



Data for Children COVID-19 Workbook

(Re)Prioritizing data investments

October 2020

DATA FOR CHILDREN COVID-19 WORKBOOK

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This workbook is designed to support country offices in identifying the best ways to (re)deploy limited data resources in the face of COVID-19. Going through the workbook and prioritization process involves four steps:

Complete the workbook

Interested offices will start by working through the first two chapters of the workbook: Chapter 1, focused on a whole-of-office overview and Chapter 2, on data needed in specific sectors.

Chapter 1 should take about three hours to complete; Chapter 2 should take about one hour per sector.

Get a pulse check

After completing the first two chapters, offices will send their work to the Data Use Team through the [Data Help Desk](#). We'll review the answers and bring together the most relevant colleagues for a video discussion with you about potential ways forward, based on your specific context.

Once you send the workbook, we'll schedule a call within 7-10 days to provide feedback and investment ideas.

Draft the plan

Offices will then identify and decide on their priorities, building a simple action plan to move forward in reorienting their data investments.

Generating ideas and discussing priorities should take approximately two 90-minute sessions; consolidating the agreed actions should take approximately two hours.

Put the plan into action

After sharing the action plan with the Data Use Team, we'll review it and match you with any available tools and resources that can help you implement your plan.

This workbook includes:

- Chapter 1: Questions about cross-cutting data issues
- Chapter 2: Questions about the data needs and opportunities by sector
- Chapter 3: Questions to consider when prioritizing investments
- Chapter 4: Sample action plan template
- Optional: Data catalogue worksheet

This process is intended to be rapid and informal. If your team is interested in a more systematic review of your data investments, please reach out through the [Data Help Desk](#) so that we can match you with the best resources for your needs.



Chapter 1: Cross-cutting data issues

This chapter is designed to identify key country office priorities and how these may have been affected by the pandemic and to identify the opportunities, risks and potential leverage points going forward. The scope should encompass both humanitarian and development priorities, both potentially affected by the COVID-19 context.

Before starting: Make this document accessible in a shared drive so that sectoral leads can add information on the cross-sectoral data landscape and review the data to inform their own responses at the sectoral level.

Collate and provide shared access to key reference documents. You may want to include:

- National development strategy and/or National SDG reporting
- National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (if one exists)
- CPD
- Most recent CCA and Situation Analysis
- Any recent pre-COVID humanitarian risk analysis doc (from INFORM)
- More recent COVID-specific context analysis doc as available
- Key figures on status of COVID 19 pandemic and control and mitigation measures
- Insight CO dashboard;
- Programme Strategy Notes
- Documentation for UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal and/or Emergency Preparedness Plan (pre-COVID and COVID specific as relevant)

When you are finished: Once this section is completed, share it with sectoral colleagues for review and invite them to complete the sectoral guides in the following section. Once completed, all these documents will should be shared with the regional and global focal points. We will schedule a video call to review and discuss the workbooks with the most relevant focal points in order to provide you feedback for developing an action plan.

Rough notes and bullet points are fine (and encouraged!) here, as long as any acronyms or descriptions will also make sense to a colleague from HQ or the regional office. The text does not need to be polished in any way.

Most of these questions will also be answered at a sectoral level, so answers here should focus on cross-cutting or whole-of-office issues.

Country office context

Current country plan timeframe and planned timeframe for next country plan:

Office size (# of staff/consultants and annual non-salary budget, including RR, OR and ORE):

Current COVID-19 case load of pandemic and major control measures in place:

Key issues

1. Please list the major country office priorities prior to the pandemic.
2. How are the key priorities for children prior to the pandemic likely to be impacted, either in how they are prioritized or implemented? Consider both development priorities and any pre-COVID humanitarian action priorities.
3. Have new priorities arisen as a result of the pandemic and the government response?
4. Is the office focusing on particularly vulnerable groups or geographies likely to have been disproportionately impacted by COVID or the response? If so, which groups and what evidence is available to identify the impacts of the pandemic and response measures on them?
5. What are the key humanitarian risks in your setting, aside from the pandemic (weather-related, conflict-related, etc.)? Has the current pandemic affected your capacity to prepare for or respond to these risks?
6. Is population movement a significant issue in your context? If so, do you have sufficient evidence to understand how this has changed due to the pandemic?

Data availability

7. How complete are birth registration and death registration in the national CRVS? Is this likely to have been significantly affected by COVID-19?
8. Have the census, MICS or DHS been delayed due to the pandemic response? If yes, what is the anticipated impact of that delay on your data needs? Are there any current or potential strategies to address your data needs?
9. Are there specialized data collections or platforms in place for emergencies or humanitarian needs (e.g. FEWSNET (food security nutrition), UNHCR / IOM refugee

and DTM data, MRM CAAC reporting, cluster reporting and needs overviews, etc.)? If so, please list the most relevant ones, provide links where possible.

10. Do you have the data/ information you need to plan and respond to key issues for children effectively? What additional data or evidence do you need to be more effective in your response (describe – what/ how often/ what level of detail). What are the key barriers that prevent you from having the data you need when you need it? Consider both your needs in the next six months as well as longer term.
11. Do you feel the government has the data/ information it needs to respond effectively to key issues (particularly those arising due to the pandemic)? If not, what are the key barriers that prevent relevant government officials from having the data they need when they need it?
12. Has the availability or quality of data available to you been affected as a result of the pandemic (for example - delayed surveys/ less capacity to respond to data requests/ changes in the functioning of or access to systems)?
13. Is there any work planned by UNICEF or others that would help address the challenges you've outlined above?
14. Are there any new data collection efforts ongoing or planned as a response to the pandemic? If so, briefly describe the data being collected, scope, purpose, etc.

Data use

15. Are the available data being used to help UNICEF drive its programming and COVID response in your sector? If not, what are the key barriers that hold back data use? (Consider staff skills, time, resources, political obstacles, etc.)
16. Are the available data being used to help the government drive its programming and COVID response in your sector? If not, what are the key barriers that hold back data use? (Consider staff skills, time, resources, political obstacles, etc.)
17. Do the office and relevant government agencies have and know how to use sufficient information to manage supply chain and logistics concerns?
18. Are you able to complete all key indicators on the bi-monthly situational report? What is your level of confidence in the reliability of the data you have for that reporting?

19. Has the government implemented new surveillance systems for individuals (case tracking using mobile phones, facial recognition, digital surveillance or monitoring) that were not already in place prior to the pandemic? If yes, please briefly describe the programmes.

UNICEF in the data landscape

20. Please list any major investments UNICEF is currently making in data systems or data collection efforts, as part of either development or humanitarian programming. Include both purpose and scope of involvement if possible.

21. Is UNICEF investing significantly in any data or evidence efforts that are less of a priority in the current context? Could any of this support be scaled back or postponed?

22. What capacity or assets does UNICEF have to help fill critical data gaps or improve data use to strengthen COVID response or rebuilding?

23. Does UNICEF currently have a leadership role on data in the UNCT or other national data coordination mechanisms?

24. Do you see opportunities that we should consider leveraging to build systems back stronger once the immediate pressure of the pandemic response subsides?



Chapter 2: Data needs and opportunities by sector

This chapter is designed to identify key sectoral priorities and how these may have been affected by the pandemic and to identify the opportunities, risks and potential leverage points going forward.

Before starting: Sectoral leads should review the draft answers in Chapter 1 - both to add any information that should be recorded in general context/ cross-sectoral discussion and to help frame your responses in this section.

Rough notes and bullet points are fine (and encouraged!) here, as long as any acronyms or descriptions will also make sense to a colleague from HQ or the regional office. The text does not need to be polished in any way.

Answers regarding specific data needs or opportunities related to humanitarian preparedness, response, or recovery can be included either in Chapter 1 on cross-cutting needs or embedded within specific sectoral responses if appropriate.

- Education
- Health (including HIV)
- Nutrition
- Child Protection
- Social Protection
- WASH
- C4D/Communications
- T4D/ Innovation
- Other: _____

Key issues in your sector

1. Please list the three biggest areas of UNICEF work in this sector prior to the pandemic.
2. Have these main areas changed as a result of the pandemic and the government response, either in how they are prioritized or implemented? Consider both development priorities and any pre-COVID humanitarian action priorities.
3. Have new priorities arisen in your sector as a result of the pandemic and the government response?
4. In your sector, are there specific groups or geographies likely to have been disproportionately impacted by COVID or the response?

Data availability

5. Do you have the data/ information you need to plan and respond to key issues effectively? What additional data or evidence do you need to be more effective in your response (describe – what/ how often/ what level of detail). What are the key barriers that prevent you from having the data you need when you need it? Consider both your needs in the next six months as well as longer term.
6. Do you feel the government has the data/ information it needs to respond effectively to key issues in your sector (particularly those arising due to the pandemic)? If not, what are the key barriers that prevent relevant government officials from having the data they need when they need it?
7. Has the availability or quality of data available to you been affected as a result of the pandemic (for example - delayed surveys/ less capacity to respond to data requests/ changes in the functioning of or access to systems)?
8. Is there any work planned by UNICEF or others that would help address these challenges?
9. In your sector, are there any new data collection efforts ongoing or planned as a response to the pandemic? If so, briefly describe the data being collected, scope, purpose, etc.

Data use

10. Are the available data being used to help UNICEF drive its programming and COVID response in your sector? If not, what are the key barriers that hold back data use? (Consider staff skills, time, resources, political obstacles, etc.)

11. Are the available data being used to help the government drive its programming and COVID response in your sector? If not, what are the key barriers that hold back data use? (Consider staff skills, time, resources, political obstacles, etc.)

UNICEF in the data landscape

12. Please list any major investments UNICEF is currently making in data systems or data collection efforts in your sector. Include both purpose and scope of involvement if possible.

13. Is UNICEF investing significantly in any data or evidence efforts that are less of a priority in the current context? Could any of this support be scaled back or postponed?

14. In your sector, what capacity or assets does UNICEF have to help fill critical data gaps or improve data use to strengthen COVID response or rebuilding?

15. Do you see opportunities that we should consider leveraging to build systems back stronger once the immediate pressure of the pandemic response subsides?

Key reference documents

Please link or name any key reference documents that you think should be considered in this review. These might include available data that aren't currently being fully utilized, sectoral data plans, data gaps analyses, etc.



Chapter 3: Questions to consider when prioritizing data investments

It isn't necessary to write down answers to these questions; they are here just to guide discussion within the office on how to identify and prioritize needed investments.

Identifying potential actions

When we don't have appropriate data to inform decision making by UNICEF, government or other partners, consider:

- What level of accuracy do we need to inform our planning and programming?
- What level of frequency do we need?
- Are there specific subgroups or geographies for which we need more detailed information?
- Does anyone else (partners, government, private sector) have this information or an appropriate proxy?
- If the data are not available, who is in the best position to collect, interpret and use them?
- How will we assure that the data, if collected, will be used to influence decision-making?

When we do have the appropriate data, but they are not being used by UNICEF, government or other partners, consider:

- Are the data in formats that are readily understood by those making decisions?
- Do the right people know about and have access to the data?
- Are the data made available at the times when they are likely to influence decision-making?
- Is there a reason decision-makers might not trust the data or whoever is sharing it?
- Is there political resistance to using the data?

Prioritizing the highest impact investments

Below are some considerations when moving through the potential areas of investment.

Which potential investments:

- Would have the biggest impact on programming or investments?
- Could be or have already been covered by other partners?
- Could be undertaken with relatively small investments of time or money?
- Can deliver actionable insights in time to influence immediate or near-term COVID response needs?
- Build on existing structures, systems, and partnerships (vs. those that would be starting something new)?
- Can be built on to create more sustainable systems after the crisis fades?
- Might create momentum for future investments from others?
- Would put the country in a better position to respond to future emergencies?

You should also consider which existing data investments could be paused, scaled down, or redirected to free up human and financial resources for new needs.



Chapter 4: Sample action plan template

Once the office has decided on priority areas for reorienting its data investments, it's time to put those priorities into an actionable (and easily monitored) plan.

The template below is a simple start for putting ideas into an actionable format; feel free to adapt it to whatever best suits the needs of your context. For an example completed action plan, you can review [the work of the Botswana Country Office](#) (pages 14-15 are most relevant).

Once the office has completed this exercise, the action plan can be shared with the Data Use team in New York. We will work with relevant colleagues to connect you with the best available resources to help implement the plan.

Expected Outcome	Outputs/Activities	What is required?	Timeframe	Priority/importance	Potential resources and partners	Sustainability and other considerations	Office focal point



Optional: Catalogue of major data systems and sources

Some offices may be interested in putting together a more detailed catalogue of the data and systems that are already available in the country – including national administrative data systems, pilot systems or collections that UNICEF is supporting, periodic national surveys such as a MICS or DHS, one off sectoral surveys or rapid assessments/collections that have been undertaken in response to COVID-19.

While it will add more time to the process, compiling this catalogue can be very useful in order to:

- Have a single place where the most important data sources and systems can be referenced by anyone in the office;
- Identify data that exist but may not be routinely used in all the places they might add value; or
- Highlight duplicative efforts either by UNICEF, partners, or government that could be streamlined to free up resources.

We recommend considering the following categories when developing a data inventory:

Data system/ major surveys in last 2-3 years (with date)	Hyperlink to data or system	Description (ownership, purpose, frequency, type of data collected, etc.)	Coverage & gaps (geographic, groups included and excluded, etc.)	Publication and reporting (how is data made available to government, to UNICEF to the public.	Value / use of data (pre-COVID, short-term, longer-term)	UNICEF role/niche