-out	Support to roll-out, adaptation and implementation
Education Strategy	(1) More children will learn better in primary school; (2) Schools will protect children and young people; (3) More young people will go to secondary school; (4) More young people will follow higher education courses; (5) Education will be available at every age; and (6) Education will be part of all emergency responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target population: Refugees</li> <li>• Developed in 2012</li> <li>• Aligned with external UNESCO Education for All targets and MDG targets</li> <li>• Roll-out in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia.</li> </ul>	‘Educate a Child’ funding from Qatar, special project funding (2012), other private funding sources, development of HQ-based educational support unit, field education positions, planned Education Management Information System to be developed, technical teacher workshops.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme (2013) ‘Note on international protection’. Sixty-fourth session.

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR (2012) Education Strategy.

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR (2011) Action Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR (2012) A Framework for the Protection of Children.

<p><b>SGBV Strategy</b></p>	<p>(1) Protection of children of concern against SGBV;  (2) Addressing survival sex as a coping mechanism in situations of displacement;  (3) Engaging men and boys;  (4) Providing safe environments and safe access to domestic energy and natural resources;  (5) Protection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) POCs against SGBV; and  (6) Protection of POCs with disabilities against SGBV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target population: Refugees; IDPs; returnees; stateless persons</li> <li>• Developed in 2011/12</li> <li>• Primarily built on UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women (1990)</li> <li>• Roll-out in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen.</li> </ul>	<p>'Special project' funding, regional workshops, regional positions in San Jose, Nairobi, Amman and Dakar, US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) 'Safe from the Start' partnership, funding from UN Action to roll out Gender-Based Violence Information Management System.</p>
<p><b>Child Protection Framework</b></p>	<p>(1) Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play;  (2) Children's participation and capacity are integral to their protection;  (3) Girls and boys have access to child-friendly procedures;  (4) Girls and boys obtain legal documentation;  (5) Girls and boys with specific needs receive targeted support; and  (6) Girls and boys achieve durable solutions in their best interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target population: Refugees; IDPs; returnees; stateless persons.</li> <li>• Conceptualised in 2011 and developed in 2012.</li> <li>• Builds on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), UNHCR Agenda for Protection (2002) and UNHCR Policy on Refugee Children (1993).</li> <li>• Roll-out in Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, Yemen.</li> </ul>	<p>Country field missions, regional workshops, webinars, monitoring and reporting, technical support and surge deployments.</p>

### 2.1.1 Summary of the Education Strategy

14. The 2012 UNHCR Education Strategy builds upon a history of education provision to refugees under the mandate of UNHCR.<sup>10</sup> The 2012 strategy renews UNHCR's focus on refugee education 'not as a peripheral standalone service but as a core component of UNHCR's protection and durable solutions mandate'. The strategy document includes six core actions for the provision of education among refugees. Each action consists of: 1) objectives; 2) targets; and 3) activities to achieve the targets.
15. As a whole, the strategy has impact-level indicators, which are aligned to the six actions. These targets are informed by the Education for All targets, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and UNHCR Global Strategy Priorities. For example, the strategy states that UNHCR will 'ensure that 3 million refugee children have access to primary education'.
16. The strategy document outlines 13 priority countries for the period 2013–2016. The number was then incrementally increased to 25 by 2015.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR (2009) *Education for all persons of concern to UNHCR*, [www.refworld.org/docid/4d11de9d2.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d11de9d2.html)



## 2.1.2 Summary of the SGBV Strategy

17. The SGBV Strategy builds on UNHCR's legacy of commitment toward the protection of POCs against SGBV. Since the release of UNHCR's first document on SGBV in 1990, the Policy on Refugee Women, the organisation has strengthened its guidelines, policies, and evaluations of SGBV toward refugees, including contributing to the formulation of policies and recommended guidelines for all humanitarian and state actors.<sup>11, 12</sup>
18. In summary, the revised strategy recommends actions to prevent, identify and respond to six 'action areas' of SGBV and identifies areas of UNHCR capacity building. This is in contrast to the other strategies, which stipulate objectives. These action areas, which are propagated by comprehensive programming and an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach, have been identified 'to increase the quality of protection and improve services for particular at-risk populations'.
19. Although the strategy lacks explicit objectives, by targeting 'action areas' of concern the strategy implies that this will ultimately contribute to the protection of refugees. Each action area has respective actions to ensure prevention and response, as well as recommended actions to identify challenges or problems. For example, in relation to 'engaging men and boys' one of the recommended preventative actions is to 'explore and expand the use of male and female outreach workers'.
20. Unlike the Global Education Strategy and Child Protection Framework, there were no countries identified as priority for roll-out. Thus, regional workshops for the SGBV Strategy were not offered to all countries. A regional workshop was organised in Panama for the offices in the Americas. As with the two other strategies, however, the SGBV Strategy is applicable to all UNHCR operations, extending beyond the pilot countries.

## 2.1.3 Summary of the Child Protection Framework<sup>13</sup>

21. UNHCR has a significant history of child protection policies and agreements, most notably the UNHCR Policy on Refugee Children,<sup>14</sup> the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>15</sup> and the UNHCR Agenda for Protection.<sup>16</sup> UNHCR has further contributed to the advocacy and standard setting for child protection via the protection cluster, the child protection working group, and other global forums.<sup>17, 18</sup>
22. The goals of the Child Protection Framework are coupled with cross-cutting principles (e.g. do no harm, AGD approach, child participation, etc.). The framework details benchmarks and suggested actions corresponding to each of its six goals. The benchmarks are generally activities or processes UNHCR will undertake to achieve each child protection goal. The framework also defines six 'systems components' that influence the goals for children (e.g. legal and policy framework, coordination, etc.).
23. The framework also includes clear activities to be undertaken by UNHCR and partners to improve planning, implementing and monitoring and reporting of child protection activities.

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<sup>11</sup> UNHCR (1990) *Policy on refugee women*, [www.unhcr.org/3ba6186810.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3ba6186810.html)

<sup>12</sup> Global Protection Cluster (2010) *Handbook for coordinating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings*, [www.unicef.org/protection/files/GBV\\_Handbook\\_Long\\_Version.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/GBV_Handbook_Long_Version.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Please note that although this is termed a 'framework' rather than a 'strategy', for all intents and purposes it is treated like a strategy and was treated as such in this evaluation.

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR (1993) *Policy on Refugee Children*, [www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3f9e6a534.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3f9e6a534.html)

<sup>15</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (1990) *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx).

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR (2003) *UNHCR agenda for protection*, [www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4714a1bf2.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4714a1bf2.html)

<sup>17</sup> World Vision (2012) *Minimum interagency standards for protection mainstreaming*, [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full\\_Report\\_3752.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_3752.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Global Protection Cluster (2013) *Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action*, <http://cpwg.net/?get=006914%7C2014/03/CP-Minimum-Standards-English-2013.pdf>



24. In 2012, when the Child Protection Framework was formulated, ten target countries were identified. The number has increased to twelve as of 2015.

## **2.2 UNHCR's strategy and planning process**

### **2.2.1 High-level strategic planning**

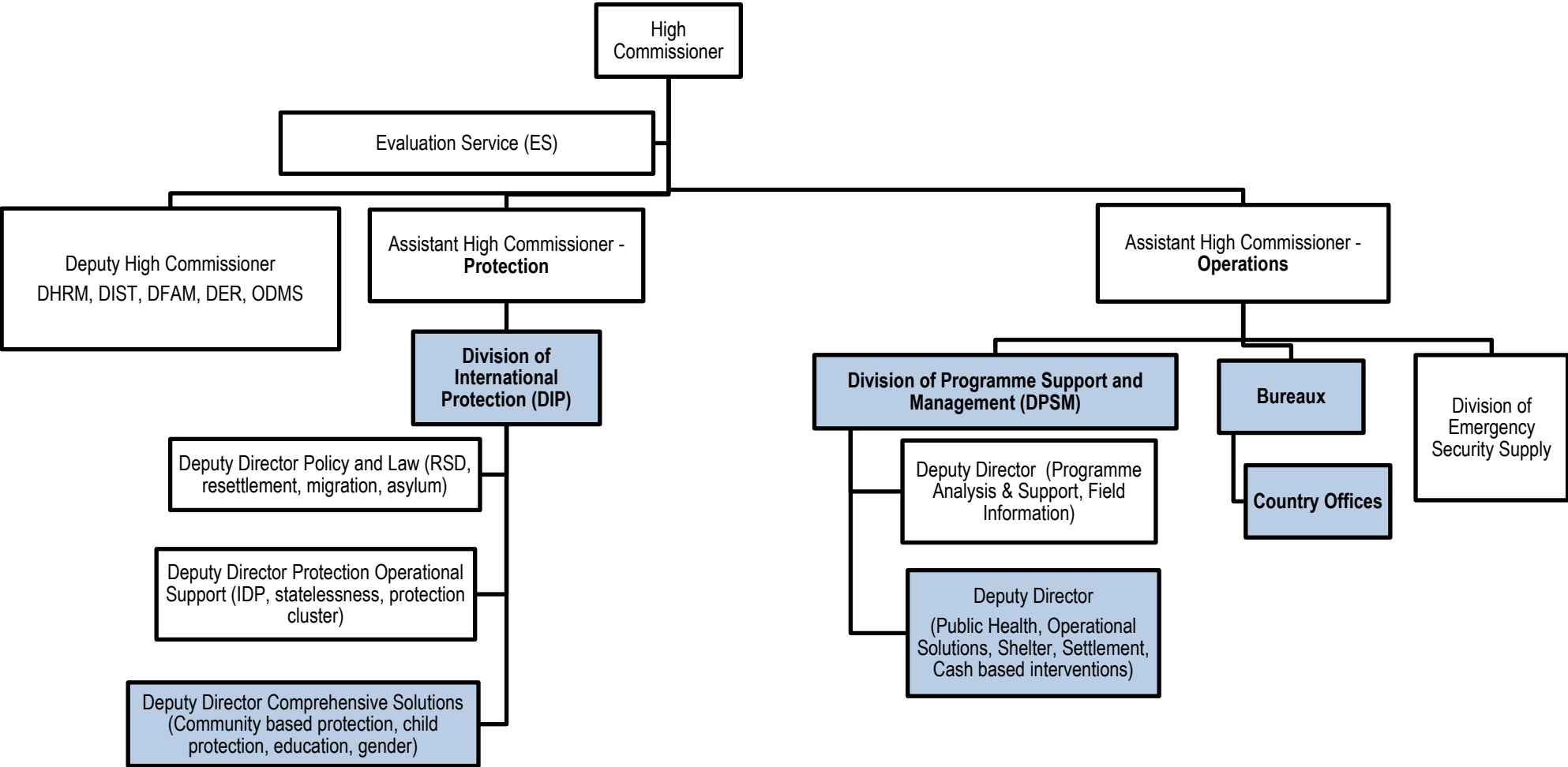
25. The three global protection strategies were developed at HQ, by DIP. In addition to the regional bureaux providing support, guidance and oversight of field operations, both DIP and the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) provide support and expert advice to field operations in their specific area of expertise. Figure 1 provides an organogram of HQ.
26. Interviews with DIP staff indicated that the Division seeks to establish child protection, education and SGBV as core elements of programming at the country office level, integrating these as constant operational concerns, beyond annual budget and planning cycles. DPSM, on the other hand, focuses principally on operational effectiveness and efficiency, with a need for clear priorities and relevant but parsimonious guidelines, while also providing expert support and advice in specific technical areas within their remit, such as shelter and health.
27. UNHCR has guiding documents and policies additional to the global strategies. Policies such as the Policy on Refugee Children (1993) and the Policy on Refugee Women (2002) set organisational goals, guiding principles and strategic objectives for UNHCR. Further, UNHCR has presented the High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Refugee Children and Five Commitments to Refugee Women. These documents and policies seem to provide long-term grounding for the direction of the organisation, including the direction taken by the strategies. However, it is unclear how well their implementation is monitored.
28. UNHCR also establishes Global Strategic Priorities (GSPs), which are meant to guide the biannual planning cycle. Indeed, interview data revealed that the GSPs are used during the prioritisation of operational needs during the COP process, which is described in the next sub-section. The GSPs are monitored and reported against.

### **2.2.2 Country-level planning and budgeting**

29. The main planning exercise in UNHCR takes place in field operations and HQ annually in February/March. At country level, this results in COPs that include the operational plan budget. They are needs based, building upon participatory assessments with refugees and consultations with key partners. All operations budgets (both field and HQ) form the overall UNHCR budget. UNHCR has a biennial budget that is submitted for approval by its governing body, the Executive Committee, in its annual session in October. It covers two calendar years and it is divided into two annual budgets. If unexpected events during the year require additional budget needs, which were not foreseen and therefore not included in its approved annual budget (e.g. new emergency operations), they will be reflected in separate supplementary budgets.
30. Prior to the start of the new calendar year, country offices receive the authority to spend/commit funds for a prioritised part of their COP budget. The level of the (initial) spending authority is decided at HQ on an annual basis, taking into consideration GSPs and the submissions received from the country offices. It is based on the expectation that the organisation globally will be able to at least secure this income in the course of the year. If more funding becomes available, either globally or for specific operations/thematic areas due to earmarking, the authority to spend/commit funds may be increased during the year (depending on whether the funds are assessed to be new and additional and not part of the projections or pledges already made).

31. When the budget envelope is determined by each bureau and communicated to country representatives, a prioritisation process takes place. Through this process, operations determine which needs will be prioritised within the (expected) funding available during the year. All units within an operation negotiate how to best allocate the limited funds available. Interview data from country offices revealed that, at this point, negotiation between programme and protection units tends to be strong. Protection areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and livelihoods fall under programme, while protection areas such as child protection and SGBV fall under protection. Thus, tension may arise regarding which objectives and output should be prioritised and often difficult decisions may have to be taken in terms of deprioritising certain activities.
32. Fundraising is targeting a broad variety of donors, both bilateral and multilateral, as well as the private sector.

**Figure 1: UNHCR organisational structure (simplified, January 2016)**



## 3 Evaluation methodology

### 3.1 Evaluation questions

33. As described in Chapter 1, the evaluation was designed to answer three headline questions:<sup>19</sup>
- A. Quality:** Are the three strategies relevant, coherent, informed by evidence, and adequately designed?
  - B. Implementation:** To what extent have the strategies been implemented?
  - C. Contribution to results:** What were the results of the strategies?
34. Under these three headline evaluation questions, detailed questions and sub-questions were specified. These headline evaluation questions provide the overarching framework for the evaluation, with the evaluation findings and respective evidence structured around the corresponding three main themes of **(1)** quality of the strategy, **(2)** implementation and **(3)** contribution to results.
35. An initial evaluation matrix was developed during the inception phase. The matrix was revised in January 2017 in line with the revised evaluation questions and broadened approach. A simple final evaluation matrix is provided below. This summarises the data sources used to answer each set of the evaluation sub-questions, which in turn provide the basis to answer the headline evaluation questions.

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<sup>19</sup> The methodological design has evolved over the course of the evaluation. In response to feedback on the initial draft report in November 2016, the scope and design of the evaluation was reviewed and revised to enable a more comprehensive and robust assessment of the global strategies. As part of this review, the evaluation questions (headline, detailed and specific sub-questions) were reviewed and restructured and finalised following further discussions.

**Table 2: Evaluation Matrix**

Headline questions	Detailed evaluation questions	Specific sub-questions	Data sources
<b>Quality</b>  Are the three strategies relevant, coherent, informed by evidence and adequately designed?	A.1 To what extent are the strategies relevant to the needs of UNHCR [the organisation] and the context of implementation [POCs, countries of operation]?	A.1.1 What was the (rationale) purpose of the strategies? A.1.2 How were the strategies developed? How consultative was this process? How did this process influence the strategies? A.1.3 What evidence was used to design the strategies? A.1.4 How was evidence used in the design of the strategies? A.1.5 To what extent are the strategies and their objectives appropriate in light of the evidence available? A.1.6 How relevant are the strategies to the needs of key stakeholders, such as the needs of partners, and governments and POCs? A.1.7 How relevant are the strategies to the global and country-level contexts of implementation? [particularly the fact that they will be implemented in vastly differing contexts]	Document review of HQ-level documents Detailed sector expert reviews of global strategies Interviews with HQ staff Interviews with staff from 15 country offices
	A.2 To what extent are the three strategies coherent (internally and externally)?	A.2.1 To what extent are terminology and structure consistent between the strategies? A.2.2 To what extent are the strategies coherent with each other and with other UNHCR policies and strategies? (How relevant are the strategies to the needs, processes and operating environment of UNHCR?) A.2.3 To what extent are the strategies coherent with global frameworks and commitments?	Detailed sector expert reviews of global strategies Document review of HQ-level documents Interviews with HQ staff
	A.3 To what extent are the strategies adequately designed to achieve their purpose?	A.3.1 Do the strategies provide a clear framework to guide key interventions and prioritisations at global and country level? A.3.2 Do the strategies have clear, appropriate, and measurable objectives? A.3.3 What is the availability and clarity of support, advice and guidance accompanying the roll-out of the strategies at country level? Was it clear and user-friendly?	Detailed sector expert reviews of global strategies Document review of HQ-level documents Interviews with HQ staff Interviews with staff from 15 country offices
	A.4 How were the strategies rolled out from HQ to country offices?	A.4.1 To what extent was the roll-out process implemented as envisioned? What factors may have affected this? How well did it work? A.4.2 How were the countries selected for the roll-out? What were the criteria? A.4.3 To what extent was the roll-out adequately resourced and supported? A.4.4 To what extent has there been a process of lesson-learning and sharing during roll-out?	Document review of HQ-level documents Interviews with HQ staff Interviews with staff from 15 country offices

<b>Implementation</b>  <b>To what extent have the strategies been implemented?</b>	<p>B.1 To what extent have the global strategies been reflected /incorporated into standalone and /or overall protection and solutions strategies, and COPs at country level?</p>	<p>B.1.1 How have country offices adapted the global strategy to local context and priority needs?  B.1.2 How have country offices engaged with other stakeholders in this process?  B.1.3 Which factors supported or constrained implementation of the strategies at country level?</p>	<p>Document review of 15 country operations  Interviews with staff from 15 country offices  Interviews with government, partners and POCs from five case-study country offices</p>
	<p>B.2 How did monitoring of the strategies take place and was it adequate?</p>	<p>B.2.1. How was the implementation of the strategies monitored and reported on at the global and country level?  B.2.2. How adequate and appropriate was this to credibly measure results?</p>	<p>Document review of HQ-level documents  Document review of 15 country operations  Interviews with HQ staff  Interviews with staff from 15 country offices</p>
<b>Contribution to results</b>  <b>What were the results of the strategies?</b>	<p>C.1 To what extent have the strategies contributed to achieving results at the institutional level?</p>	<p>C1.1 To what extent have the strategies improved core protection services?  C1.2 To what extent have the strategies contributed to the enabling environment?  C1.3 To what extent have the strategies strengthened partnerships?</p>	<p>Document review of 15 country operations  Interviews with staff from 15 country offices  Interviews with government, partners and POCs from five case-study country offices</p>
	<p>C2. To what extent have the strategies contributed to improving protection results for POCs?</p>	<p>C.2.1 To what extent have the objectives of the strategies been achieved?  C.2.2 To what extent and how has this resulted in improved protection for POCs?  C.2.3 What factors have influenced the extent to which protection results have been achieved?</p>	<p>Interviews with staff from five case-study country offices  Document review of five country operations  Interviews with government, partners and POCs</p>

## 3.2 Evidence sources

36. The evidence and analysis needed to answer the three headline evaluation questions was generated and triangulated across many different sources and types of data.
37. Data collection and analysis (both in-country and desk-based) focused on the period from the introduction of the strategies around 2012<sup>20</sup> to the time of the evaluation data collection, which began in March 2016. Data from the COPs were analysed up to mid-year 2016. Further details on the different data-collection tools and how they were used are provided in Annex B.
38. The evaluation drew from two broad sources of evidence: key informant interviews (KIIs) and desk-based documentation review. Both took place at the HQ and country level.
39. It was not feasible to conduct country-level interviews and documentation reviews for all countries covered by the global strategies, so a case-study approach was taken. Five countries were selected for in-depth assessment (including missions to each country for face-to face interviews, documentation gathering and qualitative data collection). An additional ten countries were also selected for lighter-touch assessment through desk review and remote interviews.<sup>21</sup> The basis for the case-study selection is outlined in the next sub-section.
40. Specifically, the evidence sources used for the evaluation were as follows:
  - **Detailed sector expert reviews of global strategies:** undertaken by education, child protection and SGBV sector experts to assess the technical content of the global strategies. The reviews focused on the extent to which the global strategy objectives made sense given sector best practice and were in line with the available evidence base. The set of questions used by the sector experts in conducting these reviews is provided in Annex C.
  - **Document review of HQ-level documents:** included review of strategy documents, monitoring and reporting frameworks and data, reporting documents, meeting agendas, presentation material, monitoring material, UNHCR policy documents, and interagency policy documents and frameworks.
  - **Document review of 15 country operations:** mainly centred on country-level strategy documents and drafts, and COPs for 2012 and 2016 (data at mid-year). Year-end data for 2016 was not available when the data analysis for the evaluation took place and may thus reflect changes not reflected in this evaluation. The rationale for this choice was that the 2012 COPs were produced just before global strategy roll-out (or just after) so would not have been influenced by them, while those of 2016 were the most recent available at the time the desk analysis was carried out and were intended to have been devised in line with the global strategies.
  - **KIIs with HQ staff:** undertaken during two missions to Geneva, with follow-up interviews conducted remotely as required. In total, five additional interviews were conducted in early 2017.
  - **KIIs with staff from 15 country offices:** conducted face-to-face in-country for the five case-study countries and remotely for the other ten country offices.
  - **KIIs with government and partners:** only conducted in the five case-study countries (face-to-face; in-country).
  - **Focus group discussions (FGDs) with POCs:** conducted in the five case-study countries with children receiving child protection interventions, and with the caregivers of children exposed to education and child protection interventions in the camps, shelters and residences of refugees.
  - **Household case studies with POCs:** conducted in the five case-study countries with households with children in school or receiving child protection interventions.

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<sup>20</sup> All three strategies had different inception dates, falling around the year 2012.

<sup>21</sup> The original evaluation design was based on just the five in-depth case-study countries. However, following the review of the evaluation design in late 2016, a further ten case-study countries were selected to ensure greater breadth of analysis and to enable us to make more robust evaluative judgements about the overall performance of the global strategies. This assessment was based on desk review and remote interviews, with a focus on data gaps identified. A total of nine interviews took place after January 2017, covering all ten countries except Niger (which was due to scheduling issues).

- **Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER)<sup>22</sup> with POCs:** focusing on self-identified women. This technique was intended to be applied only in countries implementing the SGBV Strategy (i.e. Bangladesh, Egypt and Rwanda)<sup>23</sup>.
41. A range of additional documents were developed by the evaluation team to enable effective analysis of the extremely large volume of data that needed to be examined per strategy and per country. They include: **(i)** detailed desk-based analysis of all countries included in the evaluation, focusing on the three main areas of inquiry relating to the headline evaluation questions; **(ii)** a systematic comparison of performance and impact indicators in 2012 and 2016 (mid-year) COPs; and **(iii)** additional reference documents examining implementation and examples of contribution to system-level results for the additional ten countries studied.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.3 Case-study country selection and evaluation scope

42. Five countries were selected for in-depth assessment (including missions to each country for data collection): Bangladesh, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico and Rwanda. An additional ten countries were also selected for assessment through desk review and remote interviews: Chad, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Uganda and Zambia.
43. The case-study countries were chosen to ensure geographical representation and variability in number and type of strategies implemented. Variables considered for the selection included: geographical representation; type of operational context; number and type of strategies rolled out and implemented; relationship between UNHCR and host government; and emergency context.
44. The choice of the five in-depth case-study countries also considered pragmatic factors, such as access and evaluation resources, and evolved over time. There were initially supposed to be six in-depth case-study countries but this was reduced to five due to scheduling issues and to allow for more extensive primary data collection activities with refugees in the countries visited. India and Chad were originally among the five selected but were substituted by Iran and Mexico. However, India and Chad were eventually still covered among the ten additional case-study countries.
45. Not all five in-depth case-study countries covered all three global strategies, as they were not chosen as pilots for priority roll-out. This is shown in Table 3. The same applies to the additional ten case-study countries, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 3: Global strategies rolled out in the five in-depth case-study countries**

	Child protection	Education	SGBV
Rwanda	✓	✓	✓
Egypt	✓	✓	✓
Bangladesh		✓	✓
Mexico	✓		
Iran		✓	

<sup>22</sup> PEER is a participatory qualitative research method. It draws on the principles of ethnography and recent developments in rapid appraisal techniques. Members of a community (peer researchers) are trained to carry out in-depth conversational interviews with friends in their social networks, and to report back findings in a series of in-depth interviews with a social scientist. Peer researchers are often from marginalised and harder-to-reach social groups.

<sup>23</sup> As noted later in this chapter, PEER was only administered in Egypt, given constraints speaking with refugees in Bangladesh, and discomfort voiced by the Rwandan country office with the evaluation team conducting PEER in the camps.

<sup>24</sup> These reference documents are available through UNHCR Evaluation Service.



**Table 4: Global strategies rolled out in the ten additional countries reviewed**

	Child protection	Education	SGBV
Chad	✓	✓	✓
India	✓		✓
Jordan		✓	✓
Kenya	✓	✓	✓
Lebanon		✓	✓
Malaysia		✓	✓
Niger		✓	✓
Pakistan		✓	✓
Uganda	✓	✓	✓
Zambia		✓	

### 3.4 Limitations

46. There were some limitations regarding the evaluation methodology, both anticipated and unanticipated. Some of these were addressed in the review of the evaluation design in late 2016, summarised at the start of this section.
47. The general limitations related to data collection and analysis included the following:
- a. Identifying interviewees best placed to provide insights particularly on strategy roll-out, country-level adaptation and influence on strategic results. This required additional efforts (for instance, snowball sampling, through which interviewees suggested the evaluation team speak to other UNHCR staff) to ensure adequate coverage of the evaluation issues.
  - b. Analysing CO-level data given the inconsistency of indicators reported on.
  - c. Establishing whether the strategies influenced changes at the level of UNHCR, government, and partner systems. Despite efforts to make extensive use of interview data to triangulate, confirm, and provide context to the findings emerging from the document review, evidence surrounding the contribution of the strategies to specific operational decisions remained weak.
  - d. Carrying out the analysing of results at the individual / POC-level mostly relied on the document review and interview data from the five case-study countries only. As noted in Section 4.7, there was great variance in the impact and performance indicators reported on across years, which makes year-to-year comparisons difficult. The indicators reported in the COPs also vary across response and population groups (e.g. emergency response, non-emergency response, urban response, Iraqi refugees versus Syrian refugees, etc.) for the same year, adding another level of unreliability to comparisons. Thus, determining whether changes occurred at the individual level required a deeper understanding of context, as well as a careful comparison of all indicators relevant to the strategies. This level of analysis was therefore only appropriate for the five case-study countries, from which primary data was gathered.
  - e. Establishing and tracing the strategies' contribution and influence to higher-level / strategic results.
48. There were also a few country-specific limitations:
- a. In Bangladesh, the evaluation team could not access the camps and thus data collection with refugees was not possible.
  - b. In Egypt, one of the partners failed to select a socioeconomically diverse sample of respondents. To mitigate this, the evaluation team worked with partners to more clearly convey the purpose of the evaluation and resample the initial list of respondents.

- c. In Iran, an important limitation related to observation and reporting bias – particularly during KIIs and FGDs – was the presence of government representatives during. An additional limitation concerned the inability for a national researcher to support data-collection activities. As mitigation, the UNHCR office proposed that their own staff provide support to data-collection activities. Although this was the only alternative, it increased the potential for social and reporting bias.
- d. A similar concern regarding social bias and reporting bias applies to Rwanda, where the UNHCR office in Kigali assigned a staff member to be present during all data-collection activities with refugees in one of the camps.
- e. An important limitation affecting data-collection activities in Mexico was the low number of youth who met the inclusion criteria for FGDs (i.e. youth aged 14+ and a refugee claimant), which resulted in smaller than expected groups. There were higher numbers of children under age 14, but ethics protocols (as discussed in Annex D) prevented the inclusion of those groups of children in the evaluation. In Tapachula, the evaluation team attempted to speak with a group of adolescents at a detention centre that receives both refugees and migrants. However, the group convened for FGDs did not include any youth intending to file an asylum claim. This prevented the gathering of insights about the experience of asylum-seeking/refugee children. Section 6.4 provides more detail on the reasons why adolescents often do not plan to submit asylum claims.
- f. Insights from the ten additional case-study countries included in the evaluation, which did not host an evaluation mission, are more limited given that the countries were covered through desk review and remote interviews.

### 3.5 Ethical clearance

- 49. Ethical, safety and informed consent protocols were developed, tested and refined prior to the start of data-collection activities with refugees.
- 50. The ethical and safety protocol detailed important measures that were considered during interviews and other data-collection activities with refugees with respect to: (1) explaining the purpose of data-collection activities used for an evaluation; (2) obtaining consent; (3) explaining the renewable nature of consent;<sup>25</sup> (4) explaining the relationship between the interviewer and UNHCR (in order to assert that there would be no consequences to the services they can access if they refused to participate in the interview); (5) stressing the confidential and private nature of the interview; (6) probing on sensitive issues and asking difficult questions; (7) responding to emotional reactions as well as verbal and non-verbal distress; and (8) researchers and respondents' physical and emotional safety.
- 51. With regards to post-interview measures, these included: (1) providing information and referrals to services available; and (2) research support during data collection (through daily debriefs) and post-data collection (through periodic debriefs between the evaluation team and local research team leaders).
- 52. Specific considerations for the PEER approach were necessary given that the researchers would not be present during PEER interviews, and thus would be unable to respond to ethical concerns. The evaluation team instructed the local research teams to facilitate conversations surrounding ethics during debriefs with PEER facilitators (see Annex D).
- 53. Ethical clearance was obtained through a submission to the LSHTM Ethical Review Board of the draft of all data-collection instruments, as well as details on the research, sampling methodology, and proposed ethics and informed consent protocols.

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<sup>25</sup> In other words, participants could leave and re-enter the interview as they wished – offering consent at the start of the interview did not subject them to remaining participants for its duration.

## 4 Evaluation findings: Quality of the strategies

54. This chapter analyses the design process behind the global strategies – which mostly occurred between 2011 and 2012 – and what may have influenced it.
55. The evidence presented is based on **(i)** a close reading of the three strategy documents; and **(ii)** secondary documents describing the strategy design process or discussing the overall corporate goals and structures of UNHCR. The document review has been supplemented by interview data collected at UNHCR HQ and in country offices. HQ-level interviews focused on the design, consultation and strategy roll-out process, while country office-level interviews focused on the relevance of the global strategies at the country level.
56. The chapter presents findings on the relevance of the strategies. In other words, it explores to what extent the strategies are appropriate to support UNHCR’s overall purpose. It also discusses **(i)** if the strategies are coherent with other UNHCR documents as well as external processes; **(ii)** what type of evidence has been used, and if the objectives formulated in the strategies are adequate, i.e. were they clear, measurable and appropriate?

### 4.1 Terminology

57. Table 5 shows a comparison of the terminology used in the strategies. Given the variance in the terms, the evaluation team has chosen to use some “generic terms” throughout the report.

**Table 5: Terms used across all three strategies**

Description	Generic terms used in the evaluation report	Child Protection	Education	SGBV
Name of document	<i>The strategies</i>	Framework	Strategy	Updated Strategy
Main aim	<i>Objective</i>	Goal	Action	Action area
Intermediate aim	<i>Outcome</i>	Outcome for children	Objective	<i>Missing</i>
Indicator	<i>Outcome or outcome indicator</i>	Benchmark	Expected Result	<i>Missing</i>
Country of implementation	<i>Pilot country</i>	Target country	Priority country	<i>Not applicable</i>

### 4.2 Relevance

58. This section examines to what extent the strategies are appropriate to serve UNHCR’s corporate purpose.

#### 4.2.1 Purpose

59. **Each of the three strategies has an ultimate purpose linked to UNHCR’s mandate of refugee protection.** The Education Strategy is motivated by the observation that many refugee children are without access to education or education delivering learning outcomes and do not feel safe at school. The Child Protection Framework is motivated by the fact that almost half of forcibly displaced persons are children, who are at greater risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation,

trafficking and forced recruitment. The Updated SGBV Strategy intends to re-emphasise six often overlooked or inadequately addressed areas<sup>26</sup> of SGBV protection.

60. The education and the SGBV strategies are based on previous versions, both running out in 2012. The new strategies reaffirm objectives made by their predecessors. The 2012 UNHCR Education Strategy restates that education strategies offer a comprehensive framework covering UNHCR activities in the education area of responsibility. The Updated SGBV Strategy follows on from a 2010–2012 SGBV Strategy preceding it.
61. **Each of the three strategies had specific contextual motivations, related to particular shortcomings in perceived performance.** The Child Protection Framework was motivated by concerns about UNHCR’s narrow focus on child protection work and best interest determinations for durable solutions, and sought to broaden it. The Education Strategy was informed by a 2011 Global Review, highlighting shortcomings in access and learning outcomes. The Updated SGBV Strategy sought to ensure the six action areas, which had been often overlooked, are adequately addressed.
62. The Education Strategy and the Child Protection Framework are both comprehensive documents intending to cover all UNHCR activities in the respective protection areas, while the Updated SGBV Strategy is not comprehensive but emphasises the six specific areas, updating the original strategy.
63. The evaluation team could not identify a definitive statement of what the purpose of the strategies was, and how they were expected to be used by country offices. At the operational level, all three strategies strive for the same goal: to embed education, SGBV and child protection as a core protection concern in country operations. It seems that a general purpose of the strategies is to provide a global framework for the development of country-level strategies and intend to fill a need for technical guidance. However, there appeared to be inconsistencies in the understanding of use of the strategies from both the perspective of HQ and CO staff.

#### 4.2.2 Strategy development and consultation on strategy design

64. The development of all three strategies was led by the respective protection advisers within DIP. The senior education adviser and the child protection adviser remained in office throughout the process, while three consecutive advisers were involved in designing the SGBV Strategy.
65. All three strategies were shared with HQ colleagues, including regional bureaux, and partner organisations prior to finalisation. In addition, prior to designing the strategy the child protection unit at UNHCR HQ launched a consultation initiative involving children, partners and UNHCR colleagues. The education team set up a reference group of 15 external partners to whom the strategy was circulated.

#### 4.2.3 Relevance of the strategies to the needs of stakeholders

66. All three global strategies work toward meeting the global protection needs of refugees. They align directly with a number of UNHCR GSPs for 2012/13.
67. From the country office perspective, the three strategies were found to be generally relevant to context and generally compatible with government approaches to child protection as well as SGBV prevention and response, and education. However, there are important examples where government policies are not aligned with strategy objectives for education and SGBV. For education, the strategy stipulates integration of refugees into public schools as a core approach; however, this is not possible when government legislation prevents refugees from integrating into the national school system (as is the case in Bangladesh, and for the non-Syrian refugee population in Egypt, for example). Similarly, achieving progress in the various actions of the SGBV Strategy is challenging and requires more advocacy on the part of UNHCR in country contexts where the strategy conflicts with government regulations (e.g. Bangladesh, Egypt and Rwanda), especially

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<sup>26</sup> The first three refer to groups at heightened risk of SGBV: (1) children, (2) persons with disabilities and (3) LGBTI persons. The remaining three refer to (4) greater engagement of men and boys in SGBV strategies, (5) safer environments and safer access to domestic energy, and (6) mitigation of risk factors related to survival sex.

with regards to Action Area 5 on the protection of LGBTI persons. However, the SGBV Strategy may help in championing a sensitive cause by establishing international doctrinal standards in line with international human rights, and offering country offices UNHCR HQ support. With regards to Child Protection, UNHCR was able to shape government regulations in this area in a few instances – including Mexico and Egypt. Importantly, noting differences between UNHCR strategies and government policies does not necessarily indicate that a strategy is not relevant, especially as one of its purposes is to serve as a basis for advocacy to influence change in government policies.

68. **If partner capacity is constrained, the strategies appear difficult to translate into programmes** and appear to be perceived as having more limited relevance in-country. This especially holds for the SGBV Strategy and to a lesser extent the Child Protection Framework.
69. The Education Strategy was felt by country offices to be too ambitious. Country offices considered that the expected results associated with strategy actions would be difficult to attain in reality, especially in the context of declining funds. Interview evidence from HQ indicates that the strategy is intentionally ambitious to galvanise action around it. For child protection, some offices found that the framework did not offer sufficiently detailed guidance for the formulation of goals and to aid prioritisation.
70. All three strategies emphasise partnerships and a multi-sectoral approach, and they are well aligned with the relevant current international agendas with two exceptions. First, the Updated SGBV Strategy diverges from the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR). UNHCR continues with the use of SGBV not GBV, since sexual violence remains a significant and challenging problem among refugees. Further, UNHCR affirms a focus on men and boys as well as protection of LGBTI persons, while the GBV AoR strives to maintain a focus on women and girls. Second, in the Child Protection Framework the role of families in protecting children could be better explored under the ‘family and community-based approach<sup>27</sup>,’ and could link more strongly with the UNHCR Community Based Approach.<sup>28</sup>

## 4.3 Coherence

71. This section examines whether the strategies are internally coherent, feasible and realistic, coherent with each other, and coherent with global frameworks.
72. All three strategies have very different structures, making it difficult to compare them directly. The following section examines the structure of each strategy before outlining common challenges.

### 4.3.1 Coherence within the strategies

73. The Education Strategy and Child Protection Framework both specify six objectives, while the SGBV Strategy defines six activities or processes. These are called actions in the Education Strategy and are precisely and clearly phrased. The six objectives are called goals in the Child Protection Framework, and are more loosely phrased. The Updated SGBV Strategy does not state objectives but action areas, which are phrased as activities or processes. They do not spell out what specifically UNHCR intends to achieve in SGBV protection; objectives are instead implicit.
74. Each strategy spells out activities associated with each objective. These describe ‘how’ the objectives could be achieved. The Education Strategy also proposes four specific strategic approaches to achieving the six objectives.
75. The activities suggested under the SGBV and child protection strategies are not always programmable activities but read like an objective statement. This applies to activities 5.5, 5.6, 3.3 or 1.6 for the Child Protection Framework or activities phrased such as ‘work to identify groups of children of concern’ or ‘supply appropriate tools’ in the SGBV Strategy.

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<sup>27</sup> See page 15 in the Framework for the Protection of Children.

<sup>28</sup> The ‘community-based approach’ was introduced with the release of the UNHCR Manual on a Community-Based Approach in UNHCR Operations. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Manual on a Community Based Approach in UNHCR Operations*, March 2008.



76. There is restatement of very similar activities in the Child Protection Framework, to the point of repetition. Not all activities of the SGBV Strategy are internally coherent; for instance, men and boys are a key protection group and yet many of the activities suggested are limited to women and girls. This could lead to confusion when translating the suggested activities into programmes.
77. **All three strategies are unclear about the pathway of change between the suggested activities and how they contribute to achieving the strategic objectives.** Pathways of change, and the related evidence base and assumptions underlying the proposed activities are mostly left implicit or not clearly articulated. For instance, the Child Protection Framework assumes that training of children will lead to empowerment or compliance with codes of conduct. The Education Strategy assumes that making data on learning outcomes available can help promoting learning in schools, while the SGBV Strategy assumes that livelihood skills and access to finance will lead to safe and decent work for women. These may all be reasonable pathways of change but they nonetheless rest on several assumptions that need to be stated and validated.

### 4.3.2 Feasibility of the strategies

78. Some objectives suggested by the strategies may only be achieved in the mid- or longer term, especially when they relate to engaging with and improving national systems. UNHCR aims to integrate refugees into national social service systems and therefore several protection activities listed in the strategies are ultimately delivered by host government institutions. These include that refugees are safely attending host government schools or that host governments' justice systems operate child-friendly procedures and are capable and interested in protecting refugees from SGBV. Ensuring that these activities are delivered as stated in the strategies requires engagement with middle level government to foster behaviour change. This calls for long term technical assistance projects, working with ministerial staff.<sup>29</sup>
79. The strategies acknowledge, to a limited extent, that not all governments support UNHCR's drive for integration of refugees into national systems. For instance, the Education Strategy notes that, for countries that are not signatories to the 1951 Convention, integration into national systems is not immediately possible or may not be appropriate<sup>30</sup>. Governments may restrict access to schools and their labour market and often do so. This affects programming and makes achievement of the strategies' objectives less likely.
80. All three strategies note that partnerships with other organisations are necessary to deliver on their objectives. Examples from interview data revealed several examples of partnership with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on improving school management or child-friendly procedures, or with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to support the justice system.

### 4.3.3 Coherence between the three strategies

81. The three protection strategies were developed separately and – as discussed above – apply their own terminology and structure. Nevertheless, **despite their separate planning processes all three strategies are coherent with each other.** The Education Strategy proposes actions and activities coherent with the Child Protection Framework and SGBV Strategy. The Child Protection Framework explicitly draws on the education and SGBV strategies, by pointing out which sections of the two strategies contribute to child protection. The Updated SGBV Strategy cites the Education Strategy as a reference and several child protection mechanisms are also referred to.
82. Table 5 showed the variations in the terminology used in the strategy documents. The consistent use of key building blocks of a strategy is important for a coherent approach.<sup>31</sup> While all three

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<sup>29</sup> Note that this paragraph refers to long term institutional change that improves systems. We do not discuss, in this instance, examples of UNHCR/government coordination but the fact that some objectives suggested by the strategies require technical assistance

<sup>30</sup> UNHCR (2012) Education Strategy, 2012-2016, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Bradley, C., Dawson, A. and Montard, A. (2013) 'Mastering the building blocks of strategy'. *McKinsey Quarterly*. [www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/mastering-the-building-blocks-of-strategy#0](http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/mastering-the-building-blocks-of-strategy#0)

strategies have six objectives, the building blocks below these objectives differ across strategies. Each strategy had its own motivation and development timeline, resulting in different structures and terminologies.

83. A workshop held in 2012 among the education, SGBV and child protection units of DIP identified intersections between and across the three protection areas, and focused on how the strategies could work together to contribute to achieving protection outcomes. The different strategies were pulled together, after the fact, by the *Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* for the three strategies (see section 4.6).

#### 4.3.4 Coherence with other UNHCR strategies

84. **The three strategies are used as references across UNHCR, reflecting coherence between the protection strategies and other UNHCR strategies.** The Education Strategy is referred to in the Global Strategy for Public Health (2014). The Strategy for Livelihoods (2014–2018) is seeking to provide durable life-skills, which is in line with the lifelong learning action of the Education Strategy. The Child Protection Framework is referred to in the Global Strategy to Support Governments to End Detention (2014). Similarly, all four DPSM strategies (Safe Access to Fuel and Water, Settlement and Shelter, Livelihoods, and Public Health) take an AGD mainstreaming approach, where the age lens ensures that they are in line with the Child Protection Framework. Protection from SGBV is considered a public health concern in the Global Public Health Strategy (2014).
85. UNHCR HQ staff noted, when discussing the three protection strategies jointly, that there is some competition between the strategies and the three DIP units on child protection, education and SGBV. Bureau colleagues added that, from the point of view of country offices, there is a proliferation of strategies (including from DPSM, mentioned above) and some concomitant ‘strategy fatigue’ at the country office level. It was, however, noted appreciatively that the Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework streamlined reporting across DIP strategies.
86. Interview data also indicates that HQ colleagues across divisions do not have a coherent understanding of what the purpose of the strategies is, and what the roll-out process entails. There are misunderstandings about the degree of consultation that took place as well as the documents and frameworks that preceded and influenced the development of the strategies.
87. A further weakness of the strategies is their inconsistency in offering clarity about use and intended audience. Although all country offices understood that the global strategies should be adapted to country-level documents, it was unclear how these country-level strategy documents should be incorporated into decision-making processes, priority setting and programming at country level. Country offices did not generally understand how these strategies were different from other internal documents and how they were supposed to be linked to existing planning and programming tools. In general, they therefore used the strategies as broad policy guidance. Indeed, direction-setting was primarily informed by the COP process and internal data-collection activities.
88. Interviews did indeed suggest an element of ‘strategy fatigue’ at country office level, relating to both sector-specific strategies and other UNHCR and wider initiatives such as the ‘Delivering as One’ approach. Some countries, like Rwanda and India, are pilots for various strategies and initiatives from UNHCR, which puts added pressure on an already limited set of resources.

#### 4.3.5 External coherence

89. **The three strategies are coherent with international law on refugees and relevant international targets and conventions.** The Education Strategy is coherent with international refugee law, the MDGs and Education for All initiative. The Child Protection Framework is coherent with international conventions on children and adopts a systems approach to child protection, which is in line with developments in the area of Child Protection. The framing of the Updated SGBV Strategy against a ‘gender equality’ background aligns with other international commitments.

## Box 1: External coherence finding spotlight

### External coherence of the strategies

Overall, the strategies are coherent with global frameworks and commitments.

The Child Protection Framework is coherent with international conventions on children, and it adopts a systems approach to child protection, which is in line with developments in the sector. Eventual integration of UNHCR approaches with local structures could be discussed more prominently. UNHCR's Framework for the Protection of Children is informed by international instruments for the protection of children such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) as well as refugee children such as the UNHCR Guidelines for the Protection and Care of Refugee Children (1994), to name but two of the list cited<sup>32</sup> in the framework. It covers the most significant rights and approaches outlined in these documents.

The Education Strategy is coherent with international law on refugees, the MDGs and Education for All initiative. The education strategy states that it is framed by the 1951 Refugee Convention, and aims to meet education for all (EFA) as well as MDG targets. It aspires to be in line with UNHCR strategic priorities. Indeed, the strategy's actions adequately cover global priorities related to education for the time. The second millennium development goal was to "achieve universal primary education for all". MDG 2 and EFA 2015 goals were the key global agreements related to education for the period 2012-2016.

With regards to the SGBV Strategy, the framing of the updated strategy against a 'gender equality' background aligns with other international commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals as well as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence and the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals amongst others. These commitments acknowledge the importance of gender equality for overcoming SGBV. The strategy's recognition that SGBV is linked with unequal gender relations is in line with wider acknowledgement that crises and emergencies take place against a backdrop of gender inequality. Thus, the consideration of 'gender equality' as the 'underlying' cause of SGBV and the changes needed in behaviours required to overcome it, is appropriate.

## 4.4 Use of evidence

90. **None of the three strategies systematically incorporates evidence to make a case for the six "objectives"**. Though it is not mentioned in the strategy, the Education Strategy used recommendations from the 2011 Global Review of Refugee Education as a basis for drawing up the strategy. The report does include figures on enrolment, teacher student ratios or funding. Data has not been used as evidence to justify actions, but the expected results of the strategy are expressed in the form of targets for specific indicators.
91. The Child Protection Framework refers to qualitative data from participants of the 2011 consultation exercise. From interviews, we noted that this data was used to identify the six goals. However, in the framework text these quotes are displayed as illustrations. They do not figure in the body of the text and are not referred to as evidence underpinning the six strategic goals.
92. The Updated SGBV Strategy refers to the data sources on which it is based only to a very limited extent. It does refer to an independent evaluation of UNHCR's SGBV response, carried out in 2008, but this report does not include data and metrics arising from caseload on SGBV from the field.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Such as: Guidelines on International Protection No. 8: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, HCR/GIP/09/08, December 2009, UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child, May 2008, Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in Dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum, February 1997, Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care, 1994, UNHCR Policy on Refugee Children, 6 August 1993, Executive Committee No. 107 (LVIII) - 2007 on Children at Risk, 5 October 2007, Children At Risk, Standing Committee, 38th meeting, EC/58/SC/CRP.7, 22 February 2007, Meeting the rights and needs of refugee children An independent evaluation, <http://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/3cd6363aa/meeting-rights-protection-needs-refugee-children-independent-evaluation.html>

<sup>33</sup> UNHCR (2008) *Evaluation of UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in situations of forced displacement*, [www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/48ea31062.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/48ea31062.pdf)



93. In the absence of more systematic data, postulating objectives drawing from a weaker evidence base – which may have included anecdotal evidence – was likely the feasible option for the three strategies. In any case, the evidence base available should be clearly flagged, including making explicit mention of data limitations, and if no robust evidence exists around a certain issue. The danger of using anecdotal or no evidence is that the chosen objectives are not relevant to the needs to the strategies' stakeholders.
94. The Education and SGBV strategies propose ways to systematically collect data specific to the protection area in the future. The SGBV Strategy provides a box on page 10 showcasing the GBV Information Management System, which provides for the collection and sharing of comprehensive GBV data. The Education Strategy points out that UNHCR and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics collect education data. Data collected from the latter initiative has been published in a few reports on refugee education.<sup>34</sup> However, none of the strategies sufficiently discusses the difficulties for country offices and partners in collecting reliable data in a forced displacement setting, and the implications this has on monitoring, as well as on the measurement of progress against strategy objectives.

## 4.5 Roll-out plans

95. **All strategies include a roll-out plan as well as supporting documents** such as preparation guidelines, checklists and contact information for relevant HQ staff. Additionally, adaptation templates were prepared for the rolling out of the Child Protection Framework. **All teams held roll-out workshops and offered technical support through missions or phone calls.**
96. The Education Strategy spells out plans, which include pilot countries as well as roll-out support available. The suggested approach is comprehensive, involving focus groups and brain storm questions, but likely lengthy to implement. Targeted field missions and technical assistance to adapt the Education Strategy was available, especially in 2012. Twelve priority countries were chosen as a pilot, with more following.
97. The Child Protection Framework concludes with a 'Way Forward Section' and a 'Three Step Process for Developing Child Protection Programmes'. The way forward recommends 11 pilot countries to start implementation in in 2012, with more countries to follow. Short-term support was offered in the form of three- to six-month deployments and regular communication.
98. The Updated SGBV Strategy includes a Strategy Matrix as a tool for programming. Roll-out took place in two phases. During the first phase selected countries were invited to HQ. The second phase took a regional approach, with regional SGBV posts leading on roll-out.
99. All three strategies mention prioritisation and adaptation to country contexts but offer little guidance on how to choose one objective or activity over another.
100. As for the HQ perspective on how well roll-out proceeded, interview data reveals that the speed with which country office staff's technical capacity improved was faster than anticipated for the implementation of the Education Strategy. Comparatively, identifying protection staff with the necessary technical knowledge was more challenging for the roll-out of the other two strategies.

### Box 2: Rollout finding spotlight

#### Rollout activities for each of the strategies

To support the rollout of the Child Protection Framework, the following activities were provided:

- Field missions and technical assistance from HQ/Regional experts to review existing country specific child protection strategies or to develop them
- Participation in a launch workshop for the 11 pilot countries 27-30 March 2012 in Geneva

<sup>34</sup> For instance, see: UNESCO (2016) *Education for people and planet*, <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2016/education-people-and-planet-creating-sustainable-futures-all/page#sthash.yog8nEzm.gK4GsxiU.dpbs> and UNHCR and UNESCO (2016) *No more excuses: Provide education to all forcibly displaced people* (Policy Paper 26), <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/no-more-excuses#sthash.GEyoqvhX.mOYK4hEh.dpbs>

- Training material on the Protection Agenda to be used for country specific briefings/trainings for partners
- Support with monitoring progress on protection interventions for children, including on child specific Global Strategic Priorities
- Possible short term deployment of child protection expert for countries with a demonstrated need for additional support to strengthen the protection programme.

The support available during rollout for the Education Strategy included:

- Training on the new Education Strategy 2012-2016, the new Education Policy and Guidelines, and on education priorities
- Targeted field missions and technical assistance to adapt the Education Strategy to the individual country context and continued support to implement country-based strategies
- Technical support to implement an education management information system (EMIS)
- Monitoring and reporting on progress, including documentation
- Advocacy and fundraising

The rollout of the SGBV Strategy was done through posting Senior SGBV Advisors in regional offices and through regional workshops which were helpful, as confirmed in the interview data, in getting COs to incorporate SGBV in their programming.

## 4.6 Results and monitoring frameworks

### 4.6.1 RBM and measurability

101. The six actions of the Education Strategy are clearly articulated, the goals of the Child Protection Framework are broadly formulated, and the objectives proposed in the SGBV Strategy are not all measurable. The Education Strategy includes expected results, making it more straightforward to assess implementation of its objectives. Although the Education Strategy clearly specifies its targets, they are very ambitious. The sets of outcomes associated with each goal of the Child Protection Framework are not always clear. It is not specified to what degree UNHCR hopes to achieve the stated outcomes or in what timeframe. The benchmarks proposed for monitoring the Child Protection Framework are not measurable but are largely rather a list of inputs. The SGBV Strategy does not specify how progress within each action area is expected to be measured.
102. For outcomes and activities to be appropriate, they need to sufficiently acknowledge the specific needs of persons of concern. For instance, the Child Protection Framework does not explicitly recognise the varying cognitive and psychosocial abilities of children, which affect children's capacity to exercise agency. This affects a number of objectives related to child empowerment. In its objectives, the SGBV Strategy does acknowledge that GBV programming needs to meet the needs of different populations, such as children, boys and men, LGBTI POCs and POCs with disabilities. However, the strategy does not in itself suggest specifically appropriate activities for each.
103. Since programming in UNHCR is built on the principle of results-based management (RBM), the definition of clearly defined results, rather than activities, is a cornerstone of systematic monitoring, reporting, and ultimately evaluation.<sup>35</sup> The Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the three strategies acknowledges the focus on results as a key parameter underpinning the monitoring and reporting on the three global strategies.
104. RBM is reflected in all three strategies, although to different degrees. On the one hand, the Child Protection Framework is clearly structured around six goals that are further specified in outcome statements. The goals focus on results, using change language to describe changes in the

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<sup>35</sup> UNHCR (2015) *UNHCR Programme Manual, Part I – Introduction to Programme Management*.

conditions of gender-disaggregated right holders, girls and boys.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the SGBV Strategy, while recognising the importance of RBM, is more action than results oriented. It promotes six action areas that mostly articulate what operations should do rather than what changes they should achieve in the conditions of people of concern. This is also reflected in the Strategy Matrix, which is meant to support country operations to identify interventions rather than results.<sup>37</sup> The Education Strategy is organised around six thematic actions and objectives, with four management results referred to as strategic approaches. The formulation of expected results for each objective or strategic approach strengthens the results-orientation of the strategy. However, compared to the Child Protection Framework, the right-holders do not stand out consistently in all objectives.

105. None of the strategies clearly articulates the causal pathways necessary to achieve the goals or objectives and nor do they discuss the conditions that may influence the achievement of the objectives or the rationale for prioritising certain goals, objectives or action areas (see also section 4.3.1). The Child Protection Framework does link the achievement of the goals to the strengthening of child protection system components.<sup>38</sup> However, it does not elaborate how the goals may be influenced by the different child protection system components. The lack of a well-defined results chain is partly understandable because a results chain is embedded in a given context. Since the strategies need to provide guidance across a wide range of contexts, it is challenging to synthesise a meaningful generic results chain. Nonetheless, more attention to what results are expected to be prioritised in different operational settings and why may increase the usefulness of the strategies for country operations. This seems in line with how UNHCR's Results Framework seeks to define goals and objectives by population planning group (PPG).<sup>39</sup>
106. The strategies support the measurability of the goals, objectives and action areas to different degrees. By quantifying expected results per objective and setting targets, the Education Strategy makes an appreciable effort to enhance measurability and quantify its ambition. However, many of the indicators used are not currently collected by national or international Education Management Information (EMI) systems. Furthermore, indicators of achievement are suggested at the level of key strategies. While the Child Protection Framework does present a set of indicators, they are not well linked to its goals or outcomes and no targets are set.<sup>40</sup> The framework refers to indicator specification in follow-up guidance (see below). The SGBV Strategy again acknowledges the importance of monitoring and data collection as part of RBM but provides little guidance to enhance the measurability of its action areas.<sup>41</sup>
107. The measurability of the strategies has been strengthened by the development of the Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the accompanying integrated and strategy-specific M&E plans in 2013 (referred to as the *monitoring and reporting plans* below). These plans link the goals, objectives and action areas from the strategies to impact and performance indicators included in UNHCR's Results Framework and internal global planning and reporting system FOCUS. This improved measurability, as it better aligned the strategies with UNHCR's organisation-wide Results Framework (RF). It harmonised the confusing variety of results and indicator terminology used across the strategies, yet only to some extent, given that the strategies

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<sup>36</sup> The *Handbook on Results-Based Management of the United Nations Development Group* (2011) promotes the use of change language over action language because results are about change rather than the activities to achieve them. Both UNHCR and UNDG consider a rights-based approach an underlying principle of results-based programming.

<sup>37</sup> An adapted version of this matrix was created later, which included a column to formulate objectives. However, the core of the matrix remained the identification of interventions or activities.

<sup>38</sup> System components are: legal and policy framework, knowledge and data, coordination, human and financial capacities, prevention and response activities, and advocacy and awareness-raising.

<sup>39</sup> A PPG is a population of concern considered to be homogenous for planning and budgeting purposes. Results chains and budgets are to be developed for each PPG according to the *UNHCR Programme Manual*.

<sup>40</sup> The indicators are linked to the child protection system components rather than to the goals or outcomes presented in the strategy.

<sup>41</sup> The SGBV Strategy does include four output-oriented indicators in the Strategy Matrix template in the annex without including targets. It is not clear whether they are provided as examples or how they relate to the action areas promoted in the strategy.

did not widely embed their goals, objectives and action areas within the Results Framework.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the alignment of the strategies with the RF worked well for some strategy results but a mismatch remained for others, which makes monitoring and budgeting for it difficult within UNHCR's existing systems.

108. The country offices have flexibility regarding which indicators to monitor as part of the monitoring and reporting of their country strategies and COPs. For the purpose of strategy monitoring, a list of minimum joint and strategy-specific core indicators was provided by DIP, which were meant to be tracked by all priority roll-out countries.<sup>43</sup> To add to the complexity of different indicators being available, the minimum core indicators do not fully align with the indicators recommended in the strategy monitoring and reporting plans supplied by DIP teams for specific protection policy areas.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, GSP indicators have been integrated in the list of minimum indicators relevant to the three strategies. However, GSP indicators are only relevant to the Child Protection Framework to a degree, and, although relevant to the SGBV Strategy, they do not specifically make reference to the strategy's action areas.
109. While this flexibility in indicator selection allows for the adaptation of planning, monitoring and reporting activities to different country contexts, it jeopardises tracking progress at global as well as at country level if the indicators can be selected from one year to another. It also opens the door to the introduction of bias in indicator selection by country operations. Therefore, it is unclear whether the change in achievement of impact indicators from 2012 to 2015 presented in the global strategy implementation reports offers an accurate picture of actual progress or is determined by the fluctuations in indicators used. A comparison between the 2014 and 2015 reports indicates that the number of selected indicators varied between the two years.
110. UNHCR sets GSPs to support focused management and reporting. The GSPs include indicators drawn from UNHCR's Results Framework. Only the Education Strategy makes explicit reference to the GSPs although the other strategies do include elements highlighted in the GSPs. For example, the 2012/13 GSPs incorporate operational impact indicators regarding SGBV survivors, children's best interest and primary school enrolment, which are covered by the strategies.

#### 4.6.2 Monitoring framework and processes

111. The Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework aimed to provide a harmonised strategy and plan for monitoring and reporting across the three strategies. Its annexes provide a set of global tools used for tracking, planning, monitoring and reporting. The framework emphasises that monitoring and reporting will make use as much as possible of existing processes, in particular the use of the existing Results Framework and information provided through the reporting tool FOCUS, to track and report on progress. It also outlines roles and responsibilities, and annual M&E activities, which were not articulated in the initial strategies. Based on the three strategies' integrated global M&E framework, DIP is responsible for managing the framework and periodically reporting on progress made, while the country operations are meant to collect, analyse and report on the data. The framework recognises that this is a challenge, and that monitoring guidance relating to the strategies is needed and should be communicated to COs upfront, and clearly – interview data revealed that, although this guidance was incorporated at various points during rollout, it was not properly understood or reached all COs, which was reflected in their general confusion about monitoring and reporting requirements.
112. Different teams in DIP working on child protection, education and SGBV developed guidance notes and tools to support global and country-level monitoring. While the Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Plan recommended the use of common templates, the different teams developed

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<sup>42</sup> The MOPAN assessment of UNHCR in 2014 highlighted UNHCR's complex results architecture comprising multiple frameworks and its limitations.

<sup>43</sup> It is unclear whether the minimum core indicator list has been tracked by all country operations as part of their strategies.

<sup>44</sup> This finding is based on a comparison between the indicator list provided in the document 'Guidance: List of Minimum Protection Indicators' (DIP, M&E, January 2014) and the strategy-specific M&E plans that form part of the annexes to the Integrated Global Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

strategy-specific templates and the degree of monitoring guidance varied. For example, the global child protection team created relatively extensive guidance.<sup>45</sup> Linkage with the UNHCR Results Framework was strongly promoted. The country templates for the education and SGBV strategies include a monitoring and reporting plan format but with little detail or guidance.

113. In general, the guidance notes and tools provide limited guidance or support to country operations about how to generate the data required to estimate the indicators, although roll-out workshops did include sessions on monitoring, reporting and data management and how to develop and implement a data collection plan.<sup>46, 47</sup> The monitoring system of the strategies is based on the assumption that data for selected indicators would be available and accessible at country level, that country staff would have the capacity to collect and analyse the data, and/or that data-collection mechanisms could be sufficiently strengthened as part of the strategy roll-out (as referenced in all three strategies). However, research conducted by the Harvard Partnership as part of the Education Strategy adaptation process pointed to the common challenge of a lack of mechanisms and capacity for collecting educational data at country level, which argues for monitoring and reporting requirements that do not tax country staff beyond their capacity.<sup>48</sup> The evaluation of UNHCR's SGBV efforts in situations of forced displacement highlighted the difficulties in collecting quantitative data on SGBV and that partner monitoring is often *ad hoc*, unsystematic and sometimes sparsely documented.<sup>49</sup> As will be discussed in the next paragraph, the quality of data available affected the consistency and quality of the reporting on results.
114. In terms of sharing the results of the strategies, the Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the three strategies indicates that progress would be reported on twice a year: one internal mid-year monitoring report and one external global monitoring report. Three annual global strategy implementation reports have been produced (2013, 2014 and 2015). The reports serve a valuable function of analysing, synthesising and communicating in a visually attractive manner the strategy implementation and monitoring efforts of UNHCR's country operations. The reports recognise that **measurement of indicators remains inconsistent and data has not been validated.**

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<sup>45</sup> The global child protection team created a country-level, Excel-based monitoring logframe prepopulated with the minimum core indicators and included indicator guidance in a template to create a country-level child protection strategy.

<sup>46</sup> For example, the SGBV roll-out workshops in 2012 included a monitoring and reporting session and discussed the use of the GBVIMV and ProGres (see UNHCR (2012) *Rollout of the SGBV Update Strategy, Workshop Report*). It was concluded that few operations would consider introducing GBVIMV. The global integrated workshop provided guidance on monitoring and developing and implementing data collection plans.

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR has developed guidance notes for impact indicators that are included in the Results Framework. While these guidance notes are a valuable reference for the calculation of the indicator and reference data collection methods and sources, they do not provide guidance on the data collection itself.

<sup>48</sup> Dryden-Peterson, S. (2014). *Harvard Partnership Review Report Summary on Adapting Global Policy to National Contexts. Project sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.*

<sup>49</sup> UNHCR (2008) *Evaluation of UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in situations of forced displacement.*



## 5 Evaluation findings: Adaptation and implementation of the strategies

115. This chapter addresses the stage following the rolling out of the global strategies in the pilot countries, focusing on the adapting of country-level strategies and the implementation of activities that align with the six priority 'action areas' or 'goals' in the global strategies.
116. Adaptation is defined as the process followed by the operations to incorporate the global strategies into their operational and strategic planning. The evaluation team assessed adaptation by looking at the country-level strategies produced, as well as reflection of the strategies' objectives on the COPs. The section on adaptation provides a discussion of two areas. First, the evaluative analysis focuses on the level of adaptation of the three strategies, i.e. the number of pilot countries that produced standalone country strategy documents, and the action areas/goals in the global strategies that are reflected in those country-level strategy documents. Second, the analysis focuses on the process of adaptation countries went through to produce the country-level documents, drawing on interview data collected during country visits and interviews with country office staff in the additional ten countries studied, as well as document review data from all 15 countries.
117. The second section of this chapter covers the implementation of the strategies, focusing on data available in the COPs of the countries included in the evaluation sample. In particular, the evaluation looked at reported performance indicators. In various instance, the performance indicators were identified to be referring to measures of activities or inputs, rather than the results of these activities, which under the OECD-DAC criteria is referred to as an 'output'. Input indicators provide data on the activities and programming that have been implemented.
118. For the purpose of the analysis, the indicators are categorised according to the objectives of each strategy, based on the type of activity they measured, and the perceived objective of those activities. In this section, the evaluation team provides a judgement as to **the influence of the release of the global protection strategies on the education, SGBV and child protection activities implemented by country offices**. As with the adaptation, the supporting analysis discusses the level of implementation, presenting the extent to which activities described in the COPs of 2016 (post-strategy release) differ from those in the COPs of 2012. The analysis also examines the approach to monitoring the activities that align with action areas/goals of the global protection strategies.
119. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the **factors that influenced the adaptation and implementation of the protection strategies**. Here the analysis draws heavily from the five country case studies, with supporting evidence from the other ten countries included in the evaluation. The analysis summarises the contextual and operational factors that both supported and hindered the translation of the global strategies into country-level strategies, and which enabled or created challenges for the implementation of activities aimed at achieving the objectives of the strategies.

### 5.1 Adaptation

#### 5.1.1 Level of adaptation

120. Among the 15 pilot countries included in the evaluation, there were high rates of adaptation of the global strategies into standalone country-level strategy documents. Nearly every country that rolled out the education and SGBV strategies produced standalone national strategy documents, except for one country (Rwanda for SGBV). All the countries that piloted the Child Protection Framework created country-level strategy documents.
121. Country-level child protection strategies were the most likely to include all six action areas from the global strategy, while country-level education strategies were the least likely to include all six action areas from the Education Strategy. Table 6 provides an overview of the extent to which the global strategies have been reflected in country-level stand-alone strategies in the 15 countries reviewed as part of this evaluation.

**Table 6: Extent of adaptation of the global strategies in country stand-alone strategies**

Strategy	Number of countries piloting the strategy (out of 15)	Number of countries which created a standalone thematic strategy	Number of countries which adapted at least half of the strategy objectives in a country-level strategy	Number of countries which adapted all six strategy objectives in a country-level strategy
Education	13	13	13	4
SGBV	12	11	10	7
Child Protection	7	7	6	5

### 5.1.2 The adaptation process

122. Most of the 15 countries included in the evaluation reported that an important contributor to the adaptation process was the supportive engagement and practical guidance provided by DIP. This was most evident in the country-level child protection strategies (with education and SGBV strategies less likely to follow a specific structure), which tended to follow the structure developed for guidance by DIP and thus include information on challenges, opportunities and strategic priorities, as well as descriptions of how child protection activities fulfil cross-sectoral objectives. However, across the three strategies, respondents reported that the regional workshops and support from DIP and the regional level that began during the roll-out period were also useful during the adaptation process, as they offered protection staff the opportunity to liaise and discuss protection issues with their counterparts from other offices.
123. The adaptation of the education, child protection and SGBV global strategies was also in some cases guided by thorough baseline assessments, participatory needs assessments and partner feasibility assessments, notably in Bangladesh, Mexico and Egypt respectively. In these cases, participatory assessments formed the basis of the data used to guide operational decision-making. It was therefore an important foundation of evidence for determining which goals and action areas would be in line with needs on the ground.
124. The process of adaptation was not always completed as envisioned, and the reasons for this vary. In Section 5.3 below, the analysis discusses which factors emerged as having influenced the adaptation of the strategies.

#### Box 3: Case study spotlight

##### Adaptation of the SGBV Strategy in Bangladesh

The approach to SGBV in Bangladesh is an example of a strategy that has taken a different route compared to other national SGBV strategies to meet the needs of the context. It is not intervention-driven, but rather largely rooted in engaging with sociocultural dimensions of Rohingyas (refugees from Myanmar) and their environment that contribute to exposure to SGBV risk. The national SGBV strategy adaptation process went through two processes. The first process was led by protection officers, while the second process was led by a gender adviser who joined the office in 2015. Both were appropriate to national context, but each strategy maintained a different approach to working with government. For example, the first adaptation called for SGBV responses that required survivors to report to the police station and then present the case to the camp-in-charge. The camp-in-charge would then triage the case and determine if a medical referral was required. Subsequently, UNHCR staff identified protection gaps in this version, and a revision was produced in 2016. The current strategy version is based on a gender analysis conducted by UNHCR in 2015 and addresses the most pressing SGBV concerns. UNHCR's SGBV partner was also involved in the adaptation of the country-level strategy. Both versions are coherent with the global strategy. However, the most recent country-level strategy is restructured and not built on the global strategy action areas but rather on how and where these action areas are meant to meet local needs.

### 5.1.3 Stakeholder engagement in adaptation

125. Country offices made use of thematic working groups in the adaptation process for all three strategies. In some instances, these were UNHCR thematic sub-working groups that existed previously and in others they were created to support the adaptation of the global strategies. In still other instances, these were existing interagency working groups or sector coordination groups that typically included larger numbers of stakeholders already working to develop a concerted approach to a particular protection issue.
126. Similarly, partners receiving funding from UNHCR were prominent stakeholders in the adaptation of the strategies, especially of the SGBV Strategy. For instance, they accompanied UNHCR staff to workshops held by HQ and the bureaux, and the adaptation started in breakout sessions at these workshops. Interviewees from India, Malaysia and Egypt all highlighted the strong contribution of partners to the adaptation of the SGBV Strategy. In comparison to the Education Strategy work, adaptations of the SGBV and child protection strategies were also more likely to involve community-level groups such as child welfare committees. This may be because a core part of the work of these strategies is to establish and capacitate community-level mechanisms to protect refugee children.
127. The adaptation of the education and child protection strategies more frequently included direct involvement from line ministries. For example, in Zambia counterparts from the Ministry of Education were involved in rolling out activities and subsequent workshops facilitated by HQ to support the adaptation of the Education Strategy. The adaptation of the SGBV Strategy likely included less input from government because of the sensitivity of the issues involved and the challenges in engaging government.

## 5.2 Implementation

### 5.2.1 Implementation of strategy-related activities

128. The influence of the global strategies on activities and programmes implemented at the country level varied. Table 7 below summarises the level of implementation of action areas present in the COPs of 2012 and the COPs of 2016 (data at mid-year) of the 15 countries sampled for the evaluation. Again, data at year-end was unavailable at the time of the evaluation – thus, data may have changed from mid-year to year-end. However, these changes are not reflected in this report.

**Table 7: Extent of implementation of strategy objectives (out of 15 countries)**

Strategy	Number of countries piloting the strategy	Number of countries whose 2012 COP included activities related to at least half the strategy objectives	Number of countries whose 2016 COP included activities related to at least half the strategy objectives	Number of countries whose 2012 COP included activities related to all six strategy objectives	Number of countries whose 2016 COP included activities related to all six strategy objectives
Education	13	13	13	0	0
SGBV	12	8	11	1	5
Child Protection	7	14	15	4	7 (of which 3 were non-pilot countries)

**Note:** For Child Protection, the number of countries exceeds the number of pilot countries in two instances given that non-pilot countries included activities in their COP reflecting strategy objectives.

129. The extent to which the strategies were implemented was influenced by their relevance to programmatic contexts. In relation to the inclusion of activities in COPs, the SGBV Strategy had the greatest influence, while being a SGBV Strategy pilot country increased the likelihood that child protection activities were incorporated in the COP. As nearly all countries were already including



in their 2012 COP education activities corresponding to the Education Strategy action areas, the direct influence of the education strategy on inclusion in the COP could not be ascertained. However, this is a limited measure that does not reflect the practical implementation of the strategies.

130. In 2012, nearly all the countries that were implementing education activities that correspond with strategy action areas were doing so in as many as four or five of the action areas. These countries then continued to implement activities corresponding with those same four or five action areas of the Education Strategy, and did not tend to include Action Area 6 in the 2016 COP activities. Thus, the analysis highlights an increase in the number of countries implementing more aspects of the Education Strategy between 2012 and 2016. The cases of Egypt and Rwanda—both of which experienced emergencies and increases in the numbers of people of concern between 2012 and 2016—may provide insight into this observation. In both countries, governments were committed to providing refugee groups most affected by the emergency with access to the education system, and integrating refugees into national schools. However, the operations have continued to provide, through partners, learning spaces as the transition to integration and building of schools requires time. The provision of learning spaces is a major suggested activity under Action Area 6.
131. **The release of the SGBV Strategy had the most influence on the inclusion of activities in the COPs.** A few countries went from having one or no activities related to the SGBV Strategy in their COPs in 2012 to having up to five in the 2016 COP. Niger, an SGBV pilot country, was the most positive example of this, having no activities corresponding with any of the action areas in the 2012 COP and all six covered in the 2016 COP, following the roll-out and adaptation of the strategy. Among the case-study countries that rolled out the SGBV Strategy,<sup>50</sup> there is a high level of implementation across the six strategy action areas, with the exception of action areas 4 and 5. This is likely because renewable energy (Action Area 4) is less of an issue in urban, non-camp settings and also given the cultural and political sensitivities surrounding protection of LGBTI people of concern (Action Area 5). Additionally, the SGBV Strategy influenced the inclusion of activities in countries that were not pilots. For instance, in Mexico, the COPs of 2012 and 2016 include programming targeted at LGBTI POCs, in particular youth. The Mexico operation was exposed to the SGBV Strategy through a regional workshop organised by HQ and the regional SGBV specialist during roll-out.
132. **Being an SGBV Strategy pilot country influenced the likelihood of incorporating child protection activities into the COP, even if a country was not piloting the Child Protection Framework.** For example, the analysis highlighted that, while Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon and Niger did not pilot the Child Protection Framework, their 2016 COP documents included activities specifically addressing between four and six of the action areas in the global Child Protection Framework. This is likely because of the strong overlap in protection issues, ways of working (e.g. community-level protection mechanisms) and stakeholder involvement in preventing and responding to both SGBV and child protection concerns. Additionally, in Jordan and Lebanon, the interagency environment and availability of funding played substantial roles in the implementation of protection activities beyond the strategies they were pilots for. More details on the factors of adaptation and implementation can be found in Section 5.3.

## 5.2.2 Monitoring of strategy-related activities

133. This section provides analysis of the progress against the strategies at country level, and the extent to which monitoring results reported in the COPs represent the work being undertaken by operations. This section contains an analysis of the approach to monitoring inputs to achieving the strategy objectives in the five case-study countries. The analysis compared the action areas being implemented with the action areas that align with performance indicators measuring activities or inputs in the 2016 COP. **Overall, from the analysis it emerged that operations are generally implementing a wider range of activities than they are reporting on in the COP.**

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<sup>50</sup> These countries are: Bangladesh, Chad, Egypt, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda and Uganda.

134. There is a high degree of variation in how operations monitor progress against the strategies and report this progress. Most operations referred to the role of partners in monitoring, and pointed to the COP as one of the main platforms they used to record and report progress on a variety of indicators. In some instances there was no ongoing monitoring of strategy activities.

**Table 8: Alignment of implementation and monitoring, 2016 COP (data at mid-year)**

Country	EDU – implemented	EDU – monitored	SGBV – implemented	SGBV – monitored	Child protection – implemented	Child protection – monitored
Bangladesh	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	3 & 4	1, 2, 3, 4, 6	1, 2 & 3 (4 and 6 in outcomes)	n/a	n/a
Egypt	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and general	1 and non-action area specific	1, 2, 3, 6 and general	1, 2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1 and 2 (remainder in outcomes)
Iran	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1 and 3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
Rwanda	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1 & 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

135. The analysis also considered how well the areas monitored in the COP reflect the overall work of operations. Given the amount of information required to make an assessment on this, the evaluation team focused on evidence from the five case-study countries, recognising the limitations with generalising these findings. The analysis looked at which activities appear in the 2016 COP and compared those against the activities for which indicators are being tracked. Table 8 above compares the activities being included in the 2016 COP that align the strategy areas with the inputs being tracked by indicators. For example, the 2016 COP for Bangladesh includes activities related to all six Education Strategy action areas, but the education indicators on outputs or objectives only reflect activities related to two of the action areas.

136. For the Education Strategy, most countries are implementing activities that cover all the action areas but are not reporting against most of related outputs in the COP. Only Rwanda’s COP-related monitoring covered performance indicators that measure outputs, and which reflect the majority of the work being done on education.

137. For child protection, reporting against indicators that measure the degree of implementation of activities is uneven among countries which rolled out the Child Protection Framework. The difference may reflect different countries’ approaches to child protection. In Egypt, for example, the operation implements activities aligning with all six action areas of the strategy. However, in Egypt reported indicators focus primarily on measuring progress against results and protection outcomes rather than progress on the implementation of activities necessary to achieve those results. Conversely, in Rwanda the latest increase in the number of POCs has led to an approach focused on building infrastructure, organisational and community structures, and capacity for child protection in emergency response. Thus, while activities linked to action areas 1 and 6 are the only ones described in the narrative of the COP, there is reporting against indicators that reflect UNHCR’s work to increase its ability to respond to all six action areas. Of the three strategies, the outputs monitored and reported in the COP for SGBV most precisely relate to the six area of the strategy areas.

138. While the scope of the COP necessarily only captures a portion of the work being done, interviews conducted suggest that operations feel that **while the Results Framework indicators selected provide a good high-level overview, what is monitored captures just part of what country**

**offices are doing** and must be complemented with other means of assessment (e.g. monitoring reports specific to protection areas, visits from HQ to operations, etc.).

## 5.3 Factors influencing adaptation and implementation

### 5.3.1 Political context

139. The existence of national government policies or frameworks compatible with or explicitly supportive of activities to promote the protection of refugees positively influenced the adaptation and implementation of the strategies. In the case of the SGBV Strategy, for example, national policies were particularly likely to have a positive influence on the adaptation of the global strategy into country-level strategies. For example, in Chad the national government launched its own national SGBV strategy the year before the global strategies were released. This presented an opportunity for UNHCR to adapt all aspects of the strategy to their country context, as the presence of a positive national framework indicated that there would be a supportive enabling environment within which to implement activities, in particular advocating for stronger legal frameworks to address SGBV within the camps.
140. Likewise, changes in government priorities and political awareness about a particular issue were an indication that activities in the strategy may be favourably received, and the analysis highlighted that operations saw this as an opportunity to strengthen cooperation with governments to accomplish strategy objectives at country level. This was the case in the Egypt and Rwanda education strategies, where government's prioritisation of enabling refugees to access national education systems facilitated the implementation of strategy activities. Similarly, the Government of Iran allows refugee children to access education alongside Iranian children. This is in line with UNHCR's approach of favouring integration in national systems whenever possible. The government's approach to the right to education also mirrors international rights of the child approaches. Interview data revealed that the integration of Afghan refugee children into official schools was facilitated by a decree of the Supreme Leader, issued in 2015, which gave permission to attend school to all Afghan children, regardless of documentation status. This was partially motivated by an acknowledgment that children attending self-run Afghan schools could not receive an accredited certificate. Additionally, the insistence on integration also comes from a previous experience where undocumented Afghani children attended an informal school affiliated to the Taliban. Operations also reported that involvement with government during strategy adaptation was a crucial step in ensuring the sustainability of the response, particularly on SGBV and child protection.
141. The political environment can also be a factor presenting challenges to UNHCR country offices as they adapted the strategies. For example, some of the six action areas in the SGBV Strategy are more challenging to achieve in local contexts where effective supporting national policies and legal frameworks are lacking or weaker. There are several conditions in which the political environment hindered adaptation of the global strategies into country-level strategies.
142. First, conditions in which protective policies exist but are poorly implemented or do not include POCs also reduce the degree to which countries find a footing to adapt the strategies. Again, this was particularly the case with regards to the SGBV Strategy (for instance, in Malaysia, which was a pilot country for SGBV, the rights of refugee women and children are not included in the country's longstanding Domestic Violence Act). It also influenced the adaptation and implementation of the Child Protection Framework, for example in Mexico where extensive child protection, child rights and child refugee rights legislation exist, but detention of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) remains a practice in violation of such legislation.
143. Similarly, government policies that leave refugees in precarious circumstances by, for example, creating high barriers to documentation, limiting mobility and denying them access to national systems, (e.g. health, justice and education) negatively influenced the adaptation of the strategies (e.g. SGBV in Kenya and SGBV and education in Bangladesh).
144. Finally, government policies and legislation that restrict the access to refugees given to national and international non-government organisations (NGOs) and organisations such as UNHCR also

negatively affected the adaptation process. This is particularly the case in countries where refugees live in camp settings. Under such conditions, UNHCR country offices and their partners face challenges in conducting advocacy, delivering services and raising funds.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, decisions about adapting the global strategies reflect these constraints.

### 5.3.2 Partnerships

145. The availability as well as the capacity of partners influenced the adaptation and implementation of the protection strategies. Where partner availability was limited, the strengths and capabilities of the existing partners could influence the choice of strategy-related activities. This was the case in Iran, for example, where interview data reflect UNHCR's confidence in the ability of partners to implement the Education Strategy, due to them having strong technical skills and demonstrated resource and case management capabilities. Similarly, high-capacity partners with flexible mandates could also encourage operations to adapt more aspects of a strategy and support partners to build specific expertise (e.g. child protection in Mexico, where local NGOs received support and training from UNHCR to expand the scope of their activities, broaden their work to include POCs and become compliant with UNHCR's reporting requirements).
146. Partners sometimes directly influenced the adaptation of the strategy, as described above. In such cases, partners and government actors were part of the adaptation process, which meant that the action areas covered were understood to be the most relevant and achievable for the country context. Partners also played an important role in providing an understanding of the context, through baseline assessments and institutional memory, which aided in the selection of activities to adapt to country level and the approach to implementing them.
147. Partnerships are particularly important in SGBV as it is a multi-sectoral issue, with actors in WASH, education, shelter, infrastructure, etc. ideally being involved. Particular aspects of the action areas could seem especially feasible or unfeasible depending on the partners available to UNHCR, their capacity and areas of expertise. This then had an influence on which action areas were adapted and ultimately implemented.
148. Partner capacity also influenced the degree to which UNHCR could rely on partners to provide adequate monitoring of the strategy activities. In some cases, such as Rwanda's Child Protection Framework implementation, partners with previous experience in this protection area were stretched by the added demands of working as a partner funded by UNHCR and providing monitoring and reporting in a humanitarian or emergency situation.

### 5.3.3 UNHCR staffing

149. The technical capacity and time availability of UNHCR country staff, as well as support from HQ, influenced the adaptation and implementation of strategy activities. Strategies benefited from the involvement of protection area specialists in the adaptation and implementation, as well as from dedicated teams with sufficient time resources to allocate to strategy activities.
150. High staff rotation in areas with difficult operational conditions impacted the quality of implementation and reporting. Institutional memory with regards to the process of drafting the strategy may be lost in the handover, requiring time and effort to bring new colleagues to the appropriate level of understanding.
151. The SGBV Strategy was particularly affected by staff capacity. Interview data revealed that country office staff acknowledged that the implementation of SGBV programming required specialist staff, and often UNHCR offices rely on external assistance or 'share' a regional resource, which prolongs implementation procedures. For example, in Malaysia the team charged with adaptation had limited capacity and technical skills in both case management and programming SGBV, and did not include an SGBV specialist. Absence of staff with the requisite technical skillset can also mean that the strategy did not get adapted at all, as was the case in Rwanda. This was also the case in one

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<sup>51</sup> Interview data revealed donors often requested site visits to better understand the context of need and the programming required to address it.

of the countries reviewed for the evaluation, where the SGBV task force that was expected to drive the strategy adaptation process (including creating a workplan and ToRs for partners) was left to a single staff member with less experience and support than ideally required. Country-level adaptation was therefore not completed as intended.

152. From interview data, it emerged that, even where specialist staff are involved in the adaptation, bottlenecks can remain because of a lack of engagement from UNHCR staff at the senior level, due to competing priorities, scheduling issues and time constraints. In one of those cases, a protection area specialist drafted a country-level strategy (on one of the protection strategies), various drafts of which were then reviewed and discussed by mid-level and junior protection and programme staff from the capital as well as field offices. Despite these reviews, however, the draft strategy was not escalated within the country office and not approved by senior management for implementation.<sup>52</sup>
153. Although insufficient evidence is available to highlight the impact of UNHCR human resources structures on the implementation of the strategies, two examples raised the importance of having the education protection area under the protection unit rather than the programme unit. In Rwanda and Lebanon, the education portfolio was recently moved to the protection unit. Data suggests that this change was motivated by internal advocacy from protection unit staff. As noted by respondents, education is an essential protection issue, and it is intimately tied to child protection. Having the education portfolio in the protection unit allows protection staff to synergise protection programming.

#### 5.3.4 Funding

154. Access to sufficient financial resources influenced the extent to which country offices engaged in the adaptation and implementation of strategy activities. While Table 7 above notes a high level of implementation of activities that align with strategy action areas, funding emerged as a recurring theme in the discussions with operations. In the positive, some operations could secure funding from non-traditional sources or leverage funding through the bureaux, and thus expressed greater ease with implementing more areas or increasing the scope of activities in a particular area of work.
155. However, shortfalls in funding also influenced views on the adaptation and implementation of the strategies, particularly the Education Strategy. For example, in Iran financial limitations have resulted in difficulties in regard to prioritisation, which has resulted in many refugee children not being able to benefit from better-equipped educational facilities, literacy courses, school-based sports and recreational activities, among other programming activities prioritised in the strategy but beyond the means of the country office to implement. According to Egypt's 2016 COP, UNHCR's budget had an overall reduction of almost US\$ 5 million compared to 2015, and 'funds for education grants will only cover 30% of total needs'. Bangladesh has similarly experienced a decrease in the level of education funding, while the level of needs and opportunities to support refugee-learning outcomes has increased.

#### 5.3.5 Context

156. The implementation context influences the adaptation and implementation of the strategies, in particular the differences between camp versus urban settings and new emergencies versus protracted situations.
157. Changes in security conditions and conflict interrupt the operational movements of UNHCR and partners, and can make implementation of particular activities unsustainable. For example, in Pakistan UNHCR is required to obtain a so-called non-objection certificate issued by the

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<sup>52</sup> In this example, the country office highlighted that, while the country-level adaptation of one of the protection strategies is work in progress, other documents exist that are reflecting the orientation of the strategy. These include the UNHCR Operation planning, and multi-year multi partners (MYMP) strategy. The evaluation team has not reviewed these reports to assess the degree to which they reflect the Global Education Strategy.



government to visit refugee-hosting areas. The certificate must be applied for several days in advance and is not always issued.

158. Implementation of activities can be affected by the change from emergency to a more protracted situation. In Kenya, the level of funding for camps in the protracted situation has decreased given declining interest from donors. The same applies to the urban response in Nairobi, which is chronically underfunded. There is also an effect with new emergency operations, with changes in resourcing and prioritisation to meet the needs of a growing number of POCs.

### **5.3.6 Coordination**

159. Coordination activities between UNHCR, government agencies and partners have served to create a cohesive network of organisations serving refugees. Such activities have proved particularly effective where state, NGO and community actors are each represented in child protection forums or similar structures facilitated by UNHCR. Strong coordination also has the potential to enhance case management activities, facilitated by UNHCR and made up of representatives from partners who are directly involved in the implementation of child-specific programming.
160. Coordination activities highlight UNHCR's role as a catalyst for collaboration in-country. Various examples illustrate the role of country offices in coordinating and fostering partnerships. In Rwanda, for instance, the country and field offices coordinate and participate in meetings with all relevant partners in camp and urban settings. It was stressed by respondents from partner organisations that the role of UNHCR in coordination enabled better communication and more efficient use of limited partner resources, as partners were all aware of what other organisations' protection responses entailed. The same applies to Mexico, where the country office was part of various committees and groups where civil society organisations were represented. In Mexico, collaboration with civil society organisations has been instrumental in the delivery of protection programming. The country office's emphasis on fostering partnerships is evident, as partners previously detached from the refugee setting are now playing important roles in the delivery of UNHCR services.
161. The leadership role of UNHCR is presented in the Refugee Coordination Model, which outlines the different ways UNHCR leads and coordinates overall refugee response.

### **5.3.7 Culture and social norms**

162. Certain cultural challenges and social norms have constrained the adaptation and implementation of the protection strategies. This is particularly the case for the SGBV Strategy, where various country-level strategies indicate challenges in addressing taboo topics about sexuality and gender relations. In these cases, the challenges presented by social norms prohibited the country offices from implementing all the objectives in the global SGBV Strategy. Stigma and condemnation associated with sexual violence and same-sex activities means that LGBTI POCs as well as survivors of gender-based violence are particularly difficult to identify and support. In addition, social attitudes may make it too challenging to implement activities under Action Area 5, which include training staff and raising awareness among legal, psychosocial and health service providers about the unique protection needs of LGBTI individuals.

## 6. Evaluation findings: Contribution to results

### 6.1 Overview and evidence

163. This section covers an analysis of changes at the output and outcome levels that have occurred since the roll-out of the global strategies, up until the evaluation missions in five countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Mexico and Rwanda) in early 2016. It explores whether the global strategies have influenced any reported changes and, if not, identifies other factors of influence that may be at play.
164. The section covers results at two levels: system and POC. System-level results look at: a) improved core protection services; b) enabling environment; and c) strengthened partnerships. To assess a change in core protection services, the evaluation looked at coordination systems internal to the country offices (i.e. coordination between programme and protection units), monitoring and reporting systems, country office-led capacity-building initiatives, planning and consultation with refugees. Core protection services were expected to be informed and supported by changes in the systems that support the design and implementation of these services. Thus, changes in the coordination systems internal to the country offices were deemed to lead to improvements in core protection services. Analysis of the enabling environment relied upon any reported or observed changes in the visibility of UNHCR in a country, the relationship between government and UNHCR, the political will of government stakeholders, government policies, donor attitudes, and attitudes of the host community. These areas cover the main stakeholders that shape the enabling environment (i.e. government, donor and the host community), and which can influence the extent to which implemented programmes are successful. Finally, partnerships were judged to have been strengthened based on the following attributes: improved partner capacity, improved coordination between the UNHCR and its partners, and the formation of new partnerships.
165. POC-level results are informed by an analysis of the document review and interview data of the five case-study countries only. As noted in Section 4.7, there was great variance in the impact and performance indicators reported on across years, which makes year-to-year comparisons difficult. The Results Framework indicators reported in the COPs also vary across response and population groups (e.g. emergency response, non-emergency response, urban response; Iraqi refugees versus Syrian refugees) for the same year, adding another level of unreliability of comparisons. Thus, determining whether changes occurred at the POC level required a deeper understanding of context, as well as a careful comparison of all Results Framework indicators relevant to the strategies. This level of analysis was therefore most appropriate for the five case-study countries, for which we could draw from primary data gathered with refugees and other country-based stakeholders (e.g. government actors and partners).
166. POC-level results look at the extent to which: a) strategy objectives were achieved; and b) protection for POCs improved. To determine whether the strategy objectives had been achieved, we looked at performance indicators that measure outputs in terms of COPs, and compared them to each other. Outputs refer to the immediate results of the implementation of programmatic activities or inputs. The analysis seeks to establish when indicators were reported for one year and not the other, and identified whether progress had been made for indicators reported both years. We organised the indicators according to the strategy objectives (i.e. the goals of the Child Protection Framework and the action areas of the SGBV and education strategies) they referred to. Through this exercise, it was possible to assess the progress made on the strategy objectives. Additionally, the analysis draws from interview and document review data to determine whether the rolling out of the global strategies, or the adaptation of the strategies into a country-level document, had been a strong factor of influence on the progress on outputs, as well as any progress made on the objectives.
167. Second, to evaluate whether protection for POCs had improved, the analysis relied on reported impact indicators measuring outcomes and data from interviews with refugees and asylum-seekers. Outcomes refer to the medium- to long-term results of both activities implemented, and the immediate results these have yielded. These allowed us to determine whether operational and systemic changes had yielded a better sense of protection for the end and primary stakeholders of the global strategies. The analysis therefore underscored opportunities and challenges POCs were

facing, reflecting on how these are related to the progress, or lack thereof, made on strategy objectives. The results at this level are difficult to attribute to the roll-out, adaptation and implementation of the strategies. The evaluation therefore did not offer conclusions on the extent to which the rolling out of the strategies could have contributed to the achievement of results and improved protection for POCs.

168. The evidence presented here is based on interview data and a document review of the five case-study countries that were visited by the evaluation team, as well as an additional ten countries for which interview data was collected remotely. Data from all 15 countries was used to assess system-level changes, as these were well documented in the country-level strategies and operational plans. It remained a difficult task to ascertain whether the strategies influenced changes at the level of UNHCR, government and partner systems. **Although we relied on interview data to confirm, triangulate as feasible and provide context to the findings emerging from the document review, evidence surrounding the contribution of the strategies to specific operational decisions and subsequent results remained weak.**

## 6.2 System-level results

### 6.2.1 Improved core protection services

169. It is difficult to ascertain whether significant changes have occurred in the operational systems that sustain core protection services. Initiatives aiming to improve the capacity building of UNHCR staff, internal coordination mechanisms, operational planning, engagement with POCs and monitoring are listed in most 2012 and 2016 COPs. Often, these initiatives do not pertain to the specific protection areas addressed by the strategies, however. Rather, they are implemented as office-wide and cross-sectoral approaches.<sup>53</sup> Given their general focus, it is difficult to assess whether – and, if yes, to which extent – the strategies have motivated their implementation.
170. Where changes are apparent (i.e. new, improved or expanded initiatives are present in the 2016 COP compared to 2012 version), interview and document review data offer limited evidence of the strategies' influence. For example, although capacity-building activities are organised by operations yearly, the topics and focus of these activities have changed over time. Data from the 2012 COP documents generally points to capacity building focusing on case management, Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and Best Interests Assessment (BIA)/Best Interests Determination (BID) processes. Some operations, such as Kenya and Uganda, offered SGBV training to UNHCR staff in 2012. However, focus on these technical areas did not commonly feature in the 2012 COP documents. In 2016, on the other hand, the COPs point to a stronger focus of training on issues targeted by the child protection and SGBV strategies. In eight out of the 15 countries studied operations reported building the SGBV capacity of their staff. Two of these countries (Mexico and Iran) were not included in the pilot to implement the SGBV Strategy. Further, in three of these eight, the training sessions dealt specifically with the protection and response to SGBV faced by the LGBTI community and people with disabilities. With respect to child protection, three out of the 15 countries studied reported training staff on child-friendly procedures in the 2016 COP – all countries were pilots of the Child Protection Framework.
171. Regarding education, from the analysis of 15 countries covered in this evaluation, there was very limited evidence of changes in CO-led capacity-building initiatives,<sup>54</sup> internal coordination or monitoring. As nearly all countries were already including in their 2012 COP education activities

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<sup>53</sup> For instance, some operations report strengthening their multi-functional teams (MFTs), without specifying whether the teams would be focusing on specific protection areas. MFTs are teams composed of focal points within the operation, at field and country level, and often involving representatives from government line ministries, partners and the refugee community. While MFTs are instruments that improve the engagement and coordination of relevant stakeholders, it is difficult to assess whether a strengthening of these teams was motivated by the global strategies when their focus seems to be general.

<sup>54</sup> Capacity-building initiatives here refer to CO-led activities aiming to improve the understanding and technical skill of staff with regards to specific protection areas. The evaluation team primarily relied on the COP to understand which capacity-building activities had been conducted at the CO level. For instance, a common CO-led capacity building activity found in COPs was focused on improving understanding of child-friendly procedures.



corresponding to the Education Strategy action areas, the direct influence of the education strategy on inclusion could not be ascertained. Two countries (Lebanon and Kenya) reported developing education monitoring systems in their 2016 COPs. However, many other countries (such as Rwanda, Iran and Uganda) had reported developing or strengthening education monitoring in their 2012 COPs. Furthermore, no CO-led capacity-building initiatives seem to have been carried out with respect to education in any of the countries included in the evaluation, as reflected in the COP. A change that occurred with respect to education was the move of the portfolio from the programme to the protection unit. This was done in Kenya, Lebanon and Rwanda. However, this change was not motivated by the rolling out of the Education Strategy, which proposes education as an important mechanism to advance protection. Instead, contextual factors were at play. In Rwanda, the portfolio was moved in 2015 following the Burundi crisis and a restructuring of the office made to more efficiently respond to emergency needs. In Lebanon, interview data revealed that staff advocated for a move of the education portfolio as it intersected and complemented the protection efforts they were supporting, and the move could facilitate improved coordination and strategic planning for the operation.

172. The SGBV and child protection strategies seem to have had a stronger influence on improving the country operations' core protection systems. This is likely given that the goals and action areas proposed in these two global strategies had not generally been targeted by the country operations. In the cases of Kenya and Uganda, the enabling environment, government support and internal UNHCR capacity likely influenced the focus on SGBV even prior to the roll-out of the global strategy. Here, the SGBV Strategy reinforced, rather than redirected, what both operations were already doing. In all other country cases reviewed as part of this evaluation, the strategies gave direction on how to respond to challenging contexts. The importance of SGBV and child protection mechanisms was already recognised in most 2012 COP documents. Changes in the demographics and needs of the refugee and POC population, however, increased the operations' attention on these protection policy areas, and the strategies served as guidance on the approach to take and the populations to target in response to SGBV and child protection challenges.
173. On the other hand, education programming, primarily with regards to primary and secondary education, related to the action areas in the Education Strategy, was in place in almost all piloted countries prior to roll-out. Interview data suggests that, in this regard, the objectives and goals of the strategy confirmed that the activities and initiatives of the country operations were appropriate.

## 6.2.2 Enabling environment

174. Changes to the enabling environment took the form of positive and negative changes to the political will, attitudes of government, and policies and regulations. **Document review and interview data suggest that these changes were primarily motivated by contextual factors and UNHCR's (pre-)existing relationships with key stakeholders and not *per se* by the three strategies. Further, where there was not already a favourable enabling environment, it was difficult to observe significant changes.**
175. For instance, the establishment of child protection legal and policy frameworks in Mexico was motivated by the large influx of children into the country since 2014. Most of these children were UASC escaping violence in Central America. As reflected in the COP, the Mexico CO has conducted advocacy to release these children from detention, as detention centres were seen by the government as a viable option to accommodate the large influx of children from Central America. In India, progress has been made with regards to the government's facilitation of family reunification for detained children. This has been the result of the India operation's advocacy, motivated by the increasing number of children without documentation and in detention centres.
176. Instances of changes relating to education have been both positive and negative, and motivated by context. In Egypt, a decree was signed to allow Syrians into all levels of public schools in Egypt provided they have UNHCR documentation. Further, a stronger partnership with the Ministry of Education supported a commitment to refurbish and build 11 schools. These two initiatives have been triggered by the Syrian refugee crisis and the large number of children and youth entering Egypt. It is worth noting that interview data revealed the situation is different relating to education for non-Syrian refugees (most of whom are Sudanese), who are not integrated in the national school system and for whom government support is minimal. In Jordan, although access to primary

and secondary education is free for Syrians, the government re-introduced school fees for Iraqi children in 2015. The different treatment of Syrian and non-Syrian refugees seems to be motivated by the attention and international pressure on governments to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis.

177. With regards to SGBV, evidence of change occurred in countries that had strong legal and policy frameworks supporting the prevention of and response to SGBV. For example, in Uganda government line ministries implemented initiatives in criminal justice that prioritised SGBV. Furthermore, courts strengthened their institutional capacity to adjudicate cases relating to juvenile sex offenders. Uganda's policy framework has a survivor-centred prevention and response approach that has supported these government actions. Likewise, in Mexico government willingness to address the needs of refugees has led staff to build internal capacity with respect to LGBTI programming. This has motivated initiatives that are intended to provide safer living spaces for LGBTI POCs in detention centres.
178. SGBV and education were found to be the most sensitive and difficult areas for UNHCR advocacy to influence. Where cultural sensitivities were strong, and where the legal framework did not support survivor-centred responses to SGBV, it was extremely challenging for the country operations to advocate for an improvement in SGBV policies and prevention and support systems. This was the experience in Bangladesh, Egypt and Iran. The advancement of SGBV programming through the support of government and SGBV policies and regulations occurred in situations where political willingness to support SGBV programming was already evident. This was the case in countries like Mexico, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda.
179. With respect to education, interview data suggested that advocacy was only conducive to change when other factors, such as international pressure or existing political support, were at play. Without these, it seemed very difficult to influence change in legislation or government approaches to the education of refugees. This was the experience in Malaysia and Bangladesh, where governments did not support the integration of refugee children and youth into the national education system. Additionally, as previously mentioned, refugee legislation in Mexico was the result of the crisis in Central America, as well as pressure coming from the international community, particularly the United States, with respect to Mexico's role in responding to the displacement of men, women and children.
180. Across countries, on an aggregate level, there are limited examples of the influence of the strategies on the enabling environment. For instance, in 2011 UNHCR had no formal partnerships with ministries of education while, in 2016, 26 have been formalised. This has facilitated an environment where advocacy for the inclusion of refugees in national education sector plans is more favourable. Additionally, Sustainable Development Goal 4 on the quality of education makes mention of this goal being achieved for refugees. These examples stress UNHCR's leadership role in advocacy at the global level, and the contribution of the Education Strategy, released in 2011, to supporting that role.

### **6.2.3 Strengthened partnerships**

181. Although there is evidence that partnerships have been strengthened since 2012, there is no definite evidence that the strategies influenced observed changes around improved coordination mechanisms and strengthened capacity building of partners. Contextual factors such as changing demographics or weak partner landscapes tended to affect implementation and delivery in all three areas of protection policies.
182. For instance, coordination mechanisms were strengthened in Rwanda and in India to address the increasing needs of the population served and the shrinking capacity of the operation in response to these needs. As part of the emergency response, the Rwanda operation increased coordination meetings with partners and local authorities, which allowed for the strong delivery of legal services, such as registration and the issuance of birth certificates. In India, the operation strengthened working groups on SGBV by expanding their membership to include operational partners and community organisations. This was done as a response to the changing demographics of the POC population, as the Rohingyas from Myanmar have become the largest community of refugees and asylum-seekers. Rohingya refugees and POCs tend to live in settlements outside Delhi and are out of the reach of UNHCR, whose only operation is in the capital. Given that the office presence

is in the capital, the country office has very limited outreach capacity. Thus, stronger working groups could facilitate improvements in SGBV coordination, referral mechanisms and service provision.

183. Capacity-building efforts were also motivated by need. In Bangladesh, there is a dearth of partners working on SGBV. The operation has focused on strengthening the technical and administrative capacity of a partner they have had for 10 years, in order to deliver results. Likewise, in Mexico partners have not traditionally served populations of children who identify as LGBTI or who are UASC. The operation is engaging closely with its partners in Mexico City and in the field to guide their thinking around the needs of these populations, as well as improve their delivery of services to them. In Malaysia, the government's refusal to integrate refugee children into the national school system has put added pressure on the operation and its partners to train teachers that can support better teaching quality and school management for refugees. In 2015, capacity building was offered to around 450 teachers, compared to 148 in 2011.

## 6.3 Person of Concern-level results

### 6.3.1 Achievement of strategy objectives

184. To determine the achievement of strategy objectives, the evaluation compared performance indicators measuring outputs as reported in the 2012 and 2016 COP documents. The evaluation team classified the indicators according to the goals and action areas of the strategies, guided by the 'List of Minimum Protection Indicators' prepared by DIP for the country offices. Some indicators measured progress against more than one objective. In such cases, indicators were used to assess the progress on all relevant objectives.
185. To measure progress, the evaluation team compared the operational target and the milestone at the year-end mark (YER) in 2012 to the operational target and the milestone at the mid-year mark (MYR) in 2016. As noted earlier (in Section 4.7 and at the start of this chapter), one of the limitations of the data available was the variability of indicators reported, not just across years but also for different populations of interest within the same year. This is reflected in the tables below, which note 'variable reporting'.
186. The evaluation team did not want to limit assessment of progress only to performance indicators reported in both the COPs of 2012 and 2016. Thus, the analysis looked at both performance and impact indicators reported per year. If all indicators had met their operational target in 2012, the tables below note 'on track'; if not, the tables note 'off track'. The same applies to 2016. If the results were variable, the tables note 'generally on track' (if more than 50% of indicators are met or on track), 'generally off track' (if more than 50% of indicators are off track), or 'variable' (if the numbers of on-track and off-track indicators are the same).
187. As shown in Table 9, Table 10 and Table 11, it is extremely difficult to assess the extent to which the objectives of each of the strategies have been achieved. Inconsistent approaches to reporting over time prevent an assessment of progress against specific indicators. Further, it is worth noting that the pilot countries for the Education Strategy produced reports in the most objective and more consistent manner than was the case with the child protection and SGBV pilot countries. Indeed, the SGBV Strategy had the least number of indicators reported directly against its action areas. Instead, SGBV pilot countries mostly reported on achieved response outputs, such as the extent to which known SGBV survivors receive appropriate support, or the number of survivors receiving psychological counselling and legal assistance. These do not fit with singular action areas but are rather overarching objectives on SGBV core issues. Moreover, from the sample of study countries, most child protection goals did not have any performance indicators measuring outputs reported against them in 2012. In 2016, there is more consistent reporting of performance indicators related to goals 4, 5 and 6 than to goals 1, 2 and 3 of the Child Protection Framework. These changes in the data reported may signal the influence of the rolling out of the strategy on the level of attention that operations pay to monitoring and reporting certain strategy-related objectives, particularly given the guidance provided on reporting against these. Although the reporting may have been influenced by the strategy, however, it is not possible to confidently make the same claim regarding the results yielded and reported on in 2016. The strategy may have been a contributing factor but it is not possible to ascertain the extent and form of the contribution with the data available.

**Table 9: Level of progress on Child Protection Framework objectives**

Country	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6
Egypt	Unreported	Unreported	Unreported	Variable reporting Unreported in 2012 Generally on track in 2016	Variable reporting Unreported in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Variable reporting Unreported in 2012 Off track in 2016
Mexico	Unreported in 2012 Off track in 2016	Unreported	Unreported in 2012 Off track in 2016	Unreported in 2012 Off track in 2016	Unreported in 2012 Off track in 2016	Not achieved in 2012 Off track in 2016
Rwanda	Unreported	Variable reporting for emergency, non-emergency and urban responses	Unreported	Variable reporting Generally off track for 2012 Generally on track or exceeded for 2016	Variable reporting Generally off track for 2012 Generally on track for 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Off track in 2016

Data sources: 2012 COP and 2016 COP (data at mid-year)

**Table 10: Level of progress on Education Strategy objectives**

Country	Action Area 1	Action Area 2	Action Area 3	Action Area 4	Action Area 5	Action Area 6
Bangladesh	Variable reporting Generally on track in 2012 Variable results in 2016	Off track in 2012 Variable results in 2016	Unreported in 2012 Generally on track in 2016	Exceeded in 2012 On track in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Unreported
Egypt	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Off track in 2016	Variable reporting Generally off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Variable reporting Generally off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Variable reporting Generally off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Variable reporting Generally off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Unreported
Iran	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Unreported in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Off track in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Unreported
Rwanda	Variable reporting Variable results in 2012 Generally on track or exceeded in 2016	Unreported	Variable reporting Variable results in 2012 Variable results in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Off track in 2016	Variable reporting Off track in 2012 Generally off track in 2016	Unreported (although Rwanda has emergency model response)

Data sources: 2012 COP and 2016 COP (data at mid-year)

**Table 11: Level of progress on SGBV Strategy objectives**

Country	Action Area 1	Action Area 2	Action Area 3	Action Area 4	Action Area 5	Action Area 6
Bangladesh	Unreported on SGBV On other child protection indicators: Unreported in 2012, variable results in 2016	Unreported in 2012 On track in 2016	Unreported	Unreported	Unreported	Unreported
Egypt	Unreported on SGBV (other child protection indicators in Table 9)	Variable reporting Only reported for non-emergency On track in 2012, exceeded in 2016	Unreported	Unreported	Unreported	Unreported
Rwanda	Unreported on SGBV (other child protection indicators in Table 9)	Variable reporting Variable results in 2012 Generally on track in 2016	Unreported in 2012 On track in 2016	Unreported	Unreported	Unreported

Data sources: 2012 COP and 2016 COP (data at mid-year)

### 6.3.2 Improved protection for POCs

188. To understand the progress toward overall refugee protection, the evaluation has looked at output /performance indicators and at impact indicators measuring results (objectives) in the COPs of 2012 and 2016 (mid-year), as well as data from interviews with POCs during evaluation missions that took place in the first quarter of 2016.

189. The data suggests protection concerns remain strong. The number of reported incidents of child abuse and SGBV remain high. Although reporting has increased in countries like Rwanda, these reports are expected to represent a small percentage of the actual number of abuse and exploitation cases. Additionally, even though measures such as the distribution of sanitation and hygienic materials has been implemented in various case-study countries, reports suggest that unmet basic needs continue to undermine protection results. For instance, in Rwanda refugee women and girls engage in survival transactional sex to be able to purchase hygienic items, like pads and soap. Additionally, some youth engage in criminal activity, like stealing, to feed themselves and to fulfil basic needs.

190. Furthermore, some countries, like Mexico, have had initiatives meant to engage the host community. Accounts of discrimination and bullying of children and youth from Mexico, Egypt and Iran point to the ways in which factors and dynamics relating to host communities undermine protection results. For instance, in both Egypt and Iran, Syrian, Sudanese and Afghan children



faced bullying and street harassment. In Iran, harassment was also perpetrated by school teachers, who had prejudice against Afghan children. In Egypt, mothers related stories of sexual abuse that took place on the way to school and at school. This prevented many children and youth, particularly females, from wanting to continue with their education.

191. It is also important to note the vulnerabilities of UASC, who do not have immediate family and support networks to rely on. Some UASC are not literate, and claim processes become difficult and arduous. In some cases, like in Mexico, this is further compounded with barriers to psychological and legal support, when the children are in detention centres. As discussed below, the conditions in detention centres are often too deplorable for children and youth to wait for a decision to be made on their case, prompting them to seek deportation. In Rwanda, many UASC and parents pointed to the difficulties of living as a child, alone. A common example given regarded the delivery of food in the camps, which takes place during school hours, preventing UASC from attending class those days.
192. It is challenging to establish definitive evidence as to whether protection results for POCs have improved as a result of the roll-out of the global strategies. As discussed in Section 5.1, although the level of adaptation was generally high it is not possible to compare levels of operationalisation of the strategies, given the different indicators used. Additionally, it is difficult to assess the direct influence the strategies have had on systems and strategic objectives, which prevents us from offering conclusive evidence to directly attribute changes in protection results for refugees and other POCs to the rolling out of the strategies. Thus, the evaluative analysis is limited to a discussion of the achievement of protection results relating to the issues highlighted by the data from the five countries visited by the evaluation team.

## 6.4 External factors influencing results

193. The following are the main factors influencing the achievement of protection outcomes, based on data from the five case-study countries. The factors highlighted in the data are external to the UNHCR. Although the strategies are meant to be adapted to ever-changing contexts, contextual factors – rather than the adapted strategies – were cited in interviews and document review data as stronger factors of influence on results.

### 6.4.1 Cultural factors

194. Customs and social norms were found to sometimes influence whether people of concern access certain services and programming. In Iran, many families are conservative and limit women's access to education and public life at large. This is a concern of particular importance to Afghan communities, where families do not send their daughters to school (2016 COP, p. 37), thus affecting the reach that the UNHCR's education programmes in schools can have.
195. In Bangladesh, interview data from country office staff revealed that survivors often choose not to report abuse. In some cases, survivors' families opt for settling the case in exchange for money, or the survivor is compelled to marry the perpetrator. Known rape survivors frequently face stigma and harassment from the community. Stigma around SGBV is also faced by survivors in Egypt and Rwanda.

### 6.4.2 Inability to reach refugees

196. Some operations have faced major constraints accessing refugees. In Rwanda, this was caused by a government decision in April 2016 to restrict access to refugee camps by donors and representatives of diplomatic missions. This hindered donor monitoring and led to significant delays in receiving locally pledged contributions from some of UNHCR's major donors. However, advocacy by UNHCR and donors has led to some progress on the issue of camp restrictions (2016 COP, p. 65).
197. Likewise in Iran, access to refugees has been limited by arbitrary detention. In 2014, for instance, the UNHCR responded to 107 cases of detention. Further, authorities prevent access of UNHCR

staff to detention centres. Thus, detained refugees do not have unobstructed access to UNHCR programming or to assistance on making asylum claims (2016 COP, p. 60).

### 6.4.3 Poverty

198. Poverty as a factor influencing the achievement of results was consistently highlighted by interview and document review data. In Egypt, results on Action Area 4 remain challenging, as students completing their secondary education face difficulties in continuing with university or formal vocational education due to tuition costs (2012 COP, p. 45).
199. Poverty often leads youth to develop negative coping mechanisms. In Rwanda, refugees identified food, wood and clothing as their major needs in all FGDs conducted there. Although partners in Rwanda work closely with government and the UNHCR to provide access to education, access to food and meals is a major barrier that has led many students to drop out of school. Uniforms were also a barrier to education. In response to such problems, adolescents and children have turned to stealing. Although education is provided to refugee children, access to food and uniforms lead them to adopt coping mechanisms that, in turn, increase their vulnerability and undermine their protection. The same applies to parents who are often in desperate situations to provide for their families, and take equally desperate measures to ensure they meet their basic needs. Parents reported relying on their children working to cope with a context of scarcity. In response to these difficulties, refugee adults have also adopted risky forms of coping. Refugees struggling to exercise their right to work are more likely to enter informal economy and exploitative work.
200. Further, as described earlier, poverty and limited livelihoods options are linked to survival transactional sex, raising the risk of women and girls of experiencing SGBV.

### 6.4.4 Refugee living conditions

201. The living conditions in camps and detention centres often undermine protection results. Detention centres in Mexico are crowded and interview data revealed asylum-seekers struggled with access to nutritious diets, high levels of boredom, and very low morale and sense of hope. These were some of the reasons why asylum-seekers withdrew their applications. Given that detention is unfit for prolonged stays, it plays a significant role in discouraging individuals to submit asylum claims or appeal negative asylum decisions (2016 COP, p. 47). This situation affects UASC primarily. According to UNHCR protection staff in Mexico City, their data show that more than 35% of adolescents who make asylum claims will withdraw their claims and abandon the process because of detention conditions.
202. Document review data elicited similarly poor living conditions in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Although the refugee situation in the camps in Bangladesh spans over two decades, the modalities of assistance still resemble those that would be employed in an emergency situation, which leads to overcrowding and increased overall protection concerns, particularly in relation to SGBV.

### 6.4.5 Government policies

203. Government policies have proven to be significant influencing factors on the protection of people of concern. In Bangladesh, no national policies or frameworks exist to directly address SGBV against POCs. Further, the justice system does not reliably deal with SGBV cases in a timely manner, and survivors face barriers to accessing the justice system. This contributes to low rates of reporting, as survivors distrust the response systems in place. In turn, the UNHCR and its partners face difficulties in identifying those individuals in need of psychosocial and legal support.
204. Moreover, in Bangladesh, refugee children are not allowed to study in government or local non-government schools outside the camps. Camp schools are unaccredited, meaning that refugee students cannot receive the certificates that would allow them to transfer to schools outside the camps in the national system. This makes it particularly difficult to access secondary school and university.



205. Similar challenges are faced in Egypt, where the Ministry of Higher Education requests secondary school certificates before admission to colleges and universities is granted (2016 COP, p. 52). Although concentrated advocacy efforts are ongoing to ease the documentation requirements, results on Action Area 4 of the Education Strategy are constrained by this documentation issue. It is important to highlight, however, that access to education in public schools in Egypt has been expanded to Sudanese and Syrian refugees. This access was agreed upon in 2016, and is a positive step for refugees from Syria and Sudan.

#### **6.4.6 Emergencies**

206. Emergencies put operations in difficult positions, as they struggle to distribute sufficient resources to respond to a crisis while also keeping their non-emergency response stable. In Egypt, the influx of refugees due to the Syrian crisis increased the number of POCs, in particular of UASC, within Egypt. The 2016 COP reflected challenges for refugees in accessing education and other services. The document points to the deteriorating socioeconomic situation in the country and ongoing inflation, which have had a negative impact on the integration and livelihood opportunities of refugees, in particular regarding access to employment, public schools and health.
207. Interview data from both Mexico and Rwanda reveal similar difficulties in achieving results during a crisis. In Rwanda, UNHCR staff highlighted the struggle between offering basic needs and livelihoods, as well as implementing longer-term protection programming, in a context of resource constraints. Not only do emergencies increase the responsibilities and demand for action by country operations and their partners, but the nature of a crisis puts refugees in particularly vulnerable positions.

## 7 Conclusions

208. This chapter provides the evaluation conclusions, based on the main findings captured earlier in this report. It first provides high level broad conclusions, followed by some more detailed conclusions for each of the three headline evaluation questions.

### 7.1 Overall Conclusions

209. The three strategies have been useful in that they have provided consistent and high-quality frameworks of guidance to country offices on how to approach three critical areas of protection policy. They have, to varying and significant degrees, been adapted and implemented in almost all the pilot countries whose experience has been reviewed as part of the evaluation. The support to adaptation was appreciated by country offices. This has resulted in country-level strategies and the inclusion of some specific action areas in COPs. It is, however, difficult to identify results and changes that can be clearly contributed at the country level to the strategies. Changes identified in the protection provided to POCs appeared principally to reflect national contextual factors rather than being clearly driven by the strategies.

210. In practice, the three strategies could be seen as performing two main types of function. The first is to provide a core set of policies in important areas of protection that should be followed by country offices, and for which progress is required to be tracked and measured. The second is to provide guidance to country offices in how to deal with challenges that they may encounter in addressing these areas. With respect to the first function, the strategies may be seen as insufficiently prescriptive and insufficiently closely monitored to ensure that these policies and principles are in fact being implemented and followed. In regard to the second, the strategies (and the supporting documentation and processes) do not provide sufficiently structured guidance on how to deal with the sorts of challenges that country offices in fact encounter.

211. The limitations of the strategies partly reflect issues specific to the strategies themselves (that could potentially be addressed through changes to the strategies and their supporting processes) and partly reflect ways in which UNHCR's planning and budgeting procedures and context militate against strategic management and strategy implementation that are more deeply embedded. Specifically, the evaluation highlighted the following issues:

- The strategies are not based on clearly articulated assumptions or theories of change.
- Although the role and purpose of the strategies is documented, significant uncertainty and confusion was found among both HQ and country office staff about the precise status and purpose of the strategies and their relationship to other strategic guidance.
- Insufficient guidance has been provided about how to interpret and implement them in the very different types of context that country offices face.
- The frameworks of objectives set out in the strategies are of varying degrees of precision and measurability.
- UNHCR's monitoring and reporting system, which provides a high level of discretion to country offices in the selection of monitoring indicators, makes it difficult to track performance in relation to the strategies over time or to compare performance across countries.
- UNHCR country offices may lack the skills (particularly in relation to SGBV and child protection) and resources to fully adapt and implement the strategies.
- The fact that the COP process is based around a single year budget with considerable uncertainty about, and fluctuations in, resource availability militates against coherent strategy planning and implementation.

## 7.2 Are the three strategies relevant, coherent, informed by evidence and adequately designed?

### 7.2.1 Strategy purpose

212. The evaluation team could not identify a definitive statement of what the purpose of the strategies was, and how they were expected to be used by country offices. The data collected seems to suggest that, while there appears to be a common view at the HQ level on the purpose of the strategies, this vision is not reflected in the form and structure of the strategies (for example, with the Education Strategy offering more concise and detailed objectives, while the Child Protection 'Framework' and SGBV Strategy had more general goals) and was not adequately communicated to and/or understood by country offices. A key distinction arising from interview data from country offices and HQ is that country office staff understood the strategies were meant to be implemented as standalone documents, whereas HQ staff understood strategy implementation as the use of the strategies as frameworks providing high-level objectives and general direction. In other words, there was a discrepancy in the way strategies were understood, i.e. as either strategic plans to direct programmatic decisions or as guiding frameworks to consider when making those programmatic decisions.
213. The global strategies have offered, in the case of child protection and SGBV, general guidance on priority areas of work, with general objectives not easily measurable. For these guidance documents to have been used as strategies, the country-level strategies would have required specific and measurable objectives. In the case of education, the objectives were too specific at the global level and general at the country level. This analysis points to limitations in the adaptation process, which was completed in a context of different understanding of the purpose of the strategies.

### 7.2.3 Strategy design and monitoring

214. The SGBV strategy is based on previous versions that were implemented up to 2012, and each of the three strategies was based on specific concerns related to shortcomings in perceived UNHCR performance. The Education Strategy and the Child Protection Framework are comprehensive and intend to cover all UNHCR activities in these protection areas, while the SGBV Strategy emphasises six specific areas (updating the original strategy).
215. The development of each strategy was led by the respective protection area senior advisers in DIP and they were shared with HQ colleagues, including regional bureaux, and partner organisations before finalisation. For instance, the Education Strategy was based on an external review of global refugee education carried out in 2011, including extensive consultation with refugees. The design of the Strategy was supported by a broad external reference group of education representatives from UN Agencies, NGOs and Academia for the duration of strategy development. Based on the data reviewed by the evaluation team, the process followed to develop the strategies is not systematically captured in the strategy documents. On the whole the strategies do not systematically present evidence to make a case for the strategic objectives proposed, and the SGBV Strategy makes limited mention of the data sources used in its preparation.
216. The approaches are generally well aligned with relevant current international agendas, emphasise partnerships and the need for a multi-sectoral approach, and are coherent with international refugee law and relevant international targets and conventions. The strategies are coherent with each other despite their separate preparation processes and using differences in terminology and structure.
217. The strategies do not set out a clear pathway (e.g. a theory of change) specifying how the suggested activities will contribute to the strategic objectives and nor do they cover the key assumptions that underlie the envisaged causal links. Although there is a limit to how much global strategies can and should be context-specific, the current strategies do not sufficiently acknowledge the different types of context within which UNHCR operates, and the implications of this for how

strategies could be implemented. The strategies also do not discuss the conditions that may influence the achievement of objectives nor the rationale for prioritising certain goals or action areas.

218. The Education Strategy sets out clear goals while those of the Child Protection Framework are more broadly formulated, and the SGBV Strategy does not propose clear or measurable objectives. The measurability of performance against the strategies has been strengthened by the development of DIP's Integrated Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the three strategies, and the integrated and strategy-specific monitoring and reporting plans in 2013. However, the goals, objectives and action areas of the three strategies are not necessarily embedded in UNHCR's Results Framework. Some of the strategies' areas are aligned with the Results Framework but others are not. This is particularly a problem for the SGBV Strategy

### **7.3.3 Strategy rollout and relevance to country offices**

219. The three strategies were considered by country offices to be generally relevant to national contexts and generally compatible with government approaches.

220. However, country offices considered the Education Strategy objectives to be too ambitious and the Child Protection Framework to provide insufficient detailed guidance on how to take forward implementation.

221. The strategies discuss, to a very limited extent, the difficulty in collecting reliable data and the implications of this for the implementation of the strategies at country level.

222. Each of the strategies includes a roll-out plan and supporting documents. While the strategies have been widely cited across UNHCR, there was evidence of competition among the strategies, strategy fatigue at country office level and a lack of clarity about the precise role of the three strategies, how they related to other strategic guidance provided, including from DPSM, and prioritisation.

## **7.3 To what extent have the strategies been implemented?**

### **7.3.1 Adaptation and implementation of the strategies**

223. The strategies were adapted to a significant extent in the 15 pilot countries studied, particularly through the creation of standalone thematic strategies that adopted at least half of the strategy action areas and goals. This was done for 12/13 piloting countries for education, 10/12 for SGBV and for all seven for child protection. Supportive engagement and practical guidance provided by DIP was mainly reported as playing a useful role in supporting country-level adaptation for the Child Protection Framework.

224. For all strategies, the adaptation process was greatly assisted by baseline and participatory needs assessments in some countries, and through the assistance of thematic working groups and partners, with the latter being particularly important for the SGBV Strategy, as well as community-level groups (for SGBV and child protection). Engagement with government line ministries was in particular important for the education and child protection strategies.

225. In relation to the inclusion of activities in COPs, the SGBV Strategy had the greatest influence, while being a SGBV Strategy pilot country increased the likelihood that child protection activities were incorporated in the COP. As nearly all countries were already including in their 2012 COP education activities corresponding to the Education Strategy action areas, the direct influence of the education strategy on inclusion could not be ascertained.

226. Most of the five case-study countries are implementing activities that cover all the action areas but are not reporting against most of these. For child protection, reporting against indicators that include

activities being implemented is uneven, while for SGBV the inputs monitored and reported in the COP most precisely cover the activities being implemented.

### 7.3.2 Factors of influence

227. Factors influencing country-level adaptation and implementation include:

- Political context – positively, where there were changes in government priorities or the development of national government policies on refugees, and negatively where national protective policies were poorly implemented or access to refugees was restricted by national governments.
- Availability and capacity of partners facilitated implementation, particularly when partners had experience in delivering specific programming or activities.
- Technical capacity and time availability of UNHCR country staff, and support from HQ (DIP). Limited staff capacity particularly affected implementation of the SGBV Strategy because of its specialist requirements. Senior-level staff engagement was also inadequate in some cases.
- While some non-traditional sources of funding were found to support strategy implementation, shortfalls of funding were a constraint, particularly for the Education Strategy.
- The implementation context, including the extent to which refugees were in camps compared to urban settings, emergencies compared to protracted situations, as well as changes in security conditions.
- Effective coordination arrangements particularly where state, NGO and community actors are each represented in child protection forums facilitated by UNHCR. This factor highlights UNHCR's leadership role in relation to coordination and fostering partnerships in-country. The UNHCR acting as a catalyst for partnership and collaboration has facilitated the implementation of protection programming, particularly in emergency settings (such as Rwanda).
- Cultural challenges and social norms were constraints for the SGBV Strategy.

### 7.3.3 Contribution to results at different levels (system and individual /PoC)

228. UNHCR's monitoring and reporting system has significant limitations for assessing the results achieved either at system<sup>55</sup> or POC level. This reflects the fact that reporting does not take place against a consistent set of indicators directly related to strategy objectives either across countries or over time. In addition, where there is some evidence of change it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which this can be attributed to the strategies rather than to specific features of the national contexts.

229. The flexibility in indicator selection allowed to country offices (and the lack of consistency between the minimum core indicators and the indicators recommended in strategy monitoring and reporting plans) significantly limits the extent to which performance can be tracked in a consistent way across countries and over time. Guidance notes and tools provide limited guidance or support to country operations about how to generate data on indicators.

230. The comparison of the COPs for 2012 and 2016 for the five case-study countries did not allow a conclusive assessment of progress because of a lack of consistency in the indicators reported against, or reporting was too incomplete to allow any conclusions to be drawn. Having said that, reporting against indicators for the Education Strategy was more consistent and complete than for the other two strategies.

231. There was no conclusive evidence of the strategies contributing to improvements in the enabling environment through advocacy. Generally, positive developments (for instance in SGBV) occurred

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<sup>55</sup> System level results refer to a) improved core protection services; b) enabling environment; and c) strengthened partnerships.

in countries that already had relatively favourable environments, or where pressures external to UNHCR (such as pressure from the international community in response to a crisis) exist. While there was some evidence of strengthened partnership arrangements in the case-study countries, it was not possible to identify if and how the strategies had contributed to this.

232. Based on the ten additional case-study countries in relation to education there was no conclusive and definite evidence of improvements in capacity, internal coordination or monitoring (as reflected particularly by the document review). The SGBV and child protection strategies do appear to have had some positive influence on country operations' core protection systems since the goals and actions areas highlighted had not previously been a focus of country operations activity. However, education systems related to the action areas in the Education Strategy were already generally in place in piloted countries prior to strategy roll-out.

### **7.3.4 Factors of influence**

233. Factors influencing results include:

- Cultural factors – negatively, as customs and social norms were found to influence whether people of concern access certain services and programming, such as education and SGBV support.
- Ability of the UNHCR to reach refugees due to government-set constraints to access, which in turn prevented refugees from accessing UNHCR and partner support.
- Poverty – negatively, as it often leads POCs to develop negative coping mechanisms, and engage in activities like stealing and survival transactional sex.
- Refugee living conditions tend to undermine protection results, as POCs struggle with nutrition, boredom and poor mental health, often leading them to abandon asylum claims, especially if they are awaiting results in detention centres.
- Government policies can positively or negatively influence results, depending on whether the policies are in line with the goals of the strategies, and whether they support response mechanisms necessary to ensure the protection of POCs.
- Emergencies – negatively, given that operations entail the further stretching of limited operational resources to serve the immediate needs of POCs in particularly vulnerable positions.



## 8 Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure a clear purpose, target audience and consistent approach and terminology of protection strategies.**

UNHCR should ensure that if thematic protection strategies are developed in the future, these protection strategies:

- (a) include a clear statement on purpose;
- (b) specify the target audience and how the protection strategy should be used;
- (c) apply a coherent and consistent approach and terminology both within each strategy document and across different strategies;
- (d) are effectively led and consistently supported across UNHCR at all management levels.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure measurability of thematic protection strategies.**

To the extent that thematic protection strategies define global level objectives (or outcomes) in support of advancing global strategic directions, UNHCR should ensure that:

- (a) the logic model or casual pathways and related assumptions showing how the types of action proposed are anticipated as contributing to achieving the objectives are made explicit;
- (b) a set of core indicators to be used across all countries is defined and agreed *prior to* the issuance of the strategies;
- (c) and the necessary systems, approaches and capacities to measure progress are identified, taking into consideration differences in the operational contexts for Country Offices.
- (d) The set of core indicators should be prescriptive to allow for comparisons over time, as well as between countries where the same frameworks have been rolled out. COs should have discretion to add additional indicators.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve communication on protection strategies.**

UNHCR should improve communication across the organisation about the purpose of protection strategies both as they are issued and during roll-out and adaptation.

### **Recommendation 4: Plan and provide appropriate guidance and support.**

UNHCR should provide appropriate forms of support and guidance to assist Country Offices in strategic planning and prioritization, incorporating protection strategies into programmatic and strategic decision-making and implementation (roll out and country-level adaptation), while ensuring an integrated approach across protection and with other protection units. The forms of support and guidance required should be responsive to expressed Country Office needs and preferences and are expected to include guidance on prioritization and on addressing interlinkages across strategies and functional areas.

### **Recommendation 5: Appropriate resourcing of strategy implementation.**

UNHCR should review the staffing and other resource implications for country operations to be able to adapt and implement thematic protection strategies. This would include assessing when and how additional staff should be deployed/contracted.



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