



June 3, 2026 | 8:00 AM EST

Building a Child-Focused Evaluation Evidence Synthesis System

1

Agenda

Two young girls in school uniforms are smiling and posing with their arms raised. The girl on the left is wearing a blue vest over a white shirt and a white hijab. The girl on the right is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a white hijab. They are standing in front of a blue structure, possibly a school building.

Evaluation synthesis overview

Methodology

Key results for children

Lessons and reflections

Looking ahead – Building a living child-focused evaluation synthesis

Q&A

Evaluation synthesis overview

Purpose and objectives of the synthesis

PURPOSE



Inform learning and decision-making for future evaluation planning and planning of other evidence exercises.



Foster accountability for outcome-level programme performance and institutional effectiveness to achieve the UNICEF Strategic Plan and contribute to the SDGs.



Elevate recurring lessons and recommendations for advancing UNICEF organizational performance.

OBJECTIVES

Map existing evaluations in relation to the UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas and Results Areas to determine coverage and coverage gaps.

Synthesize evaluation evidence to examine what has been achieved in relation to the UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas and Results Areas and identify enabling and hindering factors.

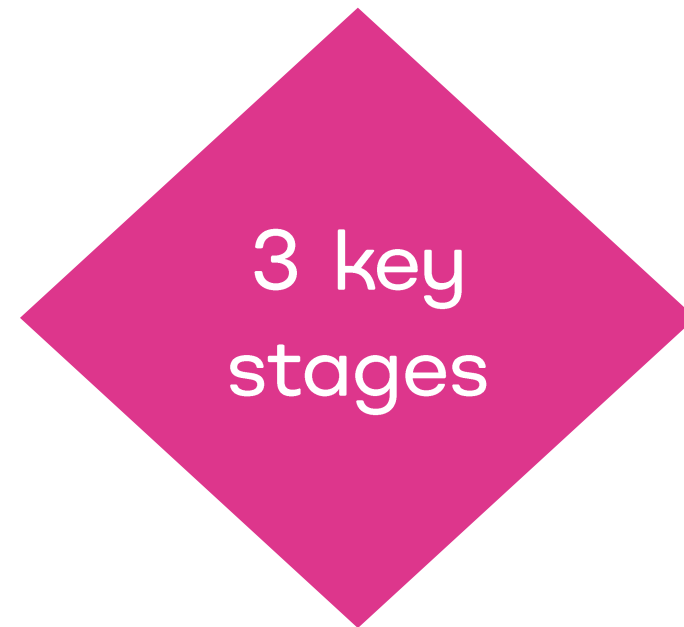
Identify lessons and recurring recommendations from evaluations requiring action by the organization and provide recommendations to inform future systematic evaluation synthesis.

Our main synthesis question: What insights do evaluations provide regarding UNICEF's progress in enabling children to realize their full potential?

Methodology



Methodology



SWIFT-Review for analyzing an extensive dataset



Data screening, extraction, and synthesis



Qualitative interviews for data triangulation

How were the evaluations analyzed?

- **631 evaluation** cross-cutting reports were analyzed using **semi-automated methods** (i.e., Python, advanced text-mining using neural networks) through a **human-in-the-loop approach**.
- The UNICEF Integrated Results and Resources Framework was used to guide the **coding of UNICEF interventions and results achieved** around Goal and Results Areas, linked to the SDGs.
- Using **EPPI-Reviewer**, evaluations were classified, creating a visual representation of the organization's evaluation evidence base.

Magnitude of evaluative evidence

Distribution of evaluations by Goal Area and geographic scope

Number of evaluations (left) and percentage by Goal Area (right)

	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	[Not Applicable]
EAPR	26	25	17	22	26	4
ECAR	27	22	28	8	24	14
ESAR	45	33	28	30	43	10
HQ	11	12	11	9	6	11
LACR	38	38	45	22	36	9
MENAR	27	21	17	14	17	6
SAR	39	26	23	17	25	6
WCAR	65	43	40	36	34	11

	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5	[Not Applicable]
EAPR	9%	11%	8%	14%	12%	6%
ECAR	10%	10%	13%	5%	11%	20%
ESAR	16%	15%	13%	19%	20%	14%
HQ	4%	5%	5%	6%	3%	15%
LACR	14%	17%	22%	14%	17%	13%
MENAR	10%	10%	8%	9%	8%	8%
SAR	14%	12%	11%	11%	12%	8%
WCAR	23%	20%	19%	23%	16%	15%

Evaluation Evidence and Gap Map

The synthesis has also generated an [Evaluation Evidence and Gap Map](#) to highlight gaps in the evidence base and show where evidence is more abundant. The map is an intuitive, visual, and interactive tool designed to provide an overview of the existing evidence on the UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal and Result Areas, across the areas where UNICEF operates worldwide.

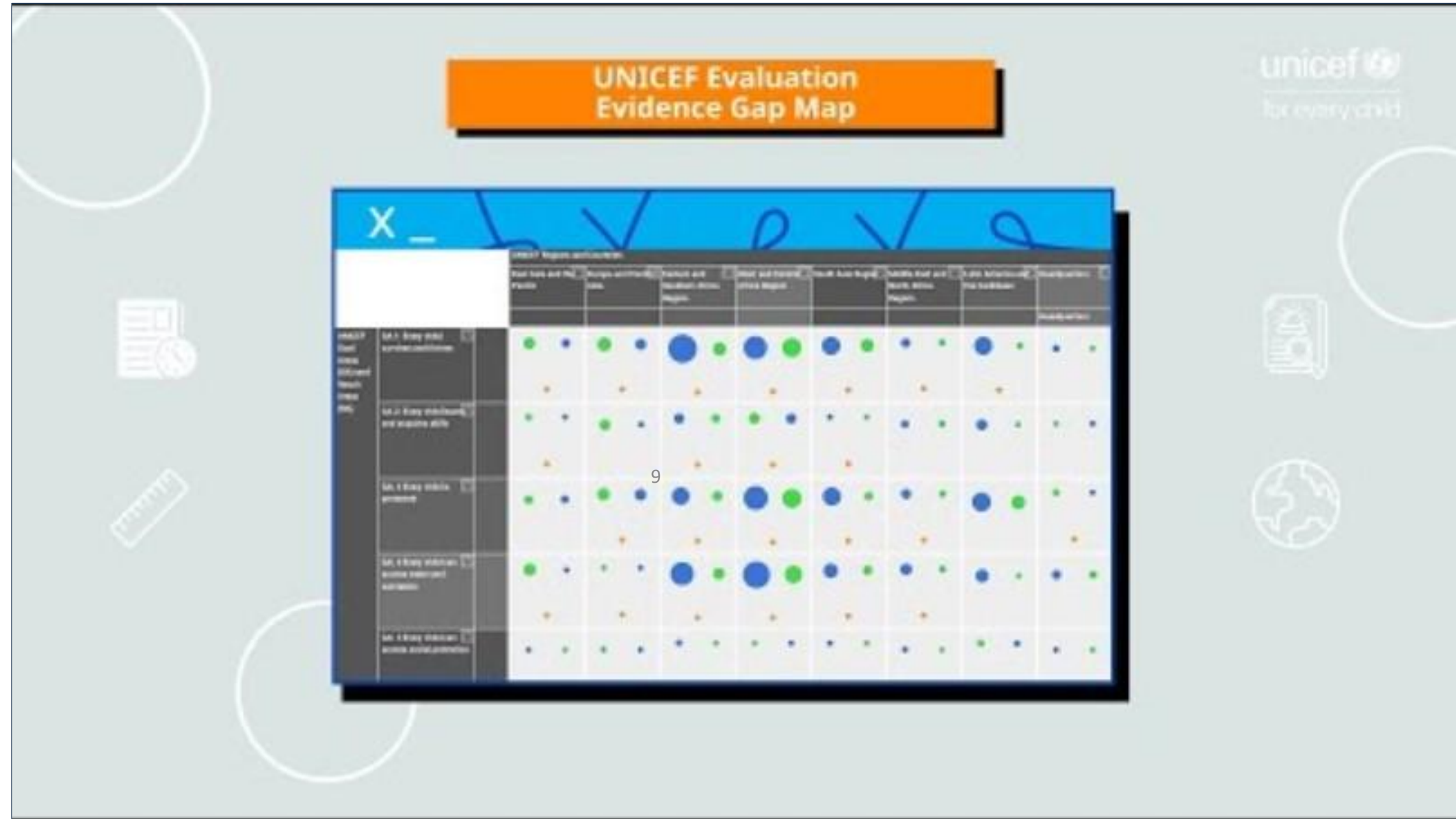


In the map, the evaluations are represented by bubbles, coded with different colors to indicate the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System ([GEROS](#)) ratings, ensuring that reports meet UNICEF norms and standards.

Only *satisfactory* evaluations are included in the map and, in detail: an "exceptional" evaluation is colored in **orange**, a "highly satisfactory" in **green** and a "satisfactory" in **blue**.

The size of each bubble corresponds to the number of evaluations included from each region and country across the different Goal and Result Areas.

Evaluation Evidence and Gap Map



Key results for children



Goal Area 1

Every child **survives and thrives**



85 evaluations across **13 outcomes** reported the following achievements:

- More health facilities with better infrastructure (e.g., providing transfusions)
- Improvement in mothers' healthcare knowledge
- More births attended by health professionals, especially low birth weight.

11

UNICEF primary contribution included:

- Strengthening health systems
- Improved physical spaces and standards of health centers
- Training and certification of personnel
- Providing cash transfers to promote access to health services
- Raise awareness on immunization.



Goal Area 2

Every child **learns and acquires skills**



79 evaluations assessed across **8 outcomes** reported the following achievements:

- Improved attendance and enrolment rate
- Improved literacy proficiency
- Reduction in gender disparity.

12

UNICEF primary contribution included:

- Providing cash transfers to access primary education
- Advocacy to increase education spending
- Training and capacity building
- Setting up and improving infrastructure and services
- Psychosocial, technical, and educational activities.



Goal Area 3

Every child is **protected**



89 evaluations assessed across **9 outcomes**

reported the following achievements:

- Decrease in abuse and violence against children, including FGM ¹³
- Children have a greater awareness of their rights and actions to take
- More victims receiving professional help
- Improved mental health of adolescents at risk.

UNICEF primary contribution included:

- Parent education (e.g., help them understand signs of abuse)
- Child Advocacy Centres or safe spaces
- Specialist judges and courts to ensure juvenile offenders are treated fairly
- Strengthening child protection policies and laws.



Goal Area 4

Every child can **access water and sanitation**



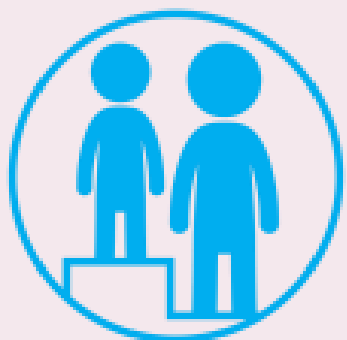
79 evaluations assessed across **9 outcomes** reported the following achievements:

- Improved access to clean, safe water
- Improvement in hygiene behaviours (e.g., hand washing, open defecation)
- Consequent improvement in health
- Menstrual hygiene education and separate sanitation facilities.

14

UNICEF primary contribution included:

- Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)
- Training government staff in health centres
- Strengthening national policies and enabling environments, especially in promoting national disaster risk reduction strategies
- Resilient infrastructure and facilities.



Goal Area 5

Every child can **access social protection**



54 evaluations assessed across **5 outcomes** reported the following achievements:

- Better identification of vulnerable children and their families
- More government spending on essential services and improved public finance management
- More families received help from community workers.

15

Primary support provided by UNICEF:

- Improving strategies and policies and collaboration between ministries
- Strengthened knowledge in public finance for children
- Cash transfers.

Insights for UNICEF programming on the way forward



1. Amplify child-centric focus: Ensure that UNICEF's reputation and partnerships are leveraged to support its core mission of helping children, emphasizing the importance of actively soliciting and prioritizing the voices of children in all decision-making processes.



2. Promote cross-sector collaboration and training of key implementers: Emphasize the effectiveness of multi-sectoral teams over sector-specific ones, encouraging collaboration across disciplines to enhance the holistic impact of UNICEF's programmes. Additionally, ensure adequate training and encouragement of key implementers, such as community volunteers.



3. Strengthen communication and coordination: Enhance communication and coordination both internally within UNICEF and externally with partners to streamline program implementation and maximize impact.



4. Optimize programme implementation and sustainability: Tailor UNICEF programmes to maximize their impact on communities while minimizing barriers to access and unintended negative consequences. Additionally, prioritize the development of suitable exit strategies and sustainability plans, empowering communities to take ownership of programs for success.

16



5. Enhance data systems and transparency: Improve data capture systems to enhance programme monitoring, ongoing internal reviews and decision-making processes, fostering a culture of transparency and accountability by openly addressing failures and learning from them.



6. Cultivate bold innovation: Transform UNICEF's culture to embrace bold, innovative and evidence-based strategies, fostering an environment where experimentation and creativity are encouraged to address evolving challenges.



7. Improve evaluation planning and accountability mechanisms: Implement robust accountability measures to improve evaluation planning at the outcome level and ensure the timely and effective implementation of evaluation recommendations, fostering a culture of responsibility and transparency throughout the organization.

Lessons and reflections

Evidence from global clinical trial publications

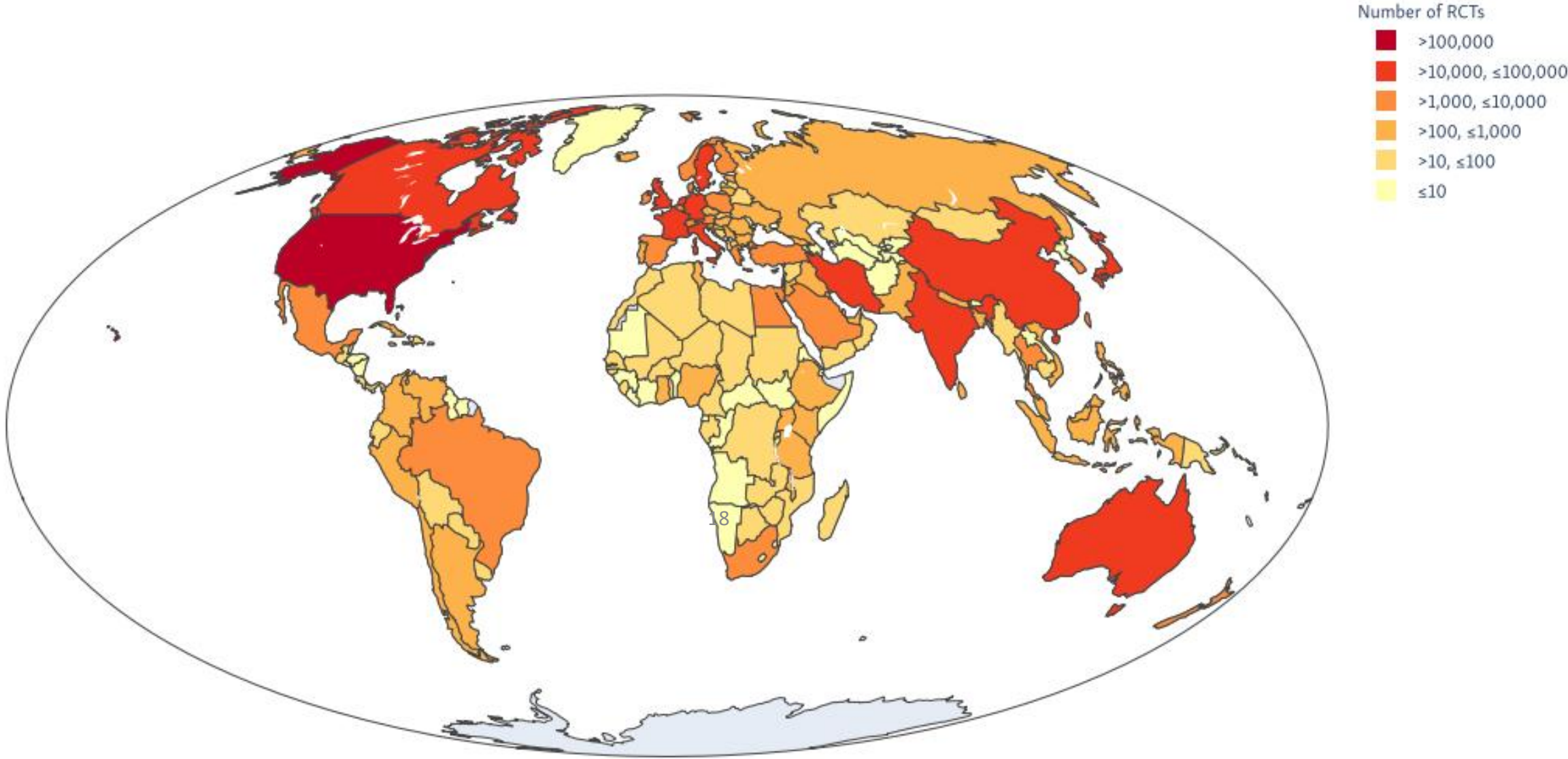
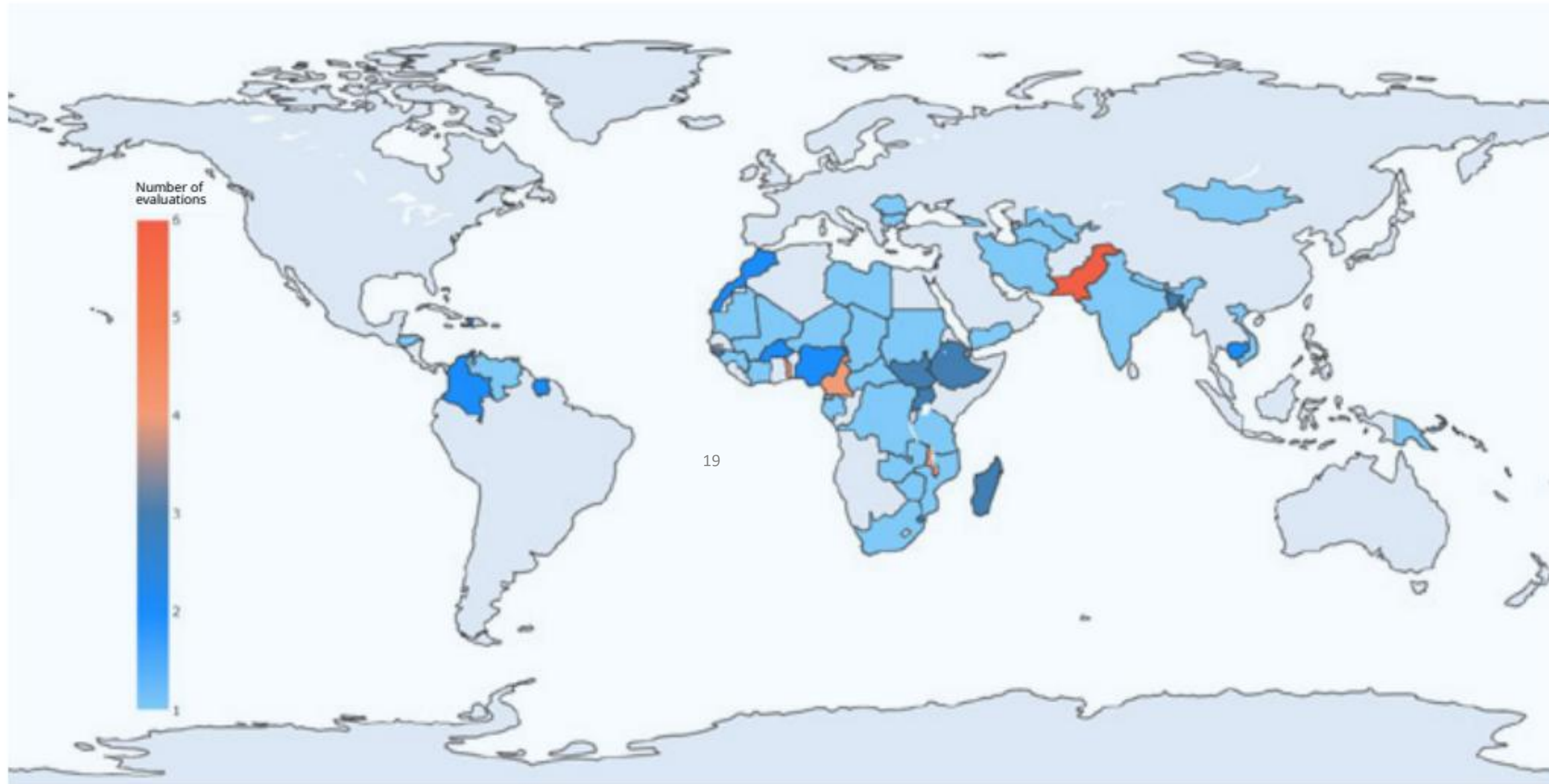


FIGURE 1: Global clinical trial publications by first author location, 1990–2017

UNICEF evaluations provide evidence where gaps exist



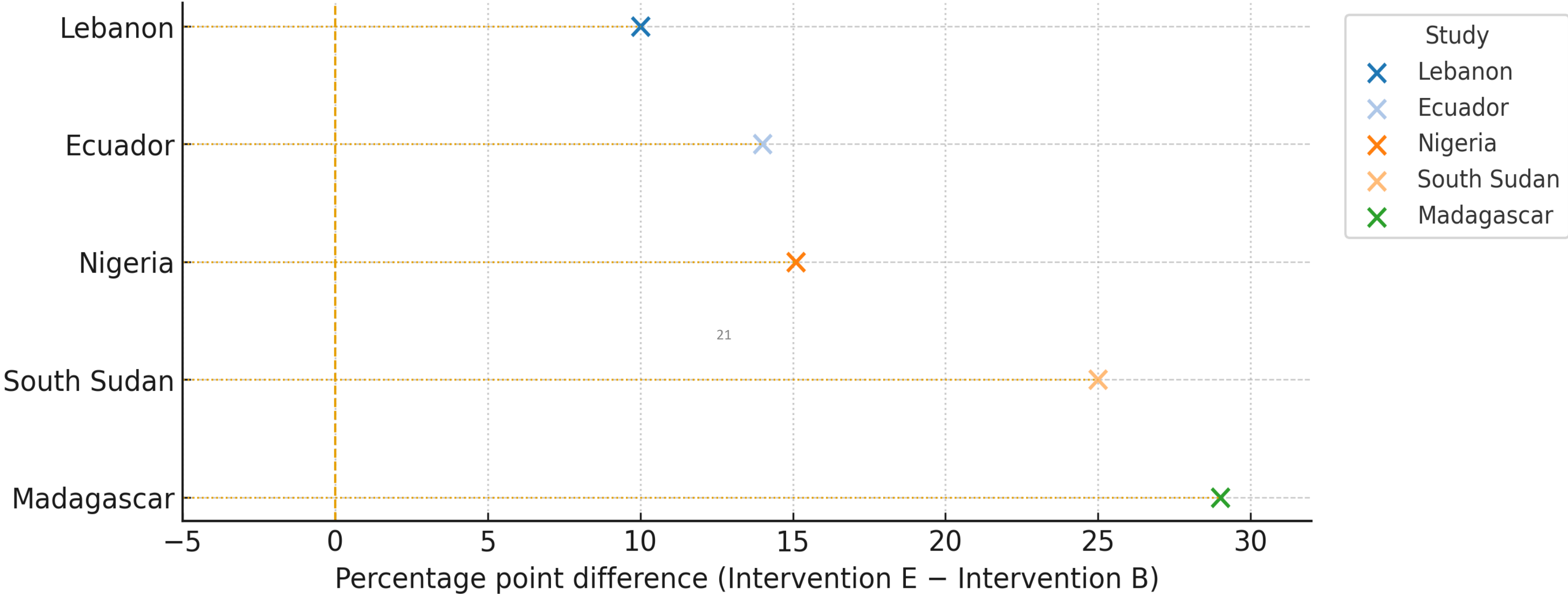
Positive findings but very limited data provided

- The percentage of people humanitarian settings able to access safe drinking water increased from 30.1% in 2018 to 49.4% in 2021
- 60% of villages were declared open-defecation free
- *“The intervention had a direct impact on children: providing them with health services, enhancing their wellbeing, contributing to a safer and hygienic school environment”*
- UNICEF's interventions contributed to producing positive changes in terms of adopting good hygiene and sanitation

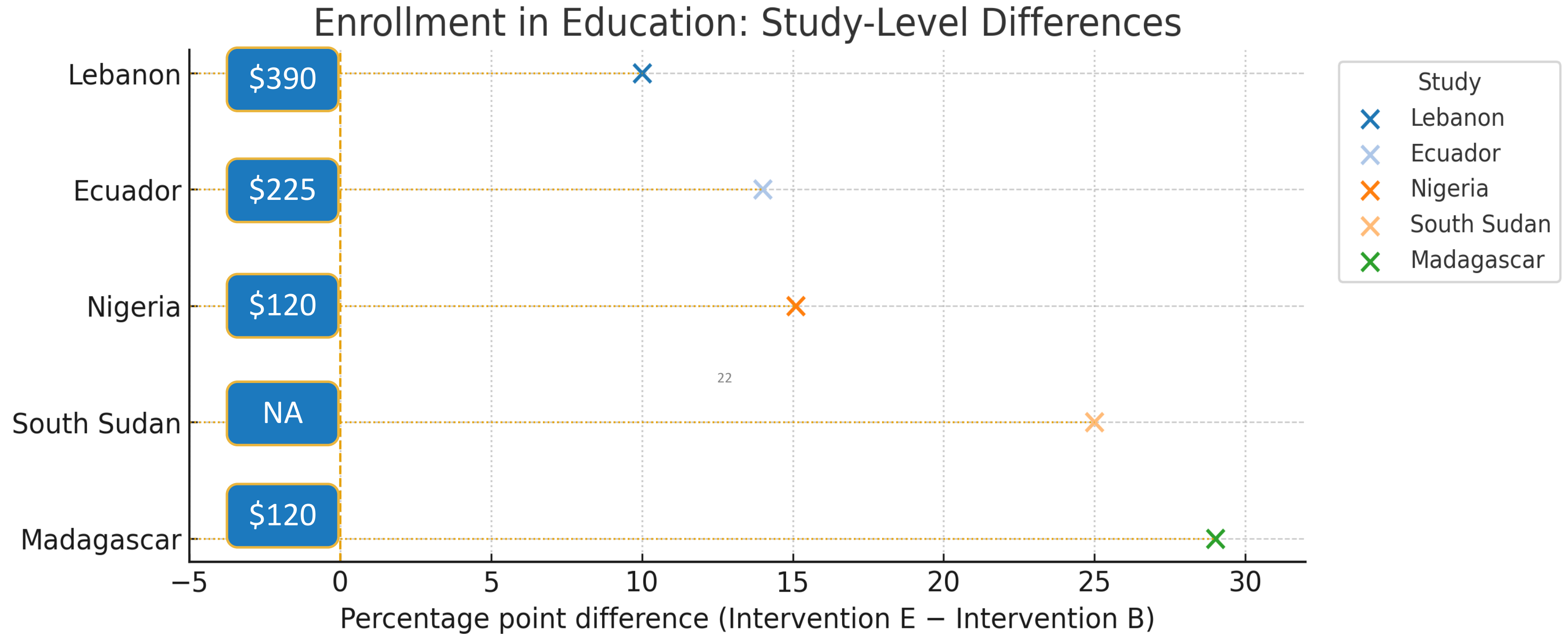


Cross-country analysis

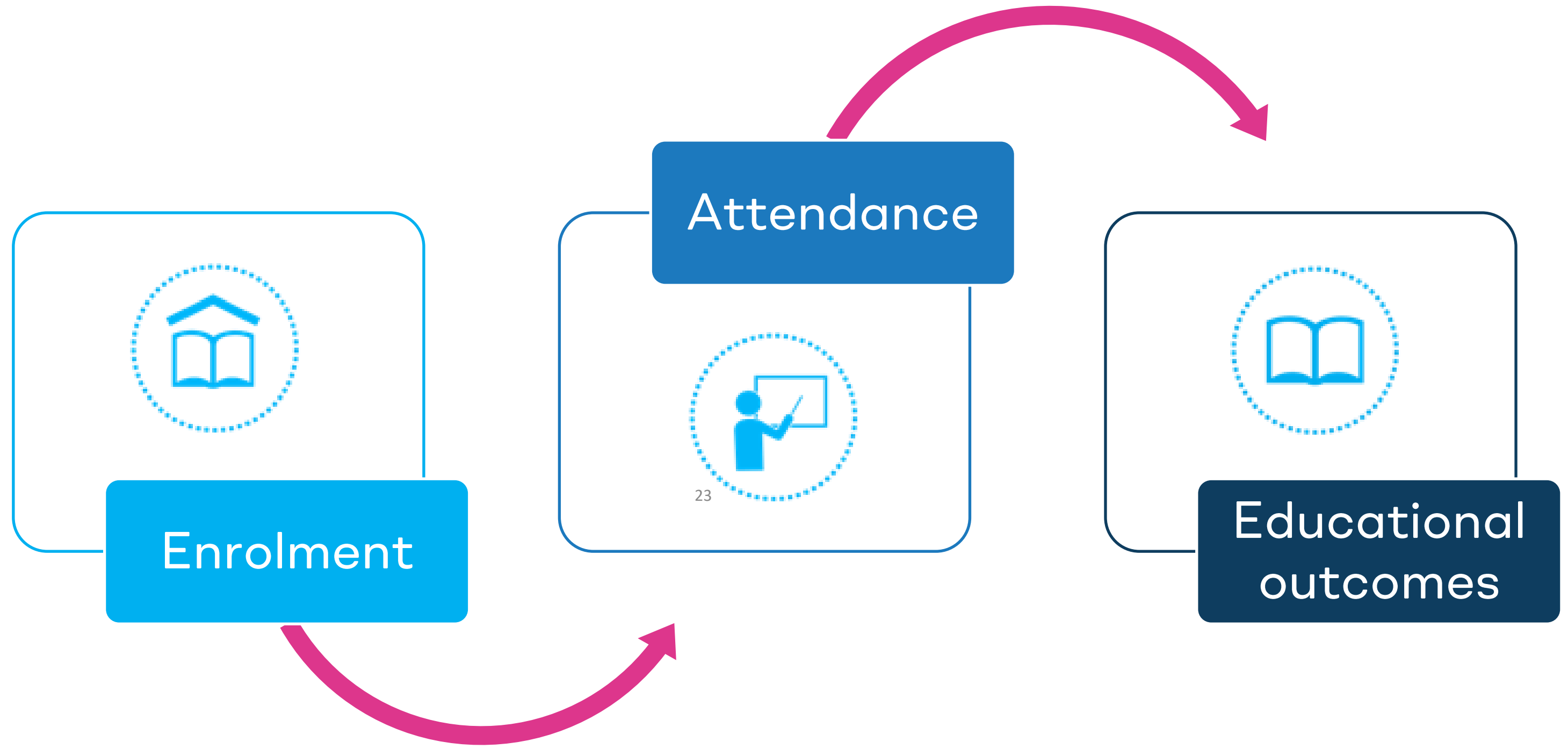
Enrollment in Education: Study-Level Differences



Cross-country analysis



Proxy outcomes



**Looking ahead –
Building a living child-
focused evaluation
evidence system**



Future opportunities for evidence synthesis


This first Global Evaluation Evidence Synthesis has played a pivotal role in informing the design of the new **UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029**, offering a robust evidence base to guide strategic shifts, prioritize scalable interventions, and inform resource allocation.


Looking ahead, future syntheses could support the implementation of UNICEF's ongoing efforts to promote greater effectiveness, efficiency, agility, and strategic alignment.

Key opportunities for UNICEF (and other organizations) include:

 **AI-powered and on-demand synthesis:** Leveraging artificial intelligence and advanced analytics to enable **faster, more targeted**, and **stakeholder-responsive** synthesis of evaluation evidence.

25

 **Living Evaluation Evidence and Gap Map:** Transitioning to a dynamic, continuously updated platform that allows users to explore the **availability of evidence** across programmes, **strategies**, and **accelerators**—at any time.

 **Stronger integration in evaluation planning and decision-making processes:** Incorporating Evaluation Evidence and Gap Maps into **evaluation planning** to inform **programming cycles**, reinforcing a culture of **learning, accountability**, and **measurement of results**.



global
evaluation
initiative

Q&A

26

Any further questions? Contact
with the UNICEF Evaluation Office:
evalhelp@unicef.org

www.glocalevalweek.org



global
evaluation
initiative

Thank you!



Scan this QR code to learn
more about the report

**Any further questions? Contact
with the UNICEF Evaluation Office:
evalhelp@unicef.org**

27

www.glocalevelweek.org