

Ex-post evaluation

Education and child protection, Syria

Title	UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection Phase V				
Sector and CRS code	Primary and secondary education, 11220 (70%), 11230 (30%)				
BMZ number	2020 18 091				
Commissioned by	BMZ				
Recipient and executing agency	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)				
FC financing volume and instrument	EUR 12 million / transitional aid (KWI title)				
Project duration	2020-2023	Reporting year	2025	Sample year	2025

Project objectives and implementation

At the outcome level, the objective was to ensure that Syrian children and young people had access to and made use of high-quality measures in the areas of education and child and youth protection. At impact-level, the objective was to mitigate the worst effects of the Syrian crisis on children's educational opportunities. In addition, the project aimed to contribute to cohesion, tolerance and peace. The outcome-level objective was pursued through activities in three areas of action: (i) formal and non-formal education, (ii) youth development and participation, and (iii) child and social protection.

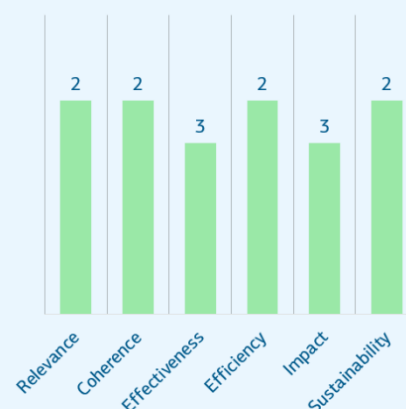
Key findings

Despite difficult conditions, positive results prevailed, which is why the programme is evaluated as "successful".

- **Relevance:** Despite some conceptual weaknesses, the programme is convincing due to its strong alignment with the needs of the target group and the policies and priorities of the BMZ and its development policy partners.
- **Coherence:** The measures were consistent with international standards and norms and complemented measures within and outside German development cooperation.
- **Effectiveness:** Quantitative targets were met. Minor qualitative limitations in implementation were identified, but UNICEF took a variety of measures to limit the risk of quality deficiencies.
- **Efficiency:** Despite small-scale measures at a large number of intervention sites, production costs were reasonable, and the costs per beneficiary were largely in line with those of comparable FC-funded projects in fragile contexts.
- **Overarching developmental impact:** The impact is plausible, although the actual contribution of the measures cannot be accurately estimated and specified due to a lack of data and interviews with the target group.
- **Sustainability:** The effects of the regime change in Syria cannot be reliably assessed, but the positive effects achieved with the measures taken so far can be continued, as UNICEF has received the necessary funding to continue its No Lost Generation approaches.

Overall rating

successful



1: very successful – 6: completely unsuccessful

Conclusions

- Early coordination and approval of intervention locations by the BMZ and AA are essential for implementation and adherence to the timetable.
- Integrated measures in the areas of education and child and youth protection are preferable to pure investments in infrastructure, as empirical evidence suggests that they are more effective.
- The measures implemented by UNICEF in Syria can be replicated in other fragile contexts.
- Where state structures are weak or bilateral development cooperation is not possible, UN organisations as project executing agencies offer limited guarantees of effectiveness and efficiency.

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List of abbreviations

AA	Federal Foreign Office
PCR	Final inspection
GDP	Gross domestic product
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
EPE	Ex-post evaluation
EUR	Euro
FC	Financial cooperation
FC E	FC Evaluation
HDI	Human Development Index
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overviews
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HTS	Hayat Tahrir al-Sham
NLG	No Lost Generation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
PA	Project appraisal
PAR	Project appraisal report
PYD	Democratic Union Party
PV	Project proposal
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SNA	Syrian National Army
SOHR	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
SYP	Syrian pound
TC	Technical cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	US dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
YPG	Women's Protection Units
YPJ	Women's Protection Units

Overview

General conditions and classification of the project

The civil war in Syria, which broke out in spring 2011 following demonstrations against Bashar al-Assad's regime, has claimed more than 600,000 lives by June 2021, according to estimates by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR).¹ In 2024, the UNHCR registered 6.25 million Syrians as refugees, and Syria was the country with the highest proportion of refugees in relation to its total population of around 24 million (SDG indicator 10.7.4); more than one in five people in Syria (20,200 refugees per 100,000 inhabitants) had become refugees, with this proportion remaining largely unchanged for ten years.² The Assad regime was unable to resolve the conflict with the insurgent opposition and rebel groups, but only to freeze it, especially as the interests of the intervening regional powers Russia, Iran and Turkey also stood in the way of a political solution.³ After the march of the Islamist militia Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and other rebel groups on Damascus, the Assad regime came to an end in early December 2024 in a largely bloodless manner.

After HTS seized power, its leader, Ahmad al-Sharaa, was appointed interim president at the end of January 2025. He promised elections in four years and a new constitution, as well as the disarmament and integration of all militias into the newly structured Syrian army. In addition, the new government faces the challenge of mobilising support for the reconstruction of the country. The transitional government has not yet succeeded in controlling the entire territory of the country. The process of social reconciliation between ethnic and religious groups in Syria is proving to be at risk, and the future development of the country is currently considered uncertain.

Syria is classified as a "high alert" fragile state, on a par with countries such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁴ The Syrian economy is in ruins, the national currency has collapsed and there are no financial resources for reconstruction. For years, the country's real GDP has been stagnating or even shrinking, with no sign of a revival in overall economic value creation.⁵ In 2020, the Syrian pound (SYP) depreciated by 224% against the USD, and by a further 26% in 2021; the inflation rate reached 114% in 2020, its highest level in decades, and fell to 89% in the following year.⁶ Two-thirds of households in Syria cannot meet their basic needs,⁷ 12.9 million people do not have secure access to food, and more than half of the population lacks a stable water supply.⁸ Rapidly rising food and fuel prices, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and ongoing conflict in parts of the country, are having devastating consequences for Syria's most vulnerable populations, while fewer people are receiving subsidised food and fuel through national social security programmes. The Covid-19 pandemic, the cholera outbreak in 2022 and the severe earthquake in February 2023 have further exacerbated the social situation. Only with the help of the international community can basic social services be maintained. According to UNICEF, more than 7 million children have been affected by the long civil war, and 2.4 million school-age children between the ages of 5 and 17 do not attend school.⁹ According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 16.7 million people – more than two-thirds of Syria's population – will be dependent on humanitarian aid by mid-2024.¹⁰ The most important donors were the European Union and its member states.¹¹ Germany suspended bilateral development cooperation with Syria after the outbreak of the armed crisis, but continued to provide non-governmental transitional assistance aimed at building structures. There was no cooperation with the government in Damascus or with de facto authorities in north-western and north-eastern Syria.¹² An expansion of Germany's development policy engagement in Syria after the fall of the Assad regime depends, among other things, on the willingness of the new government to include all population groups and civil society in the political process.¹³ Existing cooperation with UN organisations (UNICEF, UNDP, UN-Habitat) and non-governmental organisations will continue to be used to support Syria in its peaceful transition to an inclusive political system that grants rights and participation to all groups.

¹ <https://www.syriahr.com/en/217360/> (accessed: 21 November 2024).

² UNHCR (2024): Mid-Year Trends.2024. Forced Displacement in 2023, Copenhagen p. 12.

³ Jaeger, Kinan/Tophoven, Rolf (2023): The Syrian Conflict: International Actors, Interests, Conflicts, From Politics and Contemporary History, vol. 63, 8, pp. 23-29. The US also maintains the AL-Tanf military base near the Syrian-Iraqi border, where fighters from the Free Syrian Army, the armed wing of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces formed in 2011, were trained at times.

⁴ Fund for Peace: Fragile States Index 2024, Global Data, <https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data/> (accessed: 13 March 2025).

⁵ For 2024, the World Bank estimated a decline in Syria's total economic output of 1.5%, following -1.2% in the previous year; World Bank (2025): Global Economic Prospects, January, Washington DC, p. 216. Due to the uncertain political situation in Syria, the IMF has not published any macroeconomic data for the country since 2011; IMF (2024): World Economic Outlook, October, Washington DC, p. 88.

⁶ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/529543cc65226921d485b7491c310fab-0280012022/original/mpo-sm22-syria-syr-kcm2.pdf> (accessed on 19 March 2025).

⁷ World Bank (2024): Syria Economic Monitor. Conflict, Crises, and the Collapse of Household Welfare, Washington DC, p. 24.

⁸ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/syria_en and <https://www.wfp.org/countries/syrian-arab-republic> (accessed on 21 November 2024).

⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/syria/situation-children-syria> (accessed: 19 July 2025).

¹⁰ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/syria_en and <https://www.wfp.org/countries/syrian-arab-republic> (accessed on 21 November 2024).

¹¹ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/syria_en#introduction (accessed on 21 November 2024).

¹² <https://www.bmz.de/de/laender/syrien> (accessed: 25 November 2024).

¹³ <https://www.bmz.de/de/laender/syrien> (accessed: 18 December 2024); <https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/aktuelle-meldungen/schulze-gibt-unterstuetzungsmassnahmen-fuer-syrien-in-auftrag-240708> (accessed: 24 January 2025); <https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/aktuelle-meldungen/entwicklungsministerin-schulze-in-damaskus-241542> (accessed: 27 January 2025).

Brief description

The FC programme implemented in the fifth phase served to finance activities within the framework of the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative in the areas of education and child protection for children and young people in Syria. The individual measures comprised three components: (i) activities to improve access to and the quality of formal and non-formal education, (ii) measures to provide non-formal continuing education and life skills training for adolescents, and (iii) child protection and violence prevention measures and psychosocial support services. The beneficiary and implementing organisation of the programme was UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund.

Breakdown of total costs

	Phase 1 (plan)	Phase 1 (actual)
Investment costs (total) in EUR million	12.0	12.0
Own contribution in EUR million	0	0
External funding in EUR million	12.0	12.0
of which BMZ funds in EUR million	12.0*	12.0*

Table 1: Breakdown of costs.

*Transitional aid (KWI title)

Map of the project region

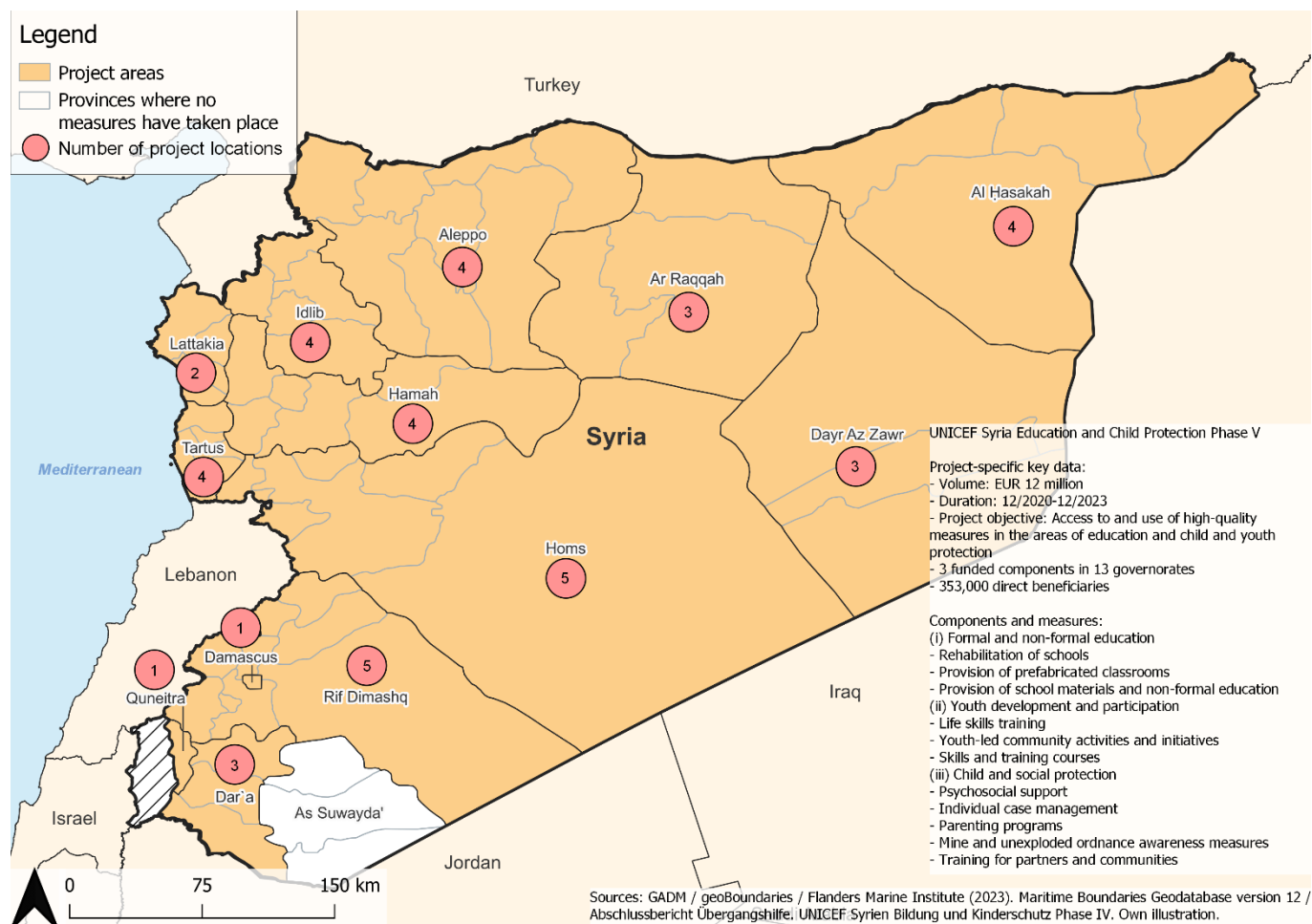


Figure 1: Map of the project country incl. project areas.

Source: Own illustration.

Project-specific strengths and weaknesses of the project

The strengths include in particular:

- The project executing agency had cross-border experience in implementing NLG projects under conditions of crisis, war and displacement and had good practical examples that were incorporated into the design and implementation of the measures of the evaluated programme.
- The gender-sensitive design of the measures was reflected in gender-equitable beneficiary figures. In the area of child protection, gender impact potential also developed as women passed on the skills they had acquired within their communities.
- The EPE found no evidence of ethnic-religious conflicts or conflicts between refugees and the local population induced by the programme, which can also be attributed to the do no harm approach implemented as part of the FC programme. Rather, the programme measures indicate a contribution to conflict reduction within the target group.
- A significant proportion of the programme's NLG measures were carried out by partners commissioned by UNICEF, enabling the 'Whole of Syria Approach' to be implemented effectively. The project executing agency comprehensively checked the qualifications of the partners. The EPE found no evidence that the partners were insufficiently qualified to implement the measures in the various components.

The weaknesses include in particular:

- In consultation with the FC, the project executing agency responded appropriately to changes in the framework conditions and made context-related adjustments, but did not take this into account in the targets for the corresponding indicators.
- Due to the urgency of implementing the programme, UNICEF's project proposal was largely adopted, with little consideration given to the FC's sector-specific expertise.
- The programme implementation schedule had to be extended due to delays in the approval of the intervention locations by the BMZ and AA.
- The programme's detailed catalogue of measures at a large number of intervention sites presumably resulted in high coordination and monitoring costs for the project executing agency, although this could not be specifically verified.
- Effects at the outcome and impact levels are particularly evident in the area of education. In the area of youth development and child protection, effects are difficult or almost impossible to verify. Qualitative aspects could also only be assessed incompletely, partly because direct contact with the target group was not possible during the evaluation.

General conclusions/lessons learned

- In fragile contexts, demonstrable effects are achieved primarily through investments in infrastructure¹⁴. Nevertheless, multifocal approaches with integrated measures in the areas of education, child protection and youth protection are preferable to pure investments in educational infrastructure, as empirical evidence suggests that integrated measures are more effective.
- In order to achieve sustainability and development policy impacts, conceptual connectivity is particularly important for FC education projects that have to be implemented under difficult socio-economic and socio-political conditions. Exit strategies should be reviewed again for follow-up projects.
- For FC projects in a country where external actors exert influence on political developments, it is essential to have an experienced project executing agency committed to neutrality for projects on education, child and youth protection, who can also draw on relevant experience in countries particularly affected by the Syrian crisis.
- Where, as in Syria, state structures are weak or bilateral cooperation is not possible, choosing a UN organisation such as UNICEF as the project executing agency offers at least a limited guarantee of effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the planned measures.

¹⁴ Empirical findings from EPEs, e.g.:

UNICEF Syria: Strengthening resilience, education and child protection, phase I (BMZ No. 2016.18 826).

UNICEF Ethiopia: Improving water and sanitation in refugee camps and host communities in Gambella (BMZ No. 2016 40 549)

UNICEF Jordan: Strengthening resilience in the context of the Syria/Iraq crisis (BMZ No. 2015 6802 1 Phase I and 2015 6889 8 Phase II)

Also highly recommended reading in this context:

Schultz, Theodore W. (1961): Investment in Human Capital, American Economic Review, vol. 51 pp. 7-11. On the social and individual returns on investment in education, see also Weiß, Manfred (1993): Education as an investment, Forum E 46, 2. DOI: 10.25656/01:1918

Assessment according to OECD DAC criteria

Relevance

1. Alignment with policies and priorities

The programme and its objectives were embedded in the regional NLG initiative, which was implemented in 2013 in response to the crises in Syria and Iraq to ensure that children and young people had access to education and child protection despite the crises.¹⁵ The measures of the initiative, which focused on children's rights, were to be implemented nationwide in line with the Whole of Syria approach, regardless of local power relations. This was in line with the policies and priorities of the BMZ as well as those of development partners and humanitarian actors in Syria, who coordinated their activities through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plans (3RP) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP).¹⁶

The programme measures were also to be coordinated with the relevant Syrian ministries and regional and local authorities, which had to approve the activities. Local education, social and health service providers, international and national non-governmental organisations and local construction companies were to be the implementing partners. The preliminary selection of project locations was based, among other things, on the needs in the education sector as recorded in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), which were divided into different levels of severity. Once areas were classified as high on the urgency scale, UNICEF – the project executing agency – also took into account location-specific reports and assessments by local staff when making its selection. This was to ensure that current and specific needs were taken into account and to avoid duplication of activities. In addition, the availability and capacity of local implementation partners were decisive factors in the pre-selection process, as were factors that were not included in the HNO severity scale due to delays in reporting, such as the influx of returnees or renewed fighting. The actual selection of project locations required the approval of the BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office, which was to take place after the financing agreement had been signed but before implementation began.

2. Alignment with the needs and capacities of stakeholders and beneficiaries

Based on high school enrolment rates before the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, 2.4 million Syrian children of school age no longer had access to formal education in Syria in 2023. Around 7,000 schools had been destroyed or damaged.¹⁷ With public spending on education also declining since the start of the war, school enrolment rates fell to an all-time low.¹⁸ In 2016 – the year the first phase of the programme/project was implemented – the gross enrolment rate for primary education was only 74%, while the net enrolment rate was 70%, roughly the same as in the 1980s. The situation was particularly dramatic in the region in and around Damascus, in Aleppo, Homs and Idlib, where more than half of the 2.1 million pupils who were no longer attending school lived.¹⁹ Due to the stagnating Syrian economy as a result of the civil war, the young population in particular suffered from a lack of prospects.

The programme, which correctly identified the core problem and therefore aimed to ensure girls' and boys' access to education, youth development and child protection through appropriate measures, was geared towards the development needs of children and young people who had suffered particularly from the effects of war. In conceptual terms, particular consideration was given to the needs of different age groups and particularly disadvantaged groups, such as children with disabilities or unaccompanied refugee children. In addition, the project proposal submitted by the project executing agency UNICEF – on which the project concept was based – appropriately analysed gender-specific risks and potential gender impacts and took them into account in the concept. For example, the non-formal continuing education programmes and life skills training for adolescents included measures that addressed the specific needs of girls and young women, who were sometimes exposed to early marriage and gender-based violence.

3. Appropriateness of design

The programme design divided the measures into three components, in which different implementation partners were involved. UNICEF checked their technical and organisational qualifications in advance on the basis of several criteria, including proof of sectoral expertise, reference projects and management skills. However, local presence and the ability to access project areas

¹⁵ No Lost Generation | No Lost Generation (accessed: 17 April 2025)

¹⁶ 3RP Syria Crisis – In Response to the Syria Crisis and Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 | Humanitarian Action (accessed: 17 April 2025).

¹⁷ The situation of children in Syria | UNICEF Syrian Arab Republic (accessed: 18 April 2025).

¹⁸ Budget brief_2022_F.pdf (accessed: 18 April 2025).

¹⁹ The data is taken from No Place for Children – The Impact of Five Years of War on Syria's Children and their Childhoods [EN/AR] – Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb (accessed on 18 April 2025); more recent figures were not available.

were also decisive factors in the selection of implementation partners, who were commissioned and (partially) financed by UNICEF for the individual measures in the three components of education, youth development and child protection.

The objective of the multi-component programme/project at the outcome level was to ensure equitable access to high-quality education, measures for adolescents and young adults, and improved prevention, protection and direct measures for children affected by violence and exploitation. The impact-level objective — ensuring vulnerable children and young people can access protection and prevention services, a safe learning environment, and opportunities to develop skills and resilience — lacked clear content definition. In addition, both formulations reflected the output level with regard to access to services. In order to distinguish more clearly between the outcome and impact levels and to emphasise the use of the output created, the target system in the present EPE is reformulated as follows: At the outcome level, the objective was for Syrian children and young people to have access to high-quality measures in the areas of (i) formal and non-formal education, (ii) youth development and participation, and (iii) child and social protection. At the impact level, the objective was to mitigate the worst effects of the Syrian crisis on the educational opportunities of children and young people in selected locations. In addition, in line with the FS1 identifier, the aim was to contribute to cohesion, tolerance and peace.

The indicators underlying the design, which recorded the respective number of children and young people who had access to the corresponding measures of the three components, were also at the output level and did not take qualitative aspects into account. However, given the challenges of data collection and the poor data situation, they are appraised as appropriate at the outcome level, although the values assigned to the indicators were no longer appropriate after the decision to adjust individual measures (see Effectiveness | Contribution to the achievement of objectives). At the impact level, relevant education indicators, such as school enrolment and completion rates, are newly added to the EPE as proxy indicators to assess the extent to which the worst effects of the Syrian crisis on the educational opportunities of children and young people have been mitigated. In addition, the frequency of conflict among children and young people has been added as a further indicator, serving as a proxy indicator to assess the contribution to cohesion, tolerance and peace.

The reformulation of the target system and the selection of indicators followed the impact logic based on empirical evidence that investments in the education of children and young people have numerous positive social and economic interactions and have a direct impact on aspects such as income, birth rates, health, the educational achievements of offspring and, under certain conditions, conflict prevention and management. In addition, empirical findings show that integrated measures – such as those to be implemented in the areas of education, youth support and child protection – have an impact-enhancing effect for the programme.²⁰

4. Adaptability – response to change

The fifth phase of the programme was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns, which had a particular impact on child protection measures, as interaction between case managers and those affected was no longer possible. In response, UNICEF developed, among other things, guidelines for the provision of remote child protection and case management services with practical steps and measures to protect those affected as best as possible.

Delays of up to six months in the implementation of individual measures occurred, among other things, because coordination between the BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office on site approval proved to be more protracted than anticipated. However, it was not necessary to reallocate funds within the individual components. Changes in the overall situation, such as heavy fighting or an immense need for classrooms, led to adjustments in individual activities, but ultimately meant that more children and young people could be reached. In addition, lessons learned from previous phases were incorporated into the design and implementation of the fifth phase, such as involving the target group in the rehabilitation and maintenance of schools or introducing digital tools in youth development in order to reach more young people.

Rating summary of relevance: **successful (3)**

Conceptual weaknesses are evident in the imprecise formulation of the target system, the lack of impact assumptions and the inappropriate weighting of indicators. On the other hand, the programme is convincing due to its strong alignment with the needs of the target group and with the policies and priorities of the BMZ, development partners and humanitarian actors. Taking all appraisal dimensions into account, the relevance of the programme is still assessed as successful from today's perspective.

²⁰ An overview of the scientific debate on the effects of education can be found here: (PDF) Argumentation framework: The development policy effects of education (accessed on 23 April 2025).

Coherence

5. Internal coherence

During the implementation period, other German development cooperation measures in Syria were carried out by non-governmental organisations in the areas of nutrition, health, employment, water and sanitation, such as the Aga Khan Foundation, or by UN organisations such as UNICEF, UNDP and UN-Habitat. Financed by transitional aid funds and the Special Initiative for Stabilisation and Development in North Africa and the Middle East (SI MENA), the programmes with UN organisations as project executing agencies had one main thing in common: improving the living conditions of the population in the individual sectors.

The coherent link between the programme and its predecessors made it possible to continuously integrate lessons learned into its implementation (see Relevance – Adaptability – response to change). At the same time, the suspension of bilateral development cooperation as a result of massive violations by the Syrian government of international norms and standards, to which German development cooperation is committed and with which the programme was consistent, limited the possibility of meaningfully interlinking German development cooperation instruments and exploiting synergies.

6. External coherence

Activities between UN organisations were coordinated through, among other things, the 3RP and HRP, which, as overall strategies for Syria and Syria's neighbouring countries, aimed to systematically delimit measures, dismantle parallel structures and avoid double financing (see Relevance | Alignment with policies and priorities). Accountability, learning, monitoring and evaluation of NLG measures were also increasingly harmonised with the HRP and regional 3RP, which applied to the countries particularly affected by the Syrian crisis, namely Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

NLG measures were also successfully implemented there, which is why UNICEF is appraised as a suitable project executing agency for Syria, having demonstrated its expertise in implementing the measures in line with its sectoral expertise. This also included – in compliance with the principles of humanitarian aid, such as humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence – the involvement of local and national authorities by UNICEF, which had to approve the activities (see Relevance | Alignment with policies and priorities). The aim was to gain support for the implementation on the ground and for the measures themselves.

Rating summary of coherence: **successful (2)**

Although German development cooperation instruments were not able to fully interlock due to the suspension of bilateral development cooperation, we nevertheless make an appraisal of the overall coherence as successful, as the measures complied with international norms and standards and were well coordinated with the activities of other UN organisations.

Effectiveness

7. Achievement of objectives

The outcome-level objective adjusted within the framework of the EPE was for Syrian children and young people to have access to and benefit from high-quality measures in three areas: (i) formal and non-formal education, (ii) youth development and participation, and (iii) child and social protection.

The achievement of the outcome-level objective can be summarised as follows:

In Component 1, more than 27,000 children benefited from rehabilitated schools, the provision of prefabricated classrooms, school materials and non-formal education opportunities.

In Component 2, more than 44,000 young people were reached with life skills training, youth-led community activities and initiatives, and skills and training courses.

In Component 3, more than 280,000 children and adults benefited from psychosocial support, individual case management, parent programmes, mine and unexploded ordnance awareness activities, and training for partners and communities.

The measures in the three components were implemented in more than 40 districts in 13 governorates.²¹

²¹ Further information on beneficiary numbers and the distribution according to specific measures can be found under Efficiency | Allocation efficiency.

The following indicators were used to measure the outcome objective:

Indicator	Status at time of project appraisal*	Target value at EPE (project appraisal)*	Actual value at project completion	Actual value at EPE
(1) Number of children with access to education	1,910,691 children	13,000 children	27,074 children (12,825 girls, 14,294 boys) → Achieved	According to UNICEF, the rehabilitated schools, prefabricated classrooms and learning centres for non-formal education are in operation Target value achieved
(2) Number of young people who have taken advantage of access to social development support measures ²²	392,000 young people	40,000 young people	44,073 young people (25,478 girls, 18,595 boys) → Achieved	Outside the scope of the outcome-level evaluation, as beneficiaries participated in the measures on a one-off basis. Target value achieved
(3) Number of children with access to child protection	2,400,320 children and adults	53,955 children and adults	281,869 (115,433 girls, 101,578 boys, 41,282 women and 23,576 men) → Achieved	Outside the scope of the evaluation at outcome level, as beneficiaries participated in the measures on a one-off basis. Target value achieved

Table 2: Outcome target achievement.

Source: Data source: KfW final report (2023) Transitional assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020 18 091; UNICEF Final Report Support to No Lost Generation Initiative for the children of Syria (Phase V), June 2023. Own illustration.

Note: *The status values are UNICEF planning values for the overall NLG programme from 2019, to which the FC programme contributed.

8. Contribution to the achievement of objectives

The significant overachievement of targets was partly a result of adjustments to measures in response to the intense fighting in large parts of Syria. For this reason, mine awareness training was integrated into almost all child protection programmes, which is why more than five times as many children and adults were reached in Component 3 than originally planned. Furthermore, reusable materials were used several times. This contributed to a higher number of children benefiting. In addition, due to the increased need for safe learning spaces, prefabricated classrooms were used, in which pupils could be taught quickly and which were more cost-effective than classrooms that still needed to be rehabilitated. This adjustment contributed to more than twice as many children being reached as planned in Component 1. However, targets were not adjusted to reflect context-related changes in the measures, which explains the sometimes massive overachievement of targets.

The prefabricated classrooms were additionally equipped with WASH facilities tailored to the specific needs of girls and children with disabilities. The disadvantage of the prefabricated classrooms was their limited useful life. At the time of the evaluation, however, all prefabricated classrooms were still in use, as were the learning centres for non-formal education and the rehabilitated classrooms.

Although the outputs achieved in all three components could not be distributed evenly and uniformly across the country due to differing needs, security situations or access restrictions, the programme aimed to ensure that the capacities created benefited the most vulnerable children and young people in all parts of the country. For example, in the area of child protection, mobile teams were trained and equipped to provide services in areas that are difficult to access. In addition, attention was paid to gender-sensitive design of the measures in all three components, such as gender-sensitive WASH facilities in component 1, services specifically for young women in component 2, and preventive courses against gender-based violence and gender-sensitive psychosocial support in component 3.

The contribution of the various measures to the achievement of objectives in quantitative terms can be directly established, i.e. the FC measures improved access to formal and non-formal education, youth development and child protection. One of the decisive factors in the clear achievement of the objectives was the local presence of the project executing agency UNICEF in Syria, which responded quickly and purposefully to needs and the volatile political environment. It is also evident that the observed

²² Adjustment of indicator formulation to the outcome level

outputs are being used, especially in Component 1²³. However, the EPE was unable to determine the extent to which particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable children, young people and adults benefited in the three areas, as further characteristics of the beneficiaries beyond gender were not recorded by UNICEF or the implementing partners during the programme period. The appraisal of qualitative aspects cannot be reliably carried out either.²⁴

9. Quality of implementation

UNICEF had many years of experience in fragile contexts and relevant expertise in the areas of education, youth development and child protection, the quality of which UNICEF ensured through various measures. These included, for example, standardised environmental and social guidelines for construction companies, as well as manuals and training measures for implementation partners in the area of youth development and child protection. Feedback and complaint mechanisms were also integrated into all three components to ensure that the implementation partners and construction companies provided high-quality services.

There were indications of inadequate quality in partner services related to school rehabilitation, such as insufficient construction site security during the building phase and lack of safety equipment. The lack of green spaces, missing or incomplete fencing around the school grounds, delays in the provision of school furniture and poor-quality sanitary facilities also had a negative impact on the quality of formal education measures.

In addition, the shortage of qualified professionals such as teachers and social workers proved to be detrimental in all components, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas. This deficit was partially offset by training volunteers in non-formal education or local community members in youth development. In addition, UNICEF pushed for standardised salaries for skilled workers in order to reduce their high turnover between sectors and implementing partners due to the highly competitive situation. However, the extent to which high-quality services could ultimately be provided at all project locations cannot be reliably assessed within the framework of the EPE. However, the various activities undertaken by UNICEF to ensure high-quality measures limit the risk of quality deficiencies, as do the fundamentally gender-sensitive, disability- and age-appropriate programming of the individual measures and the consideration of do no harm principles.

10. Unintended effects (positive or negative)

No unintended negative effects were found within the scope of the EPE, such as indications of ethnic-religious conflicts related to the funded services. According to UNICEF, the participation of women in parenting programmes proved to be more effective than expected, as it fundamentally strengthened their role in marriage and family life. In addition, a multiplier effect was observed, as the women passed on the capacities they had acquired, i.e. their knowledge of raising and caring for their children, to local communities. This created the potential for them to act as multipliers, promoting the parenting skills of other parents and supporting them in dealing with their children.

Rating summary of effectiveness: **moderately successful (3)**

In qualitative terms, there are indications that the objective of high-quality measures could only be partially achieved, as minor shortcomings in the Quality of implementation were identified. However, no unintended negative effects were identified. In quantitative terms, the objectives were achieved, and the measures are still being used by the target group in some cases. In addition, the programme's contribution to the quantitative achievement of objectives can be directly established. For these reasons, we still appraise the effectiveness as successful, despite qualitative limitations in the achievement of objectives.

²³ For information on the use of created capacities, see 10. Unintended effects (positive or negative).

²⁴ For the quality of the services provided, see 9. Quality of implementation.

Efficiency

The appraisal of efficiency takes into account that UNICEF, as the project executing agency, was not obliged to provide a detailed cost and performance account for the measures implemented. This was in line with the standard procedure (single audit principle) for cooperation with UN organisations. The available cost statements do not reveal whether and to what extent UNICEF and/or the Syrian government made their own contributions to financing the project measures. UNICEF provided co-financing for individual measures, such as the financing of a handbook as a basis for activities in the area of mental health and psychosocial support. However, there is no quantifiable evidence of these own contributions.

The use of public FC funds was additional in this programme, as private capital markets would not have financed child and youth protection measures in the intervention areas.

11. Production efficiency

The Certified Statement of Accounts prepared by UNICEF as at 31 December 2022 shows the following breakdown of the FC funds used for the programme, amounting to EUR 9.999 million (USD 11.829 million): USD 6.9 million (48.6%) was accounted for by transfers and grants to partners, a further USD 2.20 million (15.5%) by services provided by third parties on behalf of UNICEF in the three components of the programme; personnel costs, including travel expenses, amounted to USD 2.2 million (15.2%); General operating costs totalled USD 556,000 (3.9%). UNICEF charged a flat-rate administrative fee of USD 1.1 million (8.0% of direct project costs and 7.4% of total costs); this was in line with UNICEF's standard administrative costs for comparable FC programmes and is considered reasonable given the difficult operating environment in Syria.

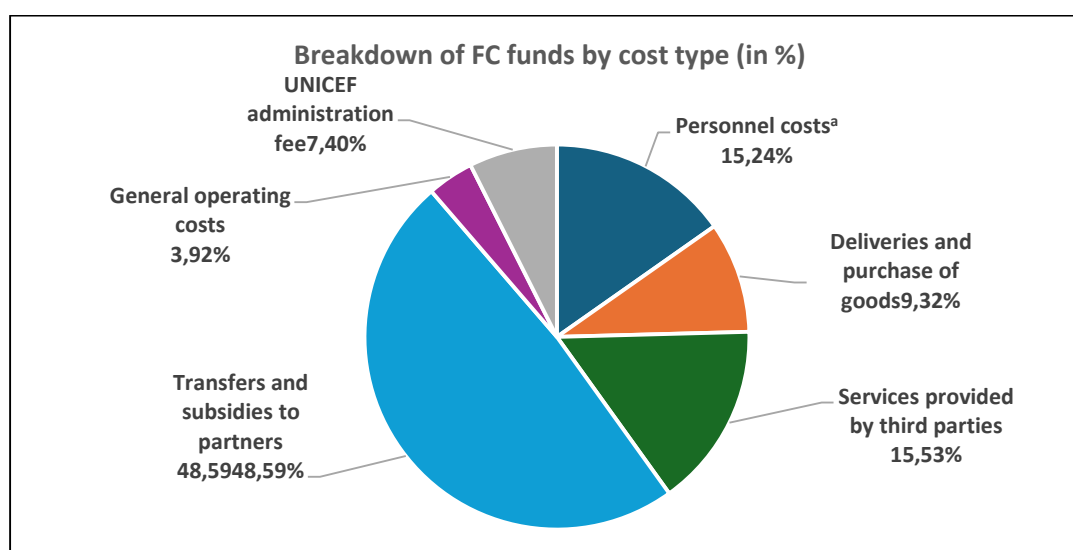


Figure 2: Breakdown of FC funds by cost type (in %).

Source: UNICEF Certified Statement of Account as of 31 December 2022 in US dollars. Own illustration.

Note: ^aIncluding travel expenses.

The targets for outputs and activities planned in the programme design were largely achieved in the components of education (K1), youth development (K2) and child protection (K3) (see Effectiveness | Achievement of (intended) objectives). K1 accounted for 25.5% of total costs, K2 for 16.5% and K3 for 28.6%; in addition, there were cross-component implementation costs amounting to 22.0% of total costs. This share of implementation costs was relatively high compared to the direct component costs, but the high expenditure incurred by the project executing agency for monitoring, reporting and accountability for the many small-scale measures carried out in more than 40 districts of 13 governorates, some of which were located far apart in the subdistricts, must be taken into account.

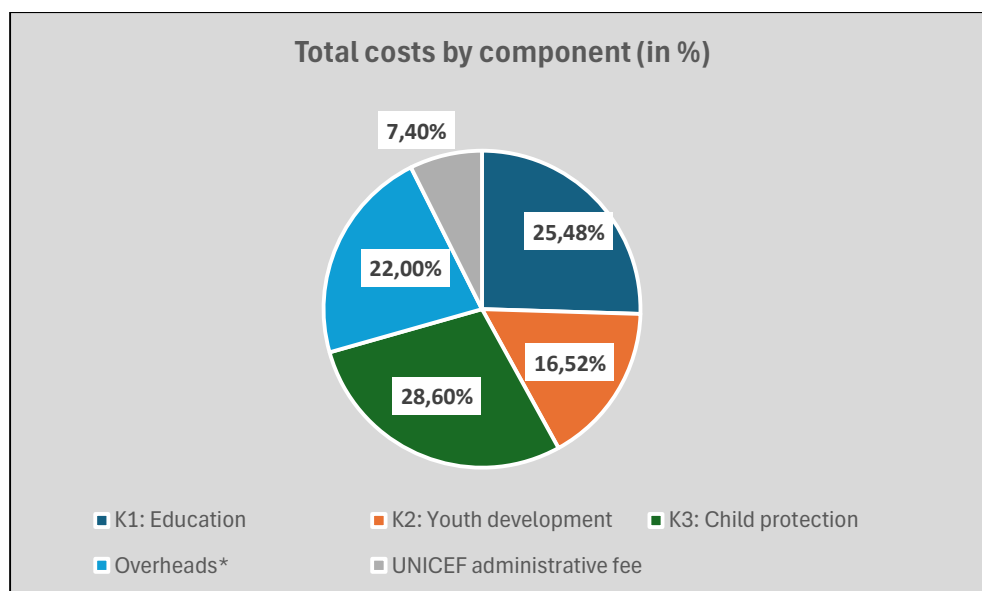


Figure 3: Total costs by component (in %).

Source: KfW final report (2023) Transitional assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020 18 09. Own illustration.

Note: * Cross-component implementation costs.

After the financing agreement was signed on 9 December 2020, the programme was scheduled to run for 18 months until May 2022. Due to the delayed start of implementation – caused by the late final approval of the intervention locations, the tense security situation and temporary access restrictions – a cost-neutral extension until December 2022 was approved, meaning that the actual implementation phase lasted 25 months (cf. Relevance | Response to changes / Adaptability). Following a progress report in January 2023, the final review was submitted in December 2023. When assessing the time efficiency of the programme, it should be noted that during the implementation period, the volatile security situation in several regions of Syria was at times the norm, and there were repeated clashes between the various actors. Against this background, the time efficiency of the programme is appraised as moderately successful.

The cost-neutral adjustments to the schedule requested by UNICEF were appropriate and understandable in the situation at the time. UNICEF's statement of account for the programme is not objectionable; the objectives were achieved economically.²⁵ Taking into account the extremely difficult conditions, the production efficiency of the programme can be assessed as successful from today's perspective, as the results are without significant shortcomings and meet expectations.

12. Allocation efficiency

No explicit statements on allocation efficiency, i.e. the relationship between input and outcome, were made in the final report of the programme. In this EPE, statements on allocation efficiency were therefore indirectly derived from the impact matrix by interpreting the number of beneficiaries as an indicator of outcome utilisation from the perspective of the target group and also assuming that the utilisation of the outputs had positive effects for the target group (cf. effectiveness and overarching developmental impacts). Input indicators are the FC funds used for the beneficiaries.

A total of 353,000 children and young people were beneficiaries of the programme, although there may be multiple counts if identical persons benefited from individual measures in the three components. In K1, 27,000 persons were beneficiaries; of these, around 12,000 benefited from the provision of learning spaces and just under 15,000 children benefited from materials for self-directed learning. The measures in K2 benefited 44,000 young people, of whom just under 19,000 benefited from life skills training, 17,000 from the promotion of youth activities and initiatives at community level, and just under 9,000 from vocational training.

²⁵ There were no indications of misuse of FC funds through corruption, although corruption is perceived as endemic in Syria; the country ranks among the lowest in the Corruption Perceptions Index 2023, on a par with South Sudan and Venezuela; Transparency International (2024): Corruption Perceptions Index 2023, Berlin, p. 3.

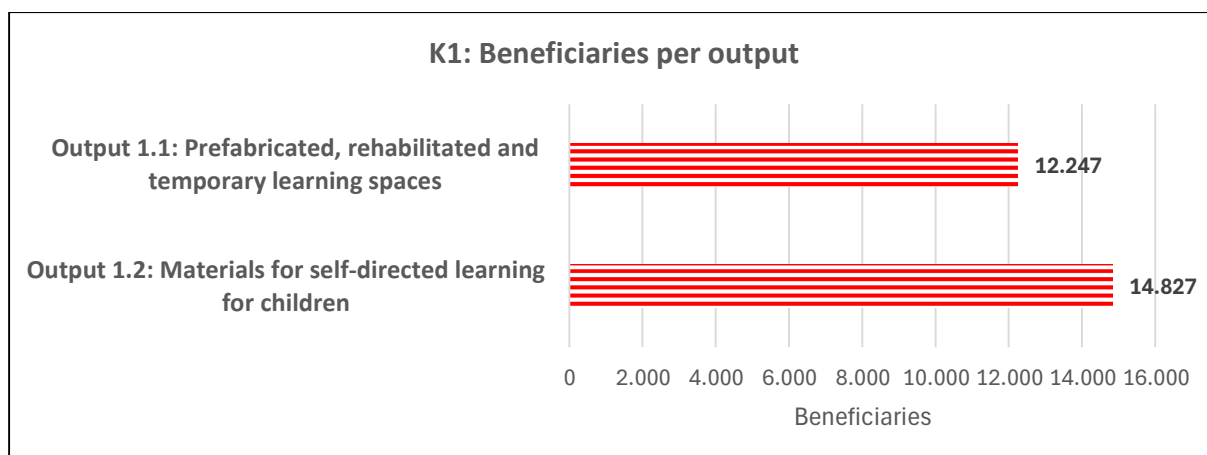


Figure 4: Beneficiaries Output 1.

Source: KfW Final Report (2023) Transitional Assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020.18.091; UNICEF Final Report Support to No Lost Generation Initiative for the children of Syria (Phase V), June 2023 Annex d: Beneficiaries reached by location. Appendix 7, Tables e) and f). Own illustration.

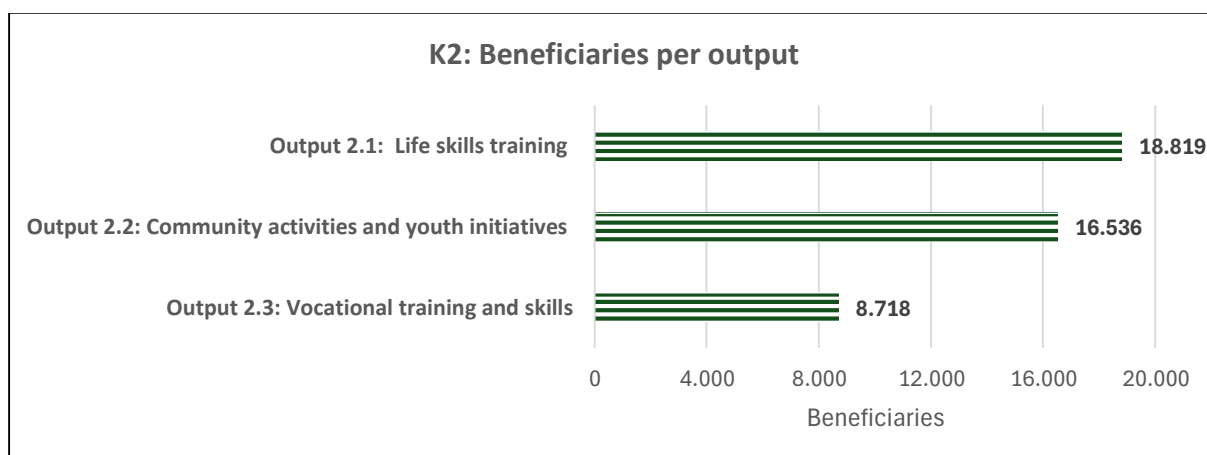


Figure 5: Beneficiaries Output 2.

Source: KfW Final Report (2023) Transitional Assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020.18.091; UNICEF Final Report Support to No Lost Generation Initiative for the children of Syria (Phase V), June 2023 Annex d: Beneficiaries reached by location. Appendix 7, Tables e) and f). Own illustration.

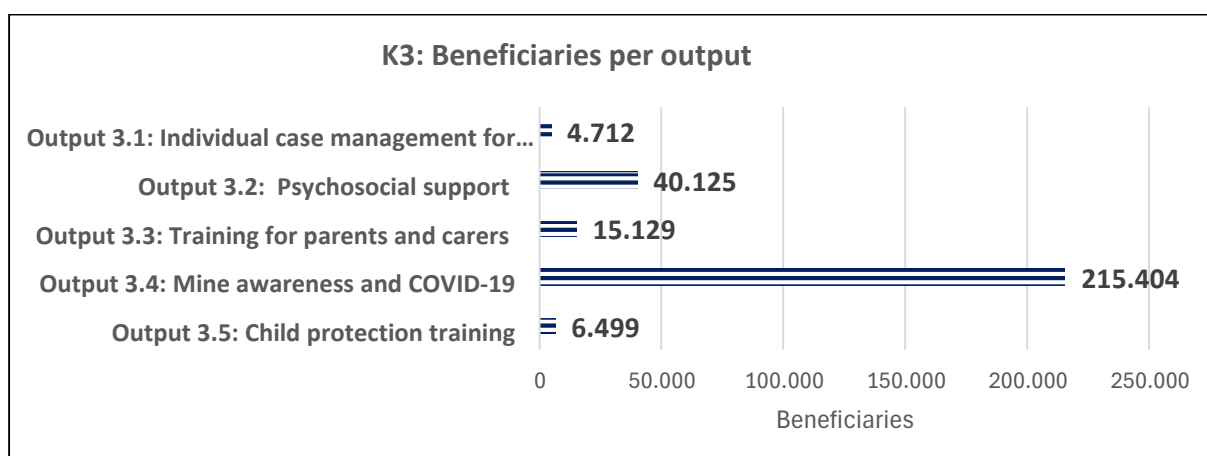


Figure 6: Beneficiaries Output 3.

Source: KfW Final Report (2023) Transitional Assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020.18.091; UNICEF Final Report Support to No Lost Generation Initiative for the children of Syria (Phase V), June 2023 Annex d: Beneficiaries reached by location. Appendix 7, Tables e) and f). Own illustration.

With a total of 282,000, most beneficiaries were reached by the measures of the child protection component (K3). 215,000 benefited from awareness-raising measures on mines, unexploded ordnance and Covid-19, while 40,000 received psychosocial support. around 15,000 parents and carers took part in child protection training measures, and almost 5,000 children received individual support. More than 6,000 adults took part in child protection training.

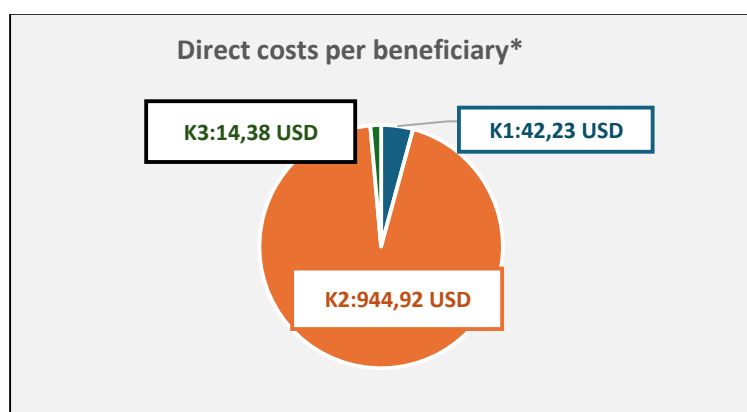


Figure 7: Direct costs per beneficiary.*

Source: KfW Final Report (2023) Transitional Assistance UNICEF Syria Education and Child Protection, Phase V, BMZ No. 2020.18.091; UNICEF Final Report Support to No Lost Generation Initiative for the children of Syria (Phase V), June 2023 Annex d: Beneficiaries reached by location. Own illustration.

Note: * Excluding pro-rata cross-component overheads and pro-rata UNICEF administrative fees

In K1 (education), the average direct costs per beneficiary were USD 42.23; taking into account the proportionate cross-component implementation costs and UNICEF fee, the costs per beneficiary amounted to USD 59.81.²⁶ The average direct per capita costs were significantly lower in K3 (child protection) at USD 14.38 and USD 20.37, respectively, when indirect costs were also taken into account. At USD 944.92 and USD 1,338.35, respectively, the per capita costs for youth development measures (K2) were comparatively very high. Due to cost increases resulting from exchange rate time series and inflation, the direct per capita costs in components K1 and K3 were 2.3 times higher than the costs per beneficiary in the first phase of the FC-funded UNICEF programme in Syria from 2016 to 2018.²⁷ For the measures in K2 (youth development), the average direct costs per beneficiary were significantly higher than the average costs in K1 and K3, at USD 943.²⁸ Nevertheless, the allocation of funds for youth development measures was justified in terms of impact orientation, as access to an integrated system for developing individual skills and technical/vocational training opportunities is (one of the) decisive factors for the employability of young people and adolescents (see Relevance | Appropriateness of design). In addition, outputs in K2 strengthened the social and civic engagement of young people by offering them opportunities to promote social cohesion in their communities through activities of their own initiative.²⁹

With the caveat that statements on the relationship between input and outcome for the FC programme could only be derived indirectly, partly due to the limited significance of the beneficiary figures for each measure, the allocation efficiency is appraised as successful.

Rating summary of efficiency: **successful (2)**

The assessment of efficiency takes into account the fact that the project executing agency drew on positive experiences from comparable FC projects in Syria and other fragile contexts when designing the programme. In view of the difficult conditions under which UNICEF had to operate in Syria and the results that met expectations, the production efficiency of the programme is appraised as successful from the perspective of the project executing agency. The allocation efficiency of the programme is also appraised as successful from the perspective of the target group. Time efficiency is rated as moderately successful. Taking all evaluation dimensions into account, we rate the overall efficiency of the programme as successful.

²⁶ The per capita costs are the direct costs of the measure, plus pro rata overheads and pro rata UNICEF administrative fees; detailed information on the calculation can be found in tables e) and f) of Annex 7 "Total costs and financing" of the Annex Volume.

²⁷ See ex-post evaluation "UNICEF Syria: Strengthening Resilience, Education and Child Protection, Phase I", BMZ No. 2016 18 826; https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Evaluierung/Ergebnisse-und-Publikationen/PDF-Dokumente-R-Z/Syrien_UNICEF_2023_D.pdf (accessed on 5 May 2025).

²⁸ The per capita costs of youth support measures in other NLG-UNICEF projects/programmes financed with FC funds were also significantly higher than the average expenditure on education and child protection measures; see ex-post evaluations "UNICEF Syria: Strengthening Resilience, Education and Child Protection, Phase I", BMZ No. 2016 18 826 and "UNICEF Jordan: Strengthening Resilience in the Context of the Syria/Iraq Crisis, Phase I", BMZ No. 2015 68 021.

²⁹ A measure-specific disaggregation of the costs per beneficiary shows that the highest average costs in K3 are for individual case management of children at USD 284, followed by measures to provide classrooms in K1, with costs of USD 123 per beneficiary. Written information from the project executing agency dated 15 April 2025. See Appendix Costs and Financing, Table g.

Impact

13. Overarching developmental changes

The impact-level objective adjusted within the framework of the EPE was to mitigate the worst effects of the Syrian crisis on the educational opportunities of children and young people in selected locations. In addition, a contribution to cohesion, tolerance and peace was to be made.

The achievement of the impact-level objective can be summarised as follows:

According to official figures, the net enrolment rate in primary education and the completion rate for secondary education showed a slight positive trend during the implementation period. However, according to UNICEF, the educational situation of children and young people had not improved by the time of the evaluation in May 2025 compared to 2020.

No data are available regarding the number of conflicts, which serve as proxy indicators to assess contributions to cohesion, tolerance, and peace. According to UNICEF, however, the programme led to a reduction in conflicts between schoolchildren, young people and within families.

The following indicators were used to measure the impact objective/no indicators were specified.

Indicator	Status at time of review	Target value at EPE (review)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
(1) Net enrolment rate (primary level)	67.3	100	76.4 → Partially achieved	According to UNICEF, the educational situation of children and young people has not improved since 2020. Target value not achieved
(2) Completion rate (lower secondary education)	40.6	100	43.2% (2022) → Partially achieved	See above. Target value not achieved
(3) Frequency of conflicts	n/a	n/a	n.a.	According to UNICEF, there has been no reduction in conflict. No data available. Target value not achieved

Table 3: Impact target achievement.

Source: <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/syrian-arab-republic/indicators>. Own illustration.

Overall, no clear changes in development policy can be identified at the time of the EPE, as measured by the indicators. However, as already noted in the EPE for the first phase, there is little doubt that without measures in the areas of formal and non-formal education, youth support and child protection, the impact of the Syrian crisis on the educational opportunities of children and young people would have been severe and the relevant education indicators would have deteriorated.³⁰ In this context, studies show that investment in education has increased the number of children attending school by 45 per cent and the school completion rate by 25 per cent. School attendance also reduced the likelihood of children suffering from psychosocial problems or being exposed to early marriage, child labour and violence, which make them particularly vulnerable.³¹ Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that integrated measures, such as those implemented in the areas of education, youth development and child protection, have a stronger impact on development policy (see relevance | appropriateness of design).

With regard to the contribution to cohesion, tolerance and peace, it is also plausible that without multisectoral measures in the areas of education, youth development and child protection, the effects would have been more drastic. This assumption is supported by an evaluation of NLG measures in Jordan, which shows that alternative education programmes have positive effects on the willingness to resolve conflicts and on social cohesion between the host society and refugees.³² In addition, the programme

³⁰ https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Evaluierung/Ergebnisse-und-Publikationen/PDF-Dokumente-R-Z/Syrien_UNICEF_2023_D.pdf (accessed on 5 May 2025).

³¹ Syria-Every-day-counts-Cost-of-not-investing-in-Education-BRIEF-June-2023-English.pdf (accessed on 5 May 2025)

³² https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/11671/file/Makani%20summative%20impact%20evaluation_English.pdf (accessed: 13 May 2025).

strengthened the self-efficacy of young people, as they became involved in socially relevant initiatives and awareness-raising campaigns for the benefit of their communities.

14. Contribution to overarching intended developmental changes

The benefits of investments in education in terms of employment, income and economic growth are well documented, as are the social benefits in terms of social cohesion, a country's capacity for innovation and health.³³ The programme's contribution to the target group, the Syrian economy and society, as well as its development policy additionality, can also be classified under these evidence-based effects. However, the actual scope of the measures and their potential effects cannot be accurately estimated and specified due to a lack of data and interviews with the target group. In addition, the difficult and complex conditions limited the potential effects of the programme, which, according to UNICEF, included a fundamental shortage of skilled workers, insufficient and unreliable payment of state teachers by the Syrian government, the 2023 earthquake and the largely destroyed education infrastructure.

However, it is plausible that UNICEF's institutional expertise had a positive impact on the programme's contribution to overarching developmental impact, as was the case at the outcome level. This is because UNICEF had cross-country experience in implementing the NLG initiative, in which the programme was integrated. Learning experiences and examples of good practice from Turkey and Jordan could thus be implemented in Syria, for example in the creation of manuals or the design of parent programmes. In addition, the international donor community had confidence in the transregional initiative and its fundamental contribution to alleviating the worst effects of the Syrian crisis on the educational opportunities of children and young people, which facilitated the acquisition of external funding and, despite funding gaps, had a positive impact on the contribution to overarching development policy changes.

15. Contribution to overarching unintended developmental changes

No unintended positive or negative effects resulting from the measures were identified within the framework of the EPE. Here, too, a lack of data and the impossibility of direct contact with the target group limited the possibility of observing impacts (cf. Overarching developmental impacts | Contribution to overarching (intended)/ (unintended) developmental changes). At the same time, the application of do no harm principles reduced the risk of unintended negative development policy effects (see Effectiveness | Contribution to the achievement of objectives). For example, local stakeholders were involved in the planning process prior to project implementation and focus group discussions were held with beneficiaries to discuss their expectations and needs. This made it possible to avoid conflicts in advance or identify specific needs, e.g. of vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups or of girls and women.

Rating summary of impact: **moderately successful (3)**

The intended overarching developmental changes are below expectations, but empirical evidence suggests that the programme has helped to mitigate the worst effects of the Syrian crisis on the educational opportunities of children and young people in selected locations. Furthermore, no unintended negative developmental impacts have been identified. Taking all three appraisal dimensions into account, we assess the programme as moderately successful.

³³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview> (accessed: 15 May 2025).

Sustainability

16. Capacities of beneficiaries and stakeholders

The programme strengthened UNICEF's capacities in Syria in the areas of project administration and monitoring as well as reporting to the FC. Whether the positive effects achieved by the programme can be maintained among the target group in subsequent phases depends primarily on further external financial support for the continuation of NLG activities on the ground by UNICEF or the new Syrian government. The financial situation remains highly dependent on donations from the international donor community, with consequences for the sustainability of NLG services in Syria. Against this background, it was unrealistic to formulate a binding exit strategy for the FC programme.

17. Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities

The FC programme enabled UNICEF to invest in the future of children and young people by improving access to and the quality of formal and non-formal education, as well as providing capacity for child protection and psychosocial support services. Without external financial support, the project executing agency would not have been able to implement and continue the measures, which also applied to the target group (Syrian children and young people in the intervention areas). The programme design contributed to supporting sustainability in that it enabled connectivity, which was also utilised in subsequent phases with external funding. As far as possible under the crisis-related conditions, the programme's contribution to supporting sustainability was successful, and the capacities created by the programme were used on an ongoing basis.

18. Durability of impacts over time

The financing proposal of October 2020 emphasised the particular urgency of implementing the programme. However, with the measures implemented focusing on education, child protection and youth development, longer-term effects could also be expected.³⁴

At the time of the EPE, despite the difficult and unstable environment, the programme had sustainability that benefited the target group (see chapter on Effectiveness and Impact). Rehabilitated schools continue to provide learning opportunities for children, and the increase in the number of children in rehabilitated classrooms indicates that returnees feel safer when they return to their areas of origin with repaired schools. The programme also had sustainability in the area of child protection through knowledge transfer and capacity building. For example, volunteers in the field of non-formal education and local community members in the field of youth development were trained, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas. The skills they learned can also be used in the future. In addition, training enabled young people to secure their livelihoods and promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence through conflict resolution training and community engagement.

At the time of the EPE, assessing the programme's sustainability based on evidence was difficult, mainly due to ongoing uncertainty about political and economic developments in the Syrian project locations and the lack of direct contact with the target group. However, if the uncertain environmental developments are excluded from the assessment of sustainability and instead the use of NLG services at the time of the PCR and EPE is assessed, the FC programme is currently considered to have a sustainability level of 2 (successful, as there are no significant shortcomings). The positive results achieved exceeded expectations in some cases. UNICEF also received funding commitments for follow-up projects (phases VI, VII and VIII) in which the NLG initiative from phase V will be continued in a conceptually modified framework, so that the positive effects achieved with the measures of the evaluated programme can be maintained, *ceteris paribus*.

Rating summary of sustainability: **successful (2)**

Overall, the sustainability criterion is appraised as successful. Although it is not possible to make a well-founded assessment of the impact of changed socio-economic and socio-political contexts, UNICEF received the necessary funding to maintain and continue the above-mentioned positive effects of the NLG services in Syria.

³⁴ However, lower sustainability was assumed in the PCR, at least for the 51 prefabricated classrooms provided, as these can only be used for a few years; cf. PCR TC 4, p. 7. According to the project executing agency, however, the prefabricated classrooms were still in use at the time of the EPE.

Overall assessment: successful (2)

Positive results in terms of relevance, coherence, efficiency and sustainability mean that the programme is appraised as successful overall. The programme design, which had an alignment with the policies and priorities of the United Nations and German development cooperation, was convincing, as was its coherence with other FC projects in Syria. In addition, the programme took into account the fundamentally high level of need among the target group and made a demonstrable, albeit not comprehensive, contribution to achieving the objectives at the outcome level. In terms of implementation, the programme was efficient from the perspective of the project executing agency and the target group. However, the effects at the impact level were only limited or attributable to the programme, but do not dominate the positive results in terms of relevance, coherence and efficiency. With regard to the assessment of the programme's sustainability, the fundamental question arises as to whether a limited sustainability claim would have been appropriate under the given conditions in Syria. However, such a limited claim is not documented in the programme documents. Although the project made a positive contribution to supporting sustainability among the target group and the project executing agency, at the time of the EPE, the durability of the effects over time could only be appraised as successful on the assumption of external financial support for follow-up projects by NLG, due to the continuing uncertainty about further political and economic developments in the Syrian project locations.

The overall rating is therefore "successful". Taking into account the difficult implementation conditions of the programme, positive results dominated in terms of relevance, coherence and efficiency; in addition, the programme had limited development effectiveness, albeit with uncertain sustainability due to the context.

Contribution to Agenda 2030

Universal applicability: The programme contributed to the achievement of sustainable development goals, in particular SDG 1 – No Poverty, SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

Shared responsibility and accountability: The programme was part of the regional NLG initiative, which is also active in Syria's neighbouring countries. The measures complemented FC projects in Syria with UNDP in the area of employment promotion and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, and with UNICEF in the area of WASH. UNICEF's accountability was in line with the United Nations' single audit principle.

Interplay between economic, environmental and social development: The rehabilitation and expansion of school infrastructure for formal, non-formal and vocational education in many parts of Syria, as well as the involvement of local businesses, promoted positive interactions between social and economic impacts.

Inclusiveness/leaving no one behind: The Whole of Syria Approach was an inclusive approach that implemented the principle of leaving no one behind. Vulnerable groups were explicitly addressed in the programme.

Methodology

Evaluation methodology

The ex-post evaluation follows the methodology of a rapid appraisal, i.e. a data-based, qualitative contribution analysis, and represents an expert opinion. The project is attributed effects based on plausibility considerations, which are based on a careful analysis of documents, data, facts and impressions. Where possible, this also includes the use of digital data sources and modern techniques (e.g. satellite data, online surveys, geocoding). The causes of any contradictory information are investigated, attempts are made to resolve them, and the assessment is based on statements that are confirmed by several sources of information (triangulation), where possible.

The analysis of the effects is based on assumed causal relationships, documented in the impact matrix developed during the project appraisal and updated during the ex-post evaluation, if necessary. The evaluation report sets out arguments as to why certain influencing factors were identified for the effects observed and why the project under review probably made a certain contribution (contribution analysis). The context of the development measure is taken into account in terms of its influence on the results. The conclusions are put into relation to the availability and quality of the data basis. An evaluation concept serves as the reference framework for the evaluation.

The method offers a balanced cost-benefit ratio for project evaluations, on average, with a balance between knowledge gain and evaluation effort, and allows for a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of DFG projects across all project evaluations. Individual ex-post evaluations cannot therefore meet the requirements of a scientific assessment in the sense of a clear causal analysis.

The main objective of the evaluations (knowledge interest) is to measure impacts, provide accountability, promote transparency and enable institutional learning.

Type of evaluation:

Remote without national experts (desk review).

Key questions of the evaluation according to the evaluation concept:

- To what extent did the programme or individual measures contribute to gender equality?
- What impact do complementary and follow-up projects have on overarching developmental impacts and the sustainability of the programme?
- Despite limited sustainability requirements, are there any effects that are still evident today?
- Was there equal access to NLG services throughout the country?
- What added value did KfW's participation in this type of financing and implementation of the programme bring?
- What lessons can be learned from the regime change in Syria for follow-up projects in the education sector?

Non-public (internal) documents

KfW project documents, UNICEF reports, secondary specialist literature, analyses by the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and UNHCR, ex-post evaluations of comparable FC projects with UNICEF as project executing agency.

Directory of public sources

KfW (2020): Special Initiative North Africa and Middle East, Improving the living conditions of refugees and host communities, reserve review over 65 million EUR.

KfW (2021): UNICEF Syria reporting: Improving the living conditions of refugees and host communities, Water Crisis Programme, Phase III (BMZ No. 2017.410.73), Phase IV (BMZ No. 2019.411.37) and Phase V (BMZ No. 2020.410.36).

KfW (2021): Project proposal "UNICEF Strengthening the resilience of the Syrian population through improved drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, Phase I, BMZ No. 2021 18 545.

KfW (2022): Reporting – Improving the living conditions of refugees and host communities, UNICEF Syria, Water Crisis Programme, Phase IV (BMZ No. 2019.4113.7), Phase V (BMZ No. 2020.4103.6).

KfW (2022): Travel return note UNICEF Syria Water Programme, progress review in Beirut from 5 to 6 April 2022.

KfW (2022): Project monitoring note / back to office report, Water Crisis Programme, financed by SI MENA.

KfW (2023): Reporting – UNICEF, Syria Crisis Programme Water, Phases IV and V BMZ No. 2019.4113.7; 2020.4103.6; Reporting – UNICEF Strengthening the resilience of the Syrian population through improved drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, phases I and II BMZ No. 2021.1854.5; 2022.1834.2.

KfW (2024): Final report UNICEF Syria, Improving the living conditions of refugees and host communities, Water Crisis Programme Phase V, BMZ No. 2020.41.036.

KfW (2024): Progress report on improving the living conditions of refugees and host communities, UNICEF Syria, Phase IV; Phase V.

KfW (2024): Project monitoring note / back to office report, Water Crisis Programme, financed by SI MENA.

UNICEF (2021): Equitable WASH services for all: Breaking the vicious cycle of service degradation WASH programme (Phase V), UNICEF Syria Country Office, February.

UNICEF (2022): KfW Phase V Update 24-3-2022.

UNICEF (2023): Donor Statement by Activity (uncertified) from 9 December 2020 to 19 June 2023.

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UNICEF (2023): Final Report Budget, KfW Phase V, Annex 2.9a Cost and financing plan - Reporting

UNICEF (2024): Final Certified Statement of Account as 31 December 2023 in US Dollars.

Abbara, Aula et al. (2022): The health of internally displaced people in Syria: are current systems fit for purpose? *Journal of Migration and Health*, 6, p. 100126.

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Data sources and analysis tools

UNHCR Refugee Data Finder; evaluation of secondary sources; satellite images; Health Nutrition and Population Statistics, World Development Indicators, media reports, Online Map of Syrian Civil War (<https://syria.liveuamap.com>)

Interview partners and modality (in person, virtual/by telephone, in writing)

KfW employees in the operational area, UNICEF employees.

The following aspects limited the evaluation

Due to the security situation in Syria, UNICEF staff could not be contacted directly on site during the evaluation, but only digitally. It was also not possible to make direct contact with UNICEF's implementation partners, many of whom provided NLG services for the programme. Direct contact with the target group was also not possible due to the security environment and the massive internal migration of refugees in the intervention areas. Due to limited data availability, statements could not be sufficiently substantiated empirically or could only be derived indirectly, for example with regard to efficiency and impact.

Information from the operational department could only be obtained to a limited extent due to staff changes. The contact person at the KfW country office in Beirut contributed his experience and extensive knowledge of the sector and the follow-up phases of the programme

Assessment methodology

A six-point scale is used to assess the project according to OECD DAC criteria, with the exception of the sustainability criterion. The scale values are as follows:

- Level 1** Very successful: results significantly above expectations
- Level 2** Successful: results fully in line with expectations, without significant shortcomings
- Level 3** Moderately successful: results below expectations, but positive results predominate
- Level 4** Moderately unsuccessful: significantly below expectations and negative results dominate despite recognisable positive results
- Level 5** Unsuccessful: despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
- Level 6** Highly unsuccessful: the project is useless or the situation has deteriorated

The overall rating on the six-point scale is based on a project-specific weighting of the six individual criteria. Levels 1–3 of the overall rating indicate a ‘successful’ project, while levels 4–6 indicate an ‘unsuccessful’ project. It should be noted that a project can generally only be classified as "successful" in terms of development policy if both the achievement of objectives at the outcome level (effectiveness) and impact level, as well as sustainability, are rated at least as "moderately successful " (level 3).

Imprint

Responsible: Evaluation Department of KfW Development Bank

FZ-Evaluierung@kfw.de

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KfW Bankengruppe
 Palmengartenstraße 5-9
 60325 Frankfurt am Main, Germany