



**Evaluation of
UNICEF Supply Division's
Supply Community Strategy**
Final report

Foreword

We are pleased to present the final report of the external evaluation of the Supply Community Strategy of UNICEF.

The selection of methods, data collection, and analysis of the data gathered in the framework of the evaluation and report writing have been conducted independently from SD by the external evaluation team. This ensures the impartiality of the evaluation, and that it can be used for accountability purposes by UNICEF.

The evaluation team declares that no conflicts of interests were present in this external evaluation. UNICEF SD managed the evaluation through an Evaluation Reference Group, who reviewed and commented deliverables in the project. These comments have been taken into account by the evaluation team where these improve the quality of the deliverables and did not threaten the editorial independence of the evaluation team.

We want to thank all respondents taking part in this evaluation from SD, Regional Offices, and Country Offices, as well as UNICEF HQ. The willingness of members of the Supply Community to cooperate in this evaluation is an indicator of their commitment towards improving the Supply Community.

Special thanks to the members of the Reference Group, and more specifically Ashley Wax and Lena Romer, for introducing us to the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the strategy.

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The purpose of publishing all evaluation reports is to fulfil a corporate commitment to transparency. The reports are designed to stimulate a free exchange of ideas among those interested in the topic and to assure those supporting the work of UNICEF that it rigorously examines its strategies, results, and overall effectiveness. The content of the report does not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF. The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UNICEF accepts no responsibility for error.

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Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CC	Contracting Centre
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
COP	Community of Practice
CSU	Country Support Unit
DO	Director's Office
EAPRO	East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HRC	Human Resources Centre
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IP	International Professional
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
KMU	Knowledge Management Unit
L&D	Learning and Development
L&D Plan	Professional Learning and Development Plan 2015-2017
LACRO	Latin America & Caribbean Regional Office
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MTSP	Medium-term Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NO	National Officer
NY	New York
NYHQ	New York Headquarters
OECD	Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development
OMP	Office Management Plan
RO	Regional Office
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
RSA	Regional Supply Advisor
SD	Supply Division
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

SFE	Evaluation of the Global Supply Function
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TOC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WBG	World Bank Group

1. Introduction

1.1 The Supply function in UNICEF

The Supply function is critical to UNICEF's ability to deliver goods and services to children as effectively and efficiently as possible. Currently, UNICEF employs approximately 1,000 Supply staff in 99 offices across 94 countries.¹ They form the Supply Community, working together to support each component of the supply chain in the following activities:

- Definition of needs
- Budgeting and planning procurement
- Procurement
- Delivery and clearance
- Inspection
- Warehousing, distribution and reorder
- Utilization by the end-user
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

In this effort, UNICEF Supply activities include humanitarian preparedness and response, product innovation, and market influencing. Supply staff in Regional and Country Offices are assigned a range of specialized roles to support the supply chain. Supply officers, logisticians, procurement assistants, warehouse managers, market and monitoring analysts, technical experts (WASH, medicines, vaccines, education, nutrition, etc.), and quality assurance experts work with officers responsible for shipping, contracting, finance, budget, accounts, Human Resources and M&E.

The Supply Community includes 350 members based in Supply Division (SD), Copenhagen, who fulfil a variety of global support functions and coordinate the work of Supply within the wider organization. SD defines the following core activities as its critical functions:²

- Support UNICEF programmes with an effective, efficient supply operation
- Help meet UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action with rapid response to provide emergency supply and logistical needs
- Support and monitor the performance of the global supply operation
- Provide procurement services to governments and development partners for strategic essential supplies
- Serve as a centre of expertise and knowledge on essential supplies for children and product innovation
- Establish policies for supply chain activities
- Lead UNICEF's work in innovation

Through these critical functions, SD guarantees an efficient and effective supply chain within UNICEF that serves global requests for goods and services. In response to the forthcoming UNICEF Strategic Plan and the SDG 2030, the Supply function is shifting its focus away from the direct delivery of goods and services, to the provision of procurement services in combination with capacity development for governments to strengthen country-led supply chains. With this shift, it is increasing its work in the areas of innovation and market influencing. To make these changes, the Supply function needs to adopt new supply chain management efficiency practices, strategic partnerships, technologies and monitoring arrangements.³ This transformation will shape what the organization needs to successfully execute its critical functions.

1 UNICEF (2015), UNICEF Supply Annual Report 2015.

2 Supply Division Office Management Plan 2014-2017 indicates that its critical functions remain the same as in Supply Division OMP 2012-2013, from which the list is quoted.

3 Presentation Tony Lake on 19 May, 2016. UNICEF Supply Recalibrating our Vision.

1.2 Developing the Supply Community Strategy

In 2007, an external evaluation assessed the overall effectiveness, efficiency and added value of UNICEF's global Supply function. Its findings, reported in the Evaluation of the Global Supply Function (SFE), triggered the development of the Supply Community Strategy.⁴

The SFE concluded that staff in the Supply function often lacked a sense of professional belonging. Particularly outside SD, Supply staff felt they were isolated and had limited possibilities for professional development or sharing experiences. Moreover, the SFE showed that Country Offices (COs) tended to undervalue supply work as a strategic capability, thereby limiting the possibilities for Supply staff to grow professionally within UNICEF. In addition, it noted that no shared curriculum for professional development for Supply staff was in place. Upon identifying these challenges, the SFE concluded that Supply staff would benefit from a networked community through which they could learn more skills and better plan the progression of their careers. SD followed up on this recommendation in the Office Management Plan 2008-2009, which said the development of a Supply Community would be "critical to move forward the recommendations made by the SFE."⁵

Incremental approach

Since then, SD has taken an incremental approach to developing its Supply Community. Under the Director's Office, it was formed into an organizational strategy and took on activities in diverse focus areas. SD's Office Management Plan (OMP) 2012-2013 then moved the responsibility for developing a Supply Community from the Director's Office to the Human Resources Centre and the Contracting Centre, assisted by the Knowledge Management Unit. Subsequently, these units created the main framework for the current Supply Community Strategy in SD's OMP for 2014-2017. This most recent OMP contains a more detailed vision and outlines various necessary actions to further develop the Supply Community.

The way the Supply Community developed from a concept into a strategy has affected its composition. Originally, it was not designed with clear objectives and targets, and lacked an overarching approach to changing the Supply function. Instead, today's Supply Community Strategy evolved organically as new activities and objectives were added. As a result, the strategy was not formally documented throughout much its development, and progress in its implementation was not holistically monitored. For those reasons, the main purpose of this evaluation is to chronicle the various elements that informed the Strategy and to reconstruct the methodology behind its transformation as defined by the Theory of Change. The full theory and its associated proposal for a future framework for monitoring and evaluation are included in Annex I of this report.

Pillars of action

The central goal of the strategy was to develop the UNICEF Supply Community -- consisting of Supply staff across HQ, SD and the Regional and Country Offices -- so its members could receive better education, training, professional development and knowledge sharing. This development of a Supply Community should encourage a sense of professional belonging among Supply staff.

To reach this overall objective, three pillars of action were defined:

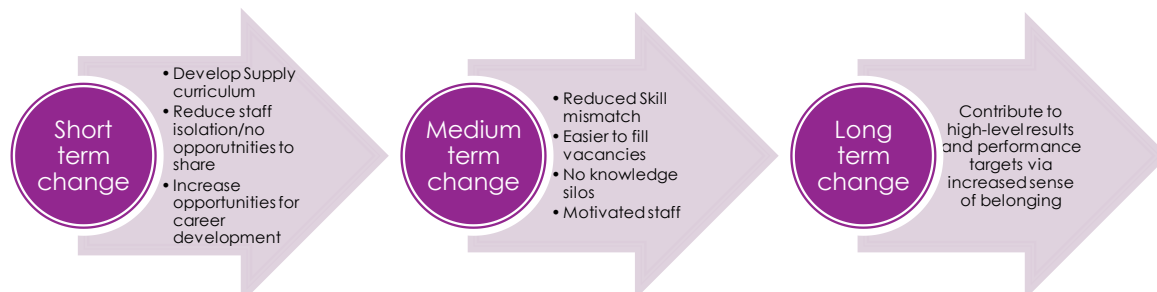
1. **Establish a corporate basis for learning and development that addresses the lack of a "Supply curriculum" and a formal career management framework.** This pillar addresses the disparity between traditional Supply skills (mainly in the field of administrative procurement) and the skills required for increasingly more strategic work in the Supply function.
2. **Develop tools and opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge.** This pillar can reduce the isolation of Supply staff outside SD, and increase overall cooperation among staff from different functional teams and offices, thus ensuring significant information is accessible to everyone in the organization.
3. **Improve the system of career mobility, career development and succession planning.** This pillar aims to augment internal possibilities for professional growth and enhance the reputation of Supply work in COs. This should help staff become more motivated and satisfied, lower the time needed to fill vacancies, and reduce the disparity of skills across the organization.

⁴ UNICEF (2014), UNICEF Supply Annual Report 2014, p. 7.

⁵ SD Office Management Plan 2008-2009, p. 4.

These pillars of action are defined as the short-term changes that enact the Supply Community Strategy. The strategy's success can be measured by the extent to which these short-term changes reduce the challenges identified by the SFE. This comprises the medium-term change, which will determine how much long-term change can be achieved. The relation between these different levels of strategic outcomes are presented schematically below and are further described in Annex I.

FIGURE 1 SHORT-TERM, MEDIUM-TERM, AND LONG-TERM CHANGES DEFINED BY THEORY OF CHANGE



Source: *Theory of Change*, see Annex I for more details.

1.3 Aim of the evaluation

This evaluation examines the Supply Community Strategy that was adopted by Supply Division (SD) in 2008, seeking to document its achievements and to provide guidance for its amelioration in the years ahead. The evaluation's main objectives are to:

- **Take stock of progress made by the strategy** since its inception as a response to the 2007 Supply Function Evaluation (SFE)
- **Assess past performance**, and in particular the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the strategy's related activities
- **Identify areas contributing to the next strategy** in the context of the future vision of the Supply function
- **Identify future actions and plans** that can overcome weaknesses in the strategy and build on its strengths

1.4 Methodology

This section presents the methodology used to evaluate the project's objectives set out in section 1.3. Based on the evaluation questions (see Annex II, III for details) and the (re)constructed Theory of Change (see Annex I), it adopted a mixed method approach, building on the following elements:

- **Desk research** analysed a large number of organizational and strategic project documents for information pertinent to evaluation questions. In addition, the evaluation team analysed internal raw SD data from the Country Support Unit (CSU), including number of website hits and staffing numbers.
- **Qualitative interviews** were conducted with management at SD, as well as key stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the strategy in SD and NY, Regional Supply Advisors (RSAs), and a selection of community members of varying staff levels from 17 COs across all regions (see Annex IV for a full list of interviewees).
- **Four workshops**, with roughly 20 participants each, were organized in collaboration with SD in Dakar, Lusaka, Nairobi and Copenhagen. These workshops used a "storytelling" approach to provide a deeper understanding of Supply staff perceptions about the strategy and activities related to its implementation, and how these affected their work.⁶

⁶ Through the combination of group dialogues and storytelling, participants generated and presented examples of valuable applications of the Supply Community Strategy and its activities and instruments. The storytelling method is a mechanism for sharing knowledge in teams, communities and organizations. Stories powerfully convey norms and values that drive the changes of human behaviour within organizations. UNICEF's Knowledge Exchange Unit explicitly identified storytelling as a valuable tool for situations where unfamiliarity can be an issue (UNICEF (2015), Knowledge Exchange Toolbox).

- **A global online survey** was distributed to all members of the Supply Community from 22 July to 5 August, 2016. Among the 1,247 individuals targeted, 709 participated, of which 699 provided valid (fully complete) responses. This equals a response rate of 56 per cent (See Annex VI).
- **Case studies on communities of practice in comparable international organizations** were conducted, based on a review of websites, email exchanges and interviews with relevant knowledge and learning officers in these institutions. This evaluation draws on lessons from communities at the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, GIZ-German Development Cooperation, Inter-American Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, OECD, UNDP (HQ), UNDP Solutions Exchange (India) and World Bank Group.

In this work, every interaction with respondents is guided by ethical safeguards to protect participants. The results from the interviews, workshops and survey are confidential, as the evaluation team ensures no input can be traced back to individual respondents without their expressed permission. A diverse range of interview respondents were selected to ensure a varied distribution of in terms of nationality, gender, work experience, current position and type of office.

1.5 Limitations to the evaluation

Since the Supply Community Strategy has not defined targets or baseline values, this evaluation cannot objectively compare the current situation to that of 2008. Instead, it uses perceptual data to determine what types of results have been achieved by the strategy. Taking perceptions of Supply staff into account, the evaluation triangulates them to the more objective raw data available. It is noted that the main objective of the strategy, “increasing the sense of professional belonging,” is by definition measured subjectively. This reinforces the need to capture and analyse perceptual data. Using staff perceptions gathered through interviews, survey questions and workshops, the evaluation systematically mapped these perceptions, mainly by triangulating them against applicable numerical data.

Another challenge for the evaluation was the fact that the Supply Community Strategy cannot be disentangled from the daily tasks of Supply Division in terms of HR and knowledge management. This risks that the evaluation becomes overly focused on SD, rather than on the broader Supply Community. The evaluation team is aware of this risk, which is reduced by its triangulation of methodologies; additionally, interviews and survey data specifically include the wider Supply Community, not only SD.

The efficiency analysis, however, was limited by the lack of financial data for the strategy. Most often, the costs related to strategy activities are not specifically earmarked to that purpose, thus limiting the scope of a possible efficiency judgment. The evaluation focused on case examples, which consisted of a more specific assessment of cases where efficiency measures have been taken. Subsequently, the evaluation focused on possible room for improvement, and, where possible, provided inspiration for comparison.

2. Learning and development

This chapter assesses the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and efficiency of the activities implemented in the area of learning and development of the Supply Community Strategy.

2.1 Relevance

Learning and professional development are key to strengthening UNICEF’s Supply Community, and its related activities are a priority in the strategy.⁷ Table 2.1 outlines the learning and professional development challenges identified by the SFE, SD’s responses to those challenges, and the evaluation’s assessment of their relevance to the strategy (as indicated by ‘+’ or ‘++’).

⁷ This chapter makes a distinction between learning and training (a concrete form of learning). In addition to training, a wide range of other learning methods are promoted in the L&D plan, such as informal learning and work-learning integration.

Table 2.1 Challenges identified in the SFE and the link with the Supply Community Strategy

Challenges identified in SFE	Approach by the Supply Community Strategy	Assessment --/ - / 0 / + /++
Limited curriculum for Supply staff	Developed Learning Calendar that provides curriculum	++
No link between training, staff member performance and career planning	No formal link has been established between learning and development (certification of training completed) and career development	--
No match between job requirements and staff expertise	Skills anticipation mechanisms established, with professional development plans introduced across UNICEF. The Learning Calendar contributes to skills development and SD has developed established training modules based on need analysis	+
Lack of operational commitment to training and decreasing investment in training and development	Operational commitment addressed by Professional Learning and Development Plan and continuing management support; SD has invested in developing and advertising corporate curriculum, however there is no monitoring for compliance to 5% norm	+
Over-reliance on learning through traditional class room settings	Increased focus on participatory forms of learning and new information technologies, supported by recruitment of external learning and development experts	++
No formalized mentoring system	Not yet implemented, despite inclusion in the Professional Learning and Development Plan	-

Source: *Triangulated evaluation findings*

The Professional Learning and Development Plan 2015-2017 (L&D Plan) has embedded more strategic learning in the organization, encouraging future work in this regard. The L&D Plan describes the objectives, scope, principles, and governance of learning within Supply. It is also closely aligned to the broader UNICEF Organizational Learning and Development Strategy 2014-2017, which has introduced additional methods and tools, as well as regular training activities. These new approaches seek to establish effective learning environments by using principles of effective adult learning in the design and programming of training modules.⁸ Other methods, such as the approach to informal on-the-job learning, still require improvement, but the strategy is introducing crucial components to learning and development activities, such as dedicated resources, additional learning capacity and organizational momentum.

Curriculum

After conducting a needs assessment, SD developed its learning curriculum, which consists of a syllabus of training courses known as the Learning Calendar. This has been followed up with an annual consultation of the learning governance group, an annual analysis of staff statistics, and the 2014 skills gap analysis to align the training offer with the actual organizational needs.⁹ In addition to those skill anticipation mechanisms, SD aims to comply with ad hoc training requests from COs, within its financial and HR limitations. Generally, learning solutions are found through internal mobilization of capacities (i.e. recent SD support for a training on procurement in Myanmar for 30 to 40 staff members). Furthermore, investments in learning and professional development are promoted by the Director's Office and senior management. This is supported by an operational commitment via budget growth, and the hiring of two dedicated learning development professionals.

SD has made significant investments in the improvement of its own curriculum through:

⁸ Since 2008, SD has made an important step to move from traditional forms of classroom teaching towards more participatory forms of learning. These new forms of learning are supported by new information technologies, and consist of online training through webinars, workshops, case studies, simulation exercises, and follow up activities. Such training includes elements of blended learning, self-directed learning, and practical learning, and builds on successful practices of adult learning. The recruitment of external Learning & Development experts also supports this development. Jane Vella, an expert in adult learning talks about the 4 I's for learning: (i) Inductive work (a learning task that connects learners with what they already know and with their unique context); (ii) Input (a learning task that invites them to examine new material/input (concepts, skills, attitudes, i.e. the content of the course); (iii) Implementation (a learning task that gets learners to do something directly with that new content, somehow implementing it); and, (iv) Integration (a learning task that integrates this new learning into their lives).

⁹ A 2013 survey of COs indicated their preference for professional development in: VISION (71%); service contracting (65%); goods procurement/procurement strategy (62%); monitoring/fit-for-purpose (45%); inventory management (43%); data analysis (41%); value-for-money procurement (39%); innovation (39%); logistics (38%); project management (37%); and ethics (24%).

- In-house development of Learning Calendar training modules
- Active involvement of specialists in rolling out training courses
- Advertisement of the training offer

SD has taken responsibility for the costs of the training, while COs consign staff and pay for the travel and other related expenses. UNICEF applies a norm for spending 5 per cent of staff time on learning and development, but this benchmark is not monitored or recorded. Importantly, SD cannot enforce the COs to support learning and professional development of Supply staff, but only provide advice and guidance. Support for learning outside the Supply curriculum (Learning Calendar) is the decision of individual offices. This inevitably results in different learning opportunities across different COs, and sometimes even different learning opportunities to different divisions working within the same CO.¹⁰

Ongoing challenges

Yet other recommendations in the SFE have not been – or were only to a limited extent – addressed. This includes the recommendation to better link training to staff performance and career planning. There continue to be no clear policies in place where accumulation of learning outcomes (certified or not) helps to make the next career step. Also, informal and non-formal learning are not systematically considered in yearly Performance Reviews. Furthermore, there are no clear learning paths defined at the organizational level, which would be particularly relevant for newcomers in the field of Supply.

Importance of informal learning

Despite the importance the L&D Plan places on informal learning, including work-based learning, mentoring has not been implemented in the Supply Community. Professionals learn in many different ways; learning is not limited to formal sessions where instructors impart expert knowledge.¹¹ Effective learning happens in stimulating environments that facilitate the broadening of skills and knowledge among staff while they work. This principle is reflected in the opinion expressed one of the interviewees, who said: *“When you have reached a certain professional level, formal training become less important, but creating supportive environments for [informal] learning, setting meetings, stimulating staff to learn becomes more important.”*

This evaluation shows that learning has not always been a key principle in daily activities, or in specific opportunities for learning. Although stretch assignments and deployments can be excellent opportunities for learning, it is not structurally facilitated in these activities. However, it could be done by including specific learning tools that provide guidance (e.g., learning plan and coaching activities) and capture learning outcomes (e.g. learning diary). Some good practices were collected when COs asked colleagues to share their experiences from a stretch assignment with each other to encourage learning. However, this is not systematically practiced. Learning on the job can be further encouraged through various tools, such as job shadowing, use of mentors, and peer learning.

Preparing for new activities and roles

Learning and development in the Supply Community continues to be relevant in light of changing technologies, critical partnerships, and the drive for results and transparency. They are even more relevant in light of the implications of SDG 2030, which require rethinking the activities and roles of Supply. SDG 2030 affects the knowledge and skills needed -- internally as well as externally -- and affects how formal and non-formal learning activities contribute to organizational objectives. Already before SDG 2030, the MTSP 2006-2010 seeks to facilitate the move from transactional work towards more strategic work. Additionally, it calls for a shift away from providing Supply services to governments, towards improving government skills and capacities in the field of Supply and Logistics.

Relevant new skillsets are needed for capacity building/systems strengthening with governments and to work in partnership with different actors. This requires a stronger emphasis on cooperation and coordination with

¹⁰ Interviews show that some COs support training for staff from Programme from their own budget, while there is not such a fund for staff in Operations or Supply.

¹¹ Jane Vella, an expert in adult learning, identifies 4 I's for learning: (i) Inductive work (a learning task connecting learners with what they already know and with their unique context); (ii) Input (a learning task inviting them to examine new material/input regarding concepts, skills, attitudes, i.e. the content of the course); (iii) Implementation (a learning task getting learners to do something directly with the new content); and, (iv) Integration (a learning task integrating this new learning into their lives).

stakeholders, which will close the distance between Supply and Programme functions. Learning and development efforts should facilitate this shift toward new roles and activities. The current learning offer therefore needs a careful assessment against these new roles, activities and skills.¹²

Discussions about new roles and activities have not yet set in motion practical actions or concrete learning initiatives for the broader Supply function. Instead, the current L&D plan focuses on the traditional role and activities of staff in Supply functions, including foundational skills. Yet its learning and development effort is viewed positively by other UNICEF divisions, which see SD as a frontrunner and an inspiring example in that regard within UNICEF.

2.2 Effectiveness

The success of the strategy is measured by the extent to which it has been able to address the challenges identified by SFE, namely by reducing the imbalance between skills in demand and skills in supply. The Supply Community Strategy, UNICEF’s Strategic Plan and SD’s OMP all set various objectives for learning and development. To evaluate progress towards these objectives, a broad set of indicators is taken into account for this evaluation.

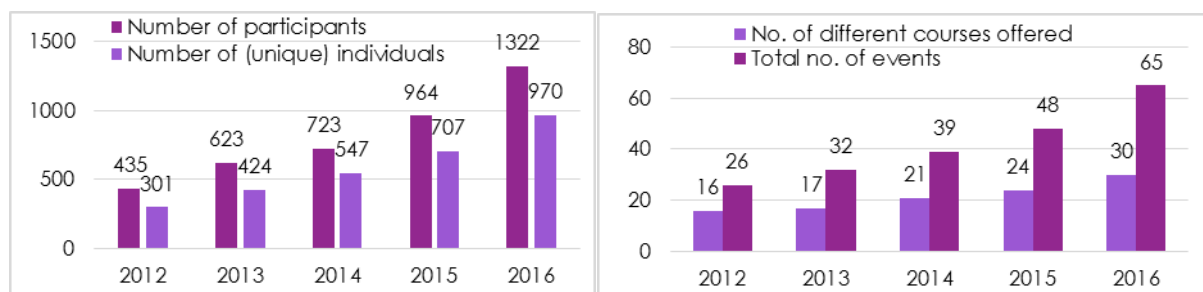
As key elements, the evaluation identifies:

- Inclusiveness of learning approach in terms of participation
- Factors that enable and impede participation in training opportunities
- Utility of offered training modalities

Inclusiveness of learning approach in terms of participation

The last few years have seen a growing number of participants enrolled in SD training, as evidenced by figure 2.1 below. From 435 in training in 2012 (301 unique individuals), participation has risen to 1,322 (970 unique individuals) in 2016. These participants vary from field-based Supply staff to SD staff and other non-Supply staff interested in Supply training. This growth in participation has increased training hours from roughly 6,300 in 2012 to 18,000 in 2015 (and 17,100 in 2016).¹³ Over those years, the number of learning events significantly increased from 16 courses (offered 26 times) in 2012 to 30 courses (offered 65 times) in 2016.

FIGURE 2.1 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING AND NUMBER OF COURSE OFFERED



Source: Training data SD, 2016

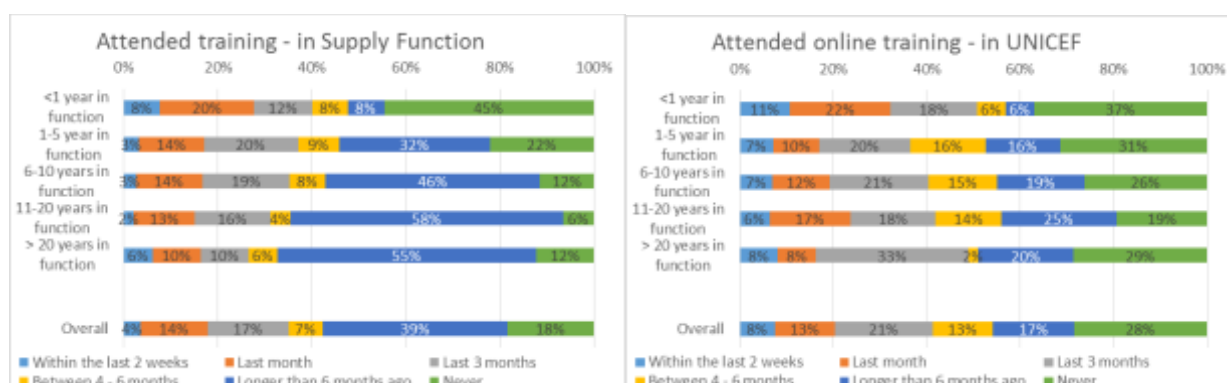
Most training participants work at SD (a total of 1,415 participations over the last five years), followed by WCARO (327), ESARO (324), MENA (283), EAPRO (132), NYHQ (115), CEE/CIS (94), ROSA (93) and LACRO (84). Comparing the share of total number of participations to the total of Supply Community members in each region for 2015, there is a relatively high rate of participation in NY HQ, CEE/CIS, MENA, EAPRO, and SD, while a low rate of participation is reported from WCARO and ROSA (ESARO and LACRO fall in between). In order to assess the inclusiveness of training, staff were asked to indicate the last time they engaged in training and online training, as presented below.¹⁴

¹² Most training focuses on technical and foundational skills that support transactional type of work performed by Supply staff (e.g., courses related to procurement, monitoring and data management, contracting processes, construction practices).

¹³ These statistics do not report other modes of learning and local training provided by COs.

¹⁴ Figure only presents staff in a Supply function. Field staff in Operations or Programme are excluded. However, all staff from SD has been included in the results.

FIGURE 2.2 LAST TIME PARTICIPATED IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES VERSUS NUMBER OF YEARS IN FUNCTION



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Inclusiveness concerns

This data shows that not all Supply staff participate in training activities and that certain staff groups participate less than others. The fact that a relevant share of the Supply Community never participated in a training session (18 per cent, and another 28 per cent never participated in online training) raises concerns about the inclusiveness of these activities. No differences exist between men and women, but significant differences are reported between Supply Staff in SD (only 14 per cent never participated in training) and COs (22 per cent never participated in COs located in the capital versus 24 per cent in COs located the field). While SD in principle offers introductory training sessions (entitled “Introduction to Procurement”) to new staff, nearly half who recently entered their function never participated in a training session. In fact, 22 per cent of staff that have worked in the Supply function between 1-5 years never participated in a training session, despite the fact this is a critical period for learning in employment.

Online training

In figure 2.2, the right graph summarizes the use of online training tool AGORA; overall 28 per cent of staff in the Supply function never used AGORA for training, while 42 per cent did so within the previous three months. When comparing the last use of AGORA against face-to-face training, the survey shows the potential of AGORA as a tool to regularly update knowledge with modular courses. Face-to-face training is costlier and happens less frequently; 55 per cent of staff in a Supply function had engaged in online training over the previous six months, while 42 per cent has engaged in face-to-face training over the same period.

Lack of guidance

Limited training and guidance for fresh recruits in Supply at COs was also noted by staff members in workshops and in the survey.¹⁵ While an introductory training is generally organized in Copenhagen for all new Supply staff, it appears that more is needed. In the survey, 43 per cent of staff thinks that new personnel receive sufficient training, while 41 per cent do not agree to this statement. Staff based in CO particularly disagreed (48 per cent). While the introduction workshop may provide a relevant theoretical introduction to Supply, staff said there is no practical learning on the job in their CO. Various staff members indicated feeling overwhelmed and “a bit lost” in the first months in their Supply function. This is particularly pronounced if no training at all takes place within the first six months of their employment. SD has a systematic induction and orientation programme, while COs may or may not have such. Recently, a specific and individualized induction programme was also introduced at SD for new Supply Managers.

Other participation issues

While the most obvious differences in training participation occur between newer and more experienced staff, other differences are also worth exploring.

First, a significantly higher number of G staff never participated in training in comparison to IP staff (25 per cent of G staff, versus 14 per cent of IP staff). This suggests potential self-exclusion among G staff, which requires

¹⁵ 32 respondents made a specific remark about this in the online survey.

attention. Furthermore, a relatively large share of surveyed staff in LACRO, WCARO, EAPRO regions indicated they had never engaged in training. Another important difference has been found between English-speaking and French-speaking staff. In the survey, a significantly large share of French-speaking respondents (43 per cent) has never enrolled in training while a much smaller share of English-speaking respondents (19 per cent) had not.

It is unclear what causes this large difference. A possible explanation cited by surveyed staff is that COs in the French-speaking WCARO region may be less supportive in facilitating training for Supply staff, but there is insufficient evidence to support this claim. The WCARO Regional Office has taken an active position to ensure inclusiveness of the French-speaking offices under its supervision by insisting on the development of French training material, which resulted in a dedicated French introduction course that reached 48 individuals. Furthermore, in the WCARO region, a French version of the “Introduction to Procurement” course was offered to French-speaking Supply staff in 2015, while the Monitoring, WIM and Contracting of Services courses have been offered in French.

Learning benchmark

Moreover, staff interviews and workshops suggest that UNICEF’s benchmark to dedicate at least 5 per cent of time to individual learning and development is not always met.¹⁶ This is a broader challenge for the entire UNICEF organization, as confirmed by the most recent Global Staff survey of 2014. A large share of SD staff indicated in this survey that no or limited time had been dedicated to professional development in the last year, which indicates a lack of commitment.¹⁷ This is confirmed by the performance trends of UNICEF IP staff. While around 90 per cent of staff (over-) achieve in their Work Plan Outputs, “only” 66 per cent of IP staff do so in their development plans.¹⁸ This shows that IP staff pay less attention to learning and development than to daily performance tasks. Overall, interviews made clear that the benchmark of 5 per cent is not always clearly communicated; interviewees in some cases referred to different benchmarks.

Factors that enable and impede participation in training opportunities

- The learning offer is well communicated and Supply staff are generally aware of training opportunities. According to the online survey, a large majority of staff in the Supply Community are aware of training opportunities in the field of Supply (overall 80 per cent). Moreover, staff members find the training offers relevant to their individual and organizational needs. The main barrier to participation in learning appears to be a lack of support by managers in the field. Various line managers cited costs and operational concerns as reasons to deny releasing staff for training.
- **To be effective, staff need to be motivated to participate in training, for instance by believing that training helps them perform better or that it is relevant to their needs.** A majority of staff (62 per cent) indicate that the training offered in the field of Supply is aligned with their own needs, while around 20 per cent disagrees. Staff in SD Operations Support, however, are evenly divided on whether training is aligned to their own needs.
- **The extent of management support for training varies between SD and offices in the field.** Staff based in the field felt insufficiently supported by their manager, particularly in ROs (46 per cent disagree that they are sufficiently supported by their manager, in comparison to 29 per cent overall). It is remarkable that managers in ROs also report they feel less responsible for encouraging staff in their professional development than in other offices. The figures for SD and other HQ divisions reflect a similar trend, as reported in the 2014 Global Staff Survey (53 per cent of SD staff agree that their supervisor encourages them to take training and professional development, while this is 54 per cent for other HQ, and 57 per cent for UNICEF total).

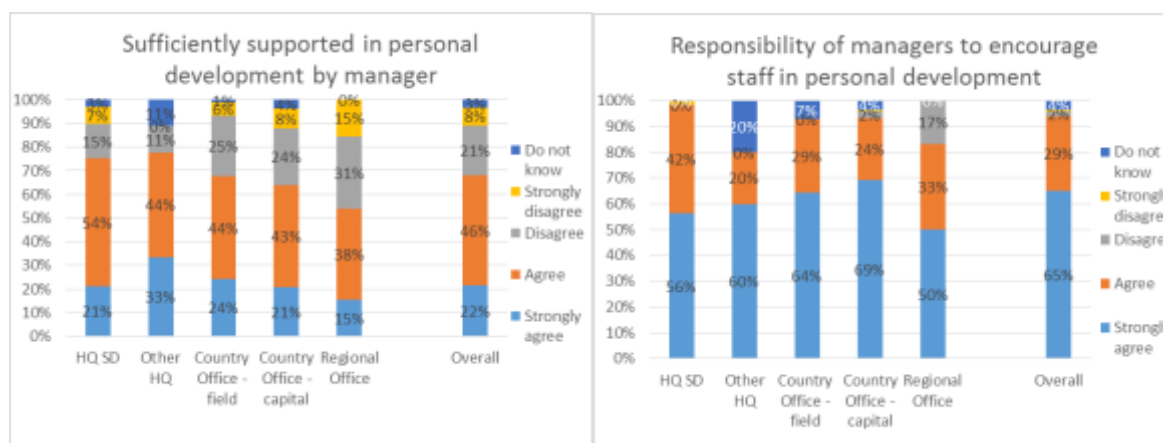
¹⁶ This is confirmed by examining the number of staff hours involved in training. Even though formal training is a limited definition of learning (other forms of learning are not captured, such as online learning, stretch assignments, engaging in specific projects, individual attendance to external events or event spent on UNICEF AGORA), it can be insightful to triangulate the commonly held staff view. 5% learning time is 12.5 working days. Considering a 7-hour work day, the average training days/staff member spent on initiatives offer by SD is 4.36 (2333 days/535 staff members). This only applies for 52.3% of staff that participated in training, so the actual number of training days per staff member is much lower (2.28 days) below the 5% target.

¹⁷ 53% of SD staff indicate that they had invested less than the three working days on professional development in the last years, compared to 38% in all of UNICEF and 54% HQ. Almost a quarter (23%) of SD staff indicate that no time was spent on professional development at all (while this was 18% across UNICEF and 23% in HQ)

¹⁸ Based on data provided by HRU on the performance review and development plans of 2,482 appraised IP staff in 2013.

- **Various managers cite costs and other operational concerns as a reason to deny training.**¹⁹ In some individual cases, managers indicate they think staff ought to only dedicate time to learning after work.
- **Some community members refer to the administrative burden to get participation in training approved, particularly where this concerns external academic programmes.** It can be a lengthy process that, in extreme cases, takes years. Some argued that they prefer to pay for advanced training themselves and take leave or follow the training in private time. Others reportedly lost trust in the system for learning and development, or felt rejected when the request for training was not granted.
- **For staff themselves, lack of time was most often mentioned as a limitation to training and development, particularly in more difficult duty stations.**²⁰ Numerous members of staff indicated that emergencies, workload and funding prevent Supply staff from participating in both online and face-to-face training. Indeed, training timetables do not always fit with the work schedules of Supply Community staff, especially in cases when training is only provided once a year. This underlines the need for more flexible learning strategies, which would allow training in the time, place and form that is most convenient for learners. The increasing development of online and blended learning approaches are promising steps in this direction, although the introduction of online learning should be carefully monitored in terms of usability and access, especially in areas with limited internet connectivity.²¹

FIGURE 2.3 LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR TRAINING FROM MANAGER



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Utility of offered training modalities

Supply staff overwhelmingly say both the face-to-face and the AGORA Supply training are useful; only 2 per cent of survey respondents consider them not useful. Managers and regular staff are equally positive, which confirms that trainings are useful for the organization and for individuals. Those that recently enrolled in AGORA training tend to rate the utility of its courses particularly highly. AGORA's combination of self-learning with interactive webinars has the potential for greater utility. Until 2016, AGORA only offered courses for Supply staff on general subjects, such as Safety Training, as SD developed more substantive online training modules. Respondents particularly appreciate the recently developed modules include more interactive forms of blended learning, such as the module on "Contracting for Services" that includes casework, moderation and a webinar.

Community members say they are generally happy with the curriculum provided, but at the same time, they indicate that more subjects should be included. Some staff request modules covering capacity building for governments, multidisciplinary training, and broader professional skills, such as communication, leadership and coaching skills. Others request additional training in existing modules, such as those on construction contracts, logistics, customs clearance, ethics and integrity, and project management. Some staff are not aware that these

¹⁹ While the costs to cover airfare and per diem are mentioned, particularly the costs related to a lack of replacement of staff are mentioned as an important limitation.

²⁰ Mentioned by 21 per cent of respondents; 104 cases.

²¹ AGORA, the UNICEF Learning Management System, now has an offline player that allows e-learning activities to be downloaded and played offline for areas where there is limited or no internet access.

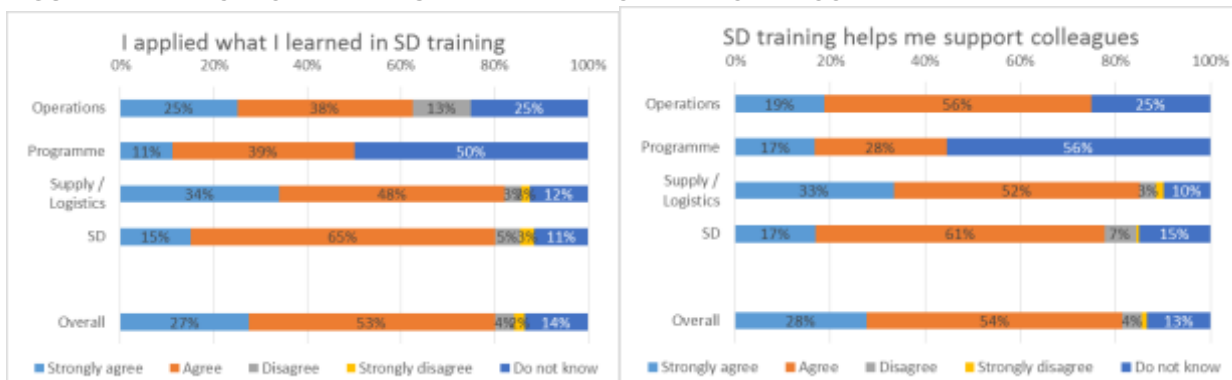
courses are already offered, while others request a more advanced level in these subjects. Interviewed staff members underlined the need for better follow up after trainings are concluded and called for a more advanced training offer. A few respondents also wanted training that is more practical and provides on-the-job learning, as well as a combination of online and face-to-face training. Some expressed their wish that trainers improve their pedagogical skills. While the trainers are “Subject Matter Experts” in their fields, they are not necessarily competent instructors.

Some interviewees criticized SD’s lack of flexibility in organizing tailored training in COs. Although such initiatives occasionally happen (including recently in Myanmar), tailored training is not widespread. AGORA has the potential to fill this gap, however, to make full use of the potential of such a training, follow up is required. For this purpose, interactive AGORA sessions have been planned, but it is too early to evaluate these activities.

2.3 Impacts of the strategy: The application of learning

SD’s L&D Plan identifies the need to link learning to organizational results. In an effective learning organization, the act of acquiring knowledge is not an objective in itself, but is tied to work by contributing to performance improvement. The survey shows that staff members are convinced that training has a positive impact on organizational performance. Staff indicate that training helped them to better support colleagues and improved the functioning of teams, and as such, advanced organizational objectives. Moreover, another large majority (80 per cent) of staff were able to apply elements from Supply training directly to their work. This was further confirmed by anecdotes shared in the workshops, where staff detailed how training helped their use of VISION. By the same token, an increased emphasis on scenario-based, situational, and action-based learning, mainly in newly developed courses, has the potential to contribute to improved organizational performance. An example of this is the recently developed emergency training, which requires participants to develop an updated supply and logistics strategy for emergencies in their CO.

FIGURE 2.4 APPLICATION WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED ON THE WORK FLOOR



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

The final gauge of effectiveness for the Supply Community Strategy is whether new learning and development activities have enabled more Supply staff to acquire appropriate sets of skills that help them do their job. A high number of staff indicate that their skills are in line with what is needed in their job (88 per cent).²² Managers in the survey confirm this, with 64.5 per cent indicating skills have improved over the years, while 15 per cent indicate they have stayed the same. Only a marginal group of respondents (3.2 per cent) indicate that this situation worsened, while roughly 17 per cent indicate they do not know the effects of learning and development activities.

2.4 Efficiency

In order to determine the efficiency of the learning and development activities under the Supply Community Strategy, the evaluation assessed its associated costs. Understanding these costs requires distinguishing between the costs for participants to travel and subsist in face-to-face trainings (the responsibility of CO) and other types of costs (most often the responsibility of SD). Generally, travel and subsistence make up a significant portion of costs (roughly US\$3,500 per person, per event organized in Copenhagen). However, no overview

²² Result from the survey, not presented here.

exists of how much COs spend in this area, so these costs cannot be included in the efficiency assessment.

But when the scope of the efficiency assessment is restricted to the costs under management of SD, another limitation also must be expressed. Despite a general perception among management staff that SD invests a great deal in training, no detailed information is available on the total resources it allocates to learning and development within SD. For 2016, an overview exists only for out-of-pocket costs, such as travel and subsistence expenses, consultants/technical support, and software/hardware, which amounts to US\$270,560. This figure, however, does not include the costs for developing new training modules. Given that similar data is generally not available in comparable international organizations, this figure alone cannot be used to make an evidence-based evaluation assessment.

In view of the absence of reliable benchmarks, within and outside UNICEF, this efficiency assessment collected evidence on the costs of developing individual trainings. This provides measures to estimate the total costs of a training session (and cost per participant), and therefore provide some input to assess the adequacy of specific resources allocated. The cost for the development of courses varies greatly between the types developed and implemented, whether e-learning module, blended learning activity (including webinars), or face-to-face training.

Recent courses

Over the last two years, SD made significant investments in employing two Learning and Development Specialists (L&D Specialists), who were actively involved in developing the L&D Plan and new training modules. The L&D specialists provided important input to increase the quality of the learning provision by introducing a solid learning need assessment and effective participatory learning methods. To gain a better understanding of their costs, the evaluation looks at recently developed courses, allowing a comparison between online and traditional modules.

The evaluation assessed the workshop on “Contracting of Services” and the four-day workshop on “Emergency Preparedness and Response.” “Contracting of Services” foresees reaching 480 participants and no financial out-of-pocket expenses are recorded for its creation, with only 15 days’ time investment for the L&D specialist and a minor non-specified demand on the Subject Matter Expert (SME). These trainings are judged to be particularly cost-efficient, as they are able to sufficiently mobilize in-house knowledge to assemble a meaningful training. The four-day training on “Emergency Preparedness and Response” required a total financial investment of \$25,000 for 24 participants (\$1,041 per participant) and 40 working days’ investment by the Learning and Development Specialist as well as high demands on the SMEs providing input during the workshop (a total of 23 SMEs investing 83.25 days developing the course and 36.5 days implementing the training). The development costs are reasonable for this new workshop, particularly in comparison to the cost of purchasing training in the private market.

The total financial investment made for the development of the e-learning module on “Introduction to Procurement”²³ (in English and French) is US\$225,000, which comes down to US\$220 per participant (with an estimated 1,023 participants). In addition, the time invested by L&D specialists to design the training and the time of SMEs provided on the learning content and material (132 working days in total) need to be taken into account. The time is justified for developing a high quality online training from scratch, with input from a SME and scenario-based learning. The advantage of online courses is that running costs are limited to maintenance and keeping content up to date. As additional staff participate in these modules, their overall relative costs further decrease. In the design process, SD benefited from the experience working with educational software developers, shortening time for the development of other online future training courses. As such, the development of new online courses has been assessed as cost-efficient.

Online vs. face-to-face learning

While the development of traditional training may be more economical in the short run, the costs per participant for online trainings decrease over time, as more participants participate. It is a significant investment that also “pays off” in future online course development (that can build on existing infrastructure, templates, knowledge and experience), particularly in the context of limited budgets. At the same time, respondents to the survey, interviews and workshops all emphasize that online learning should not come at the expense of face-to-face learning, given

²³ This is a 7-hour e-learning course that in the past was a class-based training on location.

its important contribution to community development/networking (noting that these are more expensive). Once the roll out of the L&D Plan is complete and the most important training modules are transferred online, the L&D Specialists could focus on guiding work-based learning, train the trainer activities, and support for the Supply function's transition towards new roles and activities. The potential of this work underscores the importance and efficiency of SD's dedicated specialist on online learning, who also provides advice and support to other UNICEF divisions. This role is unique within UNICEF and remarkably valuable for continuing the cost-efficient development of online training courses in the future.

Optimizing experience

The evaluation also notes that SD achieved considerable cost-savings by collaborating with different partners, including other UN organizations and international NGOs. Recent examples of this include: the collaboration with UNCHR to share costs for the development of a procurement training; the development of the Humanitarian Logistics certification with other UN organizations and international NGOs as well as the Fritz Institute; and SD's contribution to a MOOC entitled, "Quality in Digital Learning," as part of the ECBCheck initiative. Moreover, SD shares its expertise about online learning in different networks and platforms.

In March 2016, UNICEF SD became a member of the steering committee of ECB Check, a quality improvement scheme for e-learning programmes that ensures they are developed by SD and others in accordance with the standards set by its member organizations and institutions. Many UN organizations are active members who are driving this initiative, including FAO, UNITAR, ITC-ILO and UNU. By benchmarking its practices with other organizations, SD improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of its learning activities.

In addition, SD is part of Learn4Dev, an initiative in which it collaborates with other multilateral and bilateral development organizations to foster learning. As part of this, the UNICEF learning portal is featured on Learn4Dev website. SD is also a member of the HLCM-Procurement network working group on professional development, where it shares experiences and courses with other UN procurement entities.

Based on the justified development costs of new courses, the value of recruiting in-house expertise for learning and development, and efforts undertaken to work together with other international organizations, the evaluation concludes that the investments in the field of learning and development have been efficient. This assessment is confirmed by the survey of IP staff. Roughly half of IP staff members indicate that the benefits outweigh the costs for activities in the field of learning and development, while for 25 per cent, the benefits and costs are in balance. This shows general support for this investment; in the survey, only a small percentage of IP staff members said they think the costs are too high.

3. Knowledge sharing and community building

This chapter assesses the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and efficiency of the Supply Community’s knowledge sharing and community building activities.

3.1 Relevance

The SFE identified several challenges within the Supply Community’s knowledge sharing and the organizational culture. Activities developed in the Supply Community Strategy are generally considered a relevant and adequate response to those challenges.

Table 3.1 Challenges identified in the SFE of SD and the link with the Supply Community Strategy

Challenges identified in SFE	Approach by the Supply Community Strategy	Assessment --/ - / o / + / ++
Lack of “do once and share” approach to spreading information on best practices: knowledge sharing activities were ad hoc and based on personal relationships	Developed tools (Supply Faces/Hotspots) and organized face-to-face events to help staff share knowledge and solve problems	+
Formal hierarchical communication lines centred on paper-based audit trails and manager approval	Established Supply Faces/Hotspots, global Supply events and support for informal personal networks across different offices to increase contact among all Supply staff	+
“Silo-mentality” exists within UNICEF and Supply itself, reflected in the lack of integration between Programme/Supply and limited exchange across functional and organizational units	Focused Supply Community Strategy on reducing barriers and initiated Supply Faces/Hotspots for staff	o

Source: *Triangulated evaluation findings*

The SFE recommended the development of a Supply Community that could unite a network of engaged Supply staff, providing opportunities for knowledge sharing and creating a sense of professional belonging. Survey and workshop results confirm that the activities undertaken in response to the SFE are helping staff to solve work problems. To foster the Supply Community, the strategy introduced a knowledge sharing platform (Supply Faces/Hotspots), developed an Intranet webpage, and organized various face-to-face events among Supply staff. Below, the evaluation analyses the relevance of the Supply Community Strategy in addressing each of the challenges to knowledge sharing and community building that were identified in 2007.

Supply Faces/Hotspots

The development of Supply Faces/Hotspots is a highly relevant response to the need to increase sharing of knowledge and best practices. Using the Supply Intranet in the newly established Supply Community online platform as its access point, Supply Faces/Hotspots provides a specific knowledge sharing platform to: (i) improve access to information resources and (ii) facilitate connections among Supply Community members. Introduced when no such tools were available to staff, Supply Faces/Hotspots enabled members of the Supply Community to share and update their profile, ask questions, and search for relevant documents.²⁴ Feedback in staff workshops and the survey found the platform served staff needs. It crucially engaged the Supply Community in finding new ways of connecting, exchanging information, finding expertise and locating information resources.

Moreover, this Lotus Notes-based forum was relevant to opening additional lines of communication. This aspect of the Supply Community Strategy is helping reduce the dependence on formal hierarchical communication, another challenge identified in the SFE. The strategy’s aim is not to remove or reduce formal hierarchical lines of communication, but rather provide additional channels through which Supply staff can contact each other, regardless of function, rank or location.

²⁴ Supply Intranet, Supply Faces and Hotspots are Lotus Notes applications.

Global Supply events

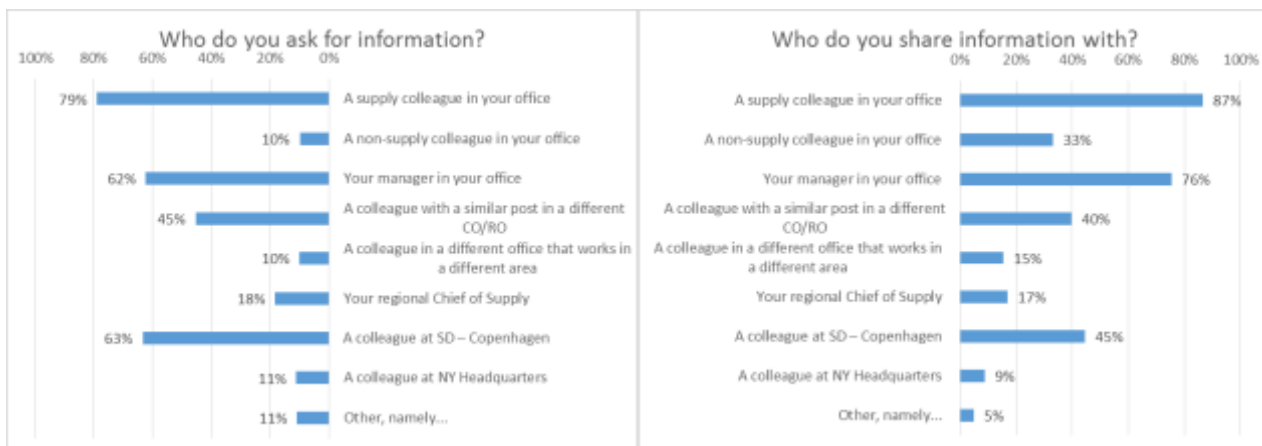
Supply Faces/Hotspots also supports the strategy’s approach to broader community building, which is also relevant to the SFE’s recommendations: the organizing of global Supply events and the bolstering of communication. SD management has organized a number of global and regional events, which have been actively communicated to the wider Supply Community. This is encouraging the development of informal personal networks across different offices, which can support greater engagement and stimulate additional interaction in the wider community. Such personal interactions can never fully be replaced by the interaction through online platforms, yet when face-to-face meetings end, online platforms support the continuation of conversations.

Broader organizational developments

While the Supply Community Strategy and online platforms are relevant to reducing a “silo-mentality” among Supply staff, this is a challenge that should also be assessed in view of broader organizational developments. With the aim to increase cross-divisional collaboration, NYHQ in 2009 introduced Yammer, a social network for all UNICEF staff. After its relatively slow launch, a more active campaign to promote and support use of Yammer across the whole organization was initiated in 2015. Against this background, the continued development of Supply-specific online platforms is becoming less relevant beyond 2015. In fact, encouraging Supply staff to continue using their own dedicated online platform rather than Yammer risks creating new organizational silos between Supply and other UNICEF Divisions.

However, the objectives set for the Supply Community Strategy remain aligned to the most urgent challenges. The strategy to foster the community through an online platform, more meetings and better support have been relevant towards meeting Supply’s objectives. This is supported by survey data, which shows that Supply Community members most often turn to local colleagues (79 per cent) or their manager (62 per cent). The data presented in Figure 3.1 below clearly demonstrates that SD has a central role in providing information to field staff; 63 per cent of survey respondents indicate they contact colleagues in SD when they need information. This underscores the relevance of SD Management in its role promoting the Intranet and providing support materials for using it.

FIGURE 3.1 UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION FLOWS



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Generally, staff share information with those that they also ask for information. They most often share information with Supply colleagues in the same office (87 per cent) and managers in the same office (76 per cent). Next most often, information is shared with colleagues at SD (45 per cent) and Supply colleagues from other field offices (40 per cent). These exchanges usually take place through regular emails or phone calls. However, given the intensity of these exchanges, the development of an online platform is relevant. Such a platform can further facilitate connections and information exchange across community members, providing staff an opportunity to learn from each other. The use of an online platform for discussion, questions and answers adds substantial value to staff, particularly when it is open for all relevant users and makes discussions transparent.

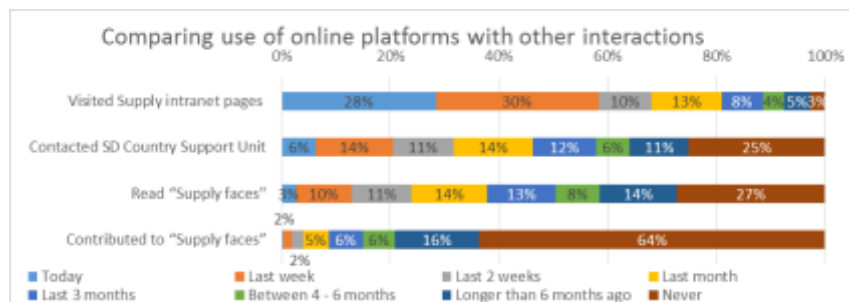
The limited exchange of Supply staff with colleagues outside the function underlines the importance of continuing to focus on the reduction of organizational silos. While Supply Faces/Hotspots can increase collaboration and

knowledge sharing between Supply staff, NYHQ’s Yammer can serve the same purpose while also opening better communication with other UNICEF Divisions.²⁵ As such, it is concluded that while Supply Faces/Hotspots was relevant at the time of its introduction, continued support for it will become decreasingly relevant in the future.

3.2 Effectiveness

The evaluators conclude that the implementation of the strategy’s knowledge sharing objectives has been partly effective. The evaluation links this to the absence of a specific plan to build and sustain a community. Without such a plan, SD did not have clearly stated objectives or explicit goals and lacked the tools to follow through with implementation. This became particularly evident in the implementation of Supply Faces/Hotspots, which is shown by comparing the use of Supply Faces/Hotspots against using the Intranet and the County Support Unit.

FIGURE 3.2 COMPARING USE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS WITH OTHER INTERACTIONS



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Only 3 per cent of respondents never visited the Supply Intranet, while a substantial majority of 64 per cent never contributed to Supply Faces.²⁶ These usage statistics show the actual application of these tools in support of work processes, regardless of their theoretical usefulness. Supply Community respondents frequently visit the Supply Intranet (81 per cent within the last month), are in regular contact with the CSU (45 per cent within the last month), and regularly read posts on Supply Faces (38 per cent within the last month). It is remarkable that respondents to the survey are more positive than the actual usage statistics of Supply Faces; 49 per cent of all registered users on Supply Faces have not logged into Supply faces since January 2015.²⁷

Supply Intranet

The Supply Intranet is the most used platform for information related to Supply. It contains links to news, key documents and important guidelines for staff, such as the Supply Manual and the Supply catalogue. Without exception, staff interviews reported that the Intranet provides information relevant to their work. As such, it is concluded that the Supply Intranet is an effective tool for meeting the strategy’s objectives.

Country Support Unit

The Country Support Unit (CSU) provides another mode for staff to resolve work-related problems. Field staff can email the CSU with their questions or information requests, which are managed by SD and usually answered within 48 hours. The CSU has received an increasing number of requests from field offices, from roughly 450 in 2008 to more than 2,000 in 2015. It supports staff in a broad number of areas, ranging from normative guidance for managers, to answers to practical requests on pricing or procurement procedures. In 2012, in information requests peaked due to the rollout of VISION. Yet staff also contact the CSU with requests about learning and knowledge sharing issues; around 19 per cent of all requests in the first six months of 2016 were in this area.²⁸ Field staff are overwhelmingly positive about the CSU; only 1 per cent find contact with the CSU not useful. Interviews confirm a positive evaluation of the CSU. Its answers are viewed as authoritative, and staff acknowledge that the unit responds quickly to their questions from the field. In particular, its competent response

25 Yammer allows users to create and join groups, which can be organized in any possible way (thematically, geographically, etc.).

26 Participants in workshops and survey respondents listed e-mail as their preferred communication tool.

27 This difference may be in part caused by the option in Supply Faces to read messages and contribute without logging onto the system; since this can be done straight from email, it is easy for users to follow what others share on Hotspots they are signed up to.

28 All figures in this section are based on data provided to evaluators by the Country Support Unit.

to the large number of requests during the roll out of VISION in 2012 has left a positive image among staff members, and contributed to expanding interactions between the CSU and the field in the years that followed.

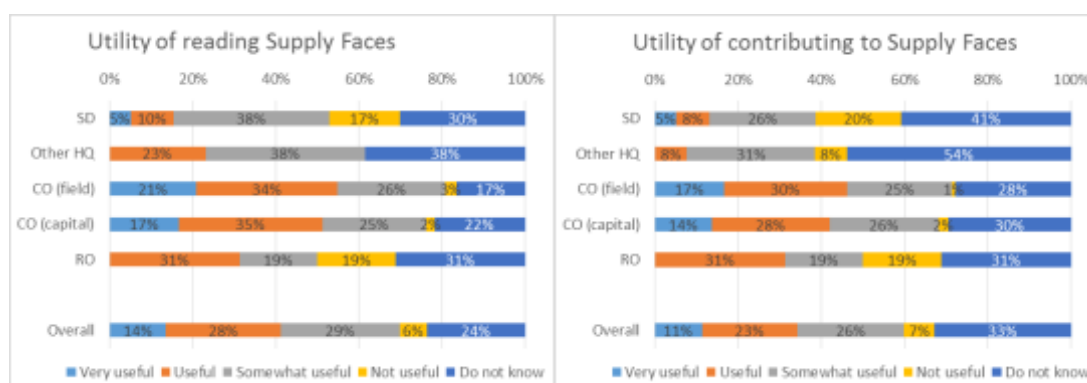
User statistics show that community members use Supply Faces/Hotspots less often than the Intranet and the CSU. The number of profiles that have logged in to Supply Faces/Hotspots has increased since 2010, but active usage has remained limited. In 2009, 63 distinct contributors were recorded in Supply Faces, climbing towards a peak in 2012 with 146 unique contributors, which coincides with the roll out of VISION. After 2012, the figure gradually declined to 91 in 2015.²⁹ On average, less than 10 per cent of the Supply Community contributed annually to Supply Faces between 2009-2015.

Supply Faces/Hotspots

Clearly, the full potential of Supply Faces has not been reached. This may be related to the lack of an explicit implementation and communication plan, since the survey shows that staff members who joined SD after 2013 are less familiar with the online platform.³⁰ Another possible reason for lack of Supply Faces/Hotspots users is the technical challenges associated with the online platform. In addition, in later years, NYHQ's promotion of Yammer contributed to confusion on which platform to use.³¹ Respondents to the survey indicated that they did not know where to find Supply Faces/Hotspots, considered the online platform too complicated, or reported technical or time constraints accessing it. While each of these reasons may be valid, the greatest impediment to its use may be lack of utility. As one interviewee stated: "I don't want to spend time on something that adds no value to what I'm doing."

It is also noted that the staff who are positive about the Intranet are its "heavy users." In this respect, Supply staff find Supply Faces/Hotspots less useful than the other tools (e.g., Intranet, Yammer), yet 42 per cent of survey respondents indicate that reading Supply Faces is useful for their work, while another 34 per cent finds contributing to Supply Faces useful. It is furthermore noted that the few new staff members who were interviewed prefer Yammer above all other tools, while most staff do not use any of these tools at all.

FIGURE 3.3 UTILITY OF SUPPLY FACES / HOTSPOTS



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Most issues concerning Supply Faces/Hotspots are related to VISION or more general procurement questions. These practical and procedural issues are linked to the fact that field staff consider Supply Faces/Hotspots significantly more useful than staff based in SD or ROs (see Figure 3.3). Staff in COs agree in considerably larger numbers on the utility of Supply Faces (55 per cent in field COs and 53 per cent in CO capitals agree; only 15 per cent in SD and 31 per cent in ROs agree), while hardly any staff consider the tool not useful (3 per cent and 2 per

29 UNICEF SD (2016), Internal overview of user statistics on Supply Faces. The declining usage of platforms was also noted in the 2014 UNICEF Global Staff Survey. The sharing of knowledge across UNICEF declined from 2012 onwards.

30 Based on interviews and the workshops conducted during the evaluation.

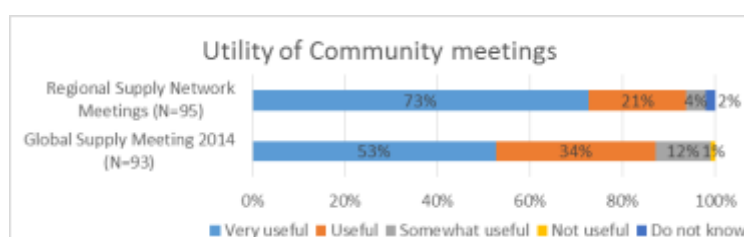
31 This knowledge sharing strategy represents two typical assumptions about launching an online community: (1) "if you built it, they will join (Rolling out a given technology platform - blogs, forums, wikis - doesn't encourage users automatically to appear and congregate, forming a robust community)". In combination with another well-known 'fallacy' – (2) "Once I've launched it, I'm done" – even urges successfully launched communities to fade out or can cause a community to fail. (<http://mashable.com/2010/07/30/sustainable-online-community/#4uTMLhC6vuqm>)

cent in COs; 17 per cent in SD and 19 per cent in ROs). The large numbers of staff that answer they “do not know” whether Supply Faces is useful are in line with statistical expectations.

Regional Supply Network Meetings

Regional Supply Network meetings have been organized in various formats between 2008-2015. In 2008-2009, for instance, a series of Regional Supply Chain Conferences were held in all regions. These conferences aimed to: brief field staff about the latest know-how in supply chain management, present techniques to advance their skills and knowledge, and improve the way supply chain operations are managed. These activities indicate a shift towards more strategic work in Supply functions. In total, 185 staff members participated in those conferences, which amounted to over 20 per cent of the Supply Community at the time. As such, these conferences brought together a wide range of staff from a variety of staff levels and different types of duty stations to meet their regional colleagues. The Global Supply Meeting in 2014, on the other hand, was an event with similar objectives that was also live broadcasted to the entire community, enabling participants who were not able to attend in person to participate online from wherever they were based.

FIGURE 3.4 UTILITY OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS (ONLY PARTICIPANTS TO THESE MEETINGS INCLUDED: “HOW USEFUL ARE COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE IN YOUR DAILY WORK?”)



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Figure 3.4 shows the utility of physical meetings for participating Supply staff. Only 1 per cent of the participants in the Global Supply Meeting and none of the participants in regional network meetings found these events not useful. Yet there is a striking difference in the share of participants that found the Global Supply Meeting very useful (53 per cent) and those that found the regional network meetings very useful (73 per cent). Much of this difference is explained by SD staff, who less often considered the Global Supply Meeting “very useful,” and participated much less in the regional meetings. Arguably, SD staff are less dependent on these meetings to network with other Supply staff, while these are a unique opportunity for staff working in ROs and COs to meet, interact and learn from their colleagues outside of their own office. Stories collected in the workshops confirm that regional meetings contributed to forming personal connections between other offices in order to solve practical problems.

3.3 Impacts of the strategy: Knowledge sharing and community building

One longer-term impact expected from the strategy’s focus on knowledge sharing is the fostering of a sense of belonging. The results of a UNICEF HQ knowledge management workshop and the existing literature on community building (see also chapter 6) assert that value is created in communities as their people connect, share, solve and innovate together.³² Value creation is an outcome of a supportive governance structure (climate and culture) and the intrinsic motivation of people who choose to work and learn together. Interactions between staff bring them together around a topic of current need or mutual interest. Through such connections, staff is empowered to find the right personnel and expertise to produce more useful work that creates more value for the organization.³³

Barriers to overcome

The survey shows that 18 per cent of survey respondents feel that their colleagues do not engage in open and frank knowledge sharing between different levels of hierarchy in the Supply Community. Interviews show that individual staff members are apprehensive about posting “silly questions” or “wrong answers.” To avoid these

³² Notes from UNICEF workshop on knowledge sharing, 19-21 April, 2016. New York.

³³ AGORA also has a discussion feature that is widely used by staff without the identified restrictions of SD Intranet.

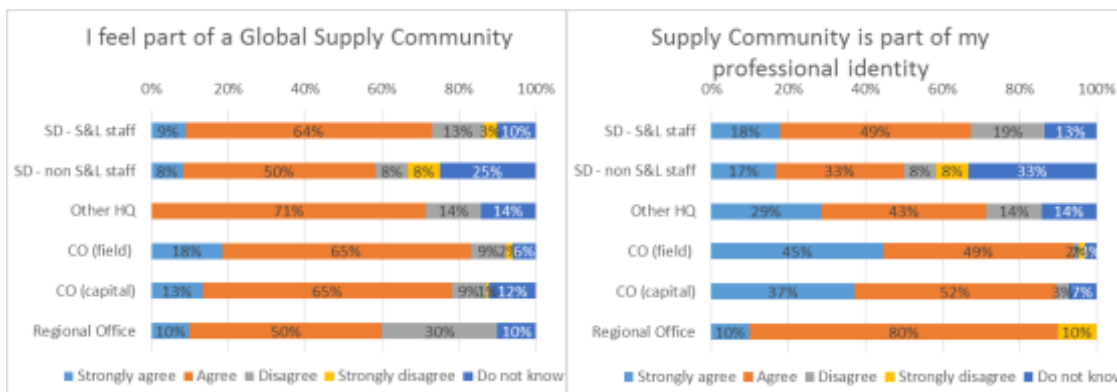
perceptions, staff members sometimes refrain from contributing altogether. In these situations, the CSU is often a better and more anonymous channel to request help. But while the CSU's "hub-and-spoke" model³⁴ of information exchange can satisfy the immediate information needs of field staff, it does not contribute to building a community. An effective community cannot be organized with a single hub providing solutions -- everyone should participate. Building a community towards such an objective is above all a social process, based on trust and reciprocity.

Sense of community

The Supply Community has at least two of the crucial drivers for the trust and reciprocity needed to promote knowledge sharing. First, there is a sense of community, and second, management in the field offices and SD encourage knowledge sharing. The survey shows that large numbers of staff in Supply say they have a sense of the community. Indeed, 81 per cent of all members feel part of a global Supply Community, with no substantial differences between different staff sub-groups.

Below, Figure 3.5 shows that field staff feel just as much part of the Supply Community as staff at SD. Staff members that work in Operations or Programme also agree in significant numbers that they are part of the community (not presented in the figure below). While non-Supply staff in SD slightly more often indicate they strongly disagree they feel part of the community, the most visible answer from this group is that they more often do not know whether they belong. There are larger differences in the extent to which staff see the Supply Community as part of their professional identity. SD staff see the Supply Community much less as part of their professional identity than staff in COs (10 per cent strongly agrees against 45 per cent/37 per cent strongly agreeing in CO). This holds true even when separating Supply staff in SD from non-Supply staff. One third of non-Supply staff indicate they do not know what to answer.

FIGURE 3.5 FEELING OF BEING PART OF THE GLOBAL SUPPLY COMMUNITY



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

The facilitation of knowledge sharing must be initiated by management. Various best practices demonstrate it can do that by motivating staff and publicly praising their contributions. This creates valuable incentives for staff to actively engage in knowledge sharing, which is necessary for the community to thrive. Above all, management should lead by example; 97 per cent of all managers indicate that they consider it their responsibility to encourage knowledge sharing among their staff, while 86 per cent of non-managing staff indicate that their manager sufficiently promotes knowledge sharing. Managers in the Supply function almost unanimously see it as their responsibility to increase the sense of professional belonging of their staff. This support for professional belonging provides the necessary "social glue" to make the Supply Community more open to sharing information and experiences.

Participants in workshops, interviews and the survey indicate that face-to-face meetings also contribute to a sense of belonging. In the encouragement of such face-to-face interaction, ROs play an important role. In regions where no RSA is present, Supply staff often report to Operation Chiefs. In these cases, less attention is paid to

34 All questions go to a central point and flow linearly back to the requestor, whereas in a community all participants feel responsible to respond and build the knowledge base. The central hub oversees and coordinates, but delegates as much as possible to the spokes in the network (i.e. the members).

the Supply function, and interviews conducted for this evaluation show that interaction between staff from different COs tends to be lower.³⁵ The RO offers a potential solution to this as a hub for meeting other Supply staff that work in comparable countries. WCARO offers a good example of the value of a RO, as it plays an active and relevant role in supporting the community in the region. To facilitate communication between SD and the predominantly French-speaking COs, WCARO has been involved in the distribution of materials in French and has actively encouraged interactions between COs.

3.4 Efficiency

Costs related to the area of knowledge sharing include the development and maintenance of Supply Faces/Hotspots and the support for running the CSU. Only a limited number of staff are involved in this area (roughly 1.5 FTE); in view of the CSU's popularity and its importance for the functioning of Supply staff, this small body of staff is impressive and efficient.

Exact information is not available on the costs for acquisition, development, and maintenance of online platforms; these are not part of the SD budget and therefore cannot be included in the evaluation. Furthermore, the evaluation established that this small group of staff have taken action to develop "how to" guidelines for communication and change management messages in order to set up and maintain a governance environment that stimulates CSU usage. No costs are available related to such activities either, which is difficult in any organization; other international organizations also do not capture such information, which makes it difficult to establish a useful benchmark or guideline for such costs in the future.³⁶

In addition, in this evaluation of efficiency, it is relevant to consider the time that field and SD staff spends using tools to perform periodic tasks such as searches or updates of profile information. The CSU further adds to efficiency in this regard, as Supply staff know they can turn to it to resolve their more demanding questions, saving time on existing problems. Other costs included in the efficiency assessment are the costs of organizing regional and global meetings, mainly travel and subsistence expenses. While these costs are comparatively high, they provide a necessary addition to online interaction. Face-to-face interaction further facilitates collaboration in ways that online interaction can never achieve.

Based on the above considerations, and further supported by the survey results, the evaluation concludes that the investments in the field of knowledge sharing and community building are efficient. Supply Community members in the survey reported that the benefits of sharing clearly outweigh the costs of developing and maintaining the platforms and hosting the meetings; 46 per cent of all surveyed staff say the benefits of knowledge sharing outweigh the costs, while 51 per cent of management staff say the benefits of community building outweigh the costs. Another 26 per cent think these are in balance. Staff based in SD or HQ are marginally more critical on the balance of costs and benefits than field staff, both for the costs associated with knowledge sharing and for community building. However, two-thirds of SD staff do not think that the costs are more substantial than the benefits. This is in line with what may be expected; the benefits of community building are more clearly felt by field staff, while it may create short-term costs for staff in HQ.

4. Career development and mobility

This chapter assesses the relevance, effectiveness, impact and efficiency of the activities implemented in the area of career development and mobility in the Supply Community.

4.1 Relevance

The SFE identified a number of challenges to the recruitment and retention of Supply staff. The Supply Community Strategy aims to address these challenges by developing opportunities for career growth within the organization and, in doing so, improve the sense of professional belonging and organizational pride among

35 Supply units in regions without a RSA do not have a dedicated regional staff member to consult, except the Regional Operations Manager, who is responsible for multiple functions (HR, finance, admin, IT, supply).

36 A comparative survey among International Financial Institutions revealed that on average, funds set aside to build a community ranging from US\$10,000 y/y to US\$100,000 y/y. In most IFIs, the building of a community is a dedicated task assigned to a staff position; discussions are monitored by the staff position and strategic discussions are even facilitated by a full time staff position for a limited time (e.g., within ADB, FAO, IADB, ILO, UNDP, World Bank Group). Efficiency is hardly measured; outputs in terms of number of discussions, development of knowledge products and innovations are assessed.

Supply staff.

While similar recruitment and retention challenges are also broadly found in the organization outside the Supply function, the Supply Community Strategy takes steps to address them within its own function. The activities developed under the Supply Community Strategy are generally considered a relevant and adequate response to the challenges identified in the SFE, as presented in table below.

Table 4.1 Challenges identified in the SFE and the link with the Supply Community Strategy

Challenges identified in SFE	Approach by the Supply Community Strategy	Assessment --/ - / o / + /++
High turnover of permanent staff, high number of vacancies in Supply functions and complex recruitment processes	Professionalized Supply's emergency response capability and increased the interactions between SD and the wider Supply Community to improve professional sense of belonging	+
Lack of career structure and limited opportunities for career progression	Increased transparency in recruitment and encouraged staff mobility and enrolment on the deployment roster for all Supply staff members in order to produce more opportunities for experience outside daily work environment	+
Insufficient support for discussions around career opportunities	Organized mobility exercises that enable line managers to better guide Supply staff in their current functions and in their exploring of opportunities for development	++

Source: *Triangulated evaluation findings*

The SFE found that Supply's high turnover rates and large number of vacancies were related to staff's isolation in field offices (see chapter 4), lack of professional belonging, and low job satisfaction. In view of these problems, the Supply Community Strategy's explicit objective is to increase the sense of professional belonging.

To achieve that, the strategy called for activities that increase interactions between SD and the wider Supply Community to foster career development and mobility, in addition to the other activities that promote learning and development or knowledge sharing. This approach is meaningful and relevant, particularly because the structural aspects of recruitment processes, working conditions and job satisfaction are the responsibility of DHR in New York and are therefore outside the scope of SD's mandate.

Career opportunities

The SFE also showed that individuals felt "stuck" in their Supply jobs and saw limited opportunities to advance into higher Supply functions, and consequently often left for a Programmatic area. But the issue of limited career opportunities remained relevant throughout the implementation of the Supply Community Strategy. In the 2014 Global Staff Survey, only 23 per cent of SD staff were satisfied with their career opportunities, compared to 40 per cent in UNICEF's broader organization. To target this issue, the strategy encourages mobility for IP staff and enrolment on the deployment roster for all Supply staff members. These activities aim to increase opportunities for experience outside the daily work environment, and contribute to a sense of professional belonging as well as pride in being part of a global organization of like-minded professionals. These are highly relevant objectives in view of the career development and mobility challenges faced by international and national/local staff in the Supply Community.

The SFE reported that Supply staff received insufficient support in conversations about career opportunities, aspirations and professional potential in global Supply functions. These conversations with field staff are conducted by the respective line managers in COs/ROs, who report to their CO/RO but not to SD. In this decentralized structure for Supply within UNICEF, it is relevant to better prepare these managers by, for example, approaching the issue of career conversations together with mobility exercises. This enables line managers to better guide Supply staff in their current functions and in exploring opportunities for development. However, the UNICEF Global Staff Survey showed that only one-third of SD staff discussed career opportunities with their managers in 2014.³⁷

³⁷ UNICEF Global Staff Survey, 2014.

In conclusion, the strategy's objective to improve the possibilities of professional career growth within Supply functions is highly relevant in view of the challenges identified by the SFE and the approaches taken by the wider UNICEF organization. Improving possibilities for career growth among Supply Community staff is also relevant from the perspective of the other objectives of the Supply Community Strategy, and is therefore a relevant way to improve organizational results.

4.2 Effectiveness

This evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the strategy's effort to improve opportunities for professional career growth within Supply, based on activities related to:

- Development of deployment roster
- Mobility exercises
- Improving career support and Human Resources planning

Development of deployment roster

Currently, roughly 200 individual staff members from various levels and offices are listed on SD's deployment roster. That figure has been confirmed by this evaluation's survey, in which 19 per cent of respondents indicate they have been included on the roster.³⁸ About two-thirds of those on the roster are G level, mainly G5 and G6. From 2013 onwards, 170 deployments have been conducted from the roster, deploying 105 individual staff members. While various individuals have been deployed more than once, 63 per cent of 2014 deployments and 41 per cent of 2015 deployments consisted of "new" staff (first time deployments). These figures underline the effectiveness of the strategy's focus on deployments to increase opportunities for professional growth.

SD staff are deployed significantly more often than staff from other locations; overall, 61 per cent of deployed staff are based originally in SD.³⁹ Particularly, staff from Regional Offices and field offices outside capitals are selected for emergency deployments less often than their colleagues based in COs in capitals or in SD. This is an important finding, particularly because the main criticism from field offices when recruiting staff from SD is lack of field experience. As such, the deployments contributed to increasing opportunities for professional growth, better equipping staff for other functions in the organization.

Lack of information

The perception of inclusiveness by staff members is nearly as important as objectively measured inclusiveness. Various respondents in the survey, interviews and workshops do not find the selection process for the deployment roster sufficiently transparent. Much of this concern, however, appears to be fuelled by a lack of information about the general procedures rather than a lack of transparency itself. This issue is apparent, for instance, from the 73 per cent of survey respondents that indicate they did not sign up for the roster, among whom up to 36 per cent did not know whether the roster would be a relevant opportunity for them. A further 9 per cent thought that the deployment roster is limited to staff with international experience, and that local staff could not apply. This also points to a lack of information about the deployment roster; local staff are not aware that the majority of staff on the roster are in fact G level. Often, G staff doubt the relevance of their own experience and therefore do not sign up for emergency deployments.

Other reasons for not signing up are: personal/family issues (7 per cent), contract status (6 per cent) and being relatively new in UNICEF (2 per cent). Meanwhile, 3 per cent (about 10 respondents) indicate they were actively discouraged to participate in the roster, and another 4 per cent do not see a possibility for deployment due to existing workload in their current office. These are valid concerns, and SD should try to minimize perceptions that managers "claim" staff and do not allow them to gain valuable experience through emergency deployments. But, particularly in smaller field offices outside national capitals, the small number of staff available may limit the possibilities for staff to gain broader experience.

Deployment procedures

³⁸ However 28% of respondents indicate they have signed up for the roster. This is at odds with SD's records that indicate it accepted almost all staff that wanted to join the roster. Possibly, some respondents confused the roster with other lists, such as talent groups. The 19% that are included are in line with the enrolment in the overall Supply Community.

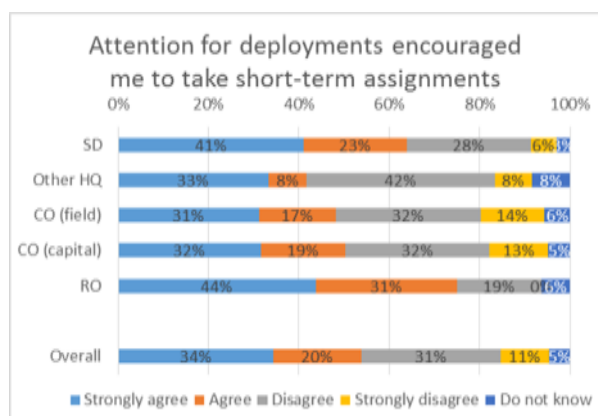
³⁹ UNICEF (2015), Supply Community Deployments, internal document.

Despite those various concerns, the selection of staff from the roster to deployments is considered inclusive. A two-thirds majority of Supply Community members (67 per cent) feel that people of the same qualifications would have the same chances to be selected for deployments. However, G6/G7 staff were significantly less positive about this, even though a majority of respondents from those levels (58 per cent) agree to the statement.

The organizational results in regards to deployment procedures are also positive; in comparison to other UNICEF divisions, SD stands out positively in responding to emergencies.⁴⁰ The emergency roster positively influenced this capability, as it has helped the selecting of capable staff to deal with emergencies within a short period of time. In addition, a specific focus in recent years on the recruitment and development of experienced logisticians has increased SD's capacity and value in responding to emergencies. SD's relative autonomy from HQ in NY in establishing and using the roster has contributed to this ability. In the future, the approach towards the deployment roster can be integrated into the HQ emergency surge mechanism.

The attention to deployments also contributed to a greater willingness among Supply staff to accept short-term assignments, particularly in SD and ROs. Respondents in these locations more often feel encouraged to go on short-term assignments (64 per cent and 75 per cent respectively) than their colleagues in COs.

FIGURE 4.1 ENCOURAGED TO ACCEPT SHORT-TERM ASSIGNMENTS – BY LOCATION



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

While short-term assignments like deployments can increase possibilities and willingness among staff to rotate, these assignments should not replace geographical mobility. This is particularly relevant in view of the lower mobility among staff in SD, and the higher willingness of the same staff in SD to take on short-term assignments.

Mobility exercises

Under the supervision of SD, mobility exercises were organized for IP staff in the Supply Community in 2012 and 2015. Out of 33 staff members targeted in 2012 and 27 staff members in 2015, 23 were successfully placed in new locations in 2012 and 19 in 2015.⁴¹ Participating staff members were largely (above 85 per cent) satisfied in both exercises. All eligible staff had initial conversations with their offices to determine whether they would be included or opt out of the exercise. In addition, all eligible staff had further conversations with SD-HRC about the exercise, regardless of their participation. Overall, these conversations were considered particularly useful by most offices, but less so by staff members.⁴²

Mixed mobility results

Despite the considerable efforts by SD and DHR, mixed results were achieved in terms of actual mobility. Below, Figure 4.2 shows a possible impact of the 2012 exercise, when the number of staff members that overstayed their tour of duty by more than one year was considerably reduced. Over time, the number of field staff that overstay their tour of duty continues to be relatively low (around 5 per cent). However, after the 2012 exercise, the number of SD staff who overstayed their tour of duty continued to increase (up to 16 per cent in 2015). The trends

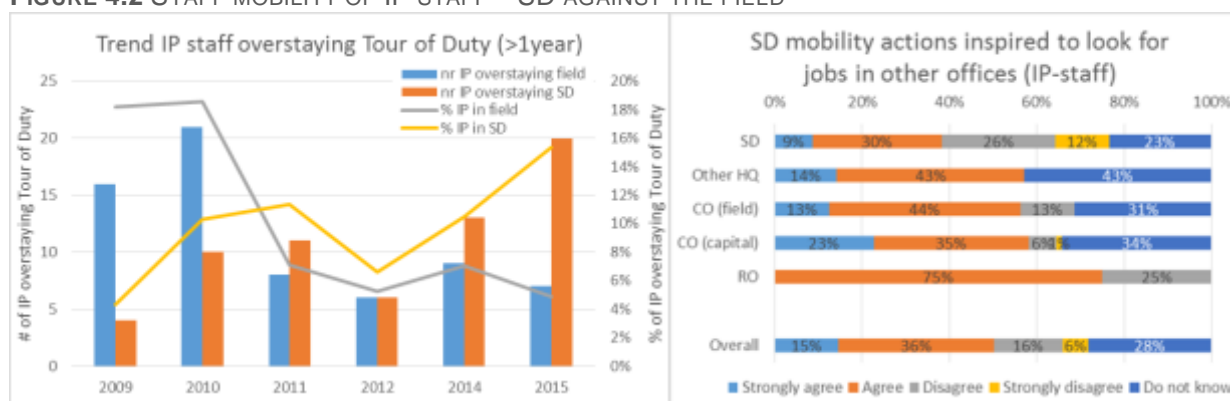
⁴⁰ This is confirmed by various interviews across UNICEF conducted by this evaluation, and further complemented by a number of emergency response evaluations.

⁴¹ UNICEF SD, Internal reports on Planned Mobility Exercises 2012, 2015.

⁴² UNICEF SD, Internal reports on Planned Mobility Exercises 2015.

presented below in Figure 4.2 confirm the voluntary nature of SD's Planned Mobility Exercise. As the 2012 exercise had already rotated staff that were willing or actively looking to move, it may have contributed to lowering the results for SD staff in 2015.

FIGURE 4.2 STAFF MOBILITY OF IP STAFF – SD AGAINST THE FIELD⁴³



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

The increasing trend of SD-based IP staff overstaying their tour-of-duty confirms a widely held perception in the field that SD-based staff do not sufficiently rotate. SD staff themselves also confirm this in the survey results depicted above. While a small majority of staff (51 per cent) is inspired to be more mobile and actively look for opportunities in other offices, this share is considerably lower in SD (39 per cent). In fact, 38 per cent of staff are not inspired to look for jobs in other offices.

This can partly be explained by the limited number of higher IP level posts outside SD: there are 68 P4/P5 positions in SD, while only 53 posts at these levels in the field.⁴⁴ This offers limited opportunities for staff to rotate to field positions at a similar level. Moreover, there is a commonly held misconception that rotation equals career progression. That further limits the mobility of staff, who are less likely to accept a rotation to an equal or lower function level. In addition, the skills required for posts in the field and SD differ substantially, creating another barrier against mobility from SD to the field. While P4/P5 positions in SD tend to be specialist posts, these are generalist management functions in the field.

Organizational considerations

Another barrier to successful placements is the limited field experience of SD staff; in some cases, CO refused to recruit individuals from SD due to their lack of field experience.⁴⁵ From this perspective, the strategy's effort to organize emergency deployments complements the work of the mobility exercise, so they together contribute to increasing the opportunities for professional development. The mobility exercises made IP staff better aware of the mobility process, while the deployments offered the means to gain additional skills and experiences.

Under certain circumstances, personal reasons are recognized as justification for overstaying a tour of duty. There can also be organizational reasons to keep certain staff members in a position, even after a tour of duty expires. For instance, SD employs a number of highly technical specialists that are not easily replaced, such as quality assurance specialists for pharmaceutical products. In a recent review of all posts, SD assigned 15 functions as non-rotational.⁴⁶ This was done for unique posts that required specific skills not found in other functions within UNICEF. Doing so tends to satisfy short-term organizational needs. However, longer-term organizational needs require staff members to be sufficiently adaptable to take on other challenges within the organization. Staff rotation helps to achieve just that. The ambitions of a successful learning organization need to be balanced against the short-term organizational risks.

⁴³ This figure excludes D-level staff and non-rotational posts at SD. Figure only includes staff that overstay their tour of duty longer than one year. No data is available for 2013.

⁴⁴ Based on SD Internal Staff list, updated until January 2016.

⁴⁵ Based on interviews with the organizers of the Planned Mobility Exercise.

⁴⁶ Based on additional data provided by SD.

Staff guidance

Despite the limited placements of the 2015 rotation exercise on SD staff mobility, the involvement of SD counsellors in providing guidance to staff and managers in the field has been a success. Most Supply Managers at targeted offices were involved and trained by SD in conducting career conversations with staff members eligible for rotation. In addition, HR personnel from SD conducted career conversations with staff opting out of the mobility exercise. As a result, the organization became better aware of barriers to mobility. For instance, when an office would not release a staff member for participation in the exercise, SD entered into dialogue with its respective line manager to prevent this from becoming a permanent limitation. Such guidance also worked the other way around; while COs have ordinarily been hesitant to recruit staff from SD with limited field experience, the mobility exercise encouraged it to happen more often, mainly due to increased interaction between SD and field offices, and the extraordinary status of the 2012/2015 exercises. Field offices, SD and participating staff members all indicated their satisfaction with this.

SD's attention to staff mobility prepared Supply staff for NYHQ's renewed attention to the issue. While DHR in NY formally led the organizing of the mobility exercises in 2012 and 2015, they were mainly implemented by SD. SD was responsible for bringing together recruiters to facilitate staff movement, and for setting up a reference group to provide support on organizational HR issues. The collaboration between SD and DHR has been successful, and DHR is now in a good position to further build on the experience with the roll out of an organization-wide rotation exercise in 2016. This is also relevant for SD, given the limited reach of its voluntary rotation exercise in 2015. Within SD, a balance needs to be struck between organizational risk for staff members in crucial positions at SD and overall objectives for mobility in the coming years. The introduction of a mainstreamed organization-wide rotation exercise serves as the starting point for finding this balance.

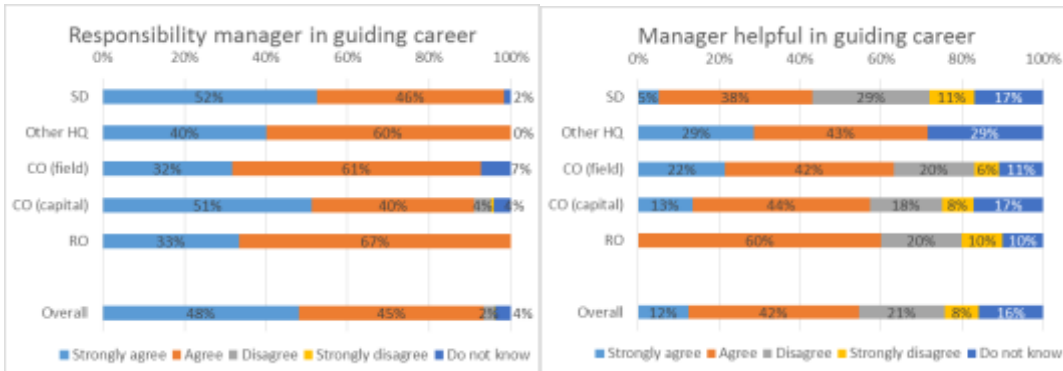
Improving career support and Human Resources planning

SD plays a central role in coordinating the global Supply function within UNICEF. For an overview of the staff working in Supply functions globally, organizational health checks were performed in 2010 and 2012. These informed SD's approach to Human Resources (HR) and provided the evidence for a more targeted approach to HR challenges among the Supply workforce. The health checks showed, for instance, that the distribution of IP staff versus local staff was out of balance in various COs, with too much managerial overhead in some and too little in others. To bring better balance, SD then worked closely with the Supply Chiefs in ROs. Based on the health checks, SD also provided tailored assistance to specific COs in structuring Supply and Logistics operations. By giving organizational blueprints to COs, SD prevented them from reducing their supply and logistics staff below minimum thresholds, thus ensuring organizational quality.

Staff involved in these largely informal interactions with HR said they found them very helpful. SD can similarly play a larger role in the recruitment of new staff, though also largely informally. Formally, SD's job is limited to technical clearance, but at the request of COs, SD has provided input in the process of shortlisting candidates. This is most often done for more senior IP positions by means of informal contact with Supply Managers.

In its role of "informal coordinator," SD also held regular face-to-face interactions with local managers where it advised them how to better guide their existing Supply staff in exploring career options, indirectly contributing to broadening opportunities for professional development. The survey shows that managers in all locations almost unanimously agree that they have a responsibility to provide support in the career development of their staff.

FIGURE 4.3 ROLE MANAGEMENT IN GUIDING CAREER



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

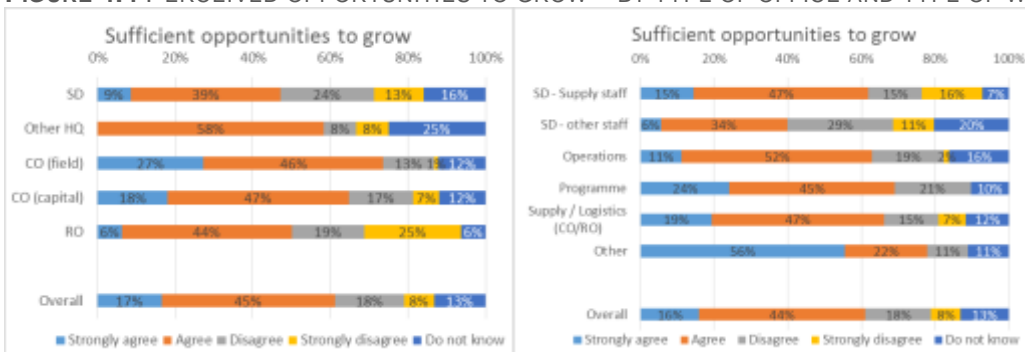
A large majority of non-managerial staff (64 per cent) also report that their managers are helpful in guiding them in their career options. Overall, staff members in the survey say they are well aware of their career opportunities (63 per cent). In these responses, no substantial differences exist between Supply and non-Supply staff, between types of offices, or between regions. Furthermore, the fact that staff have also been asked to indicate whether they have sufficient career opportunities can be seen as a sign that this particular activity is effectively implemented. Again, however, the survey shows that staff based in SD is less positive; only a 43 per cent minority of respondents in SD find that their manager is helpful in guiding them in career opportunities against 59 per cent from other locations.

4.3 Impacts of the strategy: Increasing career opportunities

To measure the broader impacts of the Supply Community Strategy’s various activities, this evaluation used the perceived career opportunities of Supply staff as a proxy for impact. The survey shows remarkable differences in career opportunities perceived by staff across COs. Outside the capital, 73 per cent see sufficient opportunities, and in the capital offices, 65 per cent do, while 50 per cent of staff in ROs and 48 per cent in SD see sufficient opportunities.

These are relevant differences that are not influenced by the area of work of staff members. Supply staff – both in the field, as in SD -- and their colleagues in Operations or Programme have similar views on their professional opportunities (66 per cent positive against 63 per cent and 69 per cent respectively). However, 16 per cent of Supply personnel at SD strongly disagree that there are sufficient opportunities to grow, which is considerably higher than staff in other locations. Moreover, those in a non-Supply function at SD see considerably fewer opportunities to grow than their Supply colleagues elsewhere. This finding is further confirmed by the various interviews conducted for this evaluation, which also suggest that SD staff -- particularly those who are not in a Supply function -- see more limited career opportunities.

FIGURE 4.4 PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW – BY TYPE OF OFFICE AND TYPE OF WORK

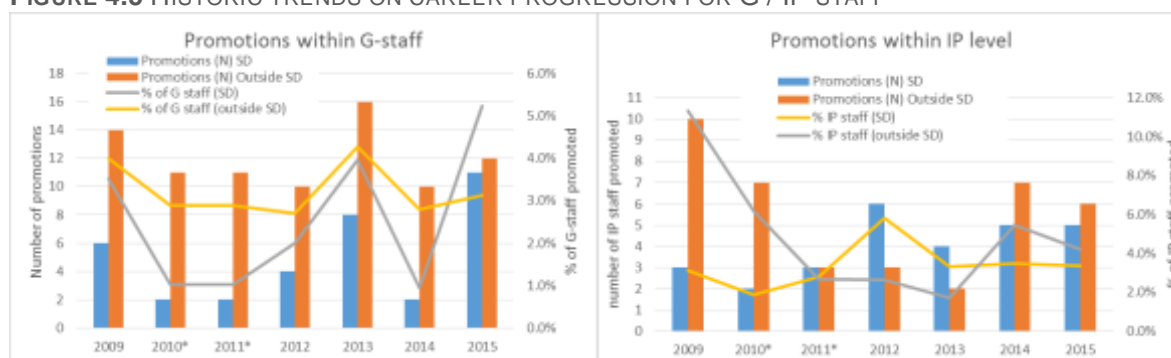


Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

These perceptions about career opportunities are compared against more objective data on career progression trends. Figure 4.5 compares the development of promotions between G staff and IP staff in SD and in the field.

No clear trend can be discerned, but overall, G staff appear to have equal chances of progression into a higher staff level as IP staff. G staff in the field tend to have a slightly better chance to obtain a higher G level position compared to their SD colleagues. This can be related to the limited number of higher G level posts in SD.

FIGURE 4.5 HISTORIC TRENDS ON CAREER PROGRESSION FOR G / IP STAFF

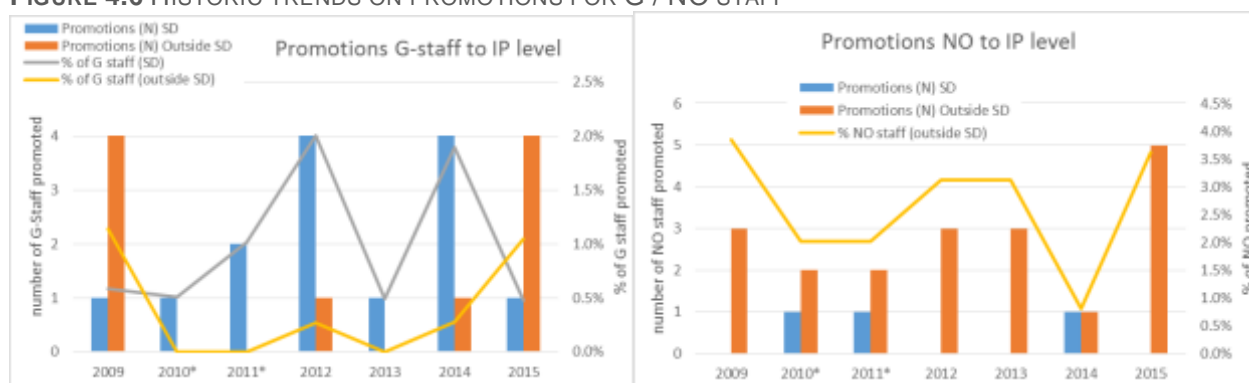


Source: SD Staffing list of all Supply functions, made available by SD HRC

The limitations on career opportunities experienced within the Supply Community do not necessarily pertain to promotions, but refer to the limited possibilities for local staff to become an IP. Many staff members at G level aim to pursue an international career within UNICEF, and seek to grow towards an IP status. In fact, interviews show that the status of IP is an important motivational factor for ambitious G staff to engage in training and development.

The figure below shows that direct progression from G to IP level has been relatively rare (less than 1 per cent per year), particularly in the field. This is partly because G staff in the field tend to first move into a National Officer (NO) position, after which they can further grow into an IP function; the share of NOs that progress to IP level is above 3 per cent in most years. However, over time, fewer G staff have been progressing to NO (a decrease from 1.6 per cent in 2009 to 0.5 per cent in 2015),⁴⁷ while the share of G staff in the field directly progressing to IP has been increasing since 2013. In SD, the move from G to IP is somewhat more common (slightly over 1 per cent of staff positions per year). While the data shows that it is not easy for staff to progress to higher levels or different staff types, it does happen every year. Over a longer period, internal SD data even shows that 28 per cent of currently employed IP staff started at G level or NO level.

FIGURE 4.6 HISTORIC TRENDS ON PROMOTIONS FOR G / NO STAFF



Source: SD Staffing list of all Supply functions, made available by HRC

The slight increase in G level promotions to IP staff coincides with a more active approach by SD since 2010 to encourage Cos and ROs to make better use of internal talent before recruiting externally.

The analysis of data in this chapter shows that, overall, staff is relatively satisfied with opportunities for professional growth. Objectively, no clear trend in career development can be discerned; relatively similar numbers of staff succeed in securing a higher staff level, or in making the shift to an IP level. Beyond the numbers

⁴⁷ Not presented in figures below.

of staff that gained higher positions, the evaluation concludes that the combination of attention to deployments for G and IP staff and work to stimulate mobility among IP staff created additional opportunities for career development. Deployment provides additional experience to staff, which can be put to use in voluntary mobility movements, but also better prepares staff with the skills and competence to be relocated under the newly revived UNICEF mobility policies initiated by HQ.

4.4 Efficiency

Overall, only 6 per cent of Supply staff find that the costs of activities in the area of career development outweigh the benefits. The only difference among staff groups was found in those based at HQ, who more often see costs outweighing the benefits (13 per cent).

The perception among some staff members that the costs for career activities are higher than the potential benefits might be related to the large efforts related to the Planned Mobility Exercises. Considerable resources were mobilized within NYHQ and in SD for this exercise, such as the setting up of a reference group and a project management team consisting of recruiters that would work as the link between eligible staff and positions. In total, more people were involved in organizing the exercise than the number of staff that were actually relocated as a result of the exercise. However, that does not necessarily mean this activity was conducted inefficiently. As mentioned, some relocations in the mobility exercise would not have been possible in a regular recruitment setting. This is a positive contribution to staff mobility that cannot easily be expressed in a financial figure. Moreover, SD and DHR can now further build on the experiences and tools developed for these two mobility exercises for the global Staff Mobility Exercise. Potentially, this contributes to relevant cost savings.

Some staff do not refer to operational costs when they see more costs than benefits in relation to SD's career development activities, but are rather pointing to the organizational costs of rotating staff. The mobility exercises brought to light concerns that the broader organizational rotation policy may cause valuable experience to be lost by relocating staff who are perfectly happy in the specialist positions they currently occupy. Although SD indeed needs to properly manage that organizational risk in response to UNICEF's broader rotation policy, this evaluation concludes that the activities undertaken in 2012 and 2015 actually reduced these risks by assigning non-rotational posts and stimulating mobility among other staff. The activities made SD better prepared for the broader organizational objectives on mobility policies, which are now even more relevant due to DHR's adoption of the new Executive Directive on staff rotation in 2015.

It is difficult to assess the efficiency of the other career development and mobility activities under the Supply Community Strategy, as many cannot be separated from the regular day-to-day responsibilities of HRC within SD. The work engaging with managers in the field or providing feedback and counselling to individual staff members between SD and the field can neither be quantified nor distinguished from regular activities. Nevertheless, the coordination and maintenance of the roster and deployments is done with limited staff (two part-time staff), which is cost-efficient in view of the human resources allocated to other activities.

5. Lessons from other communities in similar organizations

5.1 Approach

This evaluation specifically assessed the implementation of Communities of Practice (CoP) in comparable international organizations (based on desk review, email exchanges and interviews). The evaluation was able to draw lessons from CoP at the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, GIZ-German Development Cooperation, Inter-American Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, OECD, UNDP, UNDP Solutions Exchange (India) and the World Bank Group (WBG).

These organizations were selected because of their implementation of virtual communities to either support internal knowledge sharing (facilitate internal connections, on boarding and cross-organizational learning) or improve the exchange of information with external partners (country consultations, projects, joint development of knowledge products and peer reviews). All of the organizations view CoP as critical to delivering on strategic objectives and as a tool for staff in different offices to connect, exchange information and feel part of the organization. The networks also facilitate more fluid and informal connections of staff across functional, hierarchical and geographical boundaries.

5.2 Importance of communities

Communities or networks lie at the heart of successful cross-functional collaboration, teamwork, learning and the diffusion of knowledge. The reviewed institutions emphasize the importance of communities in new corporate strategies and recognize that knowledge and learning complement their technical and financial assistance programs.

To optimize their CoP, they established a dedicated plan and allocated resources that facilitated implementation. Implementation is supported by organized knowledge and learning events and by influencing existing organizational policies, projects and promotions. These communities show a common focus on the development of a governance structure that ensures the oversight, relevance, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation plan.

The main thrust of the communities remains to connect people with knowledge, thus fostering a “collaborative culture.” In such a culture, members can engage with colleagues and peers to share ideas, experiences and failures. This fosters a sense of belonging to the organization’s activities, contributing to the creation of a network-oriented workplace where staff has a genuine interest in the needs and requirements within the organization and beyond. It also offers the potential to engage with external stakeholders such as governments, NGOs and academic institutions, and encourages the co-creation of demand-driven knowledge products and services, such as peer reviews or FAQs.

However, this review also showed mixed results for the CoP in these institutions. In some organizations, they positively exceeded expectations, while in others, they are underperforming on stated objectives. Overall, the leadership of the community is a particularly important driver of its success.

Other relevant findings are:

- Communities are relatively new concepts in these organizations, and staff have taken a “wait and see” approach to membership, as it is usually voluntary
- Accountability and responsibility within these communities bypass traditional functional hierarchies, so spending staff time on community work can cause frictions with line managers
- Communities with a stated purpose, mandate and leadership recognition perform better
- Communities need to be thematically focused: a network that tries to do everything achieves nothing

Leadership and the availability of resources play a significant role in the success of a community. Commonly, leadership has a proactive role (soft monitoring, advocating and leading by example), and is supplemented with formal recognition, which include the allocation of resources for full-time moderation, non-monetary incentives, and implementing or adjusting policies to reflect knowledge and learning in HR performance. This has been the case of the CoP in ADB, GIZ, IADB, IsDB, UNDP, and the WBG.

The strength of CoP has in some cases been supported by a transfer of the corporate learning budget on sector and themes from HR to the communities (ADB, IADB and WBG). Within UNICEF in 2016, the Global UNICEF

Knowledge Unit was renamed the Knowledge and Learning Unit. Although the name change did not involve a shift in resources to advance learning, it indicates a similar trend towards closer alignment of learning and knowledge in UNICEF at the NYHQ level.

Communities in the reviewed institutions are loosely defined and vary between formal and informal. Formal CoP contribute directly to organizational goals. They are resourced and managed, with expected impacts and outcomes outlined in their work plans. Informal communities may not have resources and are often based on interest or staff-driven needs. Examples of such communities include staff associations, sport clubs, or communities with no direct relation to organizational goals (e.g. Adobe user club).

5.3 Maturity of communities

Communities typically go through a series of stages of development towards maturity. The reviewed organizations have adopted their communities since 2005, providing lessons for implementation. Important enablers for a community are leadership and community management (moderator/facilitator), goal setting, non-financial incentives, and easy to use tools and systems. Where leadership and active moderation are absent, communities struggle to survive.

Most organizations defined success through internal evaluation criteria such as the number of meetings held, knowledge events organized, postings, and open (unanswered) responses to postings. These criteria are often rudimentary, but more detailed evaluations on communities have not yet been conducted or made available. These informal community assessments build on a few criteria, which are linked to criteria developed by State of Community (SCOM), a professional association of community management. SCOM uses an X and Y matrix where the X presents the maturity level and Y the various inputs.

FIGURE 5.1 COMMUNITY MATURITY SCHEME

	Stage 1 Hierarchy	Stage 2 Emergent Community	Stage 3 Community	Stage 4 Networked
Strategy	Familiarize & Listen	Participate	Build	Integrate
Leadership	Command & Control	Consensus	Collaborative	Distributed
Culture	Reactive	Contributive	Emergent	Activist
Community Management	None	Informal	Defined roles & processes	Integrated roles & processes
Content & Programming	Formal & Structured	Some user generated content	Community created content	Integrated formal & user generated
Policies & Governance	No Guidelines for UGC	Restrictive social media policies	Flexible social media policies	Inclusive
Tools	Consumer tools used by individuals	Consumer & self-service tools	Mix of consumer & enterprise tools	'Social' functionality is integrated
Metrics & Measurement	Anecdotal	Basic Activities	Activities & Content	Behaviors & Outcomes

Source: The State of Community Management 2016: Quantifying the Value of Community

The SCOM Maturity Model can serve as example for SD to consider measuring their community maturity. It is publicly available, and SCOM reviews and substantiates its indicators annually, in response to new insights from its members. Based on these indicators, the maturity level of the UNICEF Supply Community is evaluated as a mix of stage 1 (Hierarchy) and 2 (Emergent Community). In stage 1, organizations generally use community structures and/or social collaborative tools in an ad hoc manner. A community strategy is not yet completed and resources have not been allocated to develop the community. Participation guidelines and content management processes regarding the strategic knowledge domain (if any) are informal. In stage 2, organizations create structures to support their community strategy by dedicating resources to formalize policies and processes. A work plan is present and staff is in place to run activities, such as advocacy, discussions, and meetings. Most of

the feedback on communities is gathered through surveys, as the system itself still generates insufficient information.

UNICEF NY reports that it avoids setting high expectations at the early maturity stages of communities to encourage their organic development. The Knowledge & Learning Unit of UNICEF HQ indicates that reporting mechanisms of SharePoint and Yammer provide usage statistics, and UNICEF, UNDP, IADB and WBG are consulting with Microsoft to improve report generation on the usage of systems. However, these indicators do not capture the essence of community connections. Such information can only be captured by identifying best practices, storytelling, and sharing its impact throughout the organization. While valuable lessons can be learned from other organizations, it is important to realize that none of the organizations reviewed has reached the most mature level of 4: “networked.”

5.4 Lessons learned

The review of CoP across other organizations shows that most are at a maturity level between 2 and 3. While none have yet reached the most mature level of 4 (“networked”), valuable lessons can be learned from this review to help improve the UNICEF Supply Community Strategy:

- Adopt an easy-to-follow community development approach, including a work plan/resource policy, and identify the roles and responsibilities of community specialist, manager and leader.
- It can take up to one year to build the foundations of a community (although the WBG implemented a 90 day work plan to kick-start its CoP); after 12 to 18 months, the community can be assessed if indicators of success such as by meetings, discussions, webinars, profiles, and storytelling are taking place.
- Successful communities designate managers to promote their community, set goals, organize meetings, seek new members, invite members to post, respond to posts, praise contributions and review contributions; in more mature CoP, the community manager is sometimes a full time position, and in some cases, organizations rotate the position to maintain the momentum of implementation (from six to 36 months before a new community manager takes over).
- Building and nurturing a community is a continuous process.
- Not all communities meet expectations, but all communities provide valuable lessons; underperforming communities show what works in what context, which helps guide better policies and develop tailored guidelines.
- Leadership plays a visible and stimulating role in CoP; leaders can openly share their knowledge, encourage staff to contribute to communities, and praise their contributions; in successful communities, leadership is especially involved during stage 1 and 2 of the SCOM maturity index.
- Since staff have a greater sense of belonging when their knowledge and learning activities are supported through guidelines and/or policies, knowledge sharing should be an important factor for career progression/staff promotion; to move vertically or horizontally on the career ladder, staff should demonstrate their knowledge and learning progress in performance evaluation reviews.
- Current metrics for monitoring community progress are rudimentary and difficult to apply systematically; in the absence of standard indicators, anecdotal feedback about staff participation, community contribution to developing knowledge products and services, fostering a sense of belonging, etc. must be provided to assure management of communities’ value.
- Communities in strategic knowledge domains are usually well resourced while other communities are often less resourced or not resourced at all, however participation in all communities is encouraged and acknowledged in performance reviews.
- Some organizations invest significant financial resources in building tools and systems for knowledge sharing; a current trend among all institutions is the implementation of cloud-based knowledge sharing solutions (primarily Office 365).
- Some organizations resource their communities with a dedicated L&D budget.
- There is a trend among organizations to integrate knowledge sharing and learning.

6. Conclusions and recommendations towards a future Supply Community Strategy

This chapter provides a summary of the conclusions on each evaluation criteria and recommendations towards improving the Supply Community Strategy.

6.1 Summary of key findings

Relevance

The activities supported under the Supply Community Strategy have been a relevant response to the findings of the SFE. The SFE concluded that Supply staff lack a sense of professional belonging due to: (1) no common definition of the skills and competencies required for Supply staff, and the lack of a curriculum for Supply posts; (2) a feeling of isolation and limited possibilities for professional development and sharing experience; and (3) an undervaluation of supply work in COs, which limits the possibilities for staff to grow within the organization.

This evaluation concludes that the Supply Community Strategy and its supporting activities are relevant to targeting the identified causes of the limited sense of professional belonging, by:

- Establishing a corporate basis for learning and development in Supply
- Developing tools and opportunities for exchange and knowledge sharing
- Improving systems of career mobility, career development and succession planning

Establishing a corporate basis for learning and development in Supply

Supply's learning and development activities are relevant and an adequate response to the problem drivers as identified in SFE 2007. The activities are also well aligned with broader UNICEF strategies.

- The Supply Community Strategy combines additional investment in learning and development with the establishment of a corporate Supply curriculum. This embedding of learning in the organization responds directly to one of the key conclusions of SFE. The new curriculum identifies necessary skills, helping to reduce skill mismatch in the organization.
- Despite the relevance of these activities, the Strategy does not address all SFE recommendations. For example, it does not develop concrete activities that better link training with staff performance and career planning. Moreover, the concept of learning within SD remains overly related to formal training, such as the provision of training courses. The Professional Learning Strategy 2015-2017 identified the goal to further stimulate informal learning, including the introduction of a mentoring system, but this has not directly translated into concrete actions.
- Although various SD activities offer learning opportunities (Supply Community platforms, and mobility action such as stretch assignments or deployments), these are not always seen as such. This points to the need for a common definition of "learning" that goes beyond formal training and draws attention to the importance of networking, participation in knowledge sharing and working groups.
- Learning becomes even more relevant in light of the SDG 2030, which will have an impact on the role and activities of the Supply function as well as the knowledge and skills that will be needed, both internally and externally. While Supply staff in the field appreciate SD's current expertise, a clear strategy towards future areas of expertise has not been defined.

Developing opportunities for exchange and knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing and community building opportunities are relevant to reducing staff isolation and broadening possibilities for professional development or sharing of experiences. Supply's online platform and face-to-face meetings were relevant to broader developments within the UNICEF organization.

- Intranet is centrally organized and provides relevant input for Supply staff all over the world. In addition, the Lotus Notes-based forum named Supply Faces/Hotspots was developed. This platform was a relevant response to the need to increase the sharing of knowledge and best practices, and the objective to better institutionalize knowledge sharing in the organization.

- Supply’s knowledge sharing tools are relevant for staff to contact each other, regardless of function, rank or location. Opening additional communication channels is a relevant response to the largely hierarchical communication lines in UNICEF. The organization of Global Supply conferences and regional network meetings are also relevant from this perspective, as these provide further means to share knowledge and build networks across the organization.
- The Supply Community Strategy was also aimed at staff in Programme or Operations, encouraging them to participate in the online knowledge sharing platform and sign up for SD newsletters. However, the introduction and active promotion of Sharepoint/Yammer by NYHQ makes the use of a dedicated online platform for Supply less relevant. To break through the “silo mentality,” it becomes more relevant for SD to join NYHQ in promoting the global organizational system for knowledge sharing and incorporate the functions of Supply Faces/Hotspots within this platform.

Improving the system of career mobility, career development and succession planning

The strategy’s activities are relevant to addressing the challenges identified in SFE related to high turnover of employment, lack of career structure and limited career progression possibilities, and insufficient support for discussion about career opportunities. They also align with the relevant needs and activities undertaken by other UNICEF actors, including NYHQ, ROs and COs.

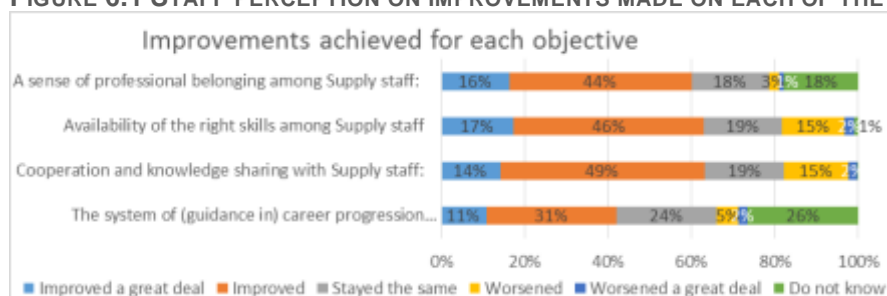
- SD has professionalized its emergency response capability and increased its interactions with the wider Supply Community. This is relevant to improving the sense of professional belonging among its members. It is further supported by activities that promote learning and development and knowledge sharing.
- The additional support for staff mobility and enrolment in the deployment roster increases opportunities to gain experience outside the daily work environment. These staff mobility activities are also a relevant first step towards the reintroduction of UNICEF’s HR mobility policies.
- In response to insufficient support for staff to explore career opportunities within the organization, the strategy explicitly addresses the issue through mobility exercises that encourage career conversations. This relevant approach enables line managers in ROs and COs to better guide Supply staff in their current functions and in their exploring of opportunities for development.

Effectiveness

This section lists the strategy’s contributions to short- and medium-term changes in Supply (as described in the Theory of Change in Annex 1). The evidence of the strategy’s effectiveness is based on survey questions and systematically selected semi-structured interviews, complemented by personal stories collected in workshops (see chapter 1.4 for a more detailed description of methodology).

The survey confirms the strategy contributed to an increased sense of professional belonging. Currently, 80 per cent of surveyed staff feel part of a global Supply Community and see the Supply Community as part of their professional identity. Supply Community members agree that the supported activities over recent years led to the following changes: (1) reduced skill mismatches, (2) improved cooperation and knowledge sharing, and (3) improved guidance and framework in career mobility, career progression, and succession planning for Supply staff (as presented in figure 6.1 below).

FIGURE 6.1 STAFF PERCEPTION ON IMPROVEMENTS MADE ON EACH OF THE IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVES



Source: Online survey Supply Community members 2016

Reducing skill mismatch

- The development of the Supply Learning Calendar provided a better structure for organizational training. The number of courses offered increased, and so did the number of participants in training activities (435 in 2012 versus 1,322 in 2016). The evaluation shows, however, that not all Supply staff participate in trainings and certain groups, such as G staff and French-speaking staff, participate less than others. Furthermore, not all new staff enrol in trainings in their first year. To ensure inclusive learning, this requires careful monitoring in the future.
- The learning offer is generally well communicated and Supply staff members are largely well aware of training opportunities. The evaluation identifies lack of support by line managers as the main barrier for participation. Various managers in the field cite costs and other operational concerns as a reason to deny training, and staff themselves do not always feel supported by their management. There are indications that SD and field offices did not comply with the UN-wide rule that staff spend a minimum of 5 per cent of their time on individual learning and development.
- Although staff value the wide variety of courses on AGORA, some mention the high number of courses as a barrier, because they cannot choose or find those most relevant for them. Staff are not guided by learning counsellors and clear learning pathways are lacking. Such learning pathways would enable staff to progressively build knowledge related to their current and future tasks and roles.
- Mechanisms for identifying relevant skills are in place, and the Supply Community Strategy better aligned the training offer to learning needs. For the majority of respondents, the training offer is aligned with organizational needs and, to a lesser extent, with their individual needs. Staff indicate that the curriculum could be made even more relevant by focusing on capacity building skills, providing more advanced courses, and contributing to learning environments that are supportive for informal learning.
- In addition to the structural contribution to learning and development, SD also responds to ad hoc training requests from the field. Though limits to resources (financial and HR) do not always permit accommodating such requests, the evaluation shows that SD responded effectively to these requests.
- Principles of effective adult learning are embedded in recently designed training modules, potentially increasing the impact of training. Participants find trainings useful, particularly where it combines self-learning with interactive webinars (such as the module on “contracting for services,” which includes case work, moderation, and a webinar). Some staff expressed the need for more practice-based training and on-the-job learning and a combination of online and face-to-face training. Some also expressed their wish that trainers improve their pedagogical skills. Overall, however, surveyed staff indicate that they were able to apply what they learned.

Improving cooperation and knowledge sharing

- Supply staff are positive about the online platform (Supply Faces/Hotspots), which paved the way for new ways of connecting, exchanging information, and finding expertise and information resources for staff. Nevertheless, the absence of a clear communication plan diminished its effectiveness. The “bottom-up approach” to the implementation of the online platform led to considerable differences in use and utility across the organization. The majority of surveyed staff have never contributed to the platform. Research shows that this is similar across other organizations: in most online communities, the majority never contributes, while a small part contributes a little, and a very small group are responsible for almost all the input (i.e., the 90-9-1 rule).
- A relevant share of Supply Community members (almost one out of five) feel that there is no open and frank knowledge sharing between different hierarchical levels, and that staff fear to be seen posting “silly questions” or “wrong answers.” This poses serious challenges for knowledge sharing.
- Staff are very positive about the capacity of the CSU to resolve work-related problems. However, the CSU does not contribute to building a community, but instead resolves issues and questions on an individual basis. In essence, it is a hierarchical tool, which does not encourage interactions between Supply Community members.
- The Supply Community is positive about global and regional meetings, saying they have been effective tools to encourage networking. As a result of knowledge sharing and community activities, the majority of surveyed staff feel they work better together with colleagues and immediate problems can be better resolved.

Career development and mobility

- The emergency deployment roster has successfully improved the Supply function. Interviews underline the increased performance of Supply in responding to emergencies since 2008, particularly in comparison to other UNICEF divisions. The roster has been instrumental in the rapid mobilization of capable staff in emergencies. Deployments contribute to further professional development of staff, who gain valuable experience by engaging in emergencies.
- The Planned Mobility Exercise successfully placed staff in new posts, and participating staff are satisfied with the exercise. However, due to the relatively low number of participants in the exercise, it did not have an overall impact in reducing the total number of staff that overstayed their tour of duty. SD staff in particular continued to overstay their tour of duty. While considerable improvements can still be made, the side effect of the mobility exercises run by SD is that the organization is better aware of barriers to mobility, and can therefore more effectively respond to the mobility policies newly introduced by UNICEF HQ.
- SD has an important role supporting field offices in their HR policies and informally liaising with field staff and involved managers. Organizational health checks ensured that the global Supply Community is better prepared for the future by identifying and addressing potential questions and issues. Furthermore, interviews show that Supply staff in the field have a better idea of where to turn for career-related questions, particularly in cases where their own managers may not always have such answers. Supply's managers also increased their competence in conducting career conversations with staff members eligible for rotation, and their responsibility in this respect.
- The survey and interviews show that there are still Supply Community members who feel that they have fewer opportunities to grow (mainly staff in ROs and SD). The most cited issues were the limited number of higher IP positions available in the field, and the limited number of higher G-level positions at SD. Moreover, local staff in the field feel that they are limited in gaining international experience. An analysis of career patterns within the organization does not confirm such perceptions and shows, for instance, that local G staff have equal chances of gaining a higher staff level (within their category) as IP staff. Almost one-third (28 per cent) of currently employed IP staff originally started at G or NO levels.
- Across the three areas of implementation of the strategy, the evaluation has identified two common factors that underlie successful implementation. First, the independent mandate of SD, visionary leadership and support from SD management is crucial. And second, this is complemented by adequate resources, which further facilitate implementation. There is a broadly shared understanding by internal and external stakeholders that without the visionary leadership from the Director and Deputy Directors in Supply Division, the Supply Community would not have achieved its current position in the organization.

Impact

Impact of the Supply Community Strategy is evaluated on the basis of its contribution towards longer-term outcomes. The longer-term outcomes defined by the Theory of Change do not merely seek to achieve learning, sharing of knowledge or career mobility as an end to themselves. Instead, these contribute to a sense of professional belonging, through which high level results and better performance towards organizational targets can be achieved. This is further operationalized into types of value created by the strategy, which consist of tangible and intangible benefits generated by communities and networks.⁴⁸

- **Immediate value:** The strategy enabled staff to find solutions to problems or transferred the knowledge, practices, tools and instruments to solve immediate problems. The evaluation collected detailed accounts of how exchanges increased after personal meetings occurred between colleagues at conferences or trainings. These accounts confirm that those interactions would not have taken place without the Supply Community Strategy.
- **Potential value:** Workshops also collected insights about how training improved staff skills, but also facilitated new roles and activities for Supply staff. Through these new roles and activities, the organization can build on its newly-developed capacity to meet specific needs or requirements in the future.

⁴⁸ Wenger et al (2011), Kaplan & Norton; and the American (APQC) and Asian Productivity Quality Centers (APO).

- **Applied value:** Trainings, knowledge sharing and higher mobility provided the means to introduce new working methods/tools, improve the quality of processes and increase cooperation between Supply and Programme staff. This has improved the organization, as greater participation led to positive changes in work processes. A frequently cited example of this applied value is how the tools, trainings and support provided by the CSU greatly facilitated the introduction of VISION.
- **Realized value:** The evaluation shows how training enables better support among colleagues and better functioning teams, and as such helped work towards organizational objectives and critical functions.⁴⁹ It also demonstrates how a sense of belonging and ongoing support among staff contributed to higher performance.
- **Reframed value:** Interviews with both Supply and non-Supply staff across UNICEF reveal an increased awareness of the Supply Community and a strengthened organizational performance. This shows the strategy has met the challenges that the Supply Community was formed to address. As one staff member commented, “When faced with problems, there is always someone out there in the community who can offer a solution.” Stakeholders outside the Supply Community also confirm this, and see SD and its staff as efficient, competent and reliable.⁵⁰

Efficiency

SD invested a significant amount of resources in the implementation of the Supply Community Strategy. Consider, for instance, the purchasing, developing and maintaining of infrastructure and services, costs for logistics, and the time invested by staff in organizing the activities and participating in events. However, this efficiency analysis is hampered by the lack of available financial information on the activities implemented through the strategy and the absence of comparable benchmarks in other international organizations.

A relevant indicator to assess efficiency would be the time that field staff and SD staff spend with the community’s tools to search and update profile information, and the time saved by using its tools. These costs are difficult to gauge against the broader benefits of community development, mainly defined by increased sharing of knowledge between Supply staff. Therefore, this evaluation analysed the potential to improve efficiency and gathered opinions about aspects of efficiency.

In regards to learning and development, training has been the largest investment under the strategy.

- The time invested by L&D Specialists and the costs for developing and implementing trainings varies, but the evaluation concludes that the benefits of learning outweigh the significant costs. While newly developed courses such as the e-learning version of “Introduction to procurement” required substantial investment, the development costs per participant are reasonable and justified.
- It is expected that after launching an online course, the cost per participant can be driven down substantially by reaching more staff. Additionally, SD benefitted from the experience working with the software for online learning modules, shortening time for the future development of new online training courses.
- Furthermore, the evaluation shows that considerable cost savings have been achieved by sharing the development costs of courses with different partners.

Costs related to the area of knowledge sharing and community building include the development and maintenance of knowledge sharing platforms, the organization of regional and global workshops (borne by the various SD units involved), and the support for running the CSU.

- The costs for running the CSU are relatively low, with only 1.5 FTE staff – in line with community building efforts at other organizations.
- Due to the “bottom-up approach,” the investments made in development, maintenance and central coordination of knowledge sharing platforms and tools are relatively low.
- Based on survey results, the majority of Supply Community members feel that the benefits of knowledge sharing clearly outweigh the costs of developing and maintaining platforms and hosting meetings.

⁴⁹ Note that improvement of performance is also the highest level in Kirkpatrick’s 4-level training evaluation model. It consists of (1) reaction, (2) learning, (3) behaviour, and (4) results. See D.L. Kirkpatrick and J.D. Kirkpatrick (1994), *Evaluating training programs*.

⁵⁰ Based on various interviews with staff at UNICEF HQ.

Concerning the efficiency of career development and mobility activities, the efforts in the Planned Mobility Exercises warrant particular attention.

- Considerable resources were mobilized within HQ in New York and in SD for the Planned Mobility Exercises, including the setting up of a reference group and a project management team.
- In total, more people were involved in organizing the exercises than the number of staff who were actually relocated.
- However, this does not mean that the cost effectiveness is low by definition. Some relocations in the mobility exercise would not have been possible in a regular recruitment setting. This is a positive contribution to staff mobility, which cannot easily be expressed in a financial figure.
- Moreover, the mobility exercise sensitized and prepared the community for the reintroduction of organizational mobility policies.
- In future mobility actions, SD and NYHQ can further build on the experiences and tools developed for these two mobility exercises. Potentially, this contributes to relevant – though hard to measure – cost savings.
- In addition to the operational costs for organizing the mobility exercises, there are organizational costs involved of rotating staff. Mobility policies cannot prevent the loss of valuable experience by relocating staff from specialist positions.
- The efficiency of the work on engaging with managers in the field, providing feedback and counselling to individual staff members between SD and the field cannot be quantified, and can neither be distinguished from the regular activities.

6.2 Recommendations towards improving the Supply Community Strategy

This evaluation concludes that SD has demonstrated leadership and vision by establishing a Supply Community Strategy in response to the SFE. Evidence shows that this has led to concrete results (see Section 6.1). Based on the key findings, further inspired by the literature and a review of community practices in comparable international organizations (see Chapter 6), the evaluation proposes a number of recommendations to further improve the Community Strategy. Yet it must be understood that the development of a community can take time. Adopting the recommendations will contribute to further progress in the maturity of the Supply Community, as defined in chapter 6.

The recommendations are logically structured towards the further development of the Supply Community. Recommendation 1 calls for improving the foundations for knowledge and learning, and is complemented by recommendation 2, which addresses cultural, behavioural and motivational aspects to foster sharing and learning practices. Recommendation 3 addresses the barriers to participation and seeks to increase inclusiveness in the community's formal approach. In addition to the formal approach, recommendation 4 focuses on the creation of enabling environments for practice-based and informal learning. The definition of learning pathways as proposed by recommendation 5 seeks to link learning routes to the different roles and activities of Supply staff. Finally, recommendation 6 suggests future directions for improving monitoring of the implementation of the Supply Community Strategy.

Recommendation 1: Create sub communities for specific strategic knowledge domains. To better ensure the relevance of the community as it develops, SD should consider:

- a) Creating subject-specific communities (e.g., Capacity Development, Logistics, Vaccines, Nutrition, WASH, Emergency and Market Development) to mobilize specific SD expertise. Begin on a small scale, by selecting one large and one small innovative community. The existing structure of Working Groups within SD may serve as the first suggestions for knowledge domains/subject-specific communities. Staff should not be discouraged to set up a community in other areas, but communities must be overseen and coordinated to avoid redundancy. Encourage participation by issuing guidelines that promote staff involvement, trust and recognition.
- b) Expanding the community by inviting external stakeholders (e.g., development partners, experts/academics, country administrations) to join a co-creation process in external strategic knowledge domains (e.g., vaccines, nutrition).
- c) Developing a "work plan" for each "formal" community that includes specific objectives, a first year agenda, and indicators for success at the end of the year.

- d) Appointing a community manager for each community to guide it through its growth from stage 1 to 2 (SCOM index). Successful communities have nominated staff to welcome and invite members to join, call for discussions, validate contents, guard community values and engage members in defining what the community is about. Without such a moderator, community members could easily feel a lack of recognition for their contributions. Moreover, without moderation, the exchanges within the community could appear positive but would insufficiently contribute to organizational objectives, and would do little to extend the knowhow of global Supply staff.
- e) The CSU is well positioned to play a role in community management and therefore should convey meetings, contribute to capacity building efforts and actively seek ambassadors to promote knowledge and learning approaches. It can overcome the limitations of traditional support strategies (i.e., its “hub-and-spoke model”) and deliver greater value in a more efficient manner by capitalizing on its knowledge. This increased value is created and managed by engaging community members in solving problems and answering questions for customers.
- f) Being prudent in its upfront allocation of resources to communities. In considering financial support, the evaluation of a work plan and its strategic goal should be the first relevant criterion, followed by an assessment of the interest and demand for such a community. A Community Readiness tool (see Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002) could support the decision whether to start a community.

Recommendation 2: Develop an approach to foster a culture of knowledge sharing and learning. More guidance must be provided by SD leadership to engage members in building a Supply Community. Therefore, SD should consider:

- a) Encouraging SD staff to directly engage peers and external colleagues without any hierarchical restrictions to share ideas, solve problems and realize challenges by connecting, communicating and/or collaborating with each other. Such efforts should be coordinated within the wider organization to avoid the creation of new “artificial technology silos.”
- b) Promoting that knowledge creation, sharing and learning with Supply colleagues is the responsibility of all staff.
- c) Reviewing job descriptions for Supply functions and ensuring that the principles for knowledge sharing and learning are embedded in them. Encourage knowledge sharing behaviour by prevailing upon NYHQ to adjust Performance/Appraisal Reviews to take into account specific knowledge and learning objectives. A link between these objectives and opportunities for career progression can be made. If this process is not facilitated, there is a greater risk of under-utilizing the potential of staff knowledge; without knowledge sharing and community building activities, staff are likely to remain disconnected from valuable collective experiences.

Recommendation 3: Identify and remove barriers to participation in Supply Community learning activities. The evaluation shows that not all Supply staff participate in trainings and certain groups participate less than others (such as recently recruited staff, G staff and French speaking staff). Therefore, SD should consider:

- a) Better defining and communicating the concept of learning in the organization, based on the principles that include formal training (i.e., training courses) as well as informal learning (e.g., participating in events, working groups, and knowledge sharing). It is critical to build consensus within the organization about what is considered learning, and to empower staff, managers and offices to define their learning needs.
- b) Monitoring the inclusiveness of learning, career development and knowledge sharing activities for Supply staff at least once every two years. While learning requires a personal commitment, low participation needs regular, improved monitoring. This can be done by better monitoring performance on the UNICEF rule to invest at least 5 per cent of time in learning and development. Monitoring can be performed by: (1) analysing participation statistics in formal training as well as SharePoint/Yammer metrics; (2) surveying Supply staff about their participation in learning; and (3) opening up a contact point (supported by L&D specialists and SME) for staff to report lack of support in learning and development.
- c) Assessing the barriers (psychological and situational), that Supply staff experience when they participate in learning, knowledge sharing and mobility actions, and undertake systematic and individualized actions to reduce these obstacles by:

- Identifying the barriers in career talks and yearly performance conversations by line managers, discussing the Personal Development Plans, and defining a plan to eliminate the barriers.
- Better advocating the importance of spending time and resources on learning by senior management to line managers and Supply staff. Showcase examples of how learning led to change and improved individual and organizational performance should be showcased, using a “storytelling” approach.
- Making line managers more accountable and responsible for knowledge sharing and learning within their team, and embedding learning in organizational objectives. This avoids the risk that these elements remain a “tick box” in the Performance Review.
- Considering the possibility to support individual training costs (travel and subsistence) for COs that underperform on learning and development for their Supply staff. Since this could create a disincentive for offices to invest in learning and development, a more rigorous alternative may be to centralize the learning budget at SD or community level.
- Focusing on developing sufficient opportunities for career growth and diversification, particularly for staff based at SD. The evaluation showed that staff at SD feel less mobile and less positive about career opportunities within Supply than their colleagues in the field. At the same time, field staff feel that the organization would benefit if staff at SD had more field expertise. The popularity of deployments and stretch assignments among SD staff could be further capitalized to broaden SD staff skills, competency and experience.

Recommendation 4: Create enabling environments for practice-based and informal learning. To do this, SD could consider rolling out the Work-Based Learning component of the L&D plan by:

- a) Establishing an environment where formal, non-formal and informal learning at work is defined as a strategic investment by providing dedicated time and resources for learning and recognizing investments made in learning in annual performance reviews. To achieve this, it is important to embed learning in the daily delivery process of projects, programs and work streams and better capture the learning that takes place on the job (through learning reports, reviews, blogs, handovers, etc.).
- b) Further facilitating practice-based learning by setting up mentoring programs or supporting job shadowing/rotation activities. A link of experienced Supply staff to those less experienced (within communities, and even between offices, or between Programme and Supply functions) would ensure informal transfer of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support relevant to work, career and/or professional development. Increasing mobility requires experiences to be documented, shared and transferred to improve the process of “getting up to speed” to fulfil assignments.
- c) Tracking progress on formal, non-formal and informal learning by, for example, using learning biographies (on AGORA) that can be attached to the Learning Development Plans, feeding career discussions among staff and managers. A learning biography gives a chronological overview of learning experience with information about training courses attended, practical learning, knowledge sharing, and more.

Recommendation 5: Define learning pathways that support the professional development of Supply staff.

Currently there are no clear learning pathways to guide staff in their selection and prioritization of courses.

Learning pathways are specifically helpful for new recruits. Therefore, SD should consider:

- a) Defining a number of learning pathways that enable staff to make clearer choices about which formal (Learning Calendar) and informal (team work, knowledge sharing, deployments, stretch assignments, staff rotation and mentoring) learning activities to follow and for what purpose. Learning pathways are routes through a range of activities that enable staff to build their knowledge progressively, given their current and future tasks, roles, and areas of specialization. They could be linked to career steps as well as to new roles and activities of Supply staff in communities (being a leader, expert, coordinator, etc.). If this development is not facilitated, there is a risk that staff will define their learning needs based on their own views, rather than through a consultative process with SD that has management input. Defining learning pathways requires an annual exchange of long-term learning goals between staff and their managers, fostering not only individual learning, but organizational learning as well.
- b) Improving the introduction and induction period for new recruits. SD could at least provide a “menu” of learning pathways that new staff could follow when entering a new Supply post. A mentor/coach (see recommendation 4b) could guide the recruit and ensure informal transfer of knowledge. If this important

period is not facilitated, it risks that a sense of belonging will not be infused and it may take staff longer to learn and integrate organizational values.

Recommendation 6: Improve monitoring of the implementation of the Supply Community Strategy. The monitoring and evaluation framework of the Supply Community Strategy has been defined too narrowly in terms of immediate outputs, and does not define measurable baselines to assess effectiveness. Therefore, SD should consider:

- a) Taking the proposed indicators as presented in the “Theory of Change” as a starting point for further refinement of the monitoring framework (see Annex I) and improved monitoring of costs of activities. The proposed indicators would use available baseline information, the logs and reports of current registration systems (such as the training database and SharePoint/Yammer metrics), and additional data collection (surveying staff and storytelling approach). SharePoint metrics monitor activities and quantifiable outputs (such as documents created, posted, downloaded, number of CoPs and postings per CoP), but do not show the actual results of interactions. Similar organizations such as UNDP, ADB, AfDB, and GIZ add a brief questionnaire to the system that users are requested to answer while searching the site (e.g., when the person wants to quit the session or when a document is downloaded). The survey includes questions to assess the platform (“did the document/session meet expectations”) as well as the product (“assess the quality and usefulness of the product”). It is recommended that SD design a questionnaire for this purpose and embed it in the SharePoint environment. The questionnaire can be developed in-house or obtained from a sister organization such as UNDP.
- b) Improving benchmarking with comparable international development organizations that have implemented their own community strategies (such as those in chapter 6). A valuable way to begin this is to become a member of “The State of Community Management Research” (SCOM), a professional membership association that focuses its research entirely on community management. The advantage of SCOM is that: (i) its methodology is public, (ii) its model is used by different international organizations, and (iii) its input indicators are substantiated and continuously enriched to reflect new insights from the members. The model allows for measuring the maturity of the community, and for benchmarking with other organizations.