



**PROGRAMA  
INTERAGENCIAL**  
"Primera infancia y sistema integral de cuidados"

**UNTREF**  
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**CINEA**  
Centro de Investigaciones  
en Estadística Aplicada

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**INTERAGENCY PROGRAM EVALUATION  
"EARLY CHILDHOOD AND COMPREHENSIVE CARE SYSTEM"  
ARGENTINA SDG FUND**

RESIDENT COORDINATOR OFFICE IN ARGENTINA  
UNICEF (LEAD AGENCY) – ECLAC– ILO – UNDP

**Product 3  
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### Warning on gender

The use of a language that does not discriminate or distinguish between men and women is one of the concerns of our organization. However, there is no agreement among linguists on how to do it in our language. In this sense and in order to avoid graphic overload, we have chosen to use the classic masculine grammatical gender, on the understanding that all mentions in that genre always represent men and women, unless otherwise specified.

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## ACRONYMS

AG: Advisory Group  
ANDIS [*Agencia Nacional de Discapacidad*]: Argentine National Agency for Disability  
CNCPS [*Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de Políticas Sociales*]: Argentine National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies  
COPNAF [*Consejo Provincial de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia (Entre Ríos)*]: Provincial Council on Childhood, Adolescence and Family  
DESEPREC [*Detección, Seguimiento y Estimulación Precoz (Mendoza)*]: Early Detection, Monitoring and Stimulation Program  
ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [In Spanish CEPAL]  
ENPI [*Estrategia Nacional de Primera Infancia*]: Argentina's Early Childhood Strategy  
GP: Gender Perspective  
HRBA: Human Rights Based Approach  
ILO: International Labor Organization [In Spanish OIT]  
INDEC [*Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos*]: National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina  
IOM: UN International Organization for Migration [In Spanish OIM]  
JP: Joint Program  
MECNUD [*Marco Estratégico de Cooperación para el Desarrollo*]: Strategic Cooperation Framework for Development of the United Nations  
MECON [*Ministerio de Economía*]: Ministry of Economy  
MfDR: Managing for Development Results Approach [In Spanish: GpRD]  
MMGyD [*Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad*]: Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity  
MTEySS [*Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social*]: Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security  
MDS [*Ministerio de Desarrollo Social*]: Ministry of Social Development  
NEA: North East of Argentina  
PRODOC: Joint Program Document  
RCO: Resident Coordinator Office – UN Argentina  
SAE [*Secretaría de Asuntos Estratégicos*]: Secretariat for Strategic Affairs  
SDG: Sustainable Development Goals  
SDG FUND: Sustainable Development Goals Fund  
SENAF [*Secretaría de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia*]: National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family  
SINTyS [*Sistema de Identificación Nacional Tributario y Social*]: National Tax and Social Identification System  
ST: Steering Committee  
ToC: Theory of Change  
UN: United Nations [In Spanish: ONU]  
UNDP: United Nations Development Program [In Spanish: PNUD]  
UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  
UNS: United Nations System

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Purposes, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The study aimed to assess the levels of progress, difficulties, opportunities, degree of achievement of the objectives set by the Interagency Program in its implementation stage, including the strategies that had to be adopted during this period to face the impact of COVID-19 on early childhood and the care system. As indicated by the Fund Secretariat, the identification of initiatives and/or responses aimed at the inclusion of people with disabilities and the native population was included as an objective.

The study covers the period between March 2020 and February 2022. It has a comprehensive approach and the background of the project formulation previous stage was considered. The actions of the study have concentrated in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, headquarters of the JP authorities, of the agencies participating in the Program and of the main national counterparts, such as the CNCPS, the SAE, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity, SINTyS, SENAF, among other agencies, in four provinces (Entre Rios, Salta, Mendoza and Cordoba), and in approximately fifteen municipalities of the aforementioned provinces where Local Council Dialog Tables for Early Childhood (UNICEF), the Training Paths for Caregivers (ILO) and Parenting Communities (UNDP) were implemented.

### 1.2 Evaluation framework (including Theory of change)

The evaluation framework is made up of a set of criteria and guiding principles that have established the methodological approach adopted and the preparation of instruments and the Evaluation Matrix. The **guiding principles** for the study have been:

- Use-oriented evaluation;
- Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and Gender Perspective (GP);
- Children's and adolescents' rights approach;
- Focus on rights and inclusion of people with disabilities;
- Managing for Development Results Approach (MfDR);

The most important **criteria** considered are: a) Effectiveness; b) Efficiency; c) Relevance; d) Consistency; e) Sustainability.

The methodological approach and the data collection instruments used took into account, in particular, one of the guiding principles ("use-oriented evaluation"). For this reason, when presenting the conclusions, we sought to provide significant elements to profit from the advantages offered by the evaluation of a Theory of change<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Ligerio Lasa, J. A. (2011). Two Evaluation Methods: Criteria and Theory of the Program- Work document CECOD Series, Number 15.

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### **1.3 Methodology**

At all stages of the methodological design, a use-oriented, transversal and sensitive approach to gender and human rights, in particular the rights of children and adolescents, was sought. The qualitative techniques applied identified the perceptions, expectations and degree of satisfaction of a wide universe of actors that included authorities and technical teams of the agencies that make up the JP, authorities and technical referents from the national, provincial and local counterparts, references from the academic and social institutions that participated in some of the projects included in the JP. It was not possible to access families with children within the JP target age group because it was developed in a pandemic context which prevented access to these recipients.

#### **Analysis and evaluation techniques and instruments**

The techniques used were: document collection, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and panels. The development of all phases of the study followed the planning agreed and adjusted in the relevant points with the Program authorities, through the Coordinating Team of the Interagency Program, the area of Social Inclusion and Monitoring of UNICEF and the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), who make up the Evaluation Management Group. The procedure to analyze the records of testimonies and narratives arising from the interviews, panels and focus groups consisted of the focused thematic review of the five evaluation criteria presented in the analysis matrix (see Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix). These 5 general criteria were broken down into 28 items or sub-axes that systematize guiding questions (see Section 4).

### **1.4 Findings**

#### **About relevance and strategic adjustment**

The general purpose of the JP, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the concept of "leaving no one behind" for achieving SDGs, is to face two key problems, from a comprehensive approach: a) the existence of social and territorial gaps that affect the full exercise of the rights of children from 0 to 6 years of age, in particular, of those who belong to populations suffering multiple discriminations; and b) the existence of barriers to the economic autonomy of women and to labor rights for workers in the care sector.

It was a flexible Program that was able to respond to COVID-19 challenges. To this end, a fifth set of results incorporating new pandemic-related activities (studies, pilot tests, training and information/awareness strategies) was added, methodologies, technical support dynamics for governments and strategies for strengthening capacities were adapted to the context (remote, virtual and/or blended modality training and meetings), and COVID-19 themes were included in scheduled activities.

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### **About management effectiveness and efficacy**

The Program contributed to consolidating efforts on childhood and care that had been made in a more isolated manner. Support for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood strategy and the development of innovative instruments aimed at promoting the rights of children and care workers was expressed in a series of initiatives with counterparts from the relevant jurisdictions: Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables for early childhood, design and implementation of training guides and the application of virtual and blended training modalities for different recipient profiles and especially care personnel, creation and publication of documents, of evidence-based information as a tool for reliable diagnoses. They are synergistic results and agencies and counterparts agree that the JP contributed to generating evidence and developing innovative tools.

The level of progress in the programmatic axes has been uneven due to the exceptional situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the territorial insertion of the agencies, the characteristics of the proposed activities and the decision and political support of counterparts at the national, provincial and municipal levels.

### **About efficiency**

The management of the Program with respect to resources/results has been adequate. The goals were generally achieved and the budget was fully executed in accordance with the general guidelines set forth. Even though some activities were not completed within the established time frame, this is considered a measure of the JP's success. From interviews with representatives of the agencies, it comes out that, to a large extent, the difficulties that arose resulted from the fact that the requirements for the execution of a program that is based on the alignment of components in a time line do not always match political and government priorities, which are generally uncoordinated.

Regarding the management of resources in territories, a hurdle that is frequently found is the complexity or the culture of the local administrative system in relation to the flow of funds when the provincial government is in charge of implementation. The need to seek mechanisms to simplify procedures on this issue has been pointed out. However, the mobilization of the Program's resources in the face of the pandemic, mainly through the execution of the aforementioned Product 5 in response to the impact of COVID-19, was timely and responded to requirements.

Regarding inter-agency intervention, several testimonies from the agencies used the concept of "fragmentation", both referring to the demand that is posed to the agencies and to the supply that they present to government agencies; the proposal of UNS joint programs focuses on this issue. The various operational scales of the agencies and the attention to administrative issues is a factor to be reviewed in similar initiatives in the future, since they had a considerable weight on Program Coordination tasks.



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### **About sustainability**

As explained in Section 7.4, the JP has contributed to strengthening local leadership and long-term ownership of intersectoral strategies in and with government counterparts to address comprehensive approaches and interventions in early childhood and care. In this process, it expanded and diversified relations with substantive areas of government at the national, provincial and municipal levels. The JP helped significantly to strengthen the use of technology and big data in strategic areas, transferred methodologies, trained human resources and produced a set of studies and research that are essential inputs for evidence-based public policies to be designed. The Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables are innovative mechanisms for local representatives because they promoted and demonstrated the potential and real achievements to be obtained through joint work.

The participation of civil society has not been relevant in the implementation of the JP. From the perspective of agency representatives, it is one of the points that the Program should reinforce. This participation was not foreseen in Provincial Dialog Tables, it was considered in Local Council Dialog Tables, but the time was not enough for them to be settled enough to incorporate these new actors. This issue seems to have different incidence and modalities depending on the type of intervention and product to be obtained, for example, the development of a technological device or the strengthening of community capacities to promote change.

### **About consistency**

The synergy of MECNUD 2016-2020 and 2021-2025, in particular with the "Protection and Universal Access to Essential Services" areas of cooperation, in the case of the former, and the dimension of Social Protection and Governance, in the latter, was essential to promote the internal consistency of the various agencies participating within the UNS framework. In this sense, the MECNUD worked as a structuring axis that helped to strengthen the lines of work prioritized by government counterparts at the national, provincial and municipal levels to advance towards achieving the SDGs.

### **Rights-based perspective focused on childhood**

The JP was structured from the perspective of children's rights. From this rights-based transversal approach, the actions of the JP helped government counterparts significantly to generate evidence through: a) promoting information and awareness campaigns aimed at overcoming discriminatory stereotypes about the roles of care and equity in domestic and family responsibilities; b) drawing attention to the impact of the pandemic on the exercise of the rights of children and the overload of care tasks in the home done by women, with a view to promoting co-responsibility and gender equity; c) training and informing representatives and caregivers; d) designing innovative tools for the collection, selection and systematization of information on childhood and care spaces. In this context, the JP focused on the problem of children in the most vulnerable sectors, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

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### Gender-based approach

As stated in the PRODOC, the JP adopted the Montevideo Strategy for the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for achieving SDGs. The social organization of care, gender gaps and their impact on the situation of women in the Region play an important role in this Strategy. The Program tried to ensure that the gender-based approach be present in all its activities, including specific studies and surveys, guidelines for training proposals and the training manuals prepared, guidelines for the strategies and public policies that were developed in territorial dialog tables, the design of information systems (for example, gender indicators in the platform for early childhood, First Years, SENAF), the contents of communication strategy pieces, etc. The Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity is the government counterpart for various JP activities and the administrative entity of the Federal Map of Care.

### Disability

Disability issues were not dealt with at the expected level. Testimonies have been collected from agency representatives and the government counterpart that point out the need to advance in the optimization of information from all jurisdictions, since it is scattered and collected with methodologies that are not always comparable and compatible. As developed in Point 8. Disability, the Early Childhood Information and Monitoring System developed for SINTyS by UNDP and ECLAC within the framework of the JP and the Federal Map of Care prepared by ECLAC and managed by the MMGyD are innovative developments that can provide significant inputs for actions aimed at addressing those situations. Representatives from Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables pointed out that disability issues either did not arise in the meeting spaces, or did not receive priority treatment. Among other reasons, they mention the lack of information to define the activities and the lack of resources at the local level to support their actions. An exception in this sense were the Cordoba Dialog Tables, which discuss the subject on a regular basis. However, the opportunity provided by the JP to present the topic and obtain support from other institutions to put it on the agenda was appreciated.

## **1.5 Conclusions and lessons learned**

- The testimonies collected and the JP reports both point out the synergy between the JP and MECNUD 2016-2020 and the relevance of the Program's products in relation to MECNUD 2021-2025, particularly in the Social Protection and Governance dimensions.
- The JP implementation coincided with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had direct consequences on the planned activities. However, the JP managed to maintain the proposed objectives by effectively adapting to the limitations of the context.
- The agencies carried out coordinated work to strengthen intersectoral and interinstitutional policies related to early childhood and care, which in turn

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promoted discussion and coordination among them and among the different levels of government. The change of government involved a particular adjustment effort in this sense.

- The governance scheme showed some operational weaknesses compared to what was expected. As stated by the agencies themselves, in some instances they were not always able to maintain the expected performance. The coordination was important to carry out the joint program, centralize information, mitigate the impact of inter-bureaucratic conflicts and operationalize decisions.
- An effective scheme for inter-agency joint tasks requires deliberate action, based on a design and planning process and a realistic vision of the intervention context. The JP met these conditions, but this is an ongoing process and it has not yet been fully perceived as a joint initiative by all its counterparts.
- The design of a common agenda on early childhood and care, in accordance with the national agenda linked to the SDGs, and the coordinated implementation of the activities associated with that agenda contribute to complementarity among the agencies involved, optimizing the quality of results, and avoiding overlapping efforts.
- Disability issues, one of the transversal axes of the JP, show diagnostic, institutional and agenda weaknesses in the country, impairing the achievement of the objectives that the JP had set.
- The convergence of technical capabilities in this area allowed the UNS to act efficiently and quickly, providing an aligned and comprehensive response to government counterparts.
- The proposal of joint programs such as the JP finds fertile ground since counterparts increasingly require interventions that can benefit from complementarities and avoid overlaps; while on the other hand, agencies need the demand from counterparts to be more organized, centralized, around common needs.
- For the agencies, joint work provides learning opportunities, strengthens their social capital and increases the capacity of the UNS in its cooperation objectives in the country.
- The innovative approach of the JP was expressed, on the one hand, in specific technological solutions that were considered in some cases by the counterparts as a significant leap in quality for the achievement of their objectives. These interventions were also valued for ensuring their sustainability through the training of their own human resources for their operation and constant updating. On the other hand, innovation resulted in a successful methodology for territorial intervention.
- The JP's contribution to updating the care staff training approach also meant a significant advance in skills training, and its certification, with an innovative virtual platform methodology throughout the country.
- The podcast "Someone Takes Care", aligned with the goal of promoting early childhood rights and care, was an innovative communication approach recognizing regional particularities and involved the participation of provincial representatives.

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- The generation of evidence, through studies and research, has contributed to informed decision-making and the support of the necessary adjustments to the actions and activities established, particularly in a new context, such as that of the COVID 19 pandemic, helping to achieve the expected results.
  - The consolidation of intersectoral institutional structures, through the Dialog Tables for Early Childhood at the provincial and local council levels by the JP has been key to promoting a comprehensive approach to the issue that can be sustainable over time, beyond the JP.
  - Heterogeneity in the territory was a challenge that the JP was able to overcome by adapting to local demands, though a work methodology and technical leadership in the territory recognized as effective by counterparts.
  - In the same sense, the strengthening of the technical capacities of the main counterparts responsible for early childhood policies at the local level, which allows the replication of knowledge in various instances and contexts, enables the sustainability and scope of the actions.
  - The training methodology applied in the territory was valued by the participants not only as a tool for achieving the specific objectives of JP in the territory, but as a significant contribution to their own professional development in the topics addressed and in working life.

## **1.6 Recommendations**

- Due to the importance given to the value that inter-agency action has for the agencies and for the UNS by increasing social capital, mechanisms for the systematic exploration of opportunities for joint action should be incorporated.
- Participating agencies highlighted that having prioritized lines of intervention over specific activities had been a good decision, because it allowed flexibility to adapt to changes. In a new joint planning, the construction of consensus on lines of intervention should be hierarchically organized.
- The alignment of the definition of functions and roles and the integration of the governance scheme with the requirements of the program should be ensured.
- It would be convenient for the design to maximize the study of intersection points that can be achieved during implementation in order to optimize intended synergies.
- As part of the inter-agency construction process, the characteristics that can strengthen a joint public image and incorporate it into the program's communication plan should be established.
- Good practices highlighted by the participants should be continued; interventions should consider technical and institutional forecasts as a priority to ensure long-term sustainability and replicability.
- In the case of administrative processes in UN agencies that are not fully compatible, alternatives that avoid potential difficulties in execution should be provided.
- Given the requirements of administrative-financial management, options that help optimize the functioning of the coordination team should be analyzed.

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- Based on the value that the professionals of the agencies give to concerted action, a mechanism should be found for meetings of technical teams so that they can be held on a regular basis, promoting intersectorality and professional debate.
  - Regarding the preparation of documents, reports, systematization, etc. related to the joint program, the effectiveness of the procedures for its dissemination among potential recipients should be ensured, considering as far as possible, its accessibility for immediate application in operation. Likewise, mechanisms that allow consensus on publishing production according to common interests should be set.
  - Based on the increase in professional interactions promoted by the joint program, it is recommendable to stimulate the consolidation of professional networks with similar themes among the members of the agencies themselves and with other relevant actors for the purposes of the program.
  - In the case of especially significant experiences, spaces for their dissemination among interested audiences should be promoted.
  - Disability is a relevant issue in the action of the program, and it would be advisable to analyze the chances of increasing its visibility in planned interventions in order to achieve a greater impact on the public agenda.

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## 2. CONTEXT AND PRESENTATION OF THE OBJECT OF EVALUATION

### Sociodemographic situation and social protection

Historically, Argentina has had one of the most extensive social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, its socioeconomic characteristics, in addition to the framework of schemes and programs aimed at covering the social risks of a large part of the population, are factors that contribute to fragmentation, heterogeneity and inequalities that can be seen in gender gaps, life conditions of indigenous populations, migrants, persons with disabilities and, in particular, significantly, in inequalities in the early childhood of children from vulnerable families. Those regions with higher relative economic productivity sectors (South and Center) generally show higher levels of well-being and development, which can be seen, for example, in the lower incidence of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and infant mortality. To partially understand this regional disparity, it is necessary to consider that, although the national State has a strong presence throughout the territory, certain rights such as access to education and health services are the primary responsibility of the provinces. The federal structure of the State cause, to a great extent, that the resources of each province ultimately determine the quality, coverage of public services and well-being of its inhabitants.

Demographic changes, the progressive aging of the population and the increase in single-parent households have resulted in more heterogeneous families with fewer possibilities of affording the care of children and the elderly, in the absence of quality public care systems. In this context, ECLAC coined the expression “care crisis” to refer to growing needs for care in the face of a greater impossibility for families to face it (ECLAC, 2009). The local and regional agenda has given it increasing relevance regarding the provision of goods, services, values and affection aimed at groups with different levels of dependency (children, the elderly and persons with disabilities).

In Argentina there are 13.2 million children and teenagers, of which approximately 5.2 million belong to the 0-to-6-year age group. After decades of crisis, poverty affected 57% of children and adolescents in 2020. Some data illustrate pending challenges. The infant mortality rate has been declining for more than four decades, but efforts are still required to reduce its largest component, the neonatal death rate (first 28 days of life). The adolescent fertility rate fell more for late adolescence than for early adolescence. The Argentine Northeast Provinces (NEA) have up to six times more births per 1,000 women aged 10 to 19 than other provinces in the center or south of the country. Child poverty is not recent. Since 1990 it has not fallen below 30% and has increased since 2018 due to multiple factors such as unemployment, precarious employment, inflation, low creation of quality jobs and the serious effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The population living in poverty in the second half of 2021 accounted for 37.3 % of the total population. For children and adolescents under 18 years of age, this proportion rose to 51.8 % (EPH-INDEC).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.indec.gov.ar/uploads/informesdeprensa/eph\\_pobreza\\_03\\_22F5E124A94B.pdf](https://www.indec.gov.ar/uploads/informesdeprensa/eph_pobreza_03_22F5E124A94B.pdf)

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This multidimensional poverty is expressed more crudely among indigenous children and adolescents, although as UNICEF points out, more data is lacking in this regard<sup>3</sup>. Lower rates of school attendance, late entry (when exiting) to preschool, malnutrition (higher incidence of low weight and short stature), higher rates of infant mortality, lower health coverage and serious violations of their rights to inter-cultural health.

As regards access and assistance to child development centers (CDC) and preschool education, the comparison of data from 2012 (UNICEF - MDS, 2013) with a UNICEF study from 2020 previous to the pandemic, for example, shows the persistence of the problem. In 2012, only 32% of 0–4-year-old children living in urban areas attended a child development center or preschool institution. Attendance increased with age. Among those under one year of age, the percentage was 3.1%, but it increased to 8.4% for 1-year-old children and reached 20.2% in the case of 2-year-old children. At the age of 3, this percentage stood at 50.5% and later rose to 76.7% at the age of 4 years. Considerable differences were observed among social groups: in the poorest quintile, 20.7% of children aged 0 to 4 attended a child development center, while attendance reached 52.1% in the richest quintile. In the study entitled Analysis of the situation of childhood and adolescence in Argentina 2020 (UNICEF, 2020), only 31% of children up to 4 years of age attended care and education institutions for early childhood (nursery schools and kindergartens under the provincial Ministries of Education or Child Development Centers –CDC– or early childhood institutions managed by the Ministries of Social Development, the provincial councils for childhood and adolescence or community organizations). The percentage increases with age (it reaches almost 100% at 5 years and is also very high for 4-year-old children). The largest gaps by territory or by socioeconomic level are seen in the youngest age ranges. This is a consequence of both the insufficiency of support programs and the lack of education and care centers. As a result, the feminization of child care takes place and the children’s school path is early determined (Pautassi & Zibecchi, 2010).

Almost 3 million women work in care sectors. Of this total, 9 out of 10 perform these tasks without pay and spend twice as much time as men.<sup>4</sup>. Reducing the responsibility of women in care tasks and facilitating access to paid activities involves an agenda that focuses on co-responsibility in care tasks, training and decent work for this sector.

The social organization of care includes the triad of time, money and services to provide care. Convention No. 156 and Recommendation No. 165 of the ILO establish that the provision of care services must be the responsibility of the State; however, they may create the conditions to encourage other entities to develop such care. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that the States must guarantee the exercise of children’s rights, including the right to care. Along with the

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<sup>3</sup> Unicef conducted a survey during the pandemic on its effects on households with disabilities: <https://www.unicef.org/argentina/media/9026/file>

<sup>4</sup> Available data at: <https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/programas-y-proyectos/economia-del-cuidado/lang-es/index.htm#:~:text=En%20Argentina%2C%20casi%203%20millones,de%20tiempo%20que%20los%20varones>.

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responsibility of the State, we should point out the importance of promoting co-responsibility both among other actors in the care diamond (private sector, community and families) (Razavi, 2007), as well as within the family organization, in order to progressively modify cultural patterns and practices that place these tasks mainly on women.

### UNS and the 2030 Agenda

In 2015, the Member States of the United Nations approved 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)<sup>5</sup> as part of the 2030 Agenda. In 2019, world leaders called for a decade of action and results for sustainable development by committing to fund allocation, country-level implementation and support to institutions to achieve the Goals by 2030, leaving no one behind. SDGs include specific goals related to early childhood and care such as 4.2, 5.2, 8.5.

In this context, in line with General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279, the reform of the UNS at the global level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gives rise to programs such as the Joint SDG Fund that are relevant to advancing and implementing Development Cooperation Frameworks. This Fund constitutes an international mechanism to support sustainable development activities through multidimensional and integrated joint programs. The changes promoted deepened inter-agency coordination and resource allocation to support countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda and their SDGs. The role of the Resident Coordinator gained relevance and the Strategic Development Cooperation Frameworks (MECNUD) were redesigned to provide more effective and strategic responses in terms of SDGs in their environmental, economic and social dimensions, promoting several alliances among multiple actors.

In Argentina, the alliances between agencies, funds and programs to access global mechanisms have had a very positive impact for the development of joint actions. The MECNUD 2021-2025 is the result of joint work between the UNS and the Government of the Argentine Republic. It incorporates contributions from civil society, academics and the private sector at all levels with the purpose of finding and implementing economic, environmental and social solutions to "leave no one behind" and improve the lives of all people in the country. It is the collective commitment of the agencies, funds and programs of the UNS to contribute to the efforts of the Argentine State in the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda, using the SDGs as a route of action and presenting the general guidelines to develop a joint work plan during the next five years. It was approved on November 3, 2020 and is the third cooperation framework between the UNS and the Argentine National State. It supports the development of evidence-based policies with a rights-based approach and a gender perspective, sufficient and sustainable allocation of budgets, expansion of the supply, coverage and quality of early childhood care, and the promotion of the work of care givers.

### The «Early Childhood and Comprehensive Care System» Joint Program

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/sustainable-development-goals)



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The Joint Program (JP) is part of a global initiative of the UNS to accelerate the achievement of SDGs and was approved as part of the Joint SDG Fund. This program focuses on children from the lowest income deciles and their families, particularly those affected by multiple factors of exclusion and discrimination (living in rural areas, belonging to indigenous communities, having some disability, etc.). A comprehensive early childhood development, care and education policy aimed at the population whose rights have been violated will ensure the exercise of rights in this age group (target SDG 4.2) and reduce and redistribute unpaid care work; mitigate inequality in the distribution of care tasks and overcome the obstacles that make it difficult for women to get decent paid work (SDG target 5.4); expand the demand for female and male employment, and contribute to decent, full and productive employment for all within the framework of early childhood care policies and services (target SDG 8.5).

Its execution is led by UNICEF, under the coordination of the Resident Coordinator Office, together with ECLAC, ILO and UNDP. These agencies have developed extensive networks with international, national, provincial and municipal public and private key actors that facilitate national social discussion and allow for the proper implementation and sustainability of the proposal. Each of them proposed a set of activities, all linked to early childhood and the comprehensive care system, and to a gender approach aimed at caregivers. Due to the fact that the interagency project was designed before COVID 19 health emergency, activities related to the emergency stage were added, after being appropriately agreed within the framework of the base document for Project planning (PRODOC). These activities were aligned with the "United Nations Framework for the socioeconomic and environmental response and recovery from Covid-19 in Argentina" (SERF). Along this line, in order to address the impact related to the pandemic -and as part of the MECNUD 2021-2025- a fifth product was included in the JP in 2020 for which a maximum amount of 20% of the funds was reallocated. This issue and its approach by the JP were incorporated into the provincial agenda, training programs and awareness campaigns. In this sense, the main recipients of the JP are in line with the groups identified as priorities in the CCA/Country Report 2015 and in the MECNUD 2016-2020.

The JP is a joint response to two central problems that require a comprehensive, inter-sector and sustainable approach: a) the conditions of poverty and violation of the rights of children between 0 and 6 years of age and their families, especially those who accumulate factors of exclusion and discrimination aggravated by inequality and social and territorial gaps; b) the barriers to women's economic autonomy and access to labor rights for workers in the care sector.

With the aim of accelerating the achievement of SDGs, at the national level, the interagency and comprehensive approach is reflected in the following intervention logic:

- Activities in territory. Strengthen territory work at national, provincial and municipal level in the implementation of comprehensive care policies.

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- Creation of studies, research, documents. This is a key aspect due to the importance that the care area has acquired and because COVID 19 imposed the need to generate and update information about its social and economic effects.
  - Training (for local effectors, families, workers at care and education centers and those taking care of children and working in private homes)
  - Information System and Big Data. Innovation and technology
  - Communication. Sensitize, raise awareness about parenting practices, guarantee consistency between the communication activities of each agency and the general strategy.

The object of the evaluation is the very process of implementation of the interagency strategy and the main results achieved by the JP thanks to the involvement of the four participating agencies and the RCO, taking into consideration the strategies that had to be adopted during the period against the impact of COVID-19 on the target population and the care system. The proposal also recognizes the importance of generating evidence on key aspects related to the possibilities and sustainability of coordinated work among agencies, funds and programs, aiming at developing future initiatives of this type.

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### **3. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION (THEORY OF CHANGE)**

#### **3.1 Purpose**

According to the established guidelines, the purpose of the evaluation of the Interagency Program has been to analyze to what extent the products proposed in its initial formulation (expressed in the planning document – PRODOC) have been achieved, to determine whether the expected results have been reached, and to find out the contribution that the Program has made to improving the situation of those groups identified as its target population. To this end, the strategies developed during its implementation were considered in order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic effects on early childhood and the care system.

The Interagency Program is carried out in the context of a series of reforms in the organization of the UN System. For this reason, and as requested, efforts have been made to produce evidence on key aspects related to the coordinated work among agencies, funds, and programs; and its sustainability over time. This includes: relevance, consistency, coordination, sustainability, human rights perspective and gender perspective.

It is expected that the main findings of the evaluation will be used by the agencies, funds and programs involved in the management of the Program and the Resident Coordinator's Office in Argentina, to report to the Secretariat for the SDG Fund about the achievements and hurdles in the management of this initiative and as input to optimize the design and future implementation of similar initiatives. Also, this input can be important for government agencies acting as counterparts at the national, provincial and municipal levels (guarantors of rights), which will be able to access a global analysis of the actions carried out in the Program in different territories and by different agencies, funds and programs, and will be able to take this information as part of the advances in policies aimed at early childhood and actions aimed at generating a comprehensive care system.

#### **3.2 Objectives and scope**

##### **General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to assess the implementation process of the interagency strategy (UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, ECLAC and the Resident Coordinator's Office) and the main results achieved by the Joint Program (JP), within the framework of the United Nations reform process and the strategy aimed at accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

##### **Specific Goals**

The evaluation work has five specific goals, namely:

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- Analyze the implementation process of the Interagency Program, with a focus on the coordination and communication of actions among the agencies, funds and programs involved, the relationship with government counterparts (at the national, provincial and municipal levels) and the contact with non-state actors (if pertinent).
  - Analyze and assess the realization of the products planned and foreseen by the Program throughout its execution and the achievement of the expected results, gathering the perspective of the various actors involved (participating agencies, funds and programs, government counterparts, recipients of the developed actions).
  - Analyze key aspects related to the innovative model that the Interagency Program assumes (relevance, consistency, coordination, sustainability, human rights perspective and gender approach), its contribution to the dynamics of the United Nations System in Argentina, particularly regarding the results foreseen in the MECNUD 2021-2025, and its contribution to accelerating the achievement of SDGs.
  - Evaluate the operation, achievements and hurdles along the various management and governance actions of the Program: Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, Program Coordination, Technical Team, agency teams, role of lead agency and RCO.
  - Identify lessons learned and good practices, in particular regarding the creation of opportunities for inter-agency work, their strengths and weaknesses; and generate strategic and operational recommendations that can be used in the management of future initiatives of this type.

### **Scope**

This qualitative evaluation covers the period between March 2020 (when the JP was launched) and February 2022. It has a comprehensive approach and considers the background of the project formulation previous stage.

It should be taken into account that the object of the evaluation is the very process of implementation of the interagency strategy and the main results achieved by the JP as a consequence of the involvement of the four participating agencies and the RCO, including the strategies adopted during the period to face the impact of COVID-19 on the target population and the care system. The proposal also recognizes the importance of generating evidence on key aspects related to the possibilities and sustainability of coordinated work among agencies, funds and programs, aiming at developing future initiatives of this type.

In accordance with the identification of the institutional and territorial contexts in which these JP activities were developed, the actions of the ongoing study are concentrated in: a) the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, headquarters of the authorities and technical teams of the agencies that participate in the JP and the main national counterparts, such as the CNCPS, the SAE, the MDS, the MMGyS, SINTyS, SENAF, among other entities; b) the counterparts of the JP of the provinces of Entre Rios, Salta, Mendoza and Cordoba, and c) local council representatives of the aforementioned provinces where the Local Council Dialog Tables for Early Childhood

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(UNICEF), the Training Paths for Caregivers (ILO) and Parenting Communities (UNDP) have been implemented.

### 3.3 Comments on the Theory of Change of the Program

These comments are based on a general framework formulated by P. Rogers<sup>6</sup> and other authors on the subject, and on the observations made throughout the field work; testimonies from the people interviewed are included in section 7 of this Report.

For the UN Development Group<sup>7</sup> a good Theory of Change (ToC) must be: a) clear, b) plausible, c) logical, d) based on evidence, e) consulted. Following these criteria, the ToC of the Program<sup>8</sup> may be qualified as such, because:

- a) It is clear, it can be easily understood in the way it is presented;
- b) Provides a plausible solution to a problem, there is a logical and defensible relationship between the solution path and the problem; it is reasonable to believe that if that route is chosen, a change will take place, thus reducing or eliminating the problem;
- c) Relationships are logical, logical arguments are sound and plausible; there are no gaps in logic or disruptions in time sequence;
- d) Sufficient and reliable evidence is presented to support the logic and relationships established by the Theory;
- e) It has been consulted with the key partners of the UN Country Team (UNCT). In the case of the JP, it has been developed by that team.

The **ToC is technically robust**, based on a good situation analysis, which included the identification of the problem that the intervention sought to address, its causes and consequences, and the opportunities, as well as the existing resources that should be strengthened. As mentioned in the PRODOC, it had a knowledge base developed in the ENPI [Argentina's Early Childhood Strategy], of the already initiated process of territorial intervention, and the previous experience of the agencies, particularly UNICEF as the lead agency.

The relation among strategies, products and results in the chain to go from the current situation to the desired situation are well defined; it clearly identifies the problems to be addressed, and the expected outcomes and impacts.

The design of the program and the interrelationship among its products **is aligned with the comprehensive approach to sustainable development** on which the current MECNUD is based. Likewise, the design of the JP considers the transversal approaches that the MECNUD includes and is aimed at contributing to each one, particularly in terms of attention to the most vulnerable populations, the human rights and gender approach, territorial asymmetries and attention to the impact of the pandemic.

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<sup>6</sup> Rogers, P., (2014), Theory of Change, UNICEF

<sup>7</sup> UNDG-LAC, Theory of Change – Concept Note, 2016.

<sup>8</sup>Section 2.2 PRODOC.

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The ToC development process of the JP was considered one of the key points in the collaboration of the professional team of the participating agencies and, for some of these professionals, a remarkable learning opportunity.

Regarding assumptions and risks foreseen by the ToC, it highlights an **unforeseen external change** (the COVID-19 pandemic) that had an impact on the definition of the situation to be addressed, worsening it, altering priorities and, consequently, affecting strategies and expected products. One fifth of the JP's resources was allocated to dealing with the pandemic. The design showed adaptability and responsiveness to change. The products remained relevant within the general framework of the MECNUD and the government's objectives.

Another external change, the change in governance, was expected to be potentially complex, with mitigation measures. It involved the incorporation into the Program of new actors, with their own agendas. The compatibility of agendas required new reformulations of the Program, and an effort of incidence and technical and political management.

The assumption of information accessibility was generally correct, but there were cases of insufficient or non-available information, although they did not have significant effects.

An implicit internal assumption, the effectiveness of the JP administrative management system, showed some inadequacy (issue noted as “gaps between SDG Fund rules and agency, fund, and program bureaucratic processes,” by A. Kern in 2020).

The effectiveness of the governance structure (implicit internal assumption), also showed some imbalance, in the face of a SC that operated with some difficulty, an AG that met the Program's expectations in a very limited way, and a coordination unit showing a good performance.

From the organizational point of view, "the desired situation" of the image of the Program, not always made explicit, would be the projection of a strengthened collective action, with a **recognized joint program** identity, and that was not seen in this way in the JP. Many counterpart representatives noted the desirability of showing more unified action.

The definition of the products was generally adequate, although different interpretations were collected regarding the innovation and its application in different contexts. In general, even when the PRODOC includes a definition of the “innovation” concept within the framework of the Program, it seems necessary to clarify the concept and the value it adds to its objectives.

In future programs it would be useful to consider the existence of a difference between the Theory of Change and the Theory of Action, or ToA, (which explains how interventions are developed to activate your Theory of Change in terms of activities to be carried out and level of success required for each outcome to cause the intended impact). In some of the cases observed, although some actions are clearly aligned with

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the ToC, they do not seem to have an explicit ToA, and even though they are valuable and positive, these initiatives do not guarantee sustainability.

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#### 4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS (EVALUATION MATRIX)

The evaluation criteria and questions are taken (and partially adjusted) from the evaluation framework suggested in the ToR. This Evaluation Framework is organized around 5 evaluation criteria, fundamental for analyzing the implementation process of the Interagency Program and the realization of the planned and anticipated products, namely:

- i. **Effectiveness:** refers to the degree to which the program has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including differentiated results among groups.
- ii. **Efficiency:** is the extent to which the products and/or results were achieved with the available resources.
- iii. **Relevance:** refers to the degree to which the objectives and design of the Program respond to the needs detected in the population and to the strategic priorities of the United Nations System in Argentina. It also considers to what extent the Program takes into account the expectations, interests and respect for cultural and social differences and the gender perspective of its recipients.
- iv. **Sustainability:** refers to the identification of needs and obstacles pending to be addressed, which are causing discrimination and disparities, in order to deepen or sophisticate the interventions, due to complex and diverse scenarios.
- v. **Consistency:** refers to the coordination between the different activities of the Program and the expected results. It also includes the way in which the rights perspective (with an emphasis on children's rights) and the gender approach are integrated transversally into the design of the program and the actions implemented, and the complementarity of the actions with other interventions of the implementing agencies.

These 5 general criteria were broken down into 28 items or sub-axes created ad hoc to guide the inquiry process:

##### **Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment**

- Item 1. General relevance
- Item 2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability and participation
- Item 3. Design
- Item 4. Incidence of COVID-19 context

##### **Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy**

- Item 5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
- Item 6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments
- Item 7. Hurdles and adaptation
- Item 8. Interagency and multilevel work
- Item 9. New approaches and responses



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- Item 10. Institutional arrangements and capacities
  - Item 11. Adaptation to the COVID-19 context
  - Item 12. Participation
  - Item 13. Follow-up

**Criterion: efficiency**

- Item 14. Resources
- Item 15. Interagency intervention
- Item 16. Transaction cost reduction
- Item 17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19

**Criterion: impact and sustainability**

- Item 18. Sustainability
- Item 19. Long-term ownership
- Item 20-21. Durability of results
- Item 22. Support to follow-up mechanisms
- Item 23. Participation of civil society
- Item 24. Contribution to SDGs

**Criterion: consistency**

- Item 25. Alignment
- Item 26. Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.
- Item 27. Gender-based approach
- Item 28. Disability

The Evaluation Matrix presented as Annex I develops this organization in detail, explaining the ordering and distribution of the almost 100 basic guiding evaluation questions suggested in the ToR.

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## 5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology has focused on reliably and validly addressing the questions established in the Evaluation Matrix (see Section 4), as a road map and reference for the planning and execution of the evaluation. All stages of the methodological design aimed at a use-oriented, transversal and sensitive approach to gender and human rights, in particular the rights of children and adolescents. Section 1.2 briefly presented those "Guiding Principles" on which the team's evaluation work is based, in line with ToR requirements.

In accordance with the philosophy and objectives of this evaluation, the general principles that guide the use of **qualitative methodology** in the evaluation of public policies are adopted, which could be summarized (Sanz, 2011) as follows:

- Recognition of different versions of the same reality
- Search for their meanings
- Holistic approach to the object of study
- Inductive process in the generation of knowledge
- Study of social actors in their own context
- Recognition of the analyst as part of the search process

In this sense, the concept of "usability", promoted in particular by Patton (2008), has been generalized to judge this approach, favoring an orientation aimed at the practical value of the knowledge generated by research for decision making. Understanding why a certain phenomenon develops, seeking an interpretation closer to reality as observed by the participants, is an essential objective in this approach. This involves direct contact with the object of study, considering the variety of perspectives of the different actors and generating "dense" information, based on multiple sources of information. Triangulation, eventually, makes it possible to reinforce the validity of its results and complement contributions from different sources.

Qualitative techniques seek to study topics, facts and cases in detail and detect significant information, so they are adequate instruments to carry out studies of interaction and social representations (Jodelet, 1986; de Gialdino, 2007), which is vital to the objectives of this study.

Knowing and understanding the representations, elaborations and expectations that guide the actions of the relevant actors in the problems addressed by the JP is essential to identify the results obtained and the opportunities for improvement, and to carry out the analysis of the processes associated with their achievement in future initiatives based on the interagency approach of the JP.

Due to the characteristics of the qualitative study, it is necessary to have margin for flexibility and openness, and be able to make changes in the course of the work, as the information gathering process progresses, adjusting the initial planning. Also, it is assumed that research questions can be enriched as new information is obtained. This feature of circularity or iterativeness of the design has led to its definition as an emergent design (Sanz, 2011).

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Qualitative techniques generate a discursive process that allows access to the subject's universe of thought and the content of social representation (Jodelet, 2003). In the case of this study, they help us address attitudes, perceptions, and expectations of officials, professionals, representatives, workers at early childhood education and care centers, and other participants in the activity.

### **5.1 Evaluation techniques and instruments developed**

As mentioned above, qualitative techniques seek to study topics, facts and cases in greater detail and detect significant information, being adequate instruments to conduct studies of interaction and social representations. The techniques used for such purposes were: document collection, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, focus groups and discussion panels, resorting to interviews or informal conversations as a complement. A summary of the description and intended operation of these techniques is presented below.

#### **Information gathering and documentary analysis**

The information gathering and documentary analysis included both the existing documentation about the Interagency Program and that referring to the context in which it was carried out. As a whole, this involved the consultation and review of more than 80 documents, the details of which are included in the matrix attached as Annex V.

Regarding its origin, most of the documentation was provided directly by its actors: coordination teams, members of the participating agencies, counterpart organizations and other people interviewed, while another smaller portion was identified by the evaluation team and included because it was considered relevant and complementary to the analysis.

Regarding the Program, the PRODOC was considered, as well as quarterly, quadrimestral, semi-annual reports, the 2020 and 2021 annual reports delivered to the Secretariat, minutes or presentations of the program and its progress in meetings, dissemination materials, previously prepared analysis documents, the products prepared within the framework of the Program (studies, training manuals, Provincial Strategies for Early Childhood, resources used as part of information and awareness campaigns, among others) and those studies with which the Program collaborated during the time of its execution. The reports provided by the participating provincial governments were very useful to see how the proposal was executed in specific territories and to think about its sustainability.

Regarding the information referring to the context of the Program, it mainly included the status report of early childhood and the care system in Argentina (regulatory, institutional and public policy framework) and the impact of the pandemic on the problems under analysis. Likewise, the guidelines contained in the MECNUD 2021-25, in the "United Nations Framework for the Socioeconomic and Environmental Response

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and Recovery from COVID-19 in Argentina", and documentation about the reforms in the UNS and the strategies for the acceleration of the SDGs, including the SDG Fund, were analyzed. Within the latter, a third set of documents refers to the theory of change and other specific guidelines for the evaluation of UNS programs.

The collection of documents was intended to reconstruct the history of the JP from secondary sources of information in order to have a broad overview of the key aspects of the initiative and also of those that result from its specificity and particularity. To this end, the work was organized in three stages: 1) Mapping, organization and preliminary recording of the documentation in a matrix in order to recognize the universe of information; 2) Adjustment of content to establish the levels of abstraction and specificity of the information collected in connection with the objectives, results and activities of the Program; 3) Analysis and description of the relevant documentation for understanding the process within the framework of the criteria and guiding principles included in the evaluation matrix.

The document collection matrix included twelve fields of information for recording and categorization whose content and purpose were as follows:

- Authors, refers to the publishing authorship under which the publication or study was registered or those who were in charge of their preparation in the case of reports.
- Organizations involved, this field became necessary since the authorship did not always reflect the collective nature of some publications and this is a relevant aspect to show the inter-agency and inter-institutional nature of productions.
- Date of publication (mm-yy); considering the length of the Program, we sought to include the month and year where possible, given the need to reconstruct a chronological time sequence that may provide information on the execution process.
- Title of the document, refers to the name under which a publication was registered or reports and documents were titled.
- Type of document, included various subcategories regarding types, purpose and uses: Reports (management, results, follow-up, monitoring, evaluation reports); Systematization; Research (compilation of studies; federal map; article; etc.); Training (guide; manual); Dissemination (brochure; radio spot; television spot; website); Regulations (law, executive order, resolution) and Budget.
- Target audience/user of the document, included internal recipients of the Program as well as end users (subnational and local governments, civil society, caregivers, etc.)
- Purpose, attempted to synthetically link the identification of the causes that gave rise to the document and the strategy chosen to respond to the proposed purpose.
- Key words, the conceptual synthesis provided by this field of information was key as a search engine within the universe of existing documents, enabling the identification of data that would contribute to the needs of the evaluation team both when gathering useful information for conducting interviews and when grouping the set of productions on the same concept, for example, COVID-19 or parenting practices.

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- Content structure, includes the index in the case of studies and publications and the titles and subtitles in the case of reports. This is useful to know quickly but descriptively what type of information the document contains and what it expresses in terms of its argumentative logic.
  - Main contributions, this section was the most complex because it involved summarizing all the content produced in line with the objectives, results and activities of the Program. That is, what contributions are made to the theory of change proposed in the transition from the current situation to the desired future situation.
  - Relationship with the Program. Initially, 4 subcategories were proposed, to which two more were later added: 1) Background: refers to previous actions developed by the participating government agencies or organizations; 2) Context: refers to actions/documents that are not specific to the project but that in some way determine or condition the actions of the program, given their relevance; 3) Management: refers to the types of documents generated by or from the coordination or other areas: Administrative, Technical, Financial, Technical Operative Administrative areas; 4) Product: refers to those actions/documents that were conceived as a product or result thereof; 5) Territory: refers to the documents produced by the subnational and/or local counterparts that are not specific to the project but are related to it; 6) Evaluation framework: refers to the documents that the evaluation team used as a reference to provide a frame for the methodological proposal in relation to the UNS standards and the theory of change.
  - References: Include the web link if the document is available for viewing.

### **In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews allow access to the subject's universe of thought and the content of social representation (Jodelet, 2003). The interview technique is valuable for obtaining a wide range of information and deepening, confirming, or interpreting information that has been obtained by other means or techniques (Taylor & Bogdan, 1987). Attempts were made to identify attitudes, perceptions, expectations of the actors and to know -through their opinion- their perception of the performance and the strengths of the different lines of intervention, as well as to detect the main hurdles and difficulties associated with their execution, the achievement of results and existing opportunities for improving the conditions and well-being of recipients.

As requested, interviews were conducted with key informers, including the main actors who -due to their responsibilities or the tasks they performed in the Program- could have relevant or necessary information for the objectives of the study, both at the national and subnational (provincial and municipal) levels, as well as some technical and political decision-makers related to the implementation of the program. Their identification -for the purposes of making the list of selected informers or their potential replacements- was progressively agreed upon with the evaluation

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management group and the agencies and funds involved in the management of the Program.

Regarding the **structure and development of the interviews**, a duration of approximately one hour was foreseen. A semi-structured guide of topics and subtopics was used, which allowed the inclusion of other questions that eventually emerged during the interview. In all cases - prior authorization of the interviewees - the recording was made with a tape recorder, and a complete record of the information was obtained.

The structure of the interviews was based on traditional blocks referring to Metadata of Context, Presentation, etc., on which the 28 main themes were then organized (subdivided into around 100 guiding questions). These topics were used to address the 5 major criteria of evaluation (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, consistency and sustainability, see matrix in Section 4).

Regarding the elaboration of the information gathering instruments, this generic guide was used for starting in every case, but the relevance of each subtopic and question was adjusted, depending on the role and profile of the interviewee involved. In other words, not all the subtopics and questions were addressed with the same intensity or depth in each interview.

### **Focus groups (virtual modality)**

This tool involves a meeting of a group of selected individuals to discuss and elaborate, from personal experience, a theme or social fact that is the object of research or analysis (Kreuger, 1988). It requires processes of interaction, discussion and agreements within the group about the themes proposed by the researcher. The dynamics created among the participants helps to highlight and identify their conception of their reality, their life experiences, their everyday language, their values and beliefs about the circumstances in which they live. This interaction also allows participants to question each other, and reconsider their own points of view regarding their specific experiences.

The formation of the group does not respond to statistical criteria, but to structural ones, that is, to its significance with respect to certain social relations in real life, which are considered relevant according to the objective of the study. This objective determines the most significant variables to take into account when selecting participants from each specific group.

The various characteristics of the groups also require different modalities of invitation and selection, and the resolution to practical aspects, taking into account that participation in these activities is voluntary, and depends on factors such as the availability of potential participants, the ease or difficulty of contacts, communications, local transfers and others.

An evident particularity derived from the **context of COVID-19**, which led to the need to adopt various measures to ensure the virtual version of this technique. The

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consulting team relied on information and local support provided from the agencies to get in contact with the participants, many of whom were from provincial territories. These meetings were carried out through platforms such as Google Meet, where only the audio (not video) was recorded, with prior authorization from the participants.

Each focus group was led by two people, a moderator and a recording assistant. The total duration of the group task was approximately 90 minutes. As in the interviews, those responsible for the coordination based their work on a guideline prepared according to the characteristics of each group, and in accordance with the axes of inquiry (general and specific) and the expected results for them. However, unlike the interviews, only four large blocks were used, one for presentation, two for deepening the specific issues to be discussed by the group, and one for retrieving suggestions or recommendations.

### **Virtual discussion panels**

Unlike the focus groups, where the emergence of broad lines of consensus and dissent is favored based on the proposal of problematic issues, the dynamic in discussion panels stems from the presentation of the experiences of each participant, which, in this case, refer to some of the processes carried out within the JP framework. Then, based on these accounts (which may refer to topics that are not necessarily similar), discussion is encouraged, seeking convergent and divergent points, reflections and recommendations. A joint analysis was carried out, that mainly included reflecting on what worked well or not so well, what were the most important factors that explain the results obtained, what could have been done differently, and what recommendations arose.

In the context of COVID-19, the implementation of virtual panels is another work modality that offers the actors involved the opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, lessons learned in the course of a territorial action, contributing to potential improvements or adaptations for its application to other contexts or situations. Unlike focus groups, the appropriate number of participants for a panel is no more than 5 or 6 people, in order to achieve the suitable level of participation. In addition, this exchange can be successfully created despite not sharing a single theme or coming from diverse territorial contexts (for example, different provinces).

The guideline was similar to that described for the focus groups, as were the meetings, which were carried out through platforms such as Google Meet and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes; audios were recorded with the prior authorization of the participants.

### **Informal interviews**

Informal interviews, also called "informal conversations" (Patton, 1987; Valles, 1997), are carried out in unscheduled situations and without following pre-established scripts, beyond the general questions of the researcher or those spontaneously derived from the immediate context. They are held in the format of free talks, often interrupted by

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unexpected situations. They are not electronically recorded, and notes are usually taken ex post. However, beyond these limitations, it is an appropriate technique to address exploratory situations or unforeseen scenarios, whose strength lies precisely in the ability to retrieve information from social actors with whom there is not yet a sufficient level of trust or time as to develop a conventional interview. These conversations lead to the exchange of ideas, opinions and perceptions with the various representatives and institutional referents, about the situation of the Plan and the age segment of interest in the study, while collecting valuable information about other contacts or topics of interest for the research.

Examples of these conversations occurred in most prior logistics tasks and the organization of the focus groups and panels, either before or after their execution.

### **Triangulation**

The development of a qualitative methodology sought a triangulation of information sources to ensure the soundness, relevance and validity of results. In its generic definition, triangulation is conceptualized as the research strategy in which multiple methods, data or techniques are used to approach the same research object. Although at the beginning this strategy seemed to be merely oriented towards data validation, over time it was consolidated as a strategy that "pursues a broad understanding of the reality being studied". For our purpose, the triangulation procedure or the proposed methodological strategy corresponds to the triangulation of data sources, since the information collected through interviews, focus groups and panels is combined with the documentary analysis of the program.

## **5.2 Summary of the sample of people consulted**

As anticipated, the list of people to be consulted was defined by mutual agreement between the evaluation management group and those responsible for coordinating the JP, based on a criterion of relevance and breadth of the issues addressed by the JP.

Throughout the study, a total of 63 people were interviewed, of which 16 were agency officials, 4 were heads of national organizations that are members of the SC of the JP, 7 were technical referents from counterpart organizations, 25 were provincial and/or municipal officials (6 from Mendoza, 5 from Entre Rios, 5 from Cordoba, 1 from Santa Fe and 7 from Salta) and 3 came from other roles (parenting communities, authors, etc.).

Additionally, another 13 interviews were arranged but, for various reasons, they could not be carried out. These essentially include officials from national, provincial and, above all, municipal entities.

A list (name, entity, position/function, date and interview date) of the interviews carried out and managed are detailed in Annex II.



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Also, 4 focus groups were carried out, made up of: a) Participants from local council dialog tables from Entre Rios (Gualedguaychú, Villaguay and Concepción del Uruguay), b) Participants from Parenting Communities (Posadas, Hurlingham and Universidad La Plata ), c) Participants in disability issues (Gualedguaychú Municipality, Concordia Municipality and Rio Tercero Municipality), and d) Participants of Social Organizations related to children (Movement of Excluded Workers of Lomas de Zamora, Lanús, Corrientes and La Poderosa).

Regarding discussion panels, a total of 5 meetings were held, made up of: a) High-level officials (Entre Rios and Cordoba), b) Local officials (from municipalities of Entre Ríos), c) Coordinators/ Heads of Centers for Early Childhood and Family Centers and Educational Services of Social Orientation (SEOS) of Mendoza, and d-e) Authors of studies carried out within the framework of the JP.

A list (name, entity, position/function, date of activity) of the groups can be found in Annex III.

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## 6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

*“We had done several trainings from different places and it is the first time that we can have this exchange and discuss how it went, what happened to us. We always participate and it seems that we are containers, like we go and they fill us with things, and at this training we felt there was an exchange and that we could chat freely and contribute suggestions at its closing. We hadn't had anything like this before. So, super grateful” (FG participant).*

The following ethical standards and considerations of the UNS were taken into account:

- Normas y Estándares para evaluación, UNEG, 2016:<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNEG-Resource-Pack-on-Joint-Evaluations.pdf>
- UNEG/UNICEF: Ethical Guidelines for UN Evaluations, 2008:<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>
- UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluations in the United Nations System UNEG, March 2008
- Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system, 2008:<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>
- Integración de los Derechos Humanos y la Igualdad de Género en la Evaluación, 2011:<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). Ethical Research Involving Children. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti <http://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERICcompendium-approved-digital-web.pdf>

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## 7. FINDINGS

*“Because that’s the idea, that’s the point. I think we should always get used to getting together or joining actions. Many times, we, at the provincial dialog table, in general, have shared everything. And that is important, the generosity of what one does. When we do it, we share it because it is for everyone. It’s not that I keep it to myself and I handle it. That’s the idea that also came up at the interministerial dialog table, being able to share everything that is done. No competitive feelings were generated. Throughout the past year, it was quite a challenge to work through the pandemic.”*

This section presents the findings generated throughout the evaluation work. They are arranged in 5 subsections (7.1 to 7.5) in line with each evaluation criterion, which are also subdivided into the 28 major topics used as a foundation to prepare the 100 original guiding questions (see Section 4 " Evaluation Criteria and Questions").

### 7.1 Findings in relation to the relevance and strategic fit of the JP

#### Item 1. General relevance

*Guiding questions: To what extent is the JP strategy relevant and addresses the needs of early childhood, considering the differences among indigenous and/or disabled child populations and the main vulnerable groups in general? To what extent is it relevant for country strategies and policies related to early childhood problems?*

The JP was relevant to the priorities set by the government counterparts. In its definition of the problem to be addressed<sup>9</sup>, the JP considered the axes of the early childhood public policies implemented in the country, within the framework of Law 26,061 and the Comprehensive Rights Protection System aimed at children and families in social vulnerability situations. It presented an overview of the situation of early childhood in the country, in particular the indigenous population and the lack of an integrated care system for early childhood. In its approach, the JP pointed to the definition of Provincial Strategies for Early Childhood and the development of actions aimed at improving the supply of care services.

According to the information obtained from the research work carried out, in a general assessment, the interviewees highlighted the importance of the horizon proposed by the JP, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the guidelines of the imperative to "leave no one behind"<sup>10</sup>, and pointed out its relevance at the national, provincial and local levels for the development of strategies and policies focused on the problems of early childhood to accelerate the achievement of SDGs, as committed in the design of the Program<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> PRODOC, Problem definition, page 10.

<sup>10</sup> Leaving No One Behind - A UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams (2019), UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).

<sup>11</sup> PRODOC, Section 4.2. Expected impact on the SDGs, p. 7.

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In its general strategy<sup>12</sup> the JP decided to collaborate in strengthening the comprehensive care policy for early childhood with a gender approach, supporting the National Strategy for Early Childhood (ENPI), aimed at children from before birth (prenatal period) to 6 years of age, with a comprehensive approach that covers different dimensions of child development, prioritizing children in situations of greater vulnerability. The ENPI's guiding principles (rights, gender and equity approach) and its management assumptions (co-responsibility, comprehensiveness and quality) correspond to the work perspective of the UNS agencies.

Within this framework, the JP defined the activities and products of its proposal (referenced throughout this Report), aiming at the achievement of three general results: a) design, implementation and monitoring of intersectoral strategies for early childhood care at the subnational level; b) alignment of training policies for decent work in the care sector, aimed at reducing the informal economy and all forms of discrimination, the elimination of child labor, strengthening the skills of workers in charge of the care and education of children, and the skills of families for their upbringing, from a rights perspective and with a gender approach; and c) design of proposals for innovative tools, construction of statistical evidence and preparation of specific studies aimed at improving the quantity and quality of public information available to facilitate access to care services and to design and implement public policies for early childhood.

In terms of the relevance of the strategy adopted to address the problem of early childhood and care, these JP definitions are in line with the priorities of the Argentine government and the purpose of the UNS agencies to place the issue at the center of the public agenda, contributing to the acceleration of the achievement of the SDGs.

Below are (only as examples of this perception) the general opinions on three activities carried out, one for each result foreseen by the Program. Due to their importance, these same activities are also analyzed from other perspectives throughout the Report. Other examples of the relevance attributed to the Program are presented in different points in the Report.

In the majority opinion of the counterparts at the provincial and local levels, the relevance of the JP is associated with coverage in the territory, with the aim of promoting early childhood strategies and policies with the Provincial and Municipal Intersectoral Dialog Tables in the provinces of Cordoba, Mendoza, Entre Rios and Salta, contribution made by UNICEF as the agency with the greatest responsibility in this development. This contribution is appreciated from two perspectives: in terms of the objective of providing support to public policies in territory (some of which were already being developed from previous interventions, either with UNICEF, or own initiatives that were enriched, strengthened or gained momentum with the Program actions), UNICEF officials and technicians<sup>13</sup> agree with the provincial authorities<sup>14</sup> on

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<sup>12</sup> PRODOC, General Strategy, page 24.

<sup>13</sup> "(The main contribution of the JP?): Territorial dialog tables" (31.117)

<sup>14</sup> "I value the program very much" "We take it as part of the Provincial Plan [...], as one of its pillars to address the problems that children and adolescents in the Province may have" (19.5); "We think that it

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the current and future impact of the organization and institutionalization of the Dialog Tables in order to convene - thanks to the image and institutional weight of UNICEF-, in many cases for the first time, actors from different fields with decision-making capacity to turn this debate into a central matter and give a comprehensive look at the problems of early childhood. The strategy adopted was considered relevant and focused on the needs of early childhood at the local level, in particular in the most vulnerable sectors.

The other perspective is related to the opportunity of the intervention, at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the difficulties that the emergency situation caused to the development of the Program's activities, for many people participating in the dialog tables at the local level it meant both technical and emotional support in situations of great difficulty in facing their responsibilities<sup>15</sup>.

On the other hand, in relation to the objective of strengthening information systems on early childhood and care, there are two actions that are recognized as highly relevant by the executing agencies and their counterparts for their contribution of public information available in quantity and quality terms to facilitate access to care services and to design and implement early childhood public policies, and it could be considered the Program's products with the highest technological content.

One of them is the Information and Monitoring System on Early Childhood, developed for the National Tax and Social Identification System (SINTyS) of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies through a joint action of UNDP and ECLAC. According to the professional referents of the counterpart, having this system was an important objective that the current management had set among its tasks, and in their opinion the contribution received from the Program was pertinent and important, representing a qualitative leap in the capacity of the sector<sup>16</sup>. The system is considered highly relevant, due to its breadth and potential scope. From the point of view of referents of the agencies that developed it, it was also considered relevant, but not only as a technical product, but also as one of the positive experiences of inter-agency collaboration in the JP<sup>17</sup>.

The other product is the Federal Map of Care, prepared by ECLAC together with the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity (MMGyD). In this case, the JP proposal responded to a need of a recently created Ministry, and a topic under development from the creation of the Interministerial Dialog Table for Care Policies. The responsible agency defined it, within a line of work that seeks to optimize public management

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had a very relevant perspective regarding the integration of areas of action both at the international and national levels as well as in our view at the provincial level" (35.10); "The program, in our case, collected and strengthened actions that were being carried out" (6.4); "The province is willing to focus efforts on early childhood (18.41).

<sup>15</sup>"Yes, absolutely. It has been very important: we also felt accompanied by the consultants, by the people, by the agency" (16.15).

<sup>16</sup> "Extremely pertinent" (17.2), "absolutely relevant" proposal, which even "contributed to the transformation of a work culture and a way of thinking the spirit of SINTyS" (17.5).

<sup>17</sup> "We worked in terms of inter-agency work; the interagency coordination process ran smoothly" (4.35).

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through the development of digital platforms, as a successful technical challenge<sup>18</sup>, and the counterpart agency agreed with this opinion<sup>19</sup>. It is important to point out that this product was only intended as a pilot experience, so the creation of a Federal Map far exceeded expectations. Like the one mentioned above, this product has a great potential for use, and additional actions to promote its dissemination point to this.<sup>20</sup>

In the line of employment promotion and coordination of training policies for decent work in the care sector, the relevance of the ILO's work was highlighted as regards having innovative elements with an impact on the problem, the development of a model to estimate employment with input-output matrices (according to the agency, a very valuable tool to strengthen its technical assistance capacity at the local level)<sup>21</sup>, as well as collaboration with the Employment Secretariat of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTEySS) for the development of training tools, a process of updating the manuals in accordance with the JP guidelines, which involves a profound change in the approach to care training, incorporating new topics such as COVID, gender-based violence and child labor, and the possibility of offering certification of skills. The Program allowed the ILO to develop a complete training path that can be followed either in-person or virtually, which allows expanding the scope of this training<sup>22</sup>.

## **Item 2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability and participation**

*Guiding questions: To what extent was the joint approach relevant and appropriate in the design, implementation and management of the program to address the country's development priorities and challenges as regards early childhood protection? To what extent is the scale of the response in the design and the resources invested consistent with the problems and needs of children under 6 years of age, considering the specific problems of the indigenous child population and those with disabilities? To what extent does the design contribute to gender inequity gap reduction and non-discrimination? To what extent was the design participatory?*

In reference to the relevance of the joint nature of the Program to address the challenges and protection of early childhood, as indicated in other points of this Report, as the first joint experience on the subject, and taking into account the circumstances that led to various adjustments in its start (to adapt the proposal to the

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<sup>18</sup> "Honestly, it was impeccable [...] they [the counterpart] are happy with what we have achieved (14.8); We are very proud, for us [doing this] was a much newer experience than for other agencies (14.23).

<sup>19</sup> "The truth is that it was an excellent job with ECLAC" (35.39).

<sup>20</sup> "ECLAC has always proposed that we invited other agencies participating in the Interministerial Dialog Table for training; in fact, the National Council for Social Policies also participated in several cases" (35.47).

<sup>21</sup> Whose "methodology, knowledge, and capacity have been developed within the framework of this Program" (7.30).

<sup>22</sup> "Virtuality also allows us to think about blended options or certain devices, or materials that can be used in-person" (41.61); "The result is widely satisfactory because what the ILO proposed to us was achieved and a very good product was obtained" (41.24).

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requirements of a new management, to the situation caused by the COVID-19 health emergency), the JP proved to be pertinent and appropriate in its design, execution and management to address the priorities and challenges of the country in the matter, through the coordinated work of its member agencies, according to their competencies as indicated in the general strategy of the Program<sup>23</sup>.

Given the magnitude and complexity of the problem addressed -to which external conditioning factors were added-, the selection and prioritization of objectives and activities, and the allocation of the resources available for the Program required a particular effort to generate the desired impact by the JP.

Regarding planned resources, from the perspective of the representatives of the agencies and many of the counterparts, these were sufficient and allowed the adequate achievement of the agreed objectives. Budget availabilities arising from the suspension or reformulation of activities (for example, due to the limitations imposed by the pandemic) and efficient management of resources even allowed -according to representatives of the agencies- more activities than those planned<sup>24</sup> to optimize results.

Some representatives from provinces or municipalities participating in Local Council Dialog Tables made observations related to the advisability of having additional financial resources to support some activities of the Program, if possible. Some suggest that in some local areas that may be very reluctant to change and perceive the exposure involved in participating as a threat, having the chance to propose some early action can trigger motivation<sup>25</sup>. Others (possibly in those locations that joined the activities of the dialog tables later) refer to the advisability of extending the assistance of the Program's experts for a while to support their sustainability until the Dialog Tables become institutionalized<sup>26</sup>. These financial aids were not foreseen in the JP, but these comments are included because they help to illustrate local actors' expectations.

With regard to the problem of the indigenous child population, the results of the collaboration established between UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Development of the government of the Province of Salta were remarkable. On the one hand, the experience of family accompaniment in rural contexts, with very vulnerable populations from indigenous communities, systematized in a UNICEF publication,<sup>27</sup> and

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<sup>23</sup> PRODOC, General Strategy, page 24.

<sup>24</sup> "We did a communication campaign. We did a parenting practices campaign. Fifteen radio spots for rural sectors" (2.22).

<sup>25</sup> "Being able to count with some resources, in the sense of ... ok, let's see officials, get down to work, I want you to think about childhood, but with some initial carrot" (20.119).

<sup>26</sup> "I believe that there should be a bit of subsequent support from the program [...] so it doesn't happen that from one day to the next the program ends and it remains solely under the responsibility of the provincial entities to maintain and sustain it" (36.69).

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF - JP - Province of Salta (2021) "Systematization of the experience of family accompaniment in rural contexts in Salta".

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the support provided to *Programa Unir* for family companions<sup>28</sup>. Based on these activities, a work methodology that can be replicated in other communities has been developed. The relevance of these achievements based on an adequate analysis of the situation, identification of the problem, opportunities and existing resources in line with the ToC that supports the JP is worth noticing.

In relation to the specific situation of children with disabilities, it was not given the attention foreseen in the JP, except in the province of Cordoba, which -according to local professionals- regularly includes it as one of its work topics<sup>29</sup>. In some Local Council Dialog Tables in which people working in this field participated, it was discussed, but in an unsystematic way. Although the JP includes among its activities -as mentioned in many points of this Report- a clear orientation towards inclusion and non-discrimination, disability issues did not reach a central place in its work. As developed in item 28, its results were affected by multiple causes.

According to the technical staff of the agencies consulted in this regard, the main reasons are the lack of updating and existing gaps in the current legislation, the lack of systematic information, comparable at the national level and in all jurisdictions, the non-existence of comprehensive public policies at the territorial level or the scarcity of allocated resources. As a referent from the agencies pointed out, the issue is not on the agenda in the country<sup>30</sup>.

In relation to the specific relevance in terms of gender, PRODOC presents gender inequality, care and investment in early childhood, closely related issues, as one of the focuses of its work. The incorporation of the MMGyD as a promoter and counterpart of the JP brought new perspectives on the subject, which were reflected in initiatives such as the Interministerial dialog Table for Care Policies, studies and various specialized publications, which are listed and commented in the Documentary Analysis Matrix, included as an Annex to this Report.

### **Item 3. Design**

*Guiding questions: Has the design of the Program been appropriate, consistent and realistic to attain the results it intends to achieve? Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other? Does it adequately identify intervention assumptions and risks, as well as sustainability strategies? Does the Program have appropriate indicators and goals for what it wants to achieve, and does it have a monitoring and evaluation system/mechanism to measure progress in the realization of products and the achievement of results?*

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<sup>28</sup> Defined by a local official as "a team of young people who work [...] in family education in the territory in the way the communities accept it, people related to the communities, respecting the culture and not imposing a Center for Early Childhood" (19.54).

<sup>29</sup> "We have focused on disability [...], we are going to continue working on the issue of disability with them because a diagnosis was made and what we want is to be able to go deeper into accompanying them in these goals that they have defined" (20.50).

<sup>30</sup> "It's a bottleneck there, a debt, I think [...] of the country and the Program" (10.19).



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At this point, some aspects of the JP design process and the provisions for its management are discussed. As it has been pointed out, the JP coordinating team had to face two contextual situations with the potential to strongly condition its development and its results: on the one hand, the changes of government at the three levels -and, consequently, changes of representatives of the counterparts and in the agenda of public policies in the intervention topics - as of December 2019; on the other hand, the impact of the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first context situation was expressly provided for in the JP Risk Management Plan<sup>31</sup>, with a detailed presentation of the risks for the achievement of results, their level, probability and impact, including the corresponding mitigation measures<sup>32</sup>. However, an unforeseen institutional circumstance had a significant programmatic impact. From its initial conception, the Program had a strong focus, as stated, on supporting the national and subnational implementation of the ENPI. When the government changed, the requirement to strengthen the perspective of care with a gender approach was presented, promoted by the recently created MMGyD, based on the context of the pandemic and its impact on the situation of women in the most disadvantaged sectors. The design was reformulated, new themes were added and some of the products already planned were adapted. Changes were reflected in the name of the JP itself.

The technical team in charge already had the initial challenge of also harmonizing other demands on the JP that were perceived as not necessarily coinciding: to seek the development of innovative approaches and instruments and to reach significant achievements in the subject addressed, in a very limited period (for initiatives of this type) of two years, through collaboration between agencies with specific responsibilities and technical profiles.

Therefore, the changes implied an additional effort for the alignment between the RCO and the coordinating team, in addition to some complexities related to the incorporation of the different perspectives while keeping the focus on the problems of early childhood. It is considered a very favorable fact to have achieved -after the various adjustment mentioned- a reasonable degree of agreement on an agenda that has sufficient breadth to accommodate and enable the integration of the agendas of the participating agencies in a common effort, rather than in a "sum of interventions". As pointed out later, there are different nuances in the appreciation of this aspect given that, even showing significant progress, this effort to provide a broad perspective did not completely dissolve the existing tensions between different perspectives, and this generated some difficulties in the subsequent implementation.

The people closest to the process of its elaboration (agency authorities and technicians, referents consulted) highlight it, however, as a useful and effective inter-

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<sup>31</sup> PRODOC Annex 8, Risk Management Plan, Joint Program (JP) document (updated September 2021), p. 82.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the document "Elections 2019 - The debt is with children and adolescents - position paper", UNICEF, Sept.", UNICEF, sept. 2019.

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agency planning exercise<sup>33</sup>, conducive to starting to generate among the participating agencies -particularly in the preparation of the first version of the document- "a shared approach to what early childhood is, why it is important" (3.11) in their joint approach. The members of the technical team pointed out a high level of commitment to this task<sup>34</sup>, and their satisfaction with the product achieved.

Regarding the resulting general design, the evaluation team recorded coincident opinions among the representatives of the agencies and the counterparts on the correctness in the definition of the objectives and their relevance in terms of strategies, products and activities established around the programmatic axes that were set to achieve their goals and overall purpose.

There are several advantages attributed to it. According to an agency official, one is to privilege "lines of action, rather than specific activities" in the formulation of future programs<sup>35</sup>, providing greater flexibility in the face of unexpected changes. Representatives from the provincial dialog tables pointed out that the JP showed flexibility in design and planning not only in the face of external conditions such as the pandemic and change in management, but also in the face of different local realities<sup>36</sup>. Along these lines, local professionals interviewed state that "the program is not what we call a «one size fits all»"<sup>37</sup>.

Among the limitations encountered, a representative of the counterpart pointed out the short time available for the presentation of the JP proposal to the SDG call and the difficulties in agreeing on policies between actors, the change in management, which affected the possibilities of greater participation of the national counterparts to influence the JP design process. For example, in the definition of topics of interest or their relative weight in the Program<sup>38</sup>. For future initiatives, considering additional instances of discussion in this phase, with a view to exploring potential synergies and complementation among the design provisions, either between agencies and counterparts, or in relation to the action between agencies, was suggested.

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<sup>33</sup> "I think that one of the advantages of this Joint Program in particular was the initial phase where the technicians from each agency got down to define very clearly" (31.12); "Just the need to set a common agenda among different agencies that have different objectives and is often difficult to align, I think it is a great advance, it is a good point" (40.7); "It worked well and coordinated at the time of design, discussion and presentation, even negotiation because when you have certain funds you have to distribute them in different ways and that worked very well" (14.37).

<sup>34</sup> "We participated a lot in the design, we gave it a logic, later issues were added to it, but it made sense. We took on that role, I think we handled it carefully.... And we put a lot of effort into it" (40.45).

<sup>35</sup> (31.22).

<sup>36</sup> "This program [...] was a flexible job, simple in the discussion. We were able to put all the pieces together to meet the objective of the project, but in a way that could be useful for us in the local field to design public policies on early childhood [...]. One of the problems with international programs is that they generally come strongly pre-designed and, later, it is sometimes very difficult to adapt them to the local reality" (35.10).

<sup>37</sup> (28.8)

<sup>38</sup> "We could have also had a more important component of the relationship between the education system and spaces for the care of young children that are out of the formal education system" (25.19); "The relationship between care and education in this plan, in my opinion, could have had a slightly more important chapter and the subject of the necessary family changes, too" (25.31).

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Regarding the levels of achievement reached in these aspects, the following sections list the various results indicated by the interviewees in a particular way. As an example, a positive result not foreseen (at least explicitly) in the JP design is mentioned at this point: an intangible contribution of "social capital" that agencies obtain when exploring new possibilities of collaboration, by making contact - jointly, hand in hand with "natural" referents - with "unusual" counterparts<sup>39</sup>, thus contributing to the objective pursued by the joint programs promoted by the UNS.

A professional from one agency pointed out the need to look for more points of intersection in execution. In line with favoring all possible synergies in the JP, a limitation of the design that was pointed out repeatedly was the insufficiency of alignment and intersections between the activities of the participating agencies, particularly at the territorial level, to promote actions<sup>40</sup>. In the opinion of a provincial official, this would make it easier for the contributions of the different products of the Program -for example, the documents generated- to have more direct channels to enrich and support the actions of the actors in the territory<sup>41</sup>.

In terms of mechanisms for the proper management of the JP, it has -on the one hand- a specialized system and team for monitoring, reporting and result-oriented evaluation, based on evidence, which allows -through the result indicators set- monitoring the progress of activities against timely agreed goals. The system established that each agency should provide narrative reports to the lead agency within set deadlines, which the lead agency consolidates and submits to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, through the Resident Coordinator. According to the procedures established by the UNS, the Joint Programs must prepare and send updated monitoring reports to the Fund Secretariat at least every 6 months. Likewise, they must share the data referring to the indicators of the Program's results matrix, which are added to the worldwide data of the Joint Fund. Similarly, financial reports must be submitted. This JP evaluation system follows the norms and standards of the UNEG (United Nations Evaluation Group).

On the other hand, the management of the JP has a governance structure that the team responsible for the design defined based, mainly, on the interagency Spotlight initiative<sup>42</sup>, which establishes a strong leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the RCO<sup>43</sup> (in this case promoting the role of the lead agency) and joint implementation through a group of United Nations agencies and the Government, both at the national

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<sup>39</sup> "The JP increased «social capital», that is, other agencies start talking to other Ministries and we talk to Ministries that we usually don't talk to, thanks to this. That expands everyone's social capital. So that's an intangible. Being able to share the agenda allows all agencies to have a higher interaction floor at all times because there are more communication channels with government counterparts" (14.37).

<sup>40</sup> "...the tendency for each one to act with their counterparts, or with their counterparts independently from another agency, then getting together and sharing how it was for each of us [...] It was a bit in the design (14.8).

<sup>41</sup> Pointed out by a provincial official: "Those of us who are responsible perhaps don't take so much time to delve into all the documents because we don't have enough time" (35.10).

<sup>42</sup> UN-EU initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

<sup>43</sup> Agency Representative: "The general design including an agency that coordinates, that is responsible for accountability [...], it monitors us, I think it has run smoothly" (14.14).

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and subnational levels. However, the more flexible guidelines of the SDG Secretariat facilitated a scheme that allowed the agencies to maintain full control of the actions of the Program<sup>44</sup>.

The governance scheme of the JP establishes a Steering Committee (SC), a Monitoring Committee (MC), and an Advisory Group (AG), and a Coordination team.

According to the information provided by the professionals consulted in the survey, this scheme went through obvious operating difficulties. The SC, a high-level governance body with the government, was unable to maintain a fully satisfactory operation, even in terms of the level of interaction among the authorities of the agencies that comprise it<sup>45</sup>. The AG, aimed at advising on strategic priorities and possibilities of articulating with other ongoing initiatives, supporting the resource mobilization strategy, providing a space for interaction, discussion and learning, and other support activities, did not reach the expected level of performance either in terms of support of Program activities<sup>46</sup>.

On the other hand, the performance of the coordination team was recognized, both in technical activities with the agency representatives, as well as in monitoring and general management. However, there is consensus that this role was affected by unforeseen administrative difficulties -which are mentioned in other points of this Report-, which consumed a significant part of their time.

In conclusion, a high degree of agreement can be verified among the members of the Program both about the effectiveness demonstrated to organize an initiative considered successful under demanding conditions, and the limitations that those same demands imposed on its design. Among these, the one mentioned most often was the analysis of alternatives to achieve greater "interagency" in the implementation and achievement of results in various activities of the JP, in matters such as mechanisms for assigning responsibilities and specialized execution, or coordination and alignment. As an example, it was indicated that Product 5, response to the pandemic, considered the most effectively interagency, even so, presented contradictions of this type in its implementation<sup>47</sup>.

These agreements, in addition to the motivation generated by the achievements of the Program, create a very favorable space for the in-depth analysis of the room for improvement in design that was detected in the course of the work, and that could be

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<sup>44</sup>Agency professional: Spotlight was seen as "split off from the agencies, took on a life of its own" (49.7).

<sup>45</sup>Interview with an agency: "I think it was activated more out of necessity than routine at certain times" (31.49).

<sup>46</sup>Professional from an agency: "We were not able to work out the ad hoc committees. We wanted to give it a political entity and an academic entity but it did not work, and we gave up" (40.41); "We tried and I think it was relatively well planned, but in practice it didn't work out [...] this was part of the program, it required a couple of steering committees, an advisor and they weren't there" (40.43).

<sup>47</sup>Professional from an agency: "We kind of went back to this idea that each agency works on its own activities and they are not necessarily activities that are carried out jointly by all the agencies, with joint approaches, in which agencies share their counterparts with the other agencies" (7.15).

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considered for future initiatives. To that end, a good number of suggestions and recommendations are summarized in the specific sections of this Report.

#### **Item 4. Incidence of COVID-19 context**

*Guiding questions: To what extent is the COVID-19 crisis worsening the problem the intervention seeks to help solve? (a) The existence of social and territorial gaps that affect the full exercise of the rights of children under 6 years of age from the lowest income deciles and their families; and (b) The existence of barriers to the economic autonomy of women and to labor rights for workers in the care sector)? To what extent has the JP adjusted its objectives, strategies, actions and/or prioritized reference population to remain relevant in the context of the COVID-19 crisis? If it has become more relevant, how have they been adjusted to respond to the new demand?*

The characteristics of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social isolation policy adopted by the government forced the JP to adjust objectives, strategies and actions to adapt and move towards meeting its objectives. As mentioned, this was reflected in the addition of a fifth set of results (“Support for the national and subnational policy to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the early childhood care system”), the incorporation of new activities, the inclusion of the issue in planned activities, the reallocation of resources and the adaptation of face-to-face to virtual methodology.

In this sense, it should be noted that the JP not only adapted to the context, but also sought to make specific contributions, producing specific information and knowledge to determine the impact of the pandemic on the target population in order to provide data and experiences for the development of public policies adjusted to a dynamic and changing reality with high levels of uncertainty<sup>48</sup>.

The sources of documentary information that were considered on this topic belong to three large groups: UN documents to respond to COVID-19, Program documents (Coordination reports) and documents generated by the JP or by some of its member agencies and to which the JP contributed.

In the first place, it should be noted that the activities of the Program were carried out in accordance with the "United Nations Framework for the socioeconomic and environmental response and recovery from COVID-19 in Argentina" that was proposed as a planning instrument to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic in a middle-income country where economic and territorial inequalities are profound. According to the annual reports, in particular, there was a contribution to pillar 2 “protecting people: social protection and basic services”, supporting the generation of evidence and studies on the impact of the pandemic on early childhood and care policies:

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<sup>48</sup>“Studies related to the COVID-19 pandemic will help to highlight its effects on children, their families, care workers, communities, and the political-institutional responses developed. In this way, the generation of more abundant and better-quality information, which can be taken as a reference when developing public policies, is expected” (Prodoc, Section 2.2 Theory of Change, p. 29).

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*“In line with this framework and the MECNUD 2021-2025, in the coming year technical assistance, the development of studies and information systems will continue to contribute to strengthening and deepening the capacities of the State to guarantee the rights of all people, especially those in conditions of greater vulnerability. The continuity of support for public policies in the territory will seek to contribute to reducing territorial inequalities in the field of comprehensive care policies for early childhood. Capitalizing on the contact already developed during 2020 with various government agencies, the interinstitutional, intergovernmental and interjurisdictional alignment proposed in the MECNUD will be facilitated” (Joint Program 2020 - Progress Report, p. 4)*

The fifth set of results appears in the annual reports, to which new COVID-19-pandemic related activities (studies, pilot tests, training and information/awareness strategies) were added, methodologies, technical support dynamics for governments and strategies for strengthening capacities were adapted to the context (remote, virtual and/or mixed modality training and meetings), and COVID-19 topics were included in scheduled activities. There were activities that could not be carried out in a timely manner and/or had to be rethought considering that, for example, care spaces remained closed for much of 2020. By order of the SDG Fund Secretariat, resources were also redirected from the first to the second year (around 18% of the budget):

*“To contribute to achieving the general results of the Fund, the JP added a fifth set of results linked to the Health Pandemic to the four original products. The activities carried out to achieve the objectives were strengthened and enriched, in a process of necessary adaptation to the new social and political scenarios. Of a total of 33 activities, 26 (79%) were planned for 2020. Of these, 8 have been completed (31%), 14 are ongoing (54%) and 4 were postponed to 2021 (15%). Consequently, 85% of the activities planned for 2020 are in progress or completed. Of the 10 activities designed in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 7 were completed and another 3 are in the process of being executed. An important number of academic productions, as well as an important territorial deployment in our wide territory, resulted from the activities developed”. (2020 Joint Program - Annual Progress Report, p. 2)*

The resulting information generated by the Program made it clear that the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated the problem that the intervention intended to help solve, given that the living conditions of families in the lowest income deciles worsened, as well as the levels of income and access or continuity of employment of workers in the care sector. In this sense, the studies showed a posteriori that the contextual situation on which the project design was based worsened during the execution process. The modifications made aimed at generating responses to the new situation, for example, based on the identification of good practices or the preparation of recommendations for the development of public policies. In this way, the goal was to strengthen the intersectorality of productions, taking into account in some cases the focus on priority populations. In this sense, the modifications included in the PRODOC redesign can be considered relevant and pertinent in relation to the Theory of Change on which it is based.

The testimonies collected throughout the field work illustrate the situations and the assessments of the people in the face of this unforeseen contextual risk, with a potential for a strong negative impact on the Program, particularly on those activities

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planned to be implemented in the territory, and on the collaboration strategies established for the entire Program<sup>49</sup>, as well as on the personal life of its protagonists.

As highlighted below, the people interviewed agree that the JP showed flexibility and, in this sense, managed to coordinate an adequate response to mitigate to a certain extent the problems associated with connectivity and logistics (which usually enlarge inequality gaps), and on the other hand, took advantage of the expansive and multiplier potential of virtuality in many of the activities planned. In addition, in mainly technology-based activities, where remote work was already incorporated beforehand as the predominant modality, the effect of the pandemic was low.

In terms of joint planning activity for the ongoing preparation of the fifth product of the Program, some tasks in which both the coordinating team and the RCO played a more active role were proposed. It was highlighted as a valuable experience of mutual collaboration and learning by some of the people interviewed who participated in this task. As they pointed out, it was qualified as one of the most clearly “inter-agency” activities among all those carried out, since it had the contribution of all the agencies<sup>50</sup>.

Obviously, the restrictions derived from prevention regulations due to the health emergency strongly affected planning in terms of activities that involved travel, face-to-face meetings, etc. At the beginning, this situation caused problems of delay in the execution of activities, and the adaptation or replacement of some of them, especially in the territory. In the most remote locations, the mandatory isolation and restrictions on movement forced a rapid search for virtual communication alternatives to continue with the tasks of the program, meetings, and training<sup>51</sup> of care workers.

Regarding the context situation in the territories, interviewees at the local level engaged in these tasks highlighted the situations of inequity, that in many places there was a lack of adaptation to the situation, and that many children in disadvantaged sectors suffered the consequences of their vulnerability; the reactions were not always quick due to the fear of the disease<sup>52</sup>. Although some activities could continue, others, such as care in hospitals and health centers for vulnerable populations, had to be suspended and could not be adequately replaced<sup>53</sup>. It was also reported that people with disabilities were greatly affected; especially the children who could not leave their homes or receive their treatments.<sup>54</sup> Some people interviewed who collaborate in early childhood spaces pointed out notable difficulties in children’s acquisition of

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<sup>49</sup>Professional participating in the Program: “The pandemic was a conditioning factor; I don't know how this program would have been without a pandemic context. Most of the people I worked with, I have never met them in person” (38.11).

<sup>50</sup>Professional participating in the Program: “This was done in a coordinated manner, discussed with all the project agencies” (7.15).

<sup>51</sup>Participant in a Local Dialog Table: “The program had a soothing effect; we were able to work” (18.102).

<sup>52</sup>According to a provincial representative: “Many children died that first year, we should have strengthened strategies” (19.73); “The pandemic paralyzed us in many aspects” (22,179).

<sup>53</sup>Local professional: “Giving stimulation guidelines is not the same as being able to touch the child, see him, observe directly. Yes, it affected a lot” (34.88).

<sup>54</sup>Local professional: “It was traumatic [...] extremely difficult for us and for the families to face it” (FG 6.114).

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language, a significant increase in violence and abuse events, and the deterioration of the economic and health situation of families because the places where they went to eat closed and they had no access to medical care centers. Still, under these circumstances, many care workers tried to continue providing their services<sup>55</sup>.

From the Program, based on the response measures mentioned above, an attempt was made to maintain a high level of activity to counteract the situation, and<sup>56</sup>, in some tasks aimed at providing direct assistance to families and communities, alternatives were sought to provide help<sup>57</sup>.

Regarding the situation of women, gender barriers and the promotion of rights, in addition to the specific contents in the training activities or the training materials for care personnel that were applied, the JP -as mentioned at the beginning of this point - has produced materials to generate evidence that can feed public policy actions aimed at addressing these problems efficiently, as listed below.

The PRODOC<sup>58</sup> included a list of studies to be carried out within the framework of the fifth result added in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparation of studies:

- Study on the impact of the pandemic on households with children and adolescents headed by women (UNICEF).
- Rapid assessment/monitoring of the impact of COVID in households with children and adolescents (UNICEF).
- Studies aimed at identifying budget resources allocated to respond to the COVID-19 emergency with a focus on children and adolescents (UNICEF).
- Study on the impact of the pandemic on care policies in Latin America (ECLAC).
- Study on the impact of the pandemic on family care (ECLAC).
- Study on community care strategies in low-income neighborhoods of AMBA during the pandemic (ECLAC).
- Study on assistance and educational demands in homes, due to the suspension of school attendance (ECLAC).
- Study on remote work and care (ECLAC).
- Preparation and tripartite validation of a study on the impact of COVID-19 on the employment situation of early childhood care workers (ILO).

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<sup>55</sup>Caregiver: "These women working at care spaces organized groups of popular educators and went out to the neighborhoods, being very careful but also very afraid" (P1.73).

<sup>56</sup>Professional from the agency: "We have not been able to make progress on some issues that we had meant [...], but we have made progress on other things, such as, for example, [virtual] training" (30.28).

<sup>57</sup>Local professional: "The idea was to be able to provide them with a solution in a context of a pandemic that made families even more vulnerable [than they previously were]" (11.12).

<sup>58</sup> PRODOC September, pp. 33-34. Studies that explicitly mention its relation to COVID-19 are included.



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The planned studies were turned into publications, whose titles were different from the content stated as content in the PRODOC. Below is the list and links to the publication.

Publications on COVID-19: The Annual Progress Report for the year 2021 (p.22-25) included 10 strategic documents produced by the JP that addressed the problem of COVID-19 from different angles: budget, knowledge of the reality of families and the situation of children, care system, situation of women and tools to understand and act against the emotional impact that the pandemic caused in early childhood. These documents are:

- *Spending on children and adolescents in the national budget* (UNICEF-National Budget Office). It comprises 6 documents produced between June 2020 and October 2021 for the 4 quarters of 2020 and the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2021.

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/gasto-en-ninez-y-adolescencia-en-el-presupuesto-nacional-primer-trimestre-2020>

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/gasto-en-ni%C3%B1ez-y-adolescencia-del-presupuesto-nacional-1>

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/gasto-en-ninez-y-adolescencia-presupuesto-nacional-32020>

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/gasto-en-ninez-y-adolescencia-en-el-presupuesto-nacional>

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/publicaciones-y-datos/INC-Gasto-Presupuesto-Primer-Semestre2021>

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/publicaciones-y-datos/INC-Gasto-Presupuesto-Segundo-Semestre2021>

- *Survey on the perception and attitudes of the population. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families with children and adolescents. Second round* (UNICEF, August 2020)

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/encuesta-rapida-covid-19-informe-de-resultados-0>

- *Care and women in times of COVID: the Argentine experience* (ECLAC, UNDP, Dec 2020)

<https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/46453-cuidados-mujeres-tiempos-covid-19-la-experiencia-la-argentina>

- *Early childhood. Emotional impact of the pandemic* (UNICEF-Joint SDG Fund, March 2021)

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/primer-infancia>

- *Challenges of public policies in the face of the care crisis. The impact of the pandemic on households with children and adolescents headed by women* (UNICEF and National Department of Economy, Equality and Gender, May 2021).

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<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/publicaciones-y-datos/desafios-politicas-cuidados-hogares-a-cargo-de-mujeres>

Another 9 strategic documents to which the JP contributed but did not produce, were added to the group; they were carried out by some of the Program's member agencies, mainly UNICEF and the ILO<sup>59</sup>. These documents were mainly aimed at knowing the impact of the pandemic on the population of children and their families, on the labor market and on the situation of workers related to the various care sectors (domestic and health sector workers).

## **7.2 Findings in relation to the management effectiveness and efficacy**

### **Item 5. Progress in the programmatic axes of the Program**

*Guiding questions: What has been the level of progress in the Program programmatic axes? (a) Support for the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for early childhood; (b) Development of innovative instruments for a comprehensive care strategy; (c) Design and implementation of strategies to identify the employment potential of the early childhood care sector and to improve caregivers' working conditions; (d) Follow-up studies, monitoring and evaluation; and (e) Support for the national and subnational policy to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the early childhood care system; What are the main factors that support the level of progress and, if there are significant differences in progress according to axes, what reasons explain this?*

The documentary analysis of the materials provided by the Program shows a positive assessment in relation to the progress and achievements in the programmatic axes. As indicated in the following Section (7.3), the reports show good execution levels, particularly in the second year.

The Annual Progress Report<sup>60</sup> recognizes the following achievements in the development of the program: 1) the generation of synergies between the strategic cooperation framework of the UNS and the lines of work prioritized by the government counterparts towards the fulfillment of the SDGs; 2) the agile production of timely and quality evidence, especially regarding the situation due to COVID-19 and the generation of information for decision-making; 3) the consolidation of intersectoral institutional structures for a comprehensive approach to early childhood and the care system based on the development of Provincial Dialog Tables and the systematization

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<sup>59</sup> The documents are cited and referenced in the Annual Progress Report for the year 2021 (p. 25-27). Four of them are the quick surveys, which contributed to knowing about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families with children and adolescents and in which the JP participated, including the module referring to early childhood from the second round on. Another document analyzed the effects of COVID-19 on poverty and inequality, with a focus on children. The other four refer to studies on the axis of women's economic autonomy and the situation of the labor market in relation to the conditions of care workers.

<sup>60</sup> 2021 Joint Program - Annual Progress Report, p. 2.

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for the design of strategies at local level; 4) strengthening of innovative processes<sup>61</sup> (Federal Map of Care, methodology for the intersectoral approach in the territory, implementation of the SINTYS indicator system, support for the RENECEPI base) to respond to the absence and/or dispersion of information on early childhood; 5) promotion of exchange and learning among actors, especially with regard to strengthening the skills of early care and education personnel; 6) expansion of the scope of actions aimed at the entire population through communication campaigns that focused on parenting practices that respect children's rights and the recognition and appreciation of the care economy.

The information obtained during the field work allows further considerations on this point. As mentioned in Section 7.1, the effectiveness and efficacy of the JP management is based on its relevance and pertinence. The JP actively supported the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for early childhood and its design had enough and timely flexibility to incorporate the care approach when the institutional political context made it necessary.

Although the assessments of the advances and achievements of the JP vary depending on whether they focus on the activities, recipients, tools used and planned by each of the agencies, they all agree that the Program allowed for the first time to consolidate the efforts on childhood and care that were being made in a more isolated way. Significant advances have been observed, although different emphases may be noted depending on whether the perspectives are more general or more specific and according to the experience of each agency. There are those who state that *"The goals were partially achieved [...] There were some that achieved more than expected, such as provincial dialog tables, and others that achieved less"*<sup>62</sup>; and some point out that *"for the purposes of compliance with the PRODOC, not only were the planned objectives met, but they have been exceeded"*<sup>63</sup>; and those who point out *"having met all the objectives and installed this methodology [...] that is where the important achievement of the Program is summed up"*<sup>64</sup>.

The support for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood strategy and the development of innovative instruments aimed at promoting the rights of children and care workers was expressed in a series of initiatives with counterparts from different jurisdictions. The Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables for Early Childhood, the design and implementation of training guides and the application of

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<sup>61</sup>The JP defined the success of the results from a perspective of social innovation when they manage to "face old or new problems that have not had an answer through traditional institutional mechanisms, or that simply had not been solved before. Innovation can be both a product and a process, a technology, an idea, legislation or a combination of these elements" (PRODOC, September p. 52). In the Annual Progress Report for the year 2020, the existence of successful innovative practices in the Program had already been mentioned, such as the previous studies for the design of the Federal Map of Care, the systematization of an intercultural device for the indigenous population residing in rural zones; the integrated system of indicators linked to the ENPI, among others (2020 Joint Program - Annual Progress Report, p. 14).

<sup>62</sup>Interviews with professional from the agency 31.14, 31.54 and 31.89.

<sup>63</sup> Professional from agency, 2.10.

<sup>64</sup>Professional from agency, 38.131.

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virtual and blended training modalities for different profiles of recipients and especially care personnel, the generation and publication of documents, of information based on evidence as an instrument for reliable diagnoses, are synergistic results in which there is consensus between agencies and counterparts.

The level of progress of the programmatic axes of the JP must be weighed in the light of exogenous and endogenous factors. The former has already been mentioned in this Report. In this context, there is also the heterogeneity of situations, priorities in public policies, of technical, human, geographic, sociodemographic and sociocultural resources at the jurisdiction level; they had to discuss, agree and implement their programmatic goals to help place early childhood and the comprehensive care approach at the center of the public agenda.

At this point, references were made to the tension between the gender agenda and that for the comprehensive development for early childhood. Those who perceive it this way, point out that the gender agenda and its consequence in the care axis (mostly feminized) does not necessarily consider the (different) services that early childhood requires: *“There was some tension and the interest of the agencies was oriented to two different perspectives [...] and some ended up in terms of gender”*<sup>65</sup>. Another issue to consider, to assess the progress and achievements in the programmatic goals, refers to the characteristics of each of the intervening agencies, their skills, resources and previous activities, their government counterparts and their ability to adapt to a joint project in a context of institutional changes and an exceptional health situation. It is in this situation that the diversity and validity of the assessments regarding the fulfillment of the JP goals set forth above should be considered.

The Local Council Dialog Tables, the training sessions, the generation of knowledge, the research on care workers, the updating of manuals on the working conditions and perspectives of this sector, the design and programming of digital platforms, the involvement of universities, social organizations, families and government representatives, the alignment with the Ministry of Economy to analyze the impact of the Pandemic on the living conditions of children and families as a direct input for the formulation of public policies<sup>66</sup>, all this set of initiatives carried out in the framework of the JP have been recognized by representatives from the agencies and government counterparts of the three jurisdictions. They all agree on emphasizing that inputs were transferred to them and especially an intervention methodology as a central element for the continuity and sustainability of public actions and policies.<sup>67</sup>

Within the framework of the JP and in line with counterparts, strategies have been designed and implemented to identify the employment potential of the early childhood care sector and to improve the working conditions of care workers. However, and in the context of the pandemic, the possibilities of intervening positively

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<sup>65</sup>Professional from agency 31.32.

<sup>66</sup>UNICEF-MECON (2019) *Challenges of public policies in the face of the care crisis*. Impact of the pandemic on households with children and adolescents headed by women.

<sup>67</sup>Local professionals: Interviews 3.8.127 y 38.133.

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to achieve concrete progress in decent work and working conditions for care workers have been restricted. As discussed in Section 7.4, the JP, aligned with the government counterpart in the three jurisdictions, has made significant progress in defining methodologies and digital platforms to track and monitor the strategies developed to achieve the goals. At the provincial and local levels, suggestions have been made to continue the technical support to institutionalize monitoring and evaluation processes that are not always solidly settled in public management. The JP has supported initiatives at the national and subnational levels in response to the impact of COVID-19, in particular with the production of studies that provide timely and quality evidence for decision-making and the implementation of digital tools that allowed progress and multiplication of the activities planned in the territory, especially those related to training, education and implementation of tools with communication messages.

As already mentioned, there is agreement between the agencies and the national counterpart in pointing out that the JP contributed significantly to developing innovative tools. One of the outstanding components is the Federal Map of Care, prepared jointly by ECLAC, UNDP and the MMGyD; it is a key tool for advancing in an accurate and georeferenced diagnosis of care spaces in the country, an achievement that will be more effective when it can incorporate the information of all subnational jurisdictions, since it will allow the formulation of public policies aimed at early childhood care, identification of employment potential in the care sector and its working conditions<sup>68</sup>. The UNDP, together with the SAE, promoted the Parenting Communities project, which involved seven universities; within its framework, the Informatics Research Institute of the School of Informatics of the National University of La Plata developed a collaborative platform through which all the actors were participating and locating the experiences that were carried out<sup>69</sup>. On the other hand, the Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables, the knowledge processes between government areas, the coordination and alignment promoted by these discussion spaces, as well as the processes and methodologies applied in the training of local human resources related to children's rights and care (partly virtual but also in-person in many cases) are considered by their recipients as truly innovative tools. In this line, it is important to highlight what was pointed out by several interviewees, regarding the achievements and at the same time the limitations that the application of technology shows in specific spaces of vulnerability and lack of basic services. For example, the pandemic (and consequently the limitations on face-to-face attendance) has been perceived as a specific limitation in those activities aimed at families, either due to the restrictions on social contact imposed by COVID-19 or due to the absence of digital media (Internet, cell phones, etc.) by the members of the families to whom the actions were directed.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Professional from counterpart: "Today, when we are in a position to start thinking about this production of information more in terms of paths" (17.58).

<sup>69</sup> Professional in territory: "It wasn't a big technical challenge because we didn't have questions about doing very innovative things in terms of development (FG 47).

<sup>70</sup> Local professional: "Sometimes unattainable for these families" (32.138).

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It was in this context of sharing that the JP promoted and facilitated the development of innovative strategies and tools that in many cases guarantee the sustainability of these achievements. For the agencies, the innovative component within the JP was incorporated according to their own profiles and activities developed and ongoing, since -as one agency professional states- “there are always many ranges of innovation”.<sup>71</sup> The temporary component of the definition and implementation and the specific conditions of the territorial spaces to which the actions are directed, and consequently the expectations and perceptions of the actors of the government counterpart, including the local technical teams, also made an impact.<sup>72</sup> Initiatives with a strong component of innovation stand out for a comprehensive early childhood and care strategy, considered successful by agencies and counterparts. The strengthening of information systems, support for the National Tax and Social Identification System (SINTyS), dependent on the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies, for the organization of a dashboard with data and information indicators and monitoring of early childhood, assistance made up of eight products, carried out jointly by UNDP and ECLAC, ECLAC's intervention in the definition of the Federal Map of Care. Although the strategy of local council dialog tables may seem devoid of an innovative component, it does have it for local representatives because these spaces promote and make possible something that is often unprecedented, such as meeting in a common space for discussing with different areas of government that did not know each other and/or did not know what each one did. UNICEF used the additional funding received by the JP not only to promote innovations, but also to leverage on activities that were being carried out within the framework of a national early childhood strategy in the provinces and municipalities, through the provincial and local council dialog tables for early childhood.<sup>73</sup>

From these experiences -beyond the definition adopted by the Program<sup>74</sup>- the innovative approach had different views and responses according to the interviewees. In the initial design of the PRODOC, innovation aimed at identifying financing alternatives for the comprehensive care for early childhood. In this regard, it can be mentioned that, at the time of the interviews, these specific products convened by UNDP (*analysis of possible innovative financing mechanisms for early childhood policies*) had not yet been delivered, although they said they were in the process of drafting the final report. Beyond this, it is important to point out the real possibility

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<sup>71</sup>Interview 7.30.

<sup>72</sup> Agency Professional: “One of the possible uses of this had to do with leveraging existing strategies that, in addition, in the case of UNICEF, generated information that now allows promoting new strategies within the cooperation framework that UNICEF has. Others saw in this the opportunity to do what they regularly did not have the money for and tried new things [...] It is difficult to maintain innovation in just two years, that something can be generated and that it be sustained over time” (3.44).

<sup>73</sup> Professional from agency: “the systematization of methodologies and studies to be able to replicate it or to be able to generate that evidence, share it with other authorities and multiply it at the national level” (3.31).

<sup>74</sup> PRODOC, Sept. p. 52.

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that all the agencies had to meet, coordinate and share common initiatives <sup>75</sup>.

In the interviews with representatives of the Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables, a significant coincidence is appreciated regarding the innovative contributions that these collective processes mean. The importance of transferring a work methodology, defining objectives, knowing the sectoral actors and contributing to the intersection of issues for the design of early childhood public policies is highlighted<sup>76</sup>.

#### **Item 6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the JP contributed to achieving your development goals, especially regarding the three outcomes? (a) design and implementation of intersectoral strategies for early childhood care at subnational level; (b) coordination of training policies for decent work in the care sector; (c) generation of evidence to facilitate access to care services and to design and implement early childhood public policies. Specifically, what has been the contribution to the regulatory frameworks, as well as to the comprehensive protection policies for children under 6 years of age and the promotion of work in the care sector? What has been the contribution of the instruments developed in the context of the JP and of the studies and research developed by using big data? Are results differentiated by gender or specific groups?*

From the perspective of the document collection carried out, some examples of this are the Federal Map of Care and the study *Care and women in times of COVID-19: the experience in Argentina* as a product of the joint work between ECLAC, UNDP and the Ministry of Health, Women, Gender and Diversity or *Challenges of public policies in the face of the care crisis. The impact of the pandemic on households with children and adolescents headed by women* carried out by UNICEF and the National Department of Economy, Equality and Gender. The updating of manuals on training and skills for care workers carried out by the ILO and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the chances of decent work and working conditions in this sector. Those arising from systematized territorial experiences can also be highlighted, such as the ones developed between UNICEF and the Government of the Province of Salta within the framework of the Program, which focused on experiences of family support in the rural population and parenting practices in indigenous communities of the Wichí people.

The JP aimed to align and generate synergies among agencies and between them and government counterparts. Each of the agencies did so based on their profiles, skills, previous work and counterparts. The intersectoral approach of the JP effectively contributed to coordinating the early childhood agenda among the UNS agencies and was key to supporting alignment in the Interministerial Dialog Table for Care Policies, contributing to collecting information from community spaces throughout the country

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<sup>75</sup>“Yes, we extended the concept of innovation to everything else, yes, there are things as basic as, for example, being able to sit everyone at the same table, which ended up being the revolution!31.91.

<sup>76</sup>Provincial representative, Interview 12.65.

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and generating synergies of coordination between the initiatives linked to childhood and care that existed in the different sectors of the national public administration<sup>77</sup>.

The generation of evidence was one of the significant contributions of the JP. The strengthening of information systems in the government counterpart is highlighted, such as support for the National Tax and Social Identification System (SINTyS), dependent on the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies, for the organization of a dashboard with data and indicators for information and monitoring of early childhood, assistance made up of eight products, carried out jointly by UNDP and ECLAC. Another example of inter-agency synergy mentioned as successful was the creation of the podcast *Someone Takes Care* (January 2022), a series of 6 chapters produced by the ILO and which included the participation of other PJ agencies (and other entities such as IOM, UNDP and UN Women) as continuation of a public awareness campaign aimed at recognizing care work, launched in March 2021.

The JP has made significant contributions to the advancement of the SDGs by promoting the institutional framework of spaces for intersectoral coordination at the national, provincial and municipal levels. This was expressed in the formulation of diagnoses, investigations, use of technology, interaction modalities and coordinated work that in turn generated and continue to generate synergies for the adaptation of normative frameworks anchored, many times, in old paradigms of childhood and gender.

UNICEF, based on previous territorial intervention work, obtained very satisfactory results with the strengthening and multiplication of Provincial and Municipal Dialog Tables for Early Childhood. *“Beyond the difficulties and necessary advances in the territorialization of JP interventions, some provincial experiences show the achievements obtained within the JP framework, especially in central axes such as children's rights and care”*<sup>78</sup>. The significant contributions of the JP can be identified at various levels. For example, a provincial official noted: *“The program, and the resource of the program gave us categories, concepts, ideas about what we were talking about. In other words, it made it possible for us to name, conceptualize and, therefore, be able to define lines of work regarding what was being debated and was sort of loose in the heat of the discussion. It helped us have a work methodology”*<sup>79</sup>. In this sense, a provincial representative pointed out: *“The key point was developing the Interministerial Dialog Table for Early Childhood. That promoted local areas [...] this is key in the synergy and in the coordinated work and at the different levels”*<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup>Referent from counterpart, interviews 27.31 y 27.39.

<sup>78</sup>“We had been seeing the differences in development in the early childhood care system in the interior of the country in contrast with that of the capital city. So, we focused on social investment in childhood and adolescence in early childhood” (36.14).

<sup>79</sup>“This possibility helped us to work further on systematicity, methodology and planning. Otherwise, I don't think we would have made it, even less in a pandemic context” (6.39).

<sup>80</sup>Another provincial representative stated: *“Working with them to organize ourselves and be able to set the objectives and see what activity we had to do to achieve them. Also, it helped us to take better advantage of the resources that we already have in the State because sometimes we are unaware that there are others”* (30.38).



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In addition, the interagency approach generates synergies in the interministerial structure of the provinces, since intersectorality is not a fact of reality but a construction that requires breaking disassociated habits, often settled in the design and implementation of policies. In this regard, the interviews conducted with representatives of the Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables show the importance of these spaces that promoted intersectoral discussion and allowed the implementation of training activities, created installed capacity and promoted regulatory frameworks and tools aimed at early childhood and care<sup>81</sup>.

In this sense, the words of an official who chairs one of the Provincial Dialog Tables become relevant:

*“Interministerial work has always been proposed because we understand that there is no other way to approach it. UNICEF has always supported these initiatives, especially in the topic discussed at the dialog table. Because we even worked jointly with the dialog table, but it was not easy because no ministry is ready to sit down and discuss these budget and goal issues with another, re-think objectives, leave their role aside, and discuss at the table”<sup>82</sup>.*

Within the framework of the Local Council Dialog Tables, the importance of the achievements obtained is appreciated, not only in the transfer of knowledge, access to information, tools to systematize needs and possible responses, but also in the institutionalization of these initiatives through legislation. Institutionalizing Local Council Dialog Tables is one of the objectives promoted by the JP and it is generally undertaken by the participants of these spaces. This involves not only the decision of its members to promote the rules and/or legislative instruments of the municipality, but also the political decision of government authorities. At a panel activity with representatives from Local Council Dialog Tables, participants pointed out the need not to leave these initiatives subject to the will of those who circumstantially occupy a decision-making position: “The Dialog Table was presented to be recognized by the education and culture ministry of the municipality by virtue of an executive order. And now what we have put together, which is the foundation or the document to start making it a reality this year, we want it to be recognized by the City Council”<sup>83</sup>. This is especially important because in many cases care spaces outside the formal scope of Education are governed by regulations related to commercial spaces; the dialog tables are spaces that promote a specific policy aimed at defining quality standards and approval for care spaces for early childhood.<sup>84</sup> The counterparts highlight the relevance of the JP to continue supporting these lines of work, given that institutional inertia does not always play in its favor.<sup>85</sup>

The approach to disability is one of the points considered among the priorities of the

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<sup>81</sup> “The construction of true, strategic, useful social data, related to the territory, that is shared, was fundamental” (6.58).

<sup>82</sup> Interview 6.14.

<sup>83</sup> Local representative - Panels 21 and 17.

<sup>84</sup> Local representative “It is very difficult to depend only on someone’s will. If it becomes evident, if the ordinance means a specific action, it is more difficult to forget” (FG1.133).

<sup>85</sup> Local representative “We request that the relevance of information on early childhood be decreed at local level” (FG1.99)

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JP. Disability, its detection, prevention, treatment, referral is an invisible problem, especially because in many cases there is no diagnosis or records. The JP has a clear inclusion and non-discrimination approach and tried to include it on local agendas, although it did not always receive the expected attention, except in some jurisdictions such as Cordoba. UNICEF contributed to putting it on the agenda of local council dialog tables; however, the words of a provincial official responsible for the Disability area, illustrate the particularities of the problem and the obstacles they encounter: *“There is a lack of political support for prevention. The [Provincial] program has a provincial law -and therefore it should be in the whole province- and we are not in the whole province”*<sup>86</sup>. Finally, in relation to migrant children, present in almost all of our country, in a focus group held in La Plata, the IOM initiative was addressed to formulate a project in the face of the almost absolute lack of specific devices to guarantee comprehensive rights.

The studies and reports generated within the JP framework that are directly linked to Items 5 and 6 analyzed up to this point, are mentioned below. A detailed breakdown can be found in the Documentary Analysis Matrix, which is included as an Annex to this Report.

About the budget: A first group of documents proposed the identification of budget resources allocated to respond to the COVID-19 emergency with a focus on children and adolescents (activity 26). The resulting product was six documents produced by UNICEF and the National Budget Office of the Ministry of Economy under the title *Spending on children and adolescents in the national budget* for the 4 quarters of 2020 and the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2021. These reports presented a financial and physical production analysis of the main national budget programs with an impact on children and adolescents and included an analysis of the budgetary reinforcements carried out by the National Government to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth mentioning that these documents are part of the regular publications that UNICEF makes with the National Budget Office; however, in the context of the pandemic, and in connection with JP activities, the section on resources to address the COVID-19 emergency was included in them.

Regarding knowledge of the reality of families and children: *Survey on the perception and attitudes of the population. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families with children and adolescents* began in April 2020 and was carried out 5 times (UNICEF, April, July and October 2020 and April-May and October-November 2021). In each version, components were added and/or modified, depending on previous findings or changes in the situation. From the second survey on, a section was included referring to the socio-emotional impact of early childhood, which inquiries about behaviors in relation to eating, sleeping and communication.

These surveys sought to find out how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting children and what level of access and response capacity government policies had in that context. The generation of information was one of the key objectives of the Response Plan to COVID-19 of UNICEF Argentina under the assumption that evidence informs

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<sup>86</sup> Interview 34.186.

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decision-making for the adoption of measures to ensure the exercise of children's rights. On the other hand, it should be noted that the survey was carried out within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement for the implementation of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Argentina with the Ministry of Social Development and the Council for the Coordination of Social Policies. This is an international program of standardized household surveys carried out by UNICEF to collect statistics on a wide range of topics on the situation of children and women and should be seen as an asset for organizations to act quickly on the emergency context.

Some of the conclusions reached are highlighted below and show to what extent the COVID-19 crisis accentuated the problem whose solution the intervention sought to contribute to:

**The existence of social and territorial gaps that affect the full exercise of the rights of children under 6 years of age from the lowest income deciles and their families.**

Between April 2020 and December 2021, the problems related to the labor market (precariousness, instability, unemployment) and income generation persisted. The financial resources of most households are insufficient to cover their needs. As at December 2021, 62% of households suffered a reduction in their income from work, being the highest figure in the series. This percentage represented approximately 3.9 million households with children and adolescents. In the case of households of the 20% of the most vulnerable population, it reaches 82% of households. This situation resulted in indebtedness for families who resorted to strategies such as buying on credit or loans to obtain food. In households in the lowest income quintile, this affected 7 out of 10 households. On the other hand, during this period, an increase in the number of households that receive the Food Card or other food support was observed. In relation to these sections, regional differences were observed in each report.

During this stage, women expressed feeling overloaded with household chores (domestic and care tasks), remaining at levels above 50%. It is also highlighted that households headed by women have a higher level of vulnerability in relation to employment and income. In addition, more than half of them did not receive the payment of alimony.

In relation to early childhood, two main alerts were highlighted: the persistence throughout the period of socio-emotional difficulties related to eating, sleeping and communication problems and the return of adults to the labor market with an insufficient public supply of care. This triggers situations of inadequate care and conciliation difficulties, mainly for women. It is key to prioritize early childhood and ensure the effective implementation of a comprehensive, sufficiently financed, quality policy.<sup>87</sup> These results led to the preparation of the following publication.

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<sup>87</sup> UNICEF Argentina, "Young children: the group that suffers even more from the impact of the pandemic", press release of 30/Nov/21. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/argentina/comunicados-prensa/5ta-Encuesta-Rapida-Covid19>

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**On the tools to face the impact of the pandemic and support emotional development in children.** *Early childhood. Emotional impact in the pandemic* (UNICEF- Joint SDG Fund, March 2021) sought to provide elements to understand the emotional impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on younger children and contribute to strengthening the skills that will be required in the return to the face-to-face modality, when they meet other children again. This manual was of great value because its content arose from the reflections derived from an intensive training module called “Early childhood. Pandemic emotional impact” held from June to August 2020. It was aimed at educators, caregivers, staff of child care centers and day care institutions, kindergartens teachers and their leaders from different provinces and was supported by officials and technical teams from the provinces of Entre Rios, Mendoza and Salta; thanks to them, the training device could be organized in just two weeks.

*“Its main objective was to respond to the concerns of the provinces, which had to close their school year 15 days after the start and continue their tasks virtually. On the other hand, the training sought to provide elements to understand the emotional impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had in a scenario characterized by the unequal conditions in which children live. This public health emergency had immediate and long-term multidimensional impacts. Both types of impact entail particular risks and effects on children and their families” (p. 9).*

The document included among its tools a decalogue to support the emotional well-being of young children during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic (chapter 1), aspects that must be taken into account by the adults involved to support, identifying risk and protection factors (chapter 2), guidelines to support and promote emotional development based on specific activities that involve the body and all the senses (chapter 3) and playing as a protective factor against stress and trauma caused by the experience of the pandemic (chapter 4).

**On the existence of barriers to the economic autonomy of women and to labor rights for workers in the care sector.** There is information provided by the quick surveys mentioned above and another series of studies developed by the JP that allowed a more specific understanding of the situation, as well as making recommendations.

In the first place and in a few words, we can state that the quick surveys showed that households headed by women present higher levels of vulnerability, and also that the overload of care tasks worsened for women as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This conclusion is shared and supported on the different studies produced, whose particularities are indicated below.

The Joint Fund carried out the study on *Care and women in times of COVID: the experience in Argentina* (CEPAL, PNUD, MMGyD, Dec 2020)<sup>88</sup>, whose objectives were: a) know the effects that the COVID- 19 pandemic has and will have and support actions as regards the situation of women in general and in one of the activities where they are most overrepresented: paid and unpaid care tasks; b) know the impact on access to economic resources, on the labor market and on the distribution of unpaid work; c)

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<sup>88</sup> This publication corresponds to activities 30 and 33 of the JP. It can be consulted at: <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/46453-cuidados-mujeres-tiempos-covid-19-la-experiencia-la-argentina>

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record the differential impact on women in economic autonomy, in the tactics to reorganize the time dedicated to housekeeping in the different socioeconomic strata and in low-income neighborhoods; d) think of state actions to prevent these biases and contribute to building more egalitarian policies and solutions to the health and economic crisis.

This publication contains an introduction and six studies: I. Impact of the Pandemic on care policies. Experiences in Latin America; II. Families, care and inequality; III. Connecting care in times of pandemic. Organizing life in low-income neighborhoods of AMBA; IV. From community care to working in private homes. Who supports caregivers? V. Women, assistance and educational demands in the face of the disruption of school attendance in Argentina; VI. Remote work and care.

This study presents multiple and situated recommendations. Among them, the most important are the need to build comprehensive care systems in the region that are defeminized, democratic and decommodified; guarantee universal and quality care services, particularly at the community level, with adequate budgets and working conditions and the participation of those who work in decision-making; the strengthening of active policies on compliance with the regulations in relation to work in private homes and the regulation of work in food kitchens, kindergartens and community centers, boosting existing projects and guaranteeing access to social security and labor rights; that caregivers may access specific, certified training; expand knowledge about work in soup kitchens and community centers so that more effective policies, based on existing realities, can be drawn up. In the case of remote work, it is recommended to strengthen the sovereignty of working time, expand the existing guarantees in terms of rights and the assumptions on which the exercise of the right to care and be cared for is based, and apply broad definitions of care, to all the tasks it involves, recognizing the possibility of interruption of the working day, increasing infrastructure and developing care services, integrating social security policies and defamiliarizing labor protection in leaves, towards a parenting model that considers a policy of fair time distribution.

**The economic recovery must have a gender and childhood perspective, investing in care.** The study *Challenges of public policies in the face of the care crisis. The impact of the pandemic on households with children and adolescents headed by women* (UNICEF and the National Department of Economy, Equality and Gender, May 2021) meant to contribute to a diagnosis of the situation of households before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, with special attention to those with children and adolescents headed by only one person in charge, and to help, based on this approach, so that the economic, fiscal, labor, productive and care policies take into account the various dimensions that the pandemic exposes and deepens, to prevent further setbacks. Its results ratify that the pandemic amplified the previously existing inequality gaps, deepening the levels of poverty and indigence and worsening the consequences for children:

*“The analysis of the impact of the pandemic on women, children and adolescents shows challenging data for the design of public policies for reconstruction and economic recovery. Women in charge of households with children and adolescents are the most affected by the crisis: they face a worse insertion in the labor market (higher*

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*levels of informality, greater instability, lower wages) and experience time scarcity deepened by the pandemic. As a consequence of this, their economic participation rate falls and their unemployment increases, thus raising the levels of poverty and indigence in their homes. The results presented here are in line with the research published by both ECLAC and ILO, the IMF and other international organizations” (UNICEF-DNElyG, 2021, p. 42).*

In this sense, it is expressed that the poverty of women is fed back with that of children and adolescents, creating a circle that requires a comprehensive approach and a gender and childhood perspective. The necessary public policies to advance in this aspect involve, on the one hand, the institutional strengthening of the government areas that address gender inequalities, interministerial work, progress on the bill for a comprehensive care system, active employment policies that explicitly include women and consider, from their design, the family responsibilities and professional training policies in community care that professionalize and certify knowledge in feminized professions. In this immediate context, it is considered necessary to continue strengthening social protection programs that compensate for falls or losses in family income, deepen the unified registry of care services initiated with the Federal Map of Care and expand the state supply of schools of double shift or extended shift to promote access to the most vulnerable sectors, guarantee caregiving time through extensive leaves that take into account the different family compositions and the different care and development needs of children.

Investment in care must be part of an economic recovery strategy that includes women in the quest to increase the rate of activity, employment and income capable of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

*“Given that the State will be a key player in Argentina's reconstruction and public investment will play a fundamental role in this path, it is essential to put the care infrastructure at the center of the recovery process. This is crucial not only to contribute to resolving the care crisis but also to reactivate the economy without leaving women behind” (UNICEF-DNElyG, 2021, p. 40).*

Another study developed in the JP that contributed to a greater knowledge of the supply of care services was *Who cares, teaches and raises in Latin America? Working conditions and training paths of upbringing, education and care workers in Argentina* (Camisassa, Florito, Guevara, Dec. 2020) in which CIPPEC, ILO, UNDP, UN Women participated on the study of the potential volume, characteristics and skills of the supply of workers in the early childhood care sector. There, based on three specific cases (provinces of Cordoba, La Pampa and Rio Negro), what actions should be taken to strengthen the training paths and improve the working conditions of upbringing, education and care workers in Argentina based on a federal, comprehensive system of care.

As part of this policy, they identify some systemic knowledge that they propose be shared by all workers, regardless of the institutional format in which they work. This knowledge involves: knowledge, practices and values of child upbringing, education and care from a holistic perspective; knowledge, practices and values around early childhood development and learning that considers the different moments in children development; knowledge, values and practices to work in contexts of inequality and

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diversity; knowledge, practices and values related to the promotion of health, nutrition, safety and social protection in early childhood, practical knowledge and values to communicate, work as a team with other workers, with families and the community and knowledge, values and practices on the local, national and international context of policies and the situation of early childhood.

**Systematization of experiences for intersectoral work, situated and focused on populations that suffer multiple discriminations: Wichí people and rural environments.** The JP produced four documents that seek to generate knowledge from situated experiences. Three of them will be dealt with in the section on impact and sustainability, while another two are included as part of the new approaches and responses to which the program means to contribute.

*Parenting practices in indigenous communities of the Wichí people* (UNICEF-Government of Salta, October 2021). This experience was preceded by the joint work carried out by UNICEF and the Government of Salta in the Parenting without Violence program, which in 2020 decided to expand to indigenous communities in the north of the province. In its introduction it is pointed out that the decision was aligned with the priority of reducing the social and territorial gaps that affect the integral development of children in early childhood and of complying with the responsibility of the States to provide the necessary support so that families, considered the most suitable environment for the growth of a child, can carry out their care and protection role.

This work had three objectives: to describe the way in which the communities of the Wichí people organize care and upbringing during early childhood based on the analysis of: the organization of family life (habits and routines), limits, care tasks and gender roles, and communication in families; produce recommendations for the adaptation or design of programs, services or strategies aimed at indigenous communities and generate inputs to advance in the design and development of parenting support workshops from an intercultural approach.

*Early childhood in rural areas and Ibicuy islands. Province of Entre Ríos.* Diagnostic approach (UNICEF-Government of Entre Ríos). This material was produced during 2021 in order to know the particularities of children from 0 to 5 years of age in the rural area and the Ibicuy Islands, adult-child bonds and existing institutional devices for early childhood in the region. According to the provincial government, the diagnosis was carried out "in order to know the singularities and strengthen the care practices in Early Childhood in the Rural and Island areas, generating instruments that facilitate accessibility to rights"<sup>89</sup> and that it was the result of a process of knowledge, tours and conversations that allowed them to go deeper into this territory, developing situated knowledge. Among its recommendations, it mentions, for example, the need to improve accessibility to Child Development Centers and preschool for this population, to add a new Child Development Center in an area where supply is insufficient or to improve mobility for access to health.

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<sup>89</sup> Report of the Undersecretariat for Human Development and Care Policies of the Province of Entre Ríos, 2021, p. 33.

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**A common strategic framework for action against COVID-19.** A final group of documents surveyed have a contextual nature, but we can say that they guided the action against COVID-19 by the UNS and/or member agencies, reinforcing in some way the power actions based on common criteria. They are: *United Nations Framework for the socioeconomic and environmental response and recovery from COVID-19 in Argentina (United Nations, August 2020)*, *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, October 2021)* and *Labor Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Policies to protect employment relationship and hiring subsidies during the COVID-19 pandemic (ECLAC, November 2021)*.

### **Item 7. Difficulties and adaptation**

*Guiding questions: What hurdles has the JP encountered and what corrective actions were taken or would have been necessary to achieve results? To what extent were the capacities of the JP, including those of staff, incentives and leadership, adequate to address the issue of early childhood protection, taking into account gender gaps and other diverse groups?*

As regards counterparts, the JP had to consider the formulation or adaptation of the comprehensive strategy for early childhood and care where it is important to consider, as a JP referent points out:

*“A program developed by a previous government administration has been inserted; it went through a change of government and a very, very powerful disruption regarding early childhood issues. This can be seen in the budget; it can be seen in the forms of institutionalization (or lack of institutionalization) of a policy both at the national and at the provincial level”<sup>90</sup>.*

The same perspective of integration in the approach to children's rights puts on the agenda the challenge of how to replicate and how to communicate these issues, taking into account the alignment deficits of the provinces or even the municipalities.

As stated by a referent of an agency:

*“In Argentina, the competences in these issues are distributed in part in the provinces, part in the municipalities and some issues at the national level. The issue appears in very dissimilar agendas. It can appear in a Ministry of Women, it can appear in a very small area of SENAF, it can appear in the Ministry of Education pointing to institutionalization. So, each one with different views and without a clear leadership”<sup>91</sup>.*

Given that each agency of the UNS discusses with different government partners, the particularities of the counterparts were either obstacles or stimuli that supported or hindered the execution of the JP. In several cases, these circumstances caused delays in matters as basic as reviewing, reorganizing and legitimizing agreements made with the previous administration<sup>92</sup>. Faced with these obstacles, the JP showed flexibility to

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<sup>90</sup> Interview 3.17.

<sup>91</sup> Interview 3.31.

<sup>92</sup> Agency Professional: “There was no executive unit of the government that supported the execution of the project, but rather it was a bit more individual... this caused delays and gaps in a project that had a logical timeline, ...because it did not depend only on the effectiveness of the agencies but on the process



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adapt to the new political-institutional circumstances. This adaptation took different or simultaneous modalities according to the professionals of the agencies that were interviewed: *"The program was flexible, even at times it was extremely flexible [...] But in general terms, good discussions and agreements were achieved with the committed government authorities both at the time of the formulation of the PRODOC and later with the new administration"*<sup>93</sup>.

Multiple factors affect the achievement and progress of the objectives: implementation times, the heterogeneity of approaches to childhood and rights in the provincial and/or municipal jurisdictions, the different levels of commitment on the part of the authorities that participate in the dialog tables, the administrative processes of some provinces that hinder the efficiency of budget disbursements processes<sup>94</sup> and technical resources, among others<sup>95</sup>.

### **Item 8: Interagency and multilevel work**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the work of UNS agencies (UNICEF, ECLAC, UNDP, ILO) at the three levels (national, regional and local) been able to provide a consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions in favor of the comprehensive protection of early childhood and the generation of employment in the care sector with a prevention and care approach (services and referral systems)?*

Inter-agency work takes time and, as an interviewed professional pointed out, "it is not a starting point but rather an arrival point". It works as a driver to align effective interventions in relation to government counterparts, whose practices have a strong tendency to change the agenda, heterogeneity, radiality and overlapping of actions, programs, government agencies of different jurisdictions<sup>96</sup>.

The complexity and challenges of inter-agency and multi-level work have two components to consider. One of them is directly related to the challenge that the joint work of the agencies based on the UNS initiative meant and means. There, formal incentives play a role, as well as those that appear in the internal institutional and communicational mechanisms of and between agencies; for example, the existence or not of a global requirement to use the logo of SDG Fund and UN Argentina. In this sense, the joint initiative has been achieved, although different testimonies indicate that there is still a long way to go. This new "doing" in the words of a referent of the agencies is a challenge that is stimulated by this initiative expressed in the JP, although the existence of short deadlines may be an adverse factor to consider in future

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of coordination with the priorities of the government, the changes of administration in different jurisdictions, etc." (31.14).

<sup>93</sup> Interview 31.22.

<sup>94</sup> Provincial representative, Interview 19.98.

<sup>95</sup> Provincial representative: "The challenge was our internal administrative sector" (18,200).

<sup>96</sup> Agency Professional: "So, this interrelation between the United Nations system and the different State agencies is very important because as this agenda is in its early stages, ... we are in that path. This is fine and this stage is logical until a new paradigm of public policy is developed from that perspective. It may take a while" (38.28).

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initiatives. This is linked in part to the coordination functions of the JP and the mechanisms and/or procedures for inter-agency communication and alignment<sup>97</sup>.

As stated by a referent of an agency the JP generated synergies that constitute high-impact incentives in this type of joint intervention. It made it possible to broaden and diversify the relationship that the agencies had with the national, provincial, and municipal government counterparts, involving other agencies of the system in that relationship.<sup>98</sup> But it also contributed to improving communication among agencies regarding objectives, research, interventions in the territory, which virtuously replicates the government counterparts' perception of them and of the Interagency Program, promoting synergies between government agencies as evidenced by experiences such as Entre Rios, Cordoba, Mendoza and Salta.

According to agency professionals, the JP also faced a challenge that it largely resolved satisfactorily: ensuring that the objectives, goals, and activities were not the sum of the different interventions and agendas of each agency<sup>99</sup>. The challenge of continuing to work to generate and sustain intersections and alignment that enhance the contributions of each of them with the counterparts and in the territory. It is also important to consider that the institutional conduct of the agencies requires time to converge on more interagency interventions that recover and resume the lessons of this initiative<sup>100</sup>. Achieving this implies considering issues that are endogenous to the agencies and the UN System, as well as to the institutional characteristics, practices, ability and resources of the counterparts.

At the territorial level, these necessary alignments and intersections between the agencies did not always take place, and in consequence the government counterparts did not fully understand that a certain line of work was part of the same JP<sup>101</sup>. However, it is also a fact that the government counterparts drag a history of radiality and overlapping of initiatives and information that impacts the actions of the agencies,

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<sup>97</sup> "This has a lot to do with the perception that it is a joint initiative [...] contributing to something in common." So, lesson learned: perhaps proposing one more team meeting every three months [...] From the second line. I say about us" (10.28). "Interagency work can trigger discussion and strengthen intersectorality. If all agencies agree on the same speech on care and gender, it is likely that we will have some influence on the public agenda and vice versa" (38.36).

<sup>98</sup> Interview 31.34.

<sup>99</sup> "When ECLAC organized something within the framework of the Fund with the Care Dialog Table, it invited the other agencies, so we created a stronger bond. The UNDP and the ILO also worked a lot with SENAF [...] If I had to point out an issue to reinforce, I think we still have a long way to go. Both from the UN side and from the side of the authorities" (3.13).

<sup>100</sup> Agency professional: "It was an attempt, but we have to continue working on finding intersections that can lead us to the territory; in my view, we are far away, there is room for improvement for that to happen" (40.7).

<sup>101</sup> Agency professional "There were deficiencies in the implementation of the design for it to be totally interagency" (7.15); "Each agency went to the counterparts with its project component" (7.21).

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which must also clear information, diagnoses and data from different areas of government, as pointed out by agency referents<sup>102</sup>.

One of the synergistic effects of the interagency initiative is what one agency official called an "increase in social capital" produced by greater interaction between agencies of the system and with government counterparts because the same process begins to generate mechanisms and channels of communication between actors.<sup>103</sup> This also involves discussing with the counterparts to identify the needs and priorities of the areas. However, some government areas point out that the discussion and interaction between them and the agencies should be optimized, although they highlight an open attitude to exchange approaches and incorporate unforeseen issues.<sup>104</sup>

In the development of inter-agency and multi-level work, several interviewees made reference to the coordination function of the JP, on which different reflections were shared. Either because one of the participating agencies was in charge of that function, which in the opinion of some agency professionals who were interviewed could bias the interventions of the coordination, or because in the opinion of the same interviewees that function should have a stronger supervision and coordination in order to avoid potential overlaps, not only between agencies but also with the government counterpart.<sup>105</sup>

According to an agency referent, the JP intends to advance in the territorialization of cooperation between the System's agencies to counteract a sectorized perception of the agencies<sup>106</sup>. In the opinion of some interviewees, formal incentives might be required for agencies to incorporate and internalize an interagency approach in all their interventions. These potential incentives range from evaluations of agencies regarding their contribution to interagency initiatives, similar evaluation periods, or the same financial management systems<sup>107</sup>. For some interviewees, inter-agency cooperation at the territorial level requires time and a cultural change for which two years would seem to be not enough, especially in the context of the reality of the

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<sup>102</sup> "Also, at the national level, what we see is that different national agencies report on the same thing, so duplication must also be identified and avoided. When you go to the provinces you also have to avoid tripling" (8.47).

<sup>103</sup> "Then we still have a long way to go, to act together in the territory [...] I think there are things that are endogenous, which may be deficiencies of each one of the components and others that have to do with how, with the counterparts" (14.8).

<sup>104</sup> "So, there is a very important difficulty for discussion in Argentina" (25.35).

<sup>105</sup> Interviews 7.19; "The coordination has to be in a position of power [...] Supervising a little, checking there are no overlaps" (7.21). "Coordination between agencies is always complex [...], a much more active participation of the agencies was sought in the design of this initiative [...] and alignment was encouraged" (3.36).

<sup>106</sup> "It is repeated in the counterparts and to a large extent our role is to continue promoting the importance of strengthening coordination, and promote the role of the coordinator and the coordination office among the counterparts" (10.36).

<sup>107</sup> "There continues to be a lack of internalization or formal incentives for agencies to also strongly incorporate this perspective" (10.32).

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country and the restrictions imposed by the pandemic in which the JP was started and developed<sup>108</sup>.

The Provincial Dialog Tables, and especially the Local Council ones, are of such significant importance that for the interviewees it is considered the most innovative component of a program that is often not perceived as inter-agency, but as a component strongly supported by UNICEF, in the opinion of a municipal official<sup>109</sup>. This is even more evident at this level, where experiences of coordination between areas and technical teams are even weaker<sup>110</sup>.

Consequently, an issue to consider in the future and in the framework of promoting an inter-agency approach in the future is the visibility of the JP and territory interventions. In the provincial and municipal jurisdictions, but also in the national counterpart, the interagency initiative is not clearly seen by certain actors, where the interventions are identified with certain agencies and not as part of a JP: *“Perhaps it was difficult for us -and this is real- to measure the magnitude of the program, beyond the direct relation with UNICEF, to understand what the involvement of the other agencies meant to the program”<sup>111</sup>; “I have no contact with the other agencies”<sup>112</sup>.*

### **Item 9: New approaches and responses & Item11: Adaptation to the COVID-19 context**

In order to facilitate the answers to the questions presented in these two points, we have opted to unify them and answer them jointly:

*Guiding questions (Item 9): To what extent have the responses of agencies, both individually and as a Program, to COVID-19 made use of innovative approaches to achieve the intended objectives and mitigate the effects of the pandemic? What has been the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the implementation of the JP and to what extent has the response of the agencies allowed the activities committed to continue?*

*Guiding questions (Item 11): To what extent have the JP and its governance structure promoted integrated and strategic technical support processes and the alignment of policies for a timely response to the COVID-19 crisis? To what extent have agencies been effective and timely in providing tailored response and guidance during the initial phases of the pandemic? What contextual and organizational culture-related factors*

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<sup>108</sup>Agency professional “But two years is a good start to test what a joint road map between agencies should be like” (2.20).

<sup>109</sup>“It allowed us [...] to think about what public policies we are going to be able to implement in 2022, to include it in the budget, consider what actors we are going to coordinate them with in order to fully exercise children’s rights [...] It allowed us to set the objectives, the goals” (22.47).

<sup>110</sup>“Local councils have made great progress in this: they have created spaces for communication, we have forced, pushed and supported them to create programs in which everyone was a part and where everybody works jointly. But the same referent points out the time factor as an issue to consider in the future: I think that six months is too little to create installed capacity for teamwork, since we know that in the public sphere, everybody protects their own sector” (20.95).

<sup>111</sup>Provincial representative, Interview 6.20.

<sup>112</sup>Local Council representative, Interview 33.44.

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*have favored the response capacity of agencies to the COVID-19 crisis? What factors are presented as inhibitors for this purpose?*

The JP started in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and consequently formulated the fifth component of the Program. The rapid response to the conditions imposed by the pandemic was highly valued by the government counterparts, who highlighted the continuity of the activities planned. As discussed in point 7.1 (item 4)<sup>113</sup> the JP adjusted its objectives, strategies and actions in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and implemented innovative approaches to achieve its objectives and mitigate -as much as possible- the effects of the pandemic. Platforms, virtual meetings and training, guides and manuals in virtual mode, studies and research on the changes imposed by COVID-19 on children, care spaces, training of technical teams and care workers.

COVID-19 imposed severe restrictions that led to the closure of spaces for socialization, care and education of children, a circumstance that affected workers in these spaces, established limitations that affected in-person training and education by imposing modalities that not all recipients were able to take advantage of since those opportunities were conditional on access to appropriate technology and, last but not least, significantly reduced the participation of families that would have participated in activities if the pandemic had not imposed extreme restrictions. In this sense, technology helped to get closer in most cases, and in others, it made it difficult to carry out the activities: *“connectivity also brought us all closer (...)”*<sup>114</sup>; *“We were able to make great progress in terms of virtuality in training... Even in the case of caregivers, who often met at the center with one or two computers”*<sup>115</sup>. *But simultaneously in other contexts virtuality implied difficulties: “We had connection issues, the Wi-Fi sometimes went out or we many times had to use mobile data, or it was cut off and we lost part of the content”*<sup>116</sup>.

As mentioned above, the JP is a flexible program that allowed rapid adaptation to an unforeseen factor such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As agency leaders pointed out, the governance structure made it possible to quickly reallocate funds to address challenges and adapt and/or multiply originally planned activities.<sup>117</sup> Approximately 20% of the funds were allocated to interventions associated with the pandemic to promote innovative responses to an exceptional situation with a high impact on the public policy agenda and the actions planned by the JP.<sup>118</sup> At the end of this point there is a list of materials produced by the JP on the subject.

In this sense, the pandemic also presented challenges to JP governance, and one of them was budget execution, execution of activities, and disbursements; these issues are addressed in the chapter on Effectiveness <sup>119</sup>. Now, the pandemic worked as a

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<sup>113</sup> Findings in relation to the relevance and strategic adjustment of the JP. Item 4 (Incidence of COVID-19 context).

<sup>114</sup> Local representative - interview 18,100 and 18,102.

<sup>115</sup> Local representative, interview 16.35.

<sup>116</sup> Local representative, interview 89.

<sup>117</sup> Interview 3.21.

<sup>118</sup> Agency professional, interview 38.71.

<sup>119</sup> Agency professional, interview 8.3.

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catalyst and the response to it was designed with a strongly interagency approach, but there are different views among the agency representatives regarding the response as JP. While some point out that the response to the pandemic “meant a hurdle from the methodological point of view, but at the same time strengthened the need to work together”<sup>120</sup> other voices point out that this component became the *only one that had activities among all the agencies. Because regarding the others, they involved either a single agency, or two agencies at most*.<sup>121</sup> This could explain, in part, the fact that in many cases the interviewees from the provincial and municipal counterparts did not recognize the JP, but rather the agency with which they carried out their activities.

The virtuality imposed by the pandemic also required adaptation by the government counterpart since in many cases they had to incorporate virtuality in a shorter time than in normal periods. Provincial and municipal counterparts saw in this a truly innovative component, especially for training courses, which allowed the incorporation of recipients from small municipalities who previously, due to logistic problems, could not participate.<sup>122</sup>

#### **Item 10. Institutional arrangements and capacities**

*Guiding questions: To what extent have management capacities and institutional arrangements supported the achievement of results? Were they adequate to ensure operations in the context of national priorities and UNS reform?*

This inter-agency initiative is highly valued by the agencies, although it was pointed out that some components have advanced in their realization and consolidation more than others. Thus, some agency voices point out that “there was a greater advance in the development of dialog tables in the provinces than at the national level; we still have that challenge”<sup>123</sup>. However, JP management cannot be analyzed without considering counterparts in their three jurisdictions. In this sense, some testimonies from provincial and municipal jurisdictions are included because they illustrate the management capacity and the effectiveness of the institutional arrangements of the JP with the counterparts: “*The most important thing was UNICEF's idea 'Organize a dialog table, make your diagnosis of the situation, propose what you think you can do to improve'*”<sup>124</sup>; “*The dialog tables managed to have this institutionality due to the support they were given*”<sup>125</sup>; “*The Program gave us a hand, evidenced what we lack and where we have to go*”<sup>126</sup>.

Other institutional arrangements of the JP allowed the development of technology and big data in strategic areas for the production of information at government levels, such

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<sup>120</sup> Agency professional: “Understanding that what we were doing was very important... strengthened the content of the process” (38.133).

<sup>121</sup> Agency professional, interview 7.10.

<sup>122</sup> Counterpart official, interviews 11.98 y 11,100.

<sup>123</sup> Agency professional, interview 3.11.

<sup>124</sup> Local Council representative, Interview 33.17.

<sup>125</sup> Provincial official, interview 9.46.

<sup>126</sup> Provincial official, Interview 9,179.

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as the Federal Map of Care (ECLAC), the Information and Monitoring System on Early Childhood developed for SINTyS (UNDP and ECLAC), research related to childhood and care, systematization of replicable good practices, and training. In this sense, the ILO (together with the MTEySS and the UPACP union) developed training manuals on child care and care work in private homes, and designed an on-line platform that not only updated previous materials but also included topics suggested by the MTEySS referring to the competencies of care personnel. Together with the SAE and seven universities, UNDP promoted the Parenting Communities project that trained tutors in order to inform and train family referents.

## **Item 12. Participation**

*Guiding questions: What has been the involvement and contribution of agents and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of the Program? To what extent did the JP guarantee the continuous participation of the actors in the execution (ideally direct beneficiaries)?*

In November 2019, a JP design validation meeting was held (the list of participants appears in the annexes of the first version of the PRODOC). At that time, comments both from social/academic organizations and government counterparts were received and then addressed and incorporated.

The Program promoted discussion and coordinated work with the different national, provincial and municipal counterparts, enabling the participation of actors and referents in the activities and in the necessary adaptations based on the specific realities. As in any heterogeneous universe of actors and competencies, perceptions can show some different emphases, where participation was appropriate<sup>127</sup> and in other cases where they mentioned the need for greater participation and spaces to validate proposals<sup>128</sup>.

Regarding the participation of the community, community organizations and religious organizations, among others, the situations were varied. In the case of the local dialog tables for childhood, in general, the provincial and municipal representative -with some exceptions- prioritized getting to know each other and coordinating with government areas so that, in a second stage, they could invite sectors of the civil society. Within the framework of the JP, specific initiatives limited in time and scope were implemented as Parenting Community, and training activities with social organizations such as La Poderosa and the Movement of Excluded Workers. Some of those consulted highly valued this opportunity to participate, which even included the evaluation process itself:

*“We had done several trainings from different places and it is the first time that we can have this exchange and say how it went, what happened to us. We always go and*

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<sup>127</sup> Provincial official “Both the needs and the projects or proposals that we had arose from the dialog tables” (16.25).

<sup>128</sup>“If I could make a suggestion out there, I would add another validation meeting with draft material, at some previous time.” (11.90).

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*it seems that we are containers, like we go and they fill us with things, and at this training we felt there was an exchange and that we could chat freely and to be able to contribute suggestions at its closing. We hadn't had anything like this before. So, super grateful" (FG5.145).*

### **Item 13. Monitoring/Follow-up**

*Guiding questions: Did the JP adequately monitor results and document information to allow measurement of their contribution to changes at product and result levels, for decision-making and accountability? (Note: consider the assessment of the use of follow-up information when making decisions and the level of adaptation of the monitoring system to the new information needs that have occurred as a result of the pandemic).*

The testimonies collected from the agencies and representatives of the government counterpart show that the JP carried out a pertinent follow-up of the results obtained in the interventions in the territory, the joint actions of research, documentation and creation of computer platforms. From the perspective of some referents of the Interagency Program, the first year was characterized by the existence of regular meetings with the participation of all the agencies where the lines of action and the necessary adjustments for decision making were analyzed, especially based on of the new demands and adaptations presented by the country in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>129</sup>. However, an agency professional pointed out that, in relation to the generation of knowledge, a highly developed component, greater synergies could have been generated for the presentation of results to all the agencies<sup>130</sup>. In relation to the national counterpart, testimonies confirm an adequate follow-up of joint activities, not only in the processes and results that were taking shape, but also in administrative matters, unforeseen institutional difficulties derived from the management of the information that was being generated. The provincial and municipal counterparts confirm the follow-up and recording of the processes and results obtained<sup>131</sup>.

The follow-up and monitoring information that could be accessed consists of the reports to the Joint Fund where the status of progress of activities and achievement of

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<sup>129</sup> "That worked well enough, let's say, I think there was a rigorous follow-up, a well-developed system, support, deadlines forced us to make things go quite well. I think that worked, I think that that worked well, the reports were fine, they were finally on time, etc." (31.75); "During practically the whole year we met with some regularity and we keep in contact" (12.57).

<sup>130</sup> "More instances like this would have been good [...] Transcending those mechanisms that are rather interpersonal [...], generating more formal instances that we don't just get together for a meeting that was, sometimes – it must be said – a bit bureaucratic. I think that it would be better to design some other more substantive and not so bureaucratic issues for the Follow-up Committee" (8.33).

<sup>131</sup> "Control and demand, since there is a commitment from the government because they signed, they did it through an executive order, I think it is a tool, what they had to buy after presenting the budget in the way they wanted (in other words, that UNICEF asked) is written, so it should be demanded..., well, you signed, now fulfill your commitment" (30.170). "UNICEF has its own team, they already have a lot of work and time, they have people who are very well trained to measure indicators and they helped us" (19.89).



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results and goals proposed are recorded based on the indicators proposed in the PRODOC. This report, according to the coordination and the agencies, was made with the contribution of each agency and its product is the consolidated result of the joint work. In this sense, it is worth highlighting a good integration given that no differences were observed regarding the execution of activities by agency. On the other hand, there is other additional documentation prepared by the coordination that presents what was done in 2020 and the execution challenges for 2021, which shows not only the level of achievement attained but also a reflection regarding expected results. The challenge is to achieve a better balance in relation to two axes: a) the production of studies and documents with information and data with the activities impacting on the territory and on the public policies applied and; b) between early childhood and the debate on the care system. For the latter, it was considered necessary to rethink the "innovation" component from a broader perspective, expand territorial coverage and involve more actors, children and families, women and caregivers based on training for effectors and the replicability of the systematized experiences as well as support the communication and visibility strategy of the program and the systematization of the added value of the interagency as a contribution to accelerating the achievement of SDGs and the work of UN agencies in Argentina.

### **7.3 Findings in relation to efficiency**

#### **Item 14. Resources**

*Guiding questions: Has the JP strategically assigned financial, human and temporary resources to guarantee the achievement of results by the expected deadlines, and does it show a level of financial execution that is consistent with the level of progress in technical execution? Has the transformation of resources into results been efficient?*

According to what was observed in the documentary analysis, the reports indicate very good levels of execution of the activities. In relation to the committed results, they reached between 65 and 70% during the first year, and 95% in December 2021, two months before completion. Regarding budget execution, 82.1% was reached during 2020, with reallocation of resources to be executed for the year 2021. This aspect was already pointed out in Section 7.1, since it was related to the adaptation to the context of the COVID-19 epidemic and the social isolation policy. During 2021, budget execution -including what was committed- reached 96%; the remaining part is intended for the last two months.

As mentioned in the previous point, the reports show that the financial support was suitable for the technical execution, enabling the development of most of the actions within the expected times or adaptations to achieve results and goals. The information available to evaluate this aspect includes an aggregate level that corresponds to that of coordination and reports to the Joint SDG Fund, so it is not possible to reach more specific conclusions. In any case, the evidence linked to the products designed within the framework of the project, both at the documentary level and as regards the existence of information systems, platforms and websites, corroborate the reported results.

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According to the testimonies of the representatives of the agencies, the management of the Program in relation to resources/results has been adequate and remarkable, the goals were generally achieved, and the budget was fully executed in accordance with the general guidelines established. This is considered a measure of the JP's success, despite some activities not having been completed within the established time frame.

As mentioned in Section 7.1., the JP governance scheme assigns a strong political-institutional leadership role to the Resident Coordinator and the RCO, the entity responsible for coordination and reporting with the Common Fund Secretariat. This Office has a key role in supporting the joint initiatives of the UNS agencies in the country, in accordance with the directives of the system at a global level, and therefore attaches great importance to the opportunity of having non-reimbursable resources to promote interagency coordination initiatives, as in the case of the JP.

According to the Office, much of its work consists of promoting and ensuring consistency, both programmatic and operational, coordinated action among agencies, within the framework of their respective tasks, promoting efficiency in the parts and as a whole.

In this role, the action of the Coordination Office, together with UNICEF as the lead agency, according to the people interviewed, has been very important during the first year of the JP, particularly in two moments of the development of the activities.

On the one hand, a need for programmatic readjustment. As mentioned, as a result of the change of government, the JP required adjustment to reconcile the initial agenda focused on early childhood with the requirements of the care agenda of a new actor, the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity. In the course of the activities of the first year, a certain imbalance between the two was observed, which motivated intervention to harmonize interests and expectations.

At another point, the intervention was aimed at resolving an operational problem that affected all the agencies when the second disbursement planned was blocked because one of them had not fully executed the budget due to procedural issues and counterpart authorizations. This problem also generated some tension, and was highlighted by agency referents who were interviewed as an issue to resolve in future programs.

The agencies have pointed out that, to a large extent, this kind of difficulties resulted from the fact that the program execution requirements, based on the alignment of components in a time line, do not always match political and government priorities, which are generally uncoordinated. Prior to the existence of the JP, each agency already had channels of communication with its government counterparts and, given the lack of an executive unit to monitor the execution of the program as a whole, the more individual channels of relationship are maintained, which not always complement each other effectively. The consequent delays and lags can affect the efficiency of both individual and joint actions.

In terms of management efficiency, the JP's decision to separate the technical leadership from the administrative leadership and maintain a coordination unit was

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considered correct, so as not to overload responsibilities in a single agency, and to specialize the task of coordinating, ensure follow-up, etc., on a specific team.

Referents from UNICEF highlighted that, in the face of some implementation problems, the agency -in its role as lead agency-, acted as a catalyst to collaborate in solving problems of other agencies, guiding towards alternative solutions to the difficulties that arose.

An issue that required review, as professionals from the agencies pointed out, was the problem generated in an account administrated by UNDP, with funds assigned for Coordination, whose processing caused some confusion among the agencies<sup>132</sup> and administrative management difficulties for the Coordination<sup>133</sup>.

On the positive side, the flexibility shown was recognized so that, given the rescheduling of activities due to the pandemic, funds could be quickly reallocated to address some of the challenges posed by the health crisis.

The testimonies collected at the provincial and local levels, mainly related to the actions in the territory, carried out by UNICEF, lead to some considerations on the subject.

In the query about the resources made available, in general interviewees considered them adequate, which is not frequent in places generally in need of economic support. A provincial official highlighted that, in some cases, the pandemic and a rapid conversion from face-to-face to virtual activities significantly reduced the expenses that are usually incurred<sup>134</sup>. In others, it seems that in the opinion of these people, the recognition for the support received from the representatives of the Program in times of difficulty has prevailed over any claim.

Other testimonies, in turn, mention the value of the symbolic resource, which seems appropriate to appreciate in fair measure by the agencies that make up the JP. According to what has been observed, in the opinion of many referents, this concept includes both: a) the technical competence (expertise) that is attributed to the professionals that the agencies assign to the tasks of the Program<sup>135</sup>, and b) the weight of the public institutional image of the agency, the high value it has for the community, which gives it enough convening power to promote initiatives with the characteristics that the Territorial Dialog Tables have, for example<sup>136</sup>.

It is also worth mentioning that, in relation to resources in the territory, and as a motivating factor to support the sustainability of the Dialog Tables, it was suggested in

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<sup>132</sup> "That was somewhat, at one point, very confusing. It is worth revising" (7.21).

<sup>133</sup> "What we did was make that money available to the agencies when they lacked resources, and that took us a long time to manage" (1.26).

<sup>134</sup> "In principle, it was enough... in a framework of hybrid work like the one we still have from last year" (35-21).

<sup>135</sup> For example, as a provincial professional mentioned, "The amount of accompaniment is minimal [...] [but] it guarantees adding some people, expert advisers who add a lot of value" (19.46).

<sup>136</sup> "Just the fact of being allies of UNICEF (19.46); It is an organization that is already legitimized- It guarantees visibility and causes many actors to become interested" (19.50).

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the focus groups that there would be ways to immediately channel small aid to some initiatives, especially those aimed at the sectors that are considered most neglected<sup>137</sup>.

Regarding the management of resources in the territory, a hurdle that is frequently encountered is also the complexity or the pace of the local administrative culture - through which the flow of funds must necessarily pass-, which often conspires against the requirements of the Program in different phases of its development, some of them critical. The need to seek mechanisms to simplify procedures on this issue has been pointed out.

### **Item 15. Interagency intervention**

*Guiding questions: Was the JP intervention more efficient compared to what could have been done by a single-agency intervention?*

In the documentary analysis, interesting elements have been found to characterize the positioning of the participating agencies in the inter-agency intervention/individual intervention relationship. In this regard, some advantages observed and recorded as part of the design and implementation process can be pointed out:<sup>138</sup>:

- Inter-agency coordination and resource mobilization were a value added by the JP when it came to concentrating joint actions to achieve direct effects.
- It created synergy in relation to integration policies and change systems, thanks to the willingness and political intention of governments to develop comprehensive public policies on care, prioritizing early childhood and populations suffering multiple discriminations; the JP was able to capitalize on this synergy for the generation of inter-agency, inter-sectoral communication and in the construction of the new institutional framework on which the proposal is based.
- The policy of alliances was based on a common history of cooperation between the RCO, the UNS agencies, governments and other society actors involved, which was evaluated as a strength to enable continuity despite the change in administration. In this sense, it is understood that the alliances built allowed the SDGs to be strengthened in the state agenda, based on previous trust and the governance mechanisms of the program.
- Participation in the JP strengthened the different agencies and help to the construction of a comprehensive view of the issue, which involved contributions in relation to innovation, learning and exchange not only inter-agency but also within each agency.
- The JP helped to strengthen national capacities to implement accelerators of the SDGs in the identification of the status of the situation, built from the perspectives of each agency and by the RCO, and the relationship of the diagnosis with the

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<sup>137</sup> “For any activity that you want to do (in the disability field), having the funds is very important” (FG 4.84)

<sup>138</sup> The observations included below correspond to content related to the 2021 Annual Report, pp. 4, 6, 7, 9, 16.

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implementation of strengthening strategies with national and subnational counterparts.

- They consider that the organization in the designation of a lead agency, the RCO and the Coordination Unit resulted in an efficient management of the program when coordinating and supervising the joint work processes and an active and open communication policy.

The counterpart representatives consulted (as indicated in other points of this Report) for the most part could not identify the other member agencies of the JP, except those with which they had direct relation.

Several testimonies from the agencies used the concept of "fragmentation", both referring to the demand that is posed to the agencies and to the supply that they present to government agencies; the proposal of UNS joint programs focuses on this issue.

Beyond the significant coordination effort required from the technical team to prepare the basic document of the Program, the first phase of its execution was marked by what an interviewee defined as an "automatic logic" of action<sup>139</sup>, based on the procedures and the organizational culture of each agency. From the perspective of a provincial official, a certain tendency towards fragmentation within the agencies themselves has also been pointed out, which does not always contribute to the search for the desired comprehensive view<sup>140</sup>.

This "fragmentation of demand" in the areas of early childhood and care in the government sector was pointed out by several agency officials interviewed, given the lack of what they understand as a governing body, able to unify the requirements that are formulated to cooperation agencies<sup>141</sup>. This circumstance apparently involved a greater coordination effort, added to that of the coordination of a "joint supply", based on a common agenda. Undoubtedly, the action of the coordination team and the RCO contributed to this<sup>142</sup>.

The aforementioned issue, the different operational scales of the agencies and the attention to administrative issues that several interviewees pointed out as a factor to review in future similar initiatives, had, beyond what was expected, a considerable weight on the tasks of the Program Coordination.

However, even though -in part- each agency "continued working on their own agenda" and the process was not exempt from difficulties, it seems that the coordination team had the capacity to establish the necessary agreements on issues, criteria, indicators,

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<sup>139</sup> "Although there is surely a lot of room to continue strengthening that alignment, I think we have been observing this learning throughout the program" (3.31).

<sup>140</sup> "Not so much fragmentation [...] We must contribute to the integration of public policies" (35.47).

<sup>141</sup> "In Argentina, competences in these issues are distributed partly in the provinces, partly in the municipalities and some issues at the national level. The issue appears in very dissimilar agendas [...] So, each one has different views and there is no clear direction" (3.39).

<sup>142</sup> Agency Professional: "Care becomes the priority on the agenda" (1.39).

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and a shared vision complemented with the particular visions of each one of them on the focused issues, in line with their mission and technical profile.

The efficient achievement of joint results peaked in various activities undertaken by the JP, which are mentioned in different points of this Report, and that in this sense are also reported here as examples of the progress made.

In terms of interagency cooperation in a technology-based product, the aforementioned project carried out jointly by UNDP and ECLAC for SINTyS stands out. As a new fact, and that reinforces the objective pursued by the Program, its public presentation will be made jointly by the entity and both agencies.

Among other activities that showed inter-agency synergies, in the achievement of the objective of raising awareness and information, we can point out the development by the ILO of the podcast *Someone Takes Care*, which involved the participation of other agencies and was widely distributed. Also, in the production of information and evidence on JP issues, the ECLAC-UNDP publication *Care and women in times of COVID-19: the experience in Argentina*.

In addition to these products, the scope of the JP facilitated collaboration based on specialized knowledge and orientation towards the joint work<sup>143</sup> of various agencies (for example, IOM with UNICEF in a requested work on the migrant population) and enabled mutual knowledge among specialists (“when faced with such an issue, now I know who I can turn to”), which contributes to the development of professional networks in the field of interest of the JP.

In conclusion, although it is admitted that it can only be seen as a first step, there is a generalized and positive opinion among the referents of the agencies regarding the progress achieved and the commitment to seek improvements in successive phases of joint work.

## **Item 16. Transaction cost reduction**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the JP contributed to improving the consistency and efficiency of the UN team in the country (by reducing transaction costs)?*

In the previous point, the advantages in this sense that the JP has provided to the participating agencies have already been pointed out. In the elaboration of technological products and services, in activities where knowledge and specialized experiences are shared, these advantages are highlighted as evident. As well as the development of networks for the exchange of resources, services, sources of information and knowledge. The value of the JP having become a propitious and open environment for learning and the production of materials of great professional worth, especially on new topics, has been recognized.

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<sup>143</sup>Agency professional: “In our country strategy and in our programmatic design, the interagency program is one of the points to which we give the highest priority” (12.22).

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In addition to the other cases of collaboration mentioned, the case of joint IOM-UNICEF work is worth pointing out. Despite not being a member of the JP, IOM provided UNICEF with technical support for setting objectives and selecting a consulting team for the *Study on the organization of early childhood care with a gender perspective in migrant families within the JP framework*, providing also supervision of reports, collaboration in the delimitation of the field of study, etc.<sup>144</sup>. In addition, it was invited to participate in the production of the podcast *Someone Takes Care*.

#### **Item 17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the JP mobilized resources (both financial and in terms of specialized knowledge) to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in an integrated manner? Orientation towards impact and sustainability*

According to the records, in the opinion of the technical managers of the agencies that were interviewed, the mobilization of the Program's resources in the face of the pandemic, mainly through the execution of the aforementioned Product 5 in response to the impact of COVID-19, was timely and responded to requirements.

The circumstances of the pandemic also enabled the availability of items that could be allocated to new activities or the reinforcement of existing ones. One decision in this regard was the reallocation of funds to carry out studies aimed at generating evidence. As an example, the cooperation with a new actor, the Ministry of Economy (MECON), through its area of Economy, Equality and Gender, was mentioned<sup>145</sup>.

As mentioned in Section 7.1, this mobilization resulted in numerous studies on the impact of the pandemic on women and families, the work carried out by the ILO to train caregivers, training actions in different areas, which in many cases created installed capacities to provide future responses to the problems derived from COVID-19.

### **7.4 Findings in relation to sustainability**

#### **Item 18. Sustainability**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the strategy adopted by the JP contributed to the sustainability of the results, especially with regard to "leaving no one behind" in terms of comprehensive early childhood protection?*

As noted, the JP made a strategic contribution to the comprehensive protection of early childhood based on the coordination of the agenda among the four agencies and the support and collaboration with government counterparts. The implementation of the JP in the territory was centrally developed by UNICEF, which contributed to the development and strengthening and expansion of the Provincial and Local Council

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<sup>144</sup> "There is also interest when there is an invitation that does not imply being part of a program, for example, it implies providing technical support or participating from another role" (12.80).

<sup>145</sup> UNICEF-MECON (2019) *Challenges of public policies in the face of the care crisis... Impact of the pandemic on households with children and adolescents headed by women*.

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Dialog Tables for early childhood, institutional resources whose continuity over time in some locations is confirmed<sup>146</sup>.

An issue worth highlighting in terms of sustainability is the commitment achieved by local governments and technical referents and the ability of the implemented strategies to be replicable in the future, as they installed a diagnosis and management methodology through assistance technique and effective processes of qualification and training of local representatives<sup>147</sup>.

In relation to the central perspective of "leaving no one behind", vacancies are identified mainly in the disability area. The issue arose in the Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables, but its promotion should continue to put it on government agendas at the national and subnational levels, since significant deficits have been pointed out in terms of diagnoses, statistical data and, consequently, public policies aimed at responding to these problems.

The Local Dialog Tables managed, with greater or lesser progress -depending on the province or municipality- to discuss these issues.<sup>148</sup> This matter gains relevance in the context of the pandemic, because it deepened associated problems, given that the closure of spaces for socialization and early childhood education have worsened vulnerability and increased care, prevention and early detection deficits<sup>149</sup>.

The development of technology and big data in strategic areas of the government with the Federal Map of Care (CEPAL), the Information and Monitoring System on Early Childhood developed for the SINTyS (UNDP and ECLAC) within the framework of the JP, the research on childhood and care, the systematization of replicable good practices, all these initiatives and products that seek to strengthen the JP strategy of "leaving no one behind", lay good foundations for the sustainability of the achievements made.

Sustainability is strongly associated with the identification of good practices and their potential for replicability, necessarily accompanied by the commitment of political decision-makers, the availability of trained technical teams, and the necessary institutional and budgetary resources. In this line, the JP has remarked the importance of organized and common reasoning of the problems in the agenda of Dialog Tables, and has transferred methodologies and tools that have been valued by local participants.

The national, provincial and municipal representatives interviewed point to "continuity" as a key issue, expected and promoted by those who have actively

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<sup>146</sup>Provincial official: "The Interministerial Dialog Table is already settled, with highly committed technical professionals. So, there is a demand even from the dialog table itself to continue working. Territorial dialog tables too" (16.76).

<sup>147</sup>"Agency Professional: "I would say that in the provinces this perspective is here to say" (2.61).

<sup>148</sup>Provincial official: "Being mentioned at the dialog tables allowed us to show that the problem is there, that we exist" (34,122).

<sup>149</sup>Noted in a focus group: "The difficulties we have had in terms of language acquisition after the pandemic are remarkable" (FG3.104).



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participated in the activities carried out within the JP framework<sup>150</sup>. This is evidenced by the communication and advocacy actions undertaken to promote the processes of institutionalization of the progress made with the Local Dialog Tables in early childhood and care, through provincial executive orders and municipal ordinances on which there have been significant progress<sup>151</sup>. In some cases, the experience of participation and joint discussion seems to have prompted the revision of organizational charts, functions or allocations in specific sectors of local administrations.

### **Item 19. Long-term ownership**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the JP supported long-term acceptance, leadership and ownership by the Government and other stakeholders?*

The JP has contributed to the strengthening of local leadership and the long-term ownership of the results obtained in its implementation. In this process, it expanded and diversified relations with substantive areas of the national, provincial and municipal government and contributed significantly to strengthening the use of technology and big data in strategic areas, transferred methodologies, trained human resources and produced a set of studies and research that are inputs of great value for the design of evidence-based public policies.

The Program has also promoted intersectoral strategies in and with government counterparts and has been a key factor in strengthening leadership and ownership of comprehensive approaches in early childhood and care. It is known that in Argentina there is a significant heterogeneity in institutional conditions and resources and approaches to childhood and rights, and it is on these issues that work should continue in the future, since the formulation of common strategies by the agencies contributes to promoting the coordination of government counterparts.

The JP has strengthened local technical resources because -as a provincial official stated- "the greatest difficulty of the municipal teams is education and training [...] and this program has helped us to stop, think and diagnose [...], it has strengthened the local resource"<sup>152</sup>. In this line, the contribution of the JP to government agencies for the application of technology in terms of information production, strengthening and transferring tools and knowledge to the government counterpart and its technical teams gains importance<sup>153</sup>.

It emerges from interview accounts that the technical teams have made the corresponding provisions, either -in the case of interventions in territory- by promoting intersectoral spaces, training local actors and providing materials and work guides to

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<sup>150</sup> Agency professional, interview 38,129. "We created installed capacity in each municipality" (20.33).

<sup>151</sup> Noted in a focus group: "[The JP] helped put the issue of early childhood on the agenda and made the various institutions realize that it is a common issue" (FG2)

<sup>152</sup> Interview 6.22.

<sup>153</sup> Counterpart official: "It is a transformation that has to do with the culture of work and the value of information records" (17.54).

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be able to replicate the experiences, or by developing technology-based products, trying to implement easily accessible technical solutions for future updates or expansions, and training the responsible personnel in the assisted organizations in critical skills<sup>154</sup>.

### **Item 20-21. Durability of results**

*Guiding questions: How likely are results to be sustained beyond the JP through action by the Government and other stakeholders and/or UN teams in the country? How effective has the JP been in building national ownership and the capacity of people and institutions to respond to the challenges of comprehensive early childhood protection, coordinating training policies for decent work in the care sector through strengthening the skills of child caregivers and education workers? Are national partners willing and able to sustain the benefits/results after the JP and funding end?*

The results achieved by the JP have laid the foundation for the continued and sustained development of a comprehensive strategy that addresses early childhood rights and care<sup>155</sup>. There are achievements that have been synergically embraced by the government counterpart, such as the computer systems developed with the MDS with the ministry's servers and its own technical teams<sup>156</sup>.

The Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables are innovative mechanisms for local representatives because they promoted and demonstrated to their participants the potential and real achievements to be obtained through joint work. As one interviewee points out "we had never met to discuss in many years of management". The JP has effectively contributed to bringing together institutional channels at the territorial level that often worked in parallel<sup>157</sup>.

However, it is necessary to consider that two years is a short term to consolidate progress and replicate achievements. In Argentina, the competences in this matter are distributed among the National State, the provinces and the municipalities. As previously mentioned in Section 7.3, for the agencies' referents, the approaches, the intervening areas, the available resources, are heterogeneous and unequal.<sup>158</sup>. One of the results of the absence of a clear leadership on the subject is the fragmentation of interventions in the areas of early childhood and care in the government sector, an

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<sup>154</sup> Agency official: "It is a model that, to this day, both the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Women have. When they want to propose different care investment scenarios, they have this model "(7.42).

<sup>155</sup> "Now it is a tool that the State can continue to use" (7.42).

<sup>156</sup> Agency official: "Sustainability is great because intellectual installed capacities were created" (14.49).

<sup>157</sup> Provincial professional: "We streamlined a lot of relationships and alignment for the child protection system" (19.77).

<sup>158</sup> Agency professionals: The issue appears in very dissimilar agendas [...] Each one has different views and there is no clear direction" (3). 39).

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issue that cannot be resolved in the short term and requires interjurisdictional construction<sup>159</sup>.

Time, support and technical assistance to counterparts are needed to sustain and expand a common approach to children's rights in which they intervene, promotion of the rights of those who provide care (strongly feminized activity) and quality of care spaces. From the interviews with participants of the Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables, it emerges that in most cases the Dialog Tables for Early Childhood show commitment and a decision to continue coordinating and inviting referents from the civil society. However, as provincial representatives state, the conviction of the governmental areas to keep the rights of early childhood on the agenda is very important, and therefore they consider there should be support after the completion of the JP<sup>160</sup>. The coordination and sharing of objectives and goals of a comprehensive and participatory strategy on the subject is a process that requires time<sup>161</sup>.

## **Item 22. Support to follow-up mechanisms**

*Guiding questions: How has the JP supported participatory and transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for national policies and plans to strengthen accountability and corrections in implementation?*

The JP has contributed significantly to strengthening human and technical resources at the national and territorial levels that empower governments and civil society to generate and sustain participatory monitoring and evaluation processes, training and educating local resources<sup>162</sup>. These knowledge transfer processes, methodologies, indicators and ways of managing the implementation of policies are highlighted and highly valued by the people interviewed<sup>163</sup>. However, some weaknesses are pointed out in the implementation at the territorial level that must be considered in the face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The perception shows the need to support and continue working on strengthening management, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms<sup>164</sup>.

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<sup>159</sup> Agency professionals: "The initiative at the local level is going to be very difficult and heterogeneous and I think that it can certainly be highlighted as something to work on in the coming years" (3.39).

<sup>160</sup> "The continuity of the work depends on the political decision of mayors, ministers, governors" (9.100).

<sup>161</sup> Counterpart Professional: "'Deep discussions with many actors are very difficult" (35.27).

<sup>162</sup> Provincial official: "The program strengthened real, local technical capacity. With what was available, in the territory, at the provincial level and at the local level, at the local dialog tables" (6.58).

<sup>163</sup> Agency Professional: "There was a very valuable virtuous circle" (12.18).

<sup>164</sup> Provincial professional: "Joint work, co-management, monitoring, co-responsibility is still a challenge [...] After the pandemic our institutions are weaker than before, coordination or alignment are axes to continue working on because they are not institutionalized" (32,153).

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### **Item 23. Participation of civil society**

*Guiding questions: Has the participation of the civil society been strengthened, even in decision-making and the evaluation of national policies and programs, as well as in terms of accountability? Have men and women gotten significantly involved?*

As already mentioned in item 12, in November 2019 a JP design validation meeting was held, and the comments received both from social/academic organizations and government counterparts were addressed and incorporated.

However, during the JP implementation stage, the participation of civil society organizations has not been as relevant. Some referents of the participating agencies recognize that at this point the Program has not reached the expected level of achievement, and that "it is one of the points that we should reinforce the most"<sup>165</sup>. Although it is an issue promoted by the Program and the agencies, at the national level, it was executed centrally with the different areas of the national government and at the provincial and local levels with the government counterparts<sup>166</sup>. Naturally, this issue has different incidence and modalities depending on the type of intervention and product to be obtained, whether it is, for example, the development of a technological device or the strengthening of community capacities to promote change.

For example, civil society organizations, in general, did not participate organically Dialog Tables for childhood<sup>167</sup>. Apparently, this was because of decisions at the local level. But there were several activities in the Program that did involve them. In this regard, different experiences are identified among the community organizations consulted. From those who value the opportunity that the Program gave them to get together -even virtually-, receive training and share experiences, to others who complain about the short time and the completion of the project: "When a bond was generated and strengthened, the program was over. So, we continue to be in the groups, but there is no longer any communication, the families themselves have been leaving the groups"<sup>168</sup>.

Representatives from the community participated in some local council dialog tables, but in general the provincial and municipal representatives chose to call, convince and strengthen the participation of the different institutional areas to define objectives, problems, status of the issue of childhood and care in order to, later, in a second stage,

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<sup>165</sup> Professionals from agencies, interview 3.64.

<sup>166</sup> Agency professionals: "We had conflicts with some initiatives because many times, and particularly in our country, civil society is very permeated by political tendencies" (10.45). "The action of the program was focused on the government. I think that was where all the action was concentrated, it was even planned that the private sector, the Civil Society, even the media, etc., would also get more involved, but I think that ended up being instrumental" (31,105).

<sup>167</sup> Provincial official: "There is a lot of territorial work by social movements on care issues, especially the most recognized movements such as Evita, La Poderosa, the CCC" (9,104); "But they do not participate in the dialog tables" (9.116).

<sup>168</sup> Noted in a focus group: FG4.137.

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invite social, religious, academic organizations, etc.<sup>169</sup>. Perhaps in some cases this criterion adopted at the local level was not properly explained<sup>170</sup>.

#### **Item 24. Contribution to SDGs**

*Guiding questions: To what extent has the JP contributed to accelerating the SDGs (target SDG 4.2, SDG target 5.4 and target SDG 8.5) at the national level? To what extent has the JP contributed to the achievement of the results of the MECNUD (specifically, in the area of "Protection and universal access to essential services" of the MECNUD 2016-2020 and the dimension of Social Protection and Governance of the MECNUD 2021- 2025) and national development priorities?*

According to the PRODOC guidelines, the JP contribution to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs at the national level, specifically focuses on the following Goals<sup>171</sup>:

- Target 4.2: ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood development and care services and pre-school education, in order to be ready for primary school.
- Target 5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and by promoting shared responsibility in the home and family, as appropriate in each country.
- Target 8.5: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including youth and persons with disabilities, as well as equal pay for work of equal value.

The actions of the JP are also part of the priorities established by the national government (at the time of the formulation of the initial PRODOC), with respect to the fight against poverty and the targeting of social investment in the most vulnerable groups, with national plans and policies aiming to:

- Achieve healthy early childhood development;
- Improve education quality;
- Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Promote inclusion and provide comprehensive care to people with disabilities, among others.

The JP, as mentioned in Section 7.1 of this Report, took as a reference for the design of the Provincial Strategies of its intervention the purpose established by the ENPI<sup>172</sup>, which is based on five areas related to different SDGs:

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<sup>169</sup> Provincial official: "We are not a mature political society to put them all at the same table in a project that had a great challenge, which was to achieve a matrix, an interministerial (intersecretarial) dialog table in a very short time. So, the truth is, we realized that it was going to be a problem" (20.136).

<sup>170</sup> Provincial official: "I understand that they were only from the government (34.126).

<sup>171</sup> PRODOC, pages 7-8.

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- Life and health (SDG 2 and 3).
  - Identity (SDG 16).
  - Conditions to guarantee upbringing (SDG 1 and 8).
  - Education and care for development (SDG 4 and 1).
  - Promotion and protection of rights in situations of risk and/or violation (SDG 5, 10, 16).

On the other hand, the JP aligned its intervention with the guidelines of the Strategic Cooperation Framework for Development of the United Nations, Argentine Republic, (MECNUD) 2016 - 2020, which in the presentation of its Cooperation Area II, Protection and access to essential services, and direct effects 4, 5 y 6<sup>173</sup> states:

*By 2020, the country will have: 4. Reduced the territorial and economic gaps for universal access to health in order to improve health throughout life, especially maternal, child and adolescent health; to control and prevent communicable and chronic non-communicable diseases (including immune-preventable ones) and to reduce injuries due to external causes (e.g. those caused by traffic accidents); all for the promotion of a longer healthy and productive life expectancy, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable sectors, taking into account the strategic and intersectoral approach to the determinants of health. 5. Reduced social and territorial gaps for early childhood, improved educational quality; reduced the digital gap, repetition and dropout from secondary education; and improved access to higher education. 6. Designed and implemented social protection and inclusion policies aimed at the full exercise of social rights through universal access to quality essential services with a gender perspective and special emphasis on groups with aggravated discrimination.*

The JP also followed the provisions of the Strategic Cooperation Framework for Development of the United Nations of Argentina (MECNUD) 2021 - 2025, which, in its Social Development Cooperation Line Dimension, Effect 4<sup>174</sup> establishes:

*By 2025, the country will have strengthened its evidence-based social protection systems to reinforce the rights approach and the gender perspective, adjust its design and planning, reduce its fragmentation, guarantee access to quality basic services, and ensure levels of provision sufficient to reduce poverty and extreme poverty throughout the territory.*

Mentioning the following strategic lines of cooperation:

4.1. Provide support to State institutions so that, based on evidence, they improve the design, efficiency and monitoring of social protection mechanisms, especially those aimed at children and adolescents, people with disabilities, senior citizens, people in precarious employment situations and people living in informal settlements.

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<sup>172</sup>It is important to highlight the fact that the ENPI is approved by Executive Order 750/19, so that even after the change of government, taking it as a reference made it possible to work with a certain predictability.

<sup>173</sup> MECNUD 2016-2020, pages 15-16.

<sup>174</sup> MECNUD 2021-2015, pages 40-41.

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4.2. Support the State in the identification and consolidation of alternatives for the financial sustainability of the social protection system, in such a way as to guarantee total coverage of populations in conditions of poverty and exclusion, and equity in allocations and access to opportunities.

In its Governance Dimension Cooperation Line, it formulates the following strategic priority:

*By 2025, the country will have improved inclusive governance, efficiency, and effectiveness of public management through interinstitutional, intergovernmental, and interjurisdictional coordination and multilateral cooperation. Also, it will have improved compliance with international human rights and gender regulations, and will have strengthened participation mechanisms for all populations, especially those in conditions of greater vulnerability, incorporating a gender and intersectionality perspective.*

To assess the progress made by the JP to comply with the commitments established by this broad cooperation framework of the UNS with the national government, information from documentary analysis and survey work carried out in the field has been used.

In its 2021 Progress Report, the JP lists the following activities carried out within the framework of its Theory of Change, and consequently related to the acceleration of the SDG<sup>175</sup>:

- The support to the development and operation of Provincial Dialog Tables contributed to improving the planning of policies oriented to early childhood, designed from an intersectoral perspective, based on evidence, with defined goals, identifying the financial resources necessary to achieve them and incorporating a focus on rights, equity and interculturality.
- The systematization and documentation of innovative experiences will enable their replication in new contexts.
- The generation of evidence through studies and other tools (such as surveys) allows improving the design and management of public policies related to early childhood and care. Specifically, the rapid generation of timely and robust evidence on the impacts of the pandemic on early childhood was useful to inform decision-making and identify new necessary actions to which the JP could contribute, such as strengthening the capacities of workers in early childhood spaces to address the socio-emotional impact on children.
- The training actions helped to strengthen the skills of the workers, the leadership teams in charge of the education and care centers, and the staff of state agencies such as the CNCPS and the MMGyD.
- The improvement at the national and subnational level in the information systems on education and care services and the instruments for their collection allows for more complete and regular data on the supply of services, while promoting the use of sources of information already available.

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<sup>175</sup> Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report.

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Regarding the link between the JP and the MECNUD/Cooperation Framework, the same document highlights that:

- The Program has contributed to advancing in the area of cooperation on "universal protection and access to essential services" of MECNUD 2016-2020. In particular, it has contributed to direct effects that addressed the social and territorial gaps for early childhood (ED 2.2), for example, through technical support to the Dialog Tables for Early Childhood, including support for the development of Comprehensive Strategies for Early Childhood at the provincial and municipal levels in four provinces and in 18 municipalities. Also, the various studies and numerous training sessions have contributed towards the development of a comprehensive care policy that involves the promotion of personal autonomy, care and assistance to dependent people (product 2.3.2) within the framework of direct effect 2.3, aimed at the design and implementation of social protection and inclusion policies for the full exercise of social rights through universal access to quality essential services.
- The JP has generated added value through interagency coordination and the mobilization of resources around products that allow concentrating joint actions in pursuit of the aforementioned direct effects.
- The products of the JP continue to be relevant in the framework of the MECNUD 2021-2025, in particular in the Social Protection and Governance dimensions. The design of the program and the interrelationship between its products are in line with the integrated approach to sustainable development on which the MECNUD is based.

The information obtained from field work, in exchanges with members of the agencies, professionals and authorities of the counterparts, representatives of provincial and municipal governments, referents of Dialog Tables and social organizations, etc. indicates a high degree of achievement of the JP objectives.

In order to accelerate the SDGs, the Interagency Program implemented a variety of activities based on five intervention logics: a) Activities in the territory at the national, provincial and municipal levels<sup>176</sup>; b) Production of studies, research, and documents that gained relevance due to the importance that the area of care acquired and due to the need to generate and update information on the social, economic, and emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; c) Training for a very broad but specific spectrum of recipients (local effectors, families, workers of care and education centers and child care); d) Development of Information and Big Data systems that strengthened the own resources of the government areas in innovation and technology<sup>177</sup>; e) Communication and awareness tools for raising awareness about parenting practices, children's rights,

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<sup>176</sup> UNICEF (Territorial Dialog Tables); ILO (Training Paths for Upbringing Workers (job dimension associated with the care and financial autonomy of women); UNDP (Parenting Community); Program Coordination (training and financing for the strengthening of 20 spaces of the MTE and La Poderosa).

<sup>177</sup> Federal Map of Care carried out by ECLAC, INDEC and the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity; indicators on early childhood by SINTyS with funding from UNDP and ECLAC; a platform financed by UNDP with the Secretariat for Strategic Affairs, among others.



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care, training of care personnel, guaranteeing consistency between the communication activities of each agency and the general strategy of the JP.

In the activities carried out with counterparts at the national and subnational levels, the JP strategically contributed to promoting and strengthening the inclusion on the public agenda of a comprehensive early childhood development, care and education policy aimed at the population whose rights have been violated. It did so by supporting and strengthening local resources and promoting the commitment of political decision makers<sup>178</sup>. In this line, the JP has contributed to strengthening political decisions and technical and human resources in the areas of protection and universal access to essential services, to define national and local development and governance priorities.<sup>179</sup>

The JP's contribution to achieving these goals must be weighed in light of an exceptional circumstance such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had a direct physical and emotional impact, not only on the rights of children and adolescents, but also on families, women and men who saw their chances of work and employment reduced: closed kindergartens and schools, families with no income, unemployment due to closure of activities with different impacts on women and men (a particularly serious case, that of domestic work).

Under these conditions, and beyond the efforts made by the Program, the effective possibilities of mitigating inequalities in the distribution of care tasks and resolving issues such as the obstacles that make it difficult for women to obtain decent paid work (SDG 5.4) , and the expansion of the demand for decent female and male employment, particularly in care services (SDG.8.5) were deeply affected and will require time and specific policies not only to achieve them, but also to recover the conditions prior to the crisis. The agencies have a future challenge that can possibly (and hopefully) be faced with other initiatives such as the JP, enriched by the experience they have gained in its development.

## **7.5 Findings in relation to consistency**

### **Item 25. Alignment**

*Guiding questions: To what extent was the alignment between the different activities of the Program and the expected results achieved?*

One of the aspects to be analyzed by the evaluation refers to the alignment between the activities of the program and the expected results. As already mentioned in Section 7.1, in the documentary analysis a good correlation between strategies, products, results and activities was observed, as well as the ability to make the actions interact prioritizing the objectives and goals to which it seeks to contribute. In this sense, for example, the innovative tools to develop statistical evidence such as those carried out with the SINTyS and the Federal Map of Care, and the studies, guides, training

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<sup>178</sup>Provincial official: "It has put the issue of early childhood on the agenda and its role as a main and very important point in our province [...] Let's try to maintain it for many more years" (18,121).

<sup>179</sup> MECNUD 2016-2020- MECNUD 2021-2025.

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materials generated by the Program, were incorporated as tools in the organizational spaces of the Provincial and Local Council Dialog Tables, as intersectoral spaces.

On the other hand, the studies carried out impact more than one of the dimensions, regardless of the fact that they may focus on one of them, showing an approach that integrates children's rights, a gender perspective and takes into account populations affected by multiple discriminations. Of the strategic documents<sup>180</sup>, 9 of them focus on the extension of social protection coverage, on improving the comprehensiveness and adequacy of social benefits and social protection, improving governance, administration and/or the implementation of a social protection system and intersectoral integration with access to health, child care, education, employment and food security.

The JP highlights among the lessons learned that the synergy with MECNUD 2016-2020 and 2021-2025, in particular with the areas of cooperation "protection and universal access to essential services" in the case of the former and the dimension of Social Protection and Governance, was central to promoting the internal consistency of the different agencies participating within the framework of the UNS, being valued positively in terms of sustainability. In this sense, the MECNUD functioned as a structuring axis to strengthen the lines of work prioritized by the government counterparts to advance towards the achievement of SDGs.

On the other hand, from the interviews held throughout the field work, it emerges that the efforts to guarantee alignment and consistency in JP's action include those aimed at strengthening an interagency approach to activities and those aimed at aligning activities with results. They are understood to be complementary in an initiative of this nature. Observations have been presented on the former in a previous Section of this Report. The latter are the subject of the following comments.

As indicated in the methodological section of the Report, one of the main points of the study was the activities of the JP Result aimed at the design, implementation and monitoring of intersectoral strategies for early childhood care at the subnational level, which were carried out by UNICEF. To this end, provincial and municipal authorities and different representatives participating in the Provincial Intersectoral Dialog Tables and the Local Council Dialog Tables of the four selected provinces were interviewed.

These activities, due to their nature of collective work and their deployment in the territory, were the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and numerous adjustments were made to adapt them to the social distancing and circulation limitation measures in effect.

Despite this, the JP's 2021 Annual Report<sup>181</sup> records a very high level of accomplishment -both in quantitative and qualitative terms- of the expected result in this objective. It should be noted that, according to the testimonies obtained in the field -which are also mentioned in other points of this Report-, this is also supported by a high level of satisfaction of the people involved.

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<sup>180</sup>The strategic documents correspond to what was reported in the 2021 Annual Report, pages 22-25.

<sup>181</sup> Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report.

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Another expected Result was related to the alignment of training policies for decent work in the care sector, aimed at reducing informal economy and all forms of discrimination, the elimination of child labor, strengthening the skills of children care and education workers, and the skills of families for their upbringing, from a rights perspective and with a gender approach.

The reports of the JP mentioned the creation of numerous training and learning spaces, generated by all the member agencies of the Program, which included the participation of government officials from the three levels, care professionals and specialists, social organizations, etc., mostly in virtual environments due to the health situation. But this was also the opportunity to develop new training and dissemination alternatives, such as online training platforms, manuals and audiovisual materials, podcasts, and others.

The mutual feedback between the expected results was appreciated here, given that the training and awareness materials, with content on early childhood and care, could be addressed to a broad public linked to the JP actions and can be applied and replicated beyond the project implementation period.

In this sense, the approach adopted by UNICEF to provide training and technical assistance to actors at the provincial and local levels was recognized as practical and useful, a work methodology<sup>182</sup> with the support of specific materials, pointed out as helpful to recognize situations and influence the cycle of public policies on the matter in each area of action.

In the same field of training and the same line of results, the ILO (together with the MTEySS and the UPACP union) developed two training manuals on child care and care work in private homes, and designed an on-line platform that not only updated the previous materials but also included topics suggested by the MTEySS referring to the skills of care personnel. It can be accessed by cell phones and computers throughout the country. Until the moment the field work was completed and according to comments from the MTEySS, these materials had not yet been distributed. Together with the SAE and seven universities, UNDP promoted the Parenting Communities project that trained tutors in order to inform and educate family referents. In this case, the brevity of the experience (the JP started late) and the context of the pandemic were factors that reduced the potential of an initiative of this nature.

A third Result aimed to contribute to the design of proposals for innovative tools, production of statistical evidence and preparation of specific studies with a view to improving the quantity and quality of public information available to facilitate access to care services and to design and implement public policies for early childhood.

A large and diverse set of activities were carried out within the framework of the JP in this line of results. For example, the development of innovative tools has been designed or supported, such as the Federal Map of Care or the system of indicators on

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<sup>182</sup>Provincial official: “We detected the need [the problem to be worked on] in the province and then they accompanied us in what was the methodology for the presentation and other aspects. Obviously, they guided us quite a bit, but we had quite defined lines” (16.27).

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early childhood, the systematization of care and upbringing experiences in indigenous communities and/or rural areas, and the preparation of 30 studies for the generation of evidence and knowledge on the subject addressed by the JP.

Among them, the process of designing and implementing a system and platform with georeferenced information about care services -carried out jointly by ECLAC and the MMGyD and mentioned in other points of this Report- constitutes an innovation for the early childhood policy, given the previous absence of similar unified records. It is complemented by specific training actions for future system operators.

### **Item 26. Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.**

*Guiding questions: To what extent was the rights perspective integrated transversally into the design of the program and the actions implemented? To what extent was the rights perspective complementary to the actions with other interventions of the implementing agencies?*

The JP defines the rights approach as the central axis of its actions, assuming that:

It is necessary to think about the problems that affect early childhood (and the social and territorial gaps associated with them) from the perspective of subjects with rights to certain benefits and behaviors, leaving behind a conception of people with needs that must be assisted or of the children as future productive adults<sup>183</sup>

From this transversal perspective of the rights approach, the JP sought to generate evidence to: a) promote information and awareness campaigns aimed at overcoming discriminatory stereotypes about the roles of care, and equity in domestic and family responsibilities; b) show the impact of the pandemic on the exercise of the rights of children and the overload of care tasks in the home done by women, with a view to promoting the required changes.

Regarding a comprehensive approach to rights, this assessment made by a caregiver participating in a focus group is interesting:

*“For us, the word ‘day care’ does not fit into everything we do. And above all that our children are not an object, they are subjects of law. We are not used to beauty.... many times our physical spaces are a bit run-down because with the money you either eat or decorate the place and the need is in the belly. It is good to eat, to attend to those needs, but we also have the right to have a storybook that is not photocopied, we have the right to have teaching material that is not recycled and recycled. The importance of having teaching material, of having a tool to be able to carry out the task because many times it happens that we have many ideas, but then the material is not there”.*

Likewise, the JP provided technical assistance for the design, financing and implementation of policies that contribute to ensuring and expanding the supply of education and care services for children, especially in indigenous and rural communities, and to improve their quality. This involved technically supporting the provinces in the safe reopening of education and care spaces.

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<sup>183</sup> UNICEF, Public Policies for Early Childhood: a priority path First edition, 2019.

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On the issue of the indigenous child population, as mentioned in point 7.1, the activities aimed at results were supported by collaborative initiatives between UNICEF and the government of the Province of Salta, that had been initiated prior to the JP. These are the experience of family accompaniment in rural contexts of the province of Salta, with a very vulnerable population of indigenous communities, whose systematization was published by UNICEF, together with research on upbringing in the Wichí people<sup>184</sup>, and support for the *Programa Unir* of family care givers of the Ministry of Social Development of that province, mentioned above. The work methodology that was developed from these activities includes guidelines that allow replication in other communities with similar characteristics.

The perspective of children's rights was also incorporated in the work carried out by UNICEF with IOM on the migrant population, in the training courses developed by the ILO, MTEySS and UPAC (union of private homes workers), the design of the ILO podcast, etc.

### **Item 27. Gender-based approach**

*Guiding questions: To what extent was the gender perspective integrated into the design of the program and the actions implemented? To what extent was the gender approach complementary to the actions of other interventions of the implementing agencies?*

As stated in the PRODOC, the JP adopted the Montevideo Strategy for the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for achieving the SDGs.<sup>185</sup> The social organization of care, gender gaps and their impact on the situation of women in the Region play an important role in this Strategy.

The gender approach in public policies is aimed at promoting autonomy, empowerment, the search for more equitable relationships, and respect for the diversity of identities.

Accordingly, it can be verified that the Program has ensured that the gender approach is present in all its activities, including specific studies and surveys, guidelines in training proposals and training manuals prepared<sup>186</sup>, in the guidelines for strategies and public policies that were developed in the Dialog Tables, the design of information systems with gender indicators, the contents of communication strategy pieces, etc. The Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity is the government counterpart for

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<sup>184</sup> UNICEF – JP - Province of Salta (2021) “Systematization of the family support experience in rural contexts in Salta” and UNICEF – JP – Province of Salta (2021) “Upbringing practices in indigenous communities of the Wichí people”.

<sup>185</sup> Prodoc, 7. Regional scope, page 9.

<sup>186</sup> Counterpart official: “These manuals align, have as a strength that they allow us to understand the sector of activity much more, transmit this perspective of rights, of gender” (13.62).

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various activities of the JP and the administrative body of the Federal Map of Care mentioned in the previous point.

### **Item 28. Disability**

*Guiding questions: To what extent was the program targeted at people with disabilities? To what extent did the design and implementation of JP activities include the requirement of non-discrimination and disability-related accessibility? To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations? To what extent do the support for data collection and analysis, records and the information system enable characterization of disability? To what extent did the Program contribute to supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities?*

The perspective of disability is incorporated in Law 26,061 and in the comprehensive protection system for the rights of children and adolescents. For this reason, when defining the target groups of the JP, the PRODOC includes among the direct beneficiary groups of the JP “children from 0 to 6 years old, particularly those with disabilities, from indigenous peoples and from low-income households, since the proposal to expand the care system aims at this population group”. This then constitutes, in the formulation, a relevant perspective for the entire Program.

However, as it was also pointed out in Section 7.1 of this Report, the topic of disability did not reach the expected level of treatment, for the reasons stated therein, which were provided to the evaluation team by authorities and technical personnel of the Program and representatives of the relevant government counterpart.<sup>187</sup>

Several people interviewed who were participants in Provincial or Local Council Dialog Tables pointed out that disability issues either did not come up in the meeting spaces, or did not receive priority treatment for various reasons, among others the lack of information to define the activities, or of resources at the local level to support their actions<sup>188</sup>. However, the opportunity to present the topic and generate support with other institutions to put it on the agenda was recognized<sup>189</sup>.

An exception in this sense were the Dialog Tables of Cordoba, where the issue was regularly treated.

Some other actions carried out, however, show progress. Regarding its training activities on care, the ILO states that people have always been considered in all their

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<sup>187</sup> In this regard, see quote in footnote 194.

<sup>188</sup> Provincial official: “Of all the objectives and proposals of the program, at the end of the dialog table we did not receive anything [provincial resources]” (34.24).

<sup>189</sup> Panelist: “[The experience] was good for me because I see it with futuristic eyes. It is not that it went backwards or stagnated, it is growing” (12).

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diversity, for which the issue of disability has always been included in the manuals, because it is considered key<sup>190</sup>.

Regarding one of the most widely mentioned problems, information, the Federal Map of Care managed by the MMGyD is an instrument of great relevance, not only because the design of the platform was carried out following the criteria of Law 26,653 (accessibility to information on the Web pages) and in which blind technical personnel participated, but because the Map has information on specific populations and collects data from the 2010 Census on disability and those provided by the Ministry of Education and the National Agency for Disability (ANDIS)<sup>191</sup>. In this regard, according to comments collected from the counterpart, the Information and Monitoring System on Early Childhood developed for SINTyS by UNDP and ECLAC within the framework of the JP does not have a national database that allows for a significant universe of early childhood with disabilities.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup>Counterpart official: “We think of care as support and as an enhancement of people's autonomy; then we always assume that said autonomy can be strengthened. I don't know if it was particularly mentioned on this occasion, because it is already somewhat present in the manuals (everything related to the care of people with disabilities)” (13.66).

<sup>191</sup> “The map has three large populations for which it provides information: children, senior citizens and persons with disabilities. A group, moreover, that is the caregivers and the training services for them” (8.25).

<sup>192</sup> “We do not have a national database to establish a universe of early childhood with disabilities” (17.70).

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## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- The collected testimonies and the JP reports agree in pointing out the synergy between the JP and the MECNUD 2016-2020 and the relevance of the Program's products in relation to the MECNUD 2021-2025, particularly in the Social Protection and Governance dimensions.
- The JP implementation coincided with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had direct consequences on the planned activities. However, the JP managed to maintain the proposed objectives by effectively adapting to the limitations of the context.
- The agencies carried out coordinated work to strengthen intersectoral and interinstitutional policies related to early childhood and care, which in turn promoted discussion and coordination among them and among the different levels of government. The change of administration involved a particular adjustment effort in this sense.
- The governance scheme showed some operational weaknesses compared to what was expected. As stated by the agencies themselves, in some instances they were not always able to maintain the expected performance. The existence of a coordination was important to carry out the joint program, centralize information, mitigate the impact of inter-bureaucratic conflicts and operationalize decisions.
- An effective scheme for inter-agency joint tasks requires deliberate action, based on a design and planning process and a realistic vision of the intervention context. The JP met these conditions, but this is an ongoing process and it has not yet been fully perceived as a joint initiative by all its counterparts.
- The design of a common agenda on early childhood and care, in accordance with the national agenda linked to the SDGs, and the coordinated implementation of the activities associated with that agenda contribute to complementarity among the agencies involved, optimizing the quality of results, and avoiding overlapping efforts.
- Disability issues, one of the transversal axes of the JP, show diagnostic, institutional and agenda weaknesses in the country, impairing the achievement of the objectives that the JP had set.
- The convergence of technical capabilities in this area allowed the UNS to act efficiently and quickly, providing an aligned and comprehensive response to government counterparts.
- The proposal of joint programs such as the JP finds fertile ground since counterparts increasingly require interventions that can benefit from complementarities and avoid overlaps; on the other hand, agencies need the demand from counterparts to be more organized, centralized, around common needs.
- For the agencies, joint work provides learning opportunities, strengthens their social capital and increases the capacity of the UNS in its cooperation objectives in the country.
- The innovative approach of the JP was expressed, on the one hand, in specific technological solutions that were considered in some cases by the counterparts as



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a significant leap in quality for the achievement of their objectives. These interventions were also valued for ensuring their sustainability through the training of their own human resources for operation and constant updating. On the other hand, innovation resulted in a successful methodology of territorial intervention.

- The JP's contribution to updating the care staff training approach also meant a significant advance in skills training, and its certification, with an innovative virtual platform methodology throughout the country.
- The podcast "Someone Takes Care", aligned with the goal of promoting early childhood rights and care, was an innovative communication approach recognizing regional particularities and involved the participation of provincial representatives.
- The generation of evidence, through studies and research, has contributed to informed decision-making and the support of the necessary adjustments to the actions and activities established, particularly in a new context, such as that of the COVID 19 pandemic, helping to achieve the expected results.
- The consolidation of intersectoral institutional structures, through the Dialog Tables for Early Childhood at the provincial and local council levels by the JP has been key to promoting a comprehensive approach to the issue that can be sustainable over time, beyond the JP.
- Heterogeneity in the territory was a challenge that the JP was able to overcome by adapting to local demands, through a work methodology and technical leadership in the territory recognized as effective by counterparts.
- Also, the strengthening of the technical capacities of the main counterparts responsible for early childhood policies at the local level, which allow the replication of knowledge in various instances and contexts, enables the sustainability and scope of the actions.
- The training methodology applied in the territory was valued by the participants not only as a tool for achieving the specific objectives of the JP in the territory, but as a significant contribution to their own professional development in the topics addressed and in working life.

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## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Due to the importance given to the value that inter-agency action has for the agencies and for the UNS for increasing social capital, mechanisms for the systematic exploration of opportunities for joint action should be incorporated.
- Participating agencies highlighted that having prioritized lines of intervention over specific activities had been a good decision, because it allowed flexibility to adapt to changes. In a new joint planning, the construction of consensus on lines of intervention should be hierarchically organized.
- The alignment of the definition of functions and roles and the integration of the governance scheme with the requirements of the program should be ensured.
- It would be convenient for the design to maximize the study of intersection points that can be achieved during implementation in order to optimize intended synergies.
- As part of the inter-agency construction process, the characteristics that can strengthen a joint public image and incorporate them into the program's communication plan should be defined.
- Good practices highlighted by the participants should be continued; interventions should consider technical and institutional forecasts as a priority to ensure long-term sustainability and replicability.
- Regarding administrative processes in the UN agencies that are not fully compatible, alternatives to prevent potential difficulties and delays in execution should be provided.
- Given the requirements of administrative-financial management, options that help optimize the functioning of the coordination team should be analyzed.
- Based on the value that the professionals of the agencies give to concerted action, a mechanism should be found for meetings of technical teams so that they can be held on a regular basis, promoting intersectorality and professional debate.
- Regarding the preparation of documents, reports, systematization, etc. related to the joint program, the effectiveness of the procedures for its dissemination among potential recipients should be ensured, considering as far as possible, its accessibility for immediate application in operation. Likewise, mechanisms that allow consensus on publishing production according to common interests should be set.
- Based on the increase in professional interactions promoted by the joint program, the consolidation of professional networks with similar themes should be consolidated among the members of the agencies themselves and with other relevant actors for the purposes of the program.
- In the case of especially significant experiences, spaces for their dissemination among interested audiences should be promoted.
- Disability is a relevant issue in the action of the program, and it would be advisable to analyze the chances of increasing its visibility in planned interventions in order to achieve a greater impact on the public agenda.

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<https://www.mendoza.gov.ar/prensa/reunion-de-la-mesa-interministerial-de-primera-infancia/>

<https://ciudaddemendoza.gob.ar/2021/09/08/la-municipalidad-de-mendoza-participo-en-una-nueva-mesa-interministerial-de-primera-infancia/>

<https://laplumaonline.com.ar/contenido/10117/la-mesa-provincial-de-primera-infancia-es-un-complemento-para-la-presencialidad->

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<https://seryhacerdemalargue.online/mendoza-y-unicef-suman-logros-por-los-derechos-ninos/>  
<https://jornadaonline.com/mendoza/2021-6-10-17-43-17-suarez-la-mesa-provincial-de-primera-infancia-es-un-complemento-para-la-presencialidad-en-las-aulas>

#### Salta

<https://www.unicef.org/argentina/publicaciones-y-datos/Sistematizacion-acompaniamiento-familiar-contextos-rurales-Salta>  
<https://www.salta.gob.ar/prensa/noticias/con-unicef-reforzamos-el-compromiso-de-trabajar-juntos-por-la-infancia-en-las-comunidades-del-norte-provincial-dijo-saenz-78645>  
<https://agenda4p.com.ar/2021/04/01/fortalecen-politicas-publicas-de-primera-infancia/>  
<https://desarrollosocial.salta.gob.ar/2021/09/17/avanza-la-consolidacion-de-mesas-de-primera-infancia-en-rosario-de-la-frontera-y-joaquin-v-gonzalez/>  
<https://tartagal.gob.ar/sitio/hoy-se-reunira-la-mesa-local-de-la-primera-infancia-en-tartagal/>  
<https://www.eltribuno.com/salta/nota/2021-9-24-0-0-0-se-consolidan-las-mesas-locales-de-primera-infancia>  
<http://saltasur.com.ar/unicef-y-el-gobierno-de-salta-inauguran-una-nueva-fase-de-trabajo-de-la-mesa-interministerial-de-primera-infancia/>  
<https://ceibalsalta.com.ar/2021/03/31/el-gobierno-de-salta-fortalece-politicas-publicas-de-primera-infancia/>

## ANNEX I: EVALUATION MATRIX

CRITERION	ITEM (SUB AXIS)	QUESTION	SUBQUESTION
CRITERION: RELEVANCE AND STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENT	1. General relevance	To what extent is the JP strategy relevant and addresses the needs of early childhood, considering the differences among indigenous and/or disabled child populations and the main vulnerable groups in general?	
		To what extent is it relevant for country strategies and policies related to early childhood problems?	
	2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability and participation	To what extent was the joint approach relevant and appropriate in the design, implementation and management of the program to address the country's development priorities and challenges as regards early childhood protection?	
		To what extent are the scale of the response in the design and the resources invested consistent with the problems and needs of children under 6 years of age, considering the specific problems of the indigenous child population and those with disabilities?	
		To what extent does the design contribute to gender inequity gap reduction and non-discrimination?	
		To what extent was the design participatory?	
	3. Design	Has the design of the Program been appropriate, consistent and realistic to attain the results it intends to achieve?	
		Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other?	
		Does it adequately identify intervention assumptions and risks, as well as sustainability strategies?	
		Does the Program have appropriate indicators and goals for what it wants to achieve, and does it have a monitoring and evaluation system/mechanism to measure progress in the realization of products and the achievement of results?	



	<b>4. Incidence of COVID-19 context</b>	To what extent is the COVID-19 crisis worsening the problem the intervention seeks to help solve?	(a) The existence of social and territorial gaps that affect the full exercise of the rights of children under 6 years of age from the lowest income deciles and their families
			(b) The existence of barriers to the economic autonomy of women and to labor rights for workers in the care sector
		To what extent has the JP adjusted its objectives, strategies, actions and/or prioritized reference population to remain relevant in the context of the COVID-19 crisis?	
		If it has become more relevant, how have they been adjusted to respond to the new demand?	
<b>CRITERION: MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICACY</b>	<b>5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes</b>	What has been the level of progress in the Program programmatic axes?	(a) Support for the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for early childhood
			(b) Development of innovative instruments for a comprehensive care strategy
			(c) Design and implementation of strategies to identify the employment potential of the early childhood care sector and to improve caregivers' working conditions.
			(d) Follow-up studies, monitoring and evaluation
			(e) Support for the national and subnational policy to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the early childhood care system
		What are the main factors that support the level of progress and, if there are significant differences in progress according to axes, what reasons explain this?	

	<b>6. Development goals and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments</b>	To what extent has the JP contributed to achieving its development goals, especially regarding the three outcomes?	(a) design and implementation of intersectoral strategies for early childhood care at subnational level
			(b) coordination of training policies for decent work in the care sector
			(c) generation of evidence to facilitate access to care services and to design and implement early childhood public policies
		What has been the contribution to the regulatory frameworks, as well as to the comprehensive protection policies for children under 6 years of age and the promotion of work in the care sector?	
	What has been the contribution of the instruments developed in the context of the JP and of the studies and research developed by using big data?		
	Are results differentiated by gender or specific groups?		
	<b>7. Difficulties and adaptation</b>	What hurdles has the JP encountered and what corrective actions were taken or would have been necessary to achieve results?	
		To what extent were the capacities of the JP, including those of staff, incentives and leadership, adequate to address the issue of early childhood protection, taking into account gender gaps and other diverse groups?	
	<b>8. Interagency and multilevel work</b>	To what extent has the work of the UNS agencies at the three levels been able to provide a consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions in favor of the comprehensive protection of early childhood and the generation of employment in the care sector with a prevention and care approach (services and referral systems)?	
	<b>9. New approaches and responses</b>	To what extent have the responses of agencies, both individually and as a Program, to COVID-19 made use of innovative approaches to achieve the intended objectives and mitigate the effects of the pandemic?	

		What has been the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the implementation of the JP and to what extent has the response of the agencies allowed the activities committed to continue?
	<b>10. Institutional arrangements and capacities</b>	To what extent have management capacities and institutional arrangements supported the achievement of results?
		Were they adequate to ensure operations in the context of national priorities and UNS reform?
	<b>11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context</b>	To what extent have the JP and its governance structure promoted integrated and strategic technical support processes and the alignment of policies for a timely response to the COVID-19 crisis?
		To what extent have agencies been effective and timely in providing tailored response and guidance during the initial phases of the pandemic?
		What contextual and organizational culture-related factors have favored the response capacity of agencies to the COVID-19 crisis?
		What factors are presented as inhibitors for this purpose?
	<b>12. Participation</b>	What has been the involvement and contribution of agents and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of the Program?
		To what extent did the JP guarantee the continuous participation of the actors in the execution (ideally direct beneficiaries)?
	<b>13. Follow-up</b>	Did the JP adequately monitor results and document information to allow measurement of their contribution to changes at product and result levels, for decision-making and accountability?
<b>CRITERION: EFFICIENCY</b>	<b>14. Resources</b>	Has the JP strategically assigned financial, human and temporary resources to guarantee the achievement of results by the expected deadlines, and does it show a level of financial execution that is consistent with the

		level of progress in technical execution?	
		Has the transformation of resources into results been efficient?	
	<b>15. Interagency intervention</b>	Was the JP intervention more efficient compared to what could have been done by a single-agency intervention?	
	<b>16. Transaction cost reduction</b>	To what extent has the JP contributed to improving the consistency and efficiency of the UN team in the country?	
	<b>17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19</b>	To what extent has the JP mobilized resources (both financial and in terms of specialized knowledge) to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in an integrated manner?	
<b>CRITERION: IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>18. Sustainability</b>	To what extent has the strategy adopted by the JP contributed to the sustainability of the results, especially with regard to "leaving no one behind" in terms of comprehensive early childhood protection?	
	<b>19. Long-term ownership</b>	To what extent has the JP supported long-term acceptance, leadership and ownership by the Government and other stakeholders?	
	<b>20-21. Durability of results</b>		How likely are results to be sustained beyond the JP through action by the Government and other stakeholders and/or UN teams in the country?
			How effective has the JP been in building national ownership and the capacity of people and institutions to respond to the challenges of comprehensive early childhood protection, coordinating training policies for decent work in the care sector by strengthening the skills of child care and education workers?
			Are national partners willing and able to sustain the benefits/results after the JP and funding end?

	<b>22. Support to follow-up mechanisms</b>	How has the JP supported participatory and transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for national policies and plans to strengthen accountability and corrections in implementation?	
	<b>23. Participation of civil society</b>	Has the participation of the civil society been strengthened, even in decision-making and the evaluation of national policies and programs, as well as in terms of accountability?	
		Have men and women gotten significantly involved?	
	<b>24. Contribution to SDGs</b>	To what extent has the JP contributed to accelerating SDGs at the national level?	Target SDG 4
			Target SDG 5.4
			Target SDG 8.5
		To what extent has the JP contributed to the achievement of MECNUD results?	Area of Protection and Universal Access to Essential Services of MECNUD 2016-2020
			Social Protection and Governance Dimension of MECNUD 2021-2025
	To what extent has the JP contributed to the achievement of national development priorities?		
	<b>CRITERION: CONSISTENCY</b>	<b>25. Alignment</b>	To what extent were the various activities of the Program aligned with the expected results?
<b>26. Rights-based perspective focused on childhood</b>		To what extent was the rights-based perspective transversally integrated into the design of the program and the actions implemented?	
		To what extent was the rights perspective complementary to other intervention actions carried out by the implementing agencies?	
<b>27. Gender-based</b>		To what extent was the gender perspective integrated into program design and implemented actions?	

	<b>approach</b>	To what extent was the gender approach complementary to other intervention actions carried out by the implementing agencies?
	<b>28. Disability</b>	To what extent was the program targeted at people with disabilities?
		To what extent did the design and implementation of JP activities include the requirement of non-discrimination and disability-related accessibility?
		To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
		To what extent do the support for data collection and analysis, records and the information system enable characterization of disability?
		To what extent did the Program contribute to supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities?

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## ANNEX II: FIELD WORK - Records of interviews

Entity/Office	Name	Position/function	Date
<b>JP Coordination</b>			
JP Coordination	Adrian Rozengardt	Coordinator- Joint SCG Program (JP)	1st 21/Dec/2021
			2nd 24/Feb/2022
	Lorena Haupt		1st. 21/Dec/2021
<b>Agencies' technical referents</b>			
UNICEF	Javier Quesada	Consultant hired for the implementation of UNICEF actions as part of this Program	4/Jan/2022
	Carolina Aulicino	Officer of Social Policies, Social Inclusion and Monitoring	4/Jan/2022
	Fernanda Potenza	Consultant in the Social Inclusion and Monitoring area (at the time of the interviews) / Technical Analyst of the Joint Program between March 2020 and July 2021	4/Jan/2022
		Second interview	16/Feb/2022
UNDP	Paola Bohorquez	Inclusive Development Analyst	4/Jan/2022

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<b>Entity/Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/function</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Alejandra García	Gender Specialist	4/Jan/2022
ILO	Magali Yance	Project Officer   SDG Joint Program	6/Jan/2022
RCO-UN	Jessica Braver	RCO Team Leader	26/Jan/2022
ECLAC	Soledad Villafañe	Researcher	20/Jan/2022
	Juan Martín Bustos	Program Coordinator	20/Jan/2022
IOM	Natalia Escoffier	National Policy and Liaison Officer	27/Jan/2022

#### **Agency officials**

	Interview with Elva Lopez Mourelo (instead of Yukiko Arai – Head of ILO Office in Argentina)	Specialist in Inclusive Job Market	18/Jan/2022
ILO			
UNICEF	Olga Isaza	Deputy representative	18/Feb/2022
		Specialist in Social inclusion and monitoring	
	Sebastián Waisgrais	SDG Referent	4/Jan/2022
		Second interview	7/Mar/2022
	Interview with J. Braver (Instead of Roberto Valent, who left the position)	Resident Coordinator	
RCO			



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<b>Entity/Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/function</b>	<b>Date</b>
ECLAC	Martín Abeles	Office Manager in Argentina	28/Jan/2022
<b>Technical referents from counterpart organizations</b>			
CNCPS-SINTYS	Florencia Espinoza	SINTYS National Manager	2/Feb/2022
	Rocío Suárez	Coordinator of Childhood and Sustainable Development Project	2/Feb/2022
MMGyD Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity	Lucia Cirimi Obon	. National Head of Care Policies	10/Feb/2022
SAE- Secretariat for Strategic Affairs	Lucía Aguerre	Consultant on Contact with Scientific System	26/Jan/2022
SENAF	Diana Gabriela Olguin	National Head, Early Childhood Program	25/Feb/2022
Ministry of Social Development	Martín De Paula	Head of Social Information Management	15/Feb/2022
Ministry of Labor and Social Security	Ana Lis Rodriguez Nardelli	Training for the Economy of Care, Head of Management of Training Programs, Labor Secretariat	28/Jan/2022
<b>Officials of national entities members of the SC of the JP</b>			
SENAF	Gabriel Lerner	Secretary	14/Feb/2022
Ministry of Labor and Social Security	Claudio Moroni	Minister	Appoints Byk

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<b>Entity/Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/function</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Edith Byk (on behalf of Minister Moroni)	Office of Management of Professional Training Programs.	8/Mar/2022
SAE- Secretariat for Strategic Affairs	Mateo Niro	National Head	26/Jan/2022
<b>Officials from provinces and municipalities</b>			
<b>Mendoza</b>			
Province government	Daniela Belén Torres	DINAF, Head of Protection and Promotion of Rights	2/Feb/2022
	Dina Tejerin	Person responsible for training at CEOS - Occupational education centers and social coordination	3/Feb/2022
	Daniela Ciani	Coordinator of comprehensive family development and strengthening centers	3/Feb/2022
	Ms. Monica Rinaldi	Head of Motherhood and Childhood, Ministry of Health	18/Feb/2022
	Marcela Bunder	Early Detection, Monitoring and Stimulation Program Coordinator - Office of care for people with disabilities- Ministry of Health	21/Feb/2022
Municipality of Guaymallen	Monica Vietty	Head of Child and Family Development Center (CDIYF)	7/Feb/2022
<b>Entre Ríos</b>			
Province government	Marisa Paira	Minister of Social Development	1st.

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<b>Entity/Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/function</b>	<b>Date</b>
			12/Jan/2022
			2nd. 19/Jan/22
	Muriel Stablun	Undersecretary of Human Development and Care Policies	20/Jan/2022
Municipality of Concordia	Noelia Vargas	Secretary of Social Development	8/Mar/2022
Municipality of Feliciano	Sandra Vargas	Secretary of Social Development	4/Mar/2022
	Nancy Velazco	Head of Childhood and Family	4/Mar/2022
<b>Cordoba</b>			
Province government	Amelia López	Defender of the Rights of Children and Adolescents	23/Feb/2022
	Celina Di Cola	External cooperation referent, Office of the Defender	7/Feb/2022
	Ana Sofía Nieva	Consultant	7/Feb/2022
Municipality of Río Tercero	Ms. Soledad Franciseti	Office of the Defender of the Rights of Children and Adolescents Río Tercero	15/Feb/2022
Municipality of Río Cuarto	Franco Gentile	Office of the Defender of the Rights of Children and Adolescents Río Cuarto	15/Feb/2022
<b>ILO- Santa Fe</b>			

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<b>Entity/Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/function</b>	<b>Date</b>
Municipality of Santa Fe	Guillermo Cherner	Head of Employment and Decent Work, Secretariat for Production and Economic Development	1/Feb/2022
<b>Salta</b>			
Province government	Marcela Alarcón	Undersecretariat for Early Childhood	9/Feb/2022
	Verónica Figueroa	Former Minister of Social Development	4/Feb/2022
Municipality of Rosario de la Frontera	José Matías Calderón	Undersecretary of Childhood, Adolescence and Family	8/Feb/2022
	Mariana Corbalá	Head of Early Childhood	
Municipality of Embarcación	Mónica Goicoechea	Coordinator of Human Development	10/Feb/2022
Municipality of Pichanal	Gabriela Lera	Head of Early Childhood	18/Feb/2022
Municipality of Morillo	Eduardo Dip		9/Feb/2022
<b>Other interviews</b>			
Parenting Community	Ramona Beatriz Gonzalez	Social Development, Municipality of Posadas, Misiones	17/Feb/2022

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Entity/Office	Name	Position/function	Date
	Julieta Mendez	University of Hurlingham	18/Feb/2022
Authors	Pablo Asa	Argentine Commission for Refugees and Migrants (CAREF)	2/Mar/2022

**The following interviews were arranged but could not be carried out:**

SENAF	Mariano Luongo	Undersecretary of Rights of Children, Adolescents and Family
MMGyD	E. Gómez Alcorta	Minister
CNCPS	Marisol Merquel	President
	Eduardo Brau	Undersecretary of Technical Coordination and Information Analysis

**Entre Ríos**

Provincial Dialog Table	Guillermo Zanutini	Secretary of Health
	Patricia López	Head of Preschool Education General Council of Education
Disability	Ines Artusi	Provincial Coordinator

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Entity/Office	Name	Position/function	Date
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**Salta**

Municipality of Tartagal

Municipality of Chicoana

Municipality of Pichanal	Sebastián Domínguez	Mayor	
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Municipality of Juan Solá Rivadavia Banda Norte	Miguel Gerala	Mayor	
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Municipality of Ballivian

**Mendoza**

Municipality of Godoy Cruz

**Annex III: FIELD WORK - Records of focus groups and panels**

Topic	Entity/Office	Name	Position/function	Date
Panel of Coordinators/ Heads of CDIYF	CDIYF Maipu	Claudia Giannaula	Head	7/Feb/2022 CHECK

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**and SEOS**

	CDIYF Tupungato	Cecilia Sanchez	Head	7/Feb/2022
	CDIYF Mendoza Capital City	Monica Caporgno	Technical team	7/Feb/2022
	SEOS (Educational service of social origin), Jardin Piquilín Kindergarten	Monica Tejón	Head	7/Feb/2022
<b>Authors of studies carried out within the framework of JP 1</b>	The autonomy of women in changing economic scenarios	Ana Catalina Valencia Magali Brosio Juan M. Ottaviano	ECLAC	22/Feb/2022
	Early childhood care and gender financial instrument	Damian Bonari	UNDP	22/Feb/2022
<b>Authors of studies carried out within the framework of JP 2</b>		Vanesa D'Alessandre	Program Coordinator	23/Feb/2022
	Covid 19 impact on care workers.	Ana Safranoff	ILO	23/Feb/2022
<b>Local officials</b>				

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Municipality of Villaguay	Daniela Azambuyo .	Head of Education	4/Mar/2022
Municipality of Villaguay	Claudia Briozzo	Coordinator of Child Development Centers	4/Mar/2022
Municipality of Villaguay	Marta Meichtry	Coordinator of Management and Institutional Pedagogical Advice	4/Mar/2022

#### Local Dialog Tables

Early childhood Dialog Table of Galeguaychú	Melisa Raffart,		8/Feb/2022
Early childhood Dialog Table of Villaguay	Claudia Briozzo		8/Feb/2022
Early childhood Dialog Table of C. del Uruguay	Marianela Marclay		8/Feb/2022

#### Parenting Community

Ramona Gonzalez	University of Misiones		23/Feb/2022
Julieta Mendez	University of Hurlingham		23/Feb/2022
Cecilia Sanz	University of La Plata		23/Feb/2022



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**Disability**

Municipality of Gualeguaychu	Malvina Grigio	Responsible for Accessibility and Integration Area	9/Mar/2022
Municipality of Concordia	Marcelo Primitivo	Head of Disability	9/Mar/2022

**MTE AND LA PODEROSA**

Ada Maidana	Las Vizcachas Corrientes	3/Mar/2022
Carmen Mareco	Barrio Ongay Corrientes	3/Mar/2022
Nélida Arizaga	Lomas de Zamora	3/Mar/2022
Zulma Fernandez	Villa Fiorito	3/Mar/2022
Lorena Toloba	Lomas de Zamora	3/Mar/2022

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## **ANNEX IV: Interview Guides [forms A-B-C-D-E-F-G]**

Form A: Members of the Interagency Technical Team in charge of Management

Form B: Authorities of agencies, funds and programs

Form C: Representatives from the National Government- Steering Committee

Form D: Representatives from the National Government- Counterpart for activities

Form E: Political decision makers at provincial level

Form F: Provincial technical teams / Members of provincial dialog tables

Form G: Municipal government / Participants of local council dialog tables, training, others

Form H: Disability questionnaire for local governments.

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### **Form A: Members of the Interagency Technical Team in charge of Management**

#### Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

1. General relevance of the JP
  - Regarding early childhood and the comprehensive care system and the country's strategies and policies
2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability
  - Relevance of the joint approach in the design, execution and management
  - Scale of design and resources in relation to the problem
  - Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination
3. Design
  - Was it participatory?
  - Was it appropriate, consistent, realistic?
  - Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other?
  - Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies?
  - Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?
4. Incidence of COVID-19 context
  - On the exercise of children's rights and the care system
  - On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the care sector

#### Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy

5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
  - Level of progress in programmatic axes -Factors that explain it
6. Development goals and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments
  - JP contribution to:
    - Intersector strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
    - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
    - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
  - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
  - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out
7. Difficulties and adaptation
  - Hurdles encountered and corrective actions
  - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership
8. Interagency and multilevel work
  - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions?
9. New approaches and responses
  - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches
10. Institutional capacities and arrangements
  - Adequate to ensure actions achieve the results in the context?
11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context
  - Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions related to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, effectiveness and timeliness of the response
  - Favorable or unfavorable context or organizational culture factors
12. Participation
  - Of the actors in the design, implementation and execution
13. Follow-up
  - Of results, documentation of results to measure contribution

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources
  - Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique
15. Interagency intervention
  - JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies
16. Transaction cost reduction
  - Any improvement in the UN teams in the country?
17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19

- Mitigation of pandemic effects

Criterion: impact and sustainability

18. Sustainability

- Focus on "leaving no one behind"

19-20-21. Long-term ownership - Durability of results

- By government and other stakeholders
- Are national partners willing and able to sustain benefits/results after JP and funding end?

22. Support to follow-up mechanisms

- of national policies and plans, strengthen responsibility and corrections

23. Participation of civil society

- in decision making and evaluation of public policies/accountability – men and women

Contribution to SDGs

- Targets 4.2; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

25. Alignment

- of activities and results

26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies in:

- Rights-based perspective focused on childhood
- Gender-based approach

28. Disability - Extent to which the JP:

- Targeted people with disabilities
- The design included the topic
- People (particularly children) were consulted
- The information and the system enable its characterization
- Contributed to inclusion

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**Form B: Authorities of agencies, funds and programs**

Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

1. General relevance of the JP

- Regarding the needs of early childhood and the comprehensive care system and the country's strategies and policies

2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability

- Relevance of the joint approach in the design, execution and management
- Scale of design and resources in relation to the problem

- Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination
- 3. Design
  - Was it participatory?
  - Appropriate, consistent, realistic?
  - Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other?
  - Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies?
  - Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?
- 4. Incidence of COVID-19 context
  - On the exercise of children's rights and the care system
  - On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the care sector

Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy

- 5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
  - Level of progress in programmatic axes -Factors that explain it
- 6. Development goals and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments
  - JP contribution to:
    - Intersector strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
    - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
    - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
  - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
  - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out
- 7. Difficulties and adaptation
  - Hurdles encountered and corrective actions
  - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership
- 8. Interagency and multilevel work
  - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions?
- 9. New approaches and responses
  - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches
- 10. Institutional capacities and arrangements
  - Adequate to ensure actions to achieve results in the context?
- 11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context
  - Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, effectiveness and timeliness of the response
  - Favorable or unfavorable context or organizational culture factors

12. Participation

- Of actors in the design, implementation and execution

13. Follow-up

- Of results, documentation of results to measure contribution

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources

- Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique

15. Interagency intervention

- JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies

16. Transaction cost reduction

- Any improvement in the UN teams in the country?

17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19

- Mitigation of pandemic effects

Criterion: impact and sustainability

18. Sustainability

- Focus on "leaving no one behind"

19-20-21 Long-term ownership - Durability of results

- By government and other stakeholders
- Are national partners willing and able to sustain benefits/results after JP and funding end?

22. Support to follow-up mechanisms

- of national policies and plans, strengthen responsibility and corrections

23. Participation of civil society

- in decision making and evaluation of public policies/accountability – men and women

24. Contribution to SDGs

- Targets 4.2; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

25. Alignment

- of activities and results

26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies in:

- Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.
- Gender-based approach

28. Disability - Extent to which the JP:

- Targeted people with disabilities
- The design included the topic
- People (particularly children) were consulted

- The information and the system enable its characterization
- Contributed to inclusion

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### **Form C: Representatives from the National Government- Steering Committee**

#### Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

1. General relevance of the JP
  - Regarding the needs of early childhood and the comprehensive care system and the country's strategies and policies, from the perspective of your area of government
2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability
  - Relevance of the joint approach in the design, execution and management
  - Scale of design and resources in relation to the problem
  - Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination
3. Design
  - Did your area participate in the design?
  - Was it appropriate, consistent, realistic?
  - Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other and those implemented by the government?
  - Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies appropriately?
  - Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?
4. Incidence of COVID-19 context
  - On the exercise of children's rights and the care system
  - On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the care sector

#### Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy

5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
  - Level of progress in programmatic axes -Factors that explain it
6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments, according to the perspective of your area of government
  - JP contribution to:
    - Intersector strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
    - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
    - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
  - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
  - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out

7. Difficulties and adaptation
  - Hurdles encountered and corrective actions
  - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership
8. Interagency and multilevel work – JP action is perceived as:
  - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions?
9. New approaches and responses
  - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches
10. Institutional capacities and arrangements
  - Adequate to ensure actions achieve the results in the context?
11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context
  - Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions related to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, effectiveness and timeliness of the response
  - Favorable or unfavorable context or organizational culture factors
12. Participation
  - Of actors in the design, implementation and execution
13. Follow-up
  - Of results, documentation of results to measure contribution

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources
  - Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique
15. Interagency intervention
  - JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies
16. Transaction cost reduction
  - Any improvement in the UN teams in the country?
17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19
  - Mitigation of pandemic effects

Criterion: impact and sustainability

18. Sustainability
  - Focus on "leaving no one behind"
- 19-20-21. Long-term ownership - Durability of results
  - How does your area appreciate the opportunity to keep the benefits/results after the JP and funding end?
22. Did the JP provide support to the monitoring mechanisms for policies and plans in your area of government?
23. Did the civil society (men and women) participate in the actions of the JP in your area of government?
24. Contribution to SDGs in actions related to your area of government:



- Targets 4.2; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

25. Alignment

- of activities and results

26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies in your area of government in:

- Rights-based perspective focused on childhood
- Gender-based approach

28. Disability - Extent to which the JP:

- Targeted people with disabilities
- The design included the topic
- People (particularly children) were consulted
- The information and the system enable its characterization
- Contributed to inclusion

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**Form D: Representatives from the National Government- Counterpart for activities**

Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

1. General relevance of the JP

- Regarding the needs of early childhood, the comprehensive care system and the country's strategies and policies, from the perspective of the area under your responsibility

2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability

- Relevance of the joint approach in the design, execution and management
- Scale of design and resources in relation to the problem
- Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination

3. Design

- Did your area participate in the design?
- Was it appropriate, consistent, realistic?
- Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other and those implemented by the government?
- Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies appropriately?
- Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?

4. Incidence of COVID-19 context

- On the exercise of children's rights and the care system
- On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the care sector

Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy

5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
  - Level of progress in programmatic axes -Factors that explain it
6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments, according to the perspective of your area of government
  - JP contribution to:
    - Intersector strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
    - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
    - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
  - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
  - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out
7. Difficulties and adaptation
  - Hurdles encountered and corrective actions
  - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership
8. Interagency and multilevel work – JP action is perceived as:
  - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions?
9. New approaches and responses
  - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches
10. Institutional capacities and arrangements
  - Adequate to ensure actions achieve results in the context?
11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context
  - Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, effectiveness and timeliness of the response
  - Favorable or unfavorable context or organizational culture factors
12. Participation
  - Of actors in the design, implementation and execution
13. Follow-up
  - Of results, documentation of results to measure contribution

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources
  - Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique
15. Interagency intervention
  - JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies in specific issues
16. Transaction cost reduction

- Any improvement in the UN teams in the country?
- 17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19
  - Mitigation of pandemic effects

Criterion: impact and sustainability

- 18. Sustainability
  - Focus on “leaving no one behind”
- 19-20-21. Long-term ownership - Durability of results
  - How does your area appreciate the opportunity to keep the benefits/results after the JP and funding end?
- 22. Did the JP provide support to the monitoring mechanisms for policies and plans in your area of government?
- 23. Did the civil society (men and women) participate in the actions of the JP in your area of government?
- 24. Contribution to SDGs in actions related to your area of government:
  - Targets 4.2; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

- 25. Alignment
  - of activities and results
- 26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies in your area of government in:
  - Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.
  - Gender-based approach
- 28. Disability - Extent to which the JP:
  - Targeted people with disabilities
  - The design included the topic
  - People (particularly children) were consulted
  - The information and the system enable its characterization
  - Contributed to inclusion

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**Form E: Political decision makers at provincial level**

Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

- 1. General relevance of the JP
  - Regarding the needs of early childhood and the comprehensive care system with respect to the strategies and policies addressed by the province government
- 2. Specific relevance in terms of early childhood, indigenous population, gender, disability (in relation to the problem and the actions of the JP in the Province)
  - Relevance of the joint approach in the design, execution and management
  - Scale of design and resources in relation to the problem

- Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination
- 3. Design
  - Did your Province participate in the design?
  - Was it appropriate, consistent, realistic?
  - Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other and those implemented by the government, both at national and provincial level?
  - Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies appropriately according to the context of your Province?
  - Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?
- 4. Incidence of COVID-19 context in your Province
  - On the exercise of children's rights and the care system
  - On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the care sector

*Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy*

- 5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes (continuity and changes)
  - Level of progress in programmatic axes -Factors that explain it
- 6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments, according to the perspective of the requirements of your province
  - JP contribution to:
    - Intersectoral strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
    - Organization of provincial and local council dialog tables
    - Parenting Communities
    - Diagnosis and research
    - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
    - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
  - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
  - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out
- 7. Difficulties and adaptation
  - Hurdles encountered in your Province and corrective actions
  - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership to overcome them
- 8. Interagency and multilevel work – JP action is perceived as:
  - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions? (Please record if joint action is not perceived)
- 9. New approaches and responses
  - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches in your Province

10. Institutional capacities and arrangements

- Adequate to ensure actions achieve results in the context?

11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context

- Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, at provincial level, effectiveness and timeliness of the response
- Favorable or unfavorable context or organizational culture factors

12. Participation

- Of the provincial actors in the design, implementation and execution

13. Follow-up

- Of results, documentation of results to measure contribution to the requirements of the Province

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources

- Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique (perceived at provincial level)

15. Interagency intervention

- JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies (provincial experience)

16. Transaction cost reduction

- Do you perceive improvement in the UN team in actions at the provincial level?

17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19

- Mitigation of the effects of the pandemic on the actions of the JP in the Province

Criterion: impact and sustainability

18. Sustainability

- Especially in "leaving no one behind"

19-20-21. Long-term ownership - Durability of results

- How does your Province appreciate the opportunity to keep the benefits/results after the JP and funding end?

22. Did the JP provide support to follow-up mechanisms for provincial policies and plans?

23. Did the civil society (men and women) participate in the actions of the JP?

24. Contribution to SDGs in actions related to your Province:

- Targets 4.2; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

25. Alignment

- of activities and results in the actions implemented in the Province

26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies in your Province in:

- Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.
  - Gender-based approach
- Disability - Extent to which -in your Province- the JP
- Targeted people with disabilities
  - The design included the topic
  - People (particularly children) were consulted
  - The information and the system enable its characterization
  - Contributed to inclusion

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### **Form F: Provincial technical teams / Members of provincial dialog tables**

#### Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

1. General relevance of the JP
  - Regarding the needs of early childhood and the comprehensive care system with respect to the strategies and policies of the country and those addressed by the province government
2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability (in relation to the problem and the actions of the JP in your Province)
  - Relevance of the joint approach in the design, execution and management
  - Scale of design and resources in relation to the problem
  - Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination
3. Design
  - Did your Province participate in the design?
  - Was it appropriate, consistent, realistic?
  - Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other and those implemented by the government, both at national and provincial level?
  - Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies appropriately according to the context of your province?
  - Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?
4. Incidence of COVID-19 context in your Province
  - On the exercise of children's rights and the care system
  - On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the care sector

#### Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy

5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
  - Level of progress in programmatic axes -Factors that explain it

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6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments, according to the perspective of the requirements of your province
    - JP contribution to:
      - Intersectoral strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
      - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
      - Organizing provincial and local council dialog tables
      - Parenting Communities
      - Diagnosis and research
      - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
    - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
    - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out
  7. Difficulties and adaptation
    - Hurdles encountered in your Province and corrective actions
    - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership to overcome them
  8. Interagency and multilevel work – JP action is perceived as:
    - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions? (Please record if joint action is not perceived)
  9. New approaches and responses
    - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches in your Province
  10. Institutional capacities and arrangements
    - Adequate to ensure actions achieve results in the context?
  11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context
    - Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, at provincial level, effectiveness and timeliness of the response
    - Favorable or unfavorable context or organizational culture factors
  12. Participation
    - Of the provincial actors in the design, implementation and execution
  13. Follow-up
    - Of results, documentation of results to measure the contribution to the requirements of your Province

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources
  - Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique (perceived at national level)
15. Interagency intervention

- JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies (provincial experience)
- 16. Transaction cost reduction
  - Do you perceive improvement in the UN team in actions at the provincial level?
- 17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19
  - Mitigation of the effects of the pandemic on the actions of the JP in the Province

Criterion: impact and sustainability

- 18. Sustainability
  - Focus on "leaving no one behind"
- 19-20-21 Long-term ownership - Durability of results
  - How does your Province appreciate the opportunity to keep the benefits/results after the JP and funding end?
- 22 Did the JP provide support to follow-up mechanisms for provincial policies and plans?
- 23. Did the civil society (men and women) participate in the actions of the JP?
- 24. Contribution to SDGs in actions related to your Province:
  - Targets 4.2; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

- 25. Alignment
  - of activities and results in the actions implemented in the Province
- 26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies in your Province in:
  - Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.
  - Gender-based approach
- 28. Disability - Extent to which -in your Province- the JP:
  - Targeted people with disabilities
  - The design included the topic
  - People (particularly children) were consulted
  - The information and the system enable its characterization
  - Contributed to inclusion

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**Form G: Municipal government / Participants of local council dialog tables, training, others**

Criterion: relevance and strategic adjustment

- 1. General relevance of the JP
  - Importance for the needs of early childhood and the comprehensive care system and government actions at the provincial and local levels
- 2. Specific relevance in terms of indigenous population, gender, disability
  - Importance according to the problem and the actions of the JP at local level
  - Contribution to gender gap reduction and non-discrimination



3. Design
  - Was it appropriate, consistent, realistic?
  - Do the strategies, products and activities capture all possible synergies and complement each other and those implemented by the government, at national, provincial and local level?
  - Does it identify risks and assumptions, and sustainability strategies appropriately according to the provincial and local level?
  - Are indicators, goals, monitoring/evaluation system suitable?
4. Incidence of COVID-19 context in the province and at local level;
  - On the exercise of children's rights
  - On the economic autonomy of women and labor rights of workers in the sector

Criterion: management effectiveness and efficacy

5. Progress and achievements in programmatic axes
  - Level of progress in activities -Factors that explain it
6. Development objectives and contribution to regulatory frameworks and instruments, according to the perspective of provincial and local requirements
  - JP contribution to:
    - Intersectoral strategies for early childhood care and the comprehensive care system
    - Training policies for decent work in the care sector
    - Organizing local council dialog tables
    - Parenting Communities
    - Diagnosis and research
    - Generation of evidence to facilitate access and design policies
  - Contribution to regulatory frameworks and comprehensive protection policies
  - Contribution of the instruments, studies and research carried out
7. Difficulties and adaptation
  - Hurdles encountered at local level and corrective actions
  - JP capabilities, staff, incentives, leadership to overcome them
8. Interagency and multilevel work – JP action is perceived as:
  - Consistent, complementary and adaptable set of actions? (Please record if joint action is not perceived)
9. New approaches and responses
  - Response to the pandemic, innovative approaches at local level
10. Institutional capacities and arrangements
  - Adequate to ensure actions achieve the results in the context?
11. Adaptation to COVID-19 context

- Adjustment of objectives, strategies, JP actions to the pandemic context - Promotion of support and discussion processes, at local level, effectiveness and timeliness of the response

12. Participation

- Of local actors in the design, implementation and execution

13. Follow-up

- Of results, documentation of results to measure contribution to local requirements

Criterion: efficiency

14. Resources

- Appropriate financial allocation and execution, consistent with the technique (perceived at local level)

15. Interagency intervention

- JP intervention vs. intervention of individual agencies (local experience)

16. Transaction cost reduction

- Do you perceive improvement in the UN team in actions at local level?

17. Mobilization of resources to face COVID-19

- Mitigation of the effects of the pandemic on the actions of the JP at local level

Criterion: impact and sustainability

18. Sustainability

- Focus on "leaving no one behind"

19-20-21. Long-term ownership - Durability of results

- How is the opportunity to keep the benefits/results after the JP and funding end appreciated at local level?

22. Did the JP provide support to follow-up mechanisms for local policies and plans?

23. Did the local civil society (men and women) participate in the actions of the JP?

24. Contribution to SDGs in local actions:

- Targets 4; 5.4; 8.5 – MECNUD – national priorities

Criterion: consistency

25. Alignment

- of activities and results in the actions implemented at local level

26-27. Transversality of the design and complementarity of actions with other interventions of the agencies at local level in:

- Rights-based perspective focused on childhood.
- Gender-based approach

28. Disability - Extent to which -at local level - the JP:

- Targeted people with disabilities
- The design included the topic
- People (particularly children) were consulted

- The information and the system enable its characterization
- Contributed to inclusion

**Form H: Disability Specialists / Participants of Interagency Program Activities**

This questionnaire is aimed at officials and specialists in disability issues **who have participated** in the activities of the Interagency Program throughout the country. Its objective is to collect their opinions and suggestions **specifically referring to disability**, in order to evaluate the results of the Program and make suggestions to improve future initiatives of this type. To complete it, in each question, you should **only mark with a cross (X) the option** that best represents your opinion, and in the following space you can present your grounds and/or provide other information that you believe is important for the improvement of the Program in this aspect.

- 1• To what extent was the Joint Program (JP) targeted at people with disabilities?
- a. It was not specifically targeted
  - b. It is one of the direct beneficiary target groups
  - c. It is the main target group of the program

*Additional information that you consider relevant:*

2• To what extent did the design and implementation of the Joint Program (JP) activities include the requirement of non-discrimination and disability-related accessibility?

- a. No requirements
- b. General reference
- c. Specific requirements

*Additional information that you consider relevant:*

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3• To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?

- a. They were not invited
- b. They were invited
- c. Specific scope

*Additional information that you consider relevant:*

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4• To what extent does the support for data collection and analysis, records and the information system enable characterization of disability?

- a. No reference to disability
- b. Disability included through a "Washington group short set", but without analysis
- c. Disability included through a "Washington group short set"
  - Part of the general analysis.
  - With specific analysis

*Additional information that you consider relevant:*

5• ¿To what extent did the Joint Program (JP) contribute to supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities through:

- a. Ensuring basic income
- b. Covering health care costs, including rehabilitation and assistance devices
- c. Covering disability-related costs, including community support services
- d. Facilitating access to inclusive child development, education and work/financial means

*Additional information that you consider relevant:*

Name:

Position:

Date:

***Thank you very much for your help!***