

# Strengthening Collaboration in the Global Evaluation Ecosystem:

UNICEF South Asia : Thoughts and  
Experiences

Esther B. Kaggwa, PhD, Regional Evaluation Adviser



# UNICEF Evaluation Function Vision

*“Our vision is to consistently leverage rigorous, strategically prioritized evaluative evidence for UNICEF and its partners to realize the rights of every child in the Decade of Action”*

## Goal

Evaluation in UNICEF helps the organization and its partners to achieve the best results possible for children through independent, credible, ethically generated, timely and accessible evaluative evidence.

## Purpose

4 complementary purposes

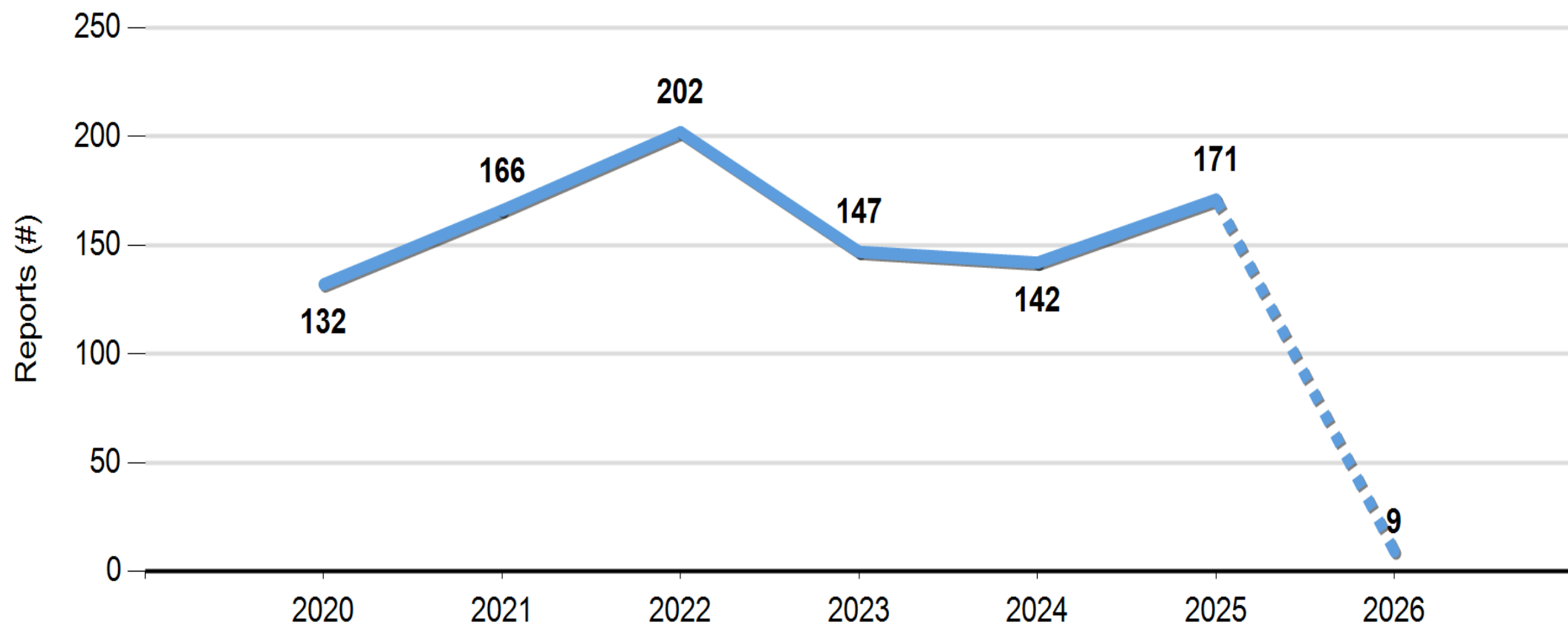
1. Maximizing results for children in development and humanitarian
2. Contributing to oversight and accountability.
3. Fostering organizational learning.
4. Empowering community, national and regional stakeholders.



# Hierarchy and Structure



# UNICEF: Completed Evaluations by Year



# UNICEF's Efforts with Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange

unicef   
for every child



# Government and other Partnerships: Levels and Entry Points: UNICEF South Asia Road Map

Entry at several levels

National Level

Ministry or  
Departmental level

Sub national level

Association, academia  
and similar levels



# UNICEF South Asia Road Map: Key Characteristics for NECD and Partnerships

- Planned, systematic and not ad hoc
- Move from output to Results oriented
  - System strengthening and functionality is a key target
- Context based
  - One size doesn't fit all
  - Capacity, needs, strengths of partner critical
- Maximizes UNICEF's mandate and comparative advantage recognizing that there are other players and partners
- Sustainability although challenging is critical

# UNICEF South Asia Road Map: Systematic process of Partnering for National Evaluation Capacity Development



## UNICEF Knowledge Exchange Platforms



- Country Government platforms and conferences
- UNICEF/ government symposia
- Academic platforms and collaborations
- National Evaluation Associations
- Global and Regional International Conferences
- UNICEF organized conferences
- Public Reports and publications
- UNEG and other UN inter agency platforms

## Knowledge Exchange with Government: Highlighted UNICEF Roles



- Convener on child related KM activities
- Participant in government and other partner activities
- Sponsor /co sponsor
- Technical assistance provider
- Co author- Publications/ Op-Ed pieces

# UNICEF: Examples of Specific Areas of support for National evaluation Capacity Building



# Global Evaluation Blended Learning Programme Concept

## EXPECTED RESULTS

Contribute to Enhanced National Capacity and **Partnership** for Evaluation

More Senior Policy Makers and Managers as **Champions of Evaluation**

Accelerate Evaluation **Skills Development** among partners and staff

More Evaluation-Friendly **Environment**

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

### ExCEL

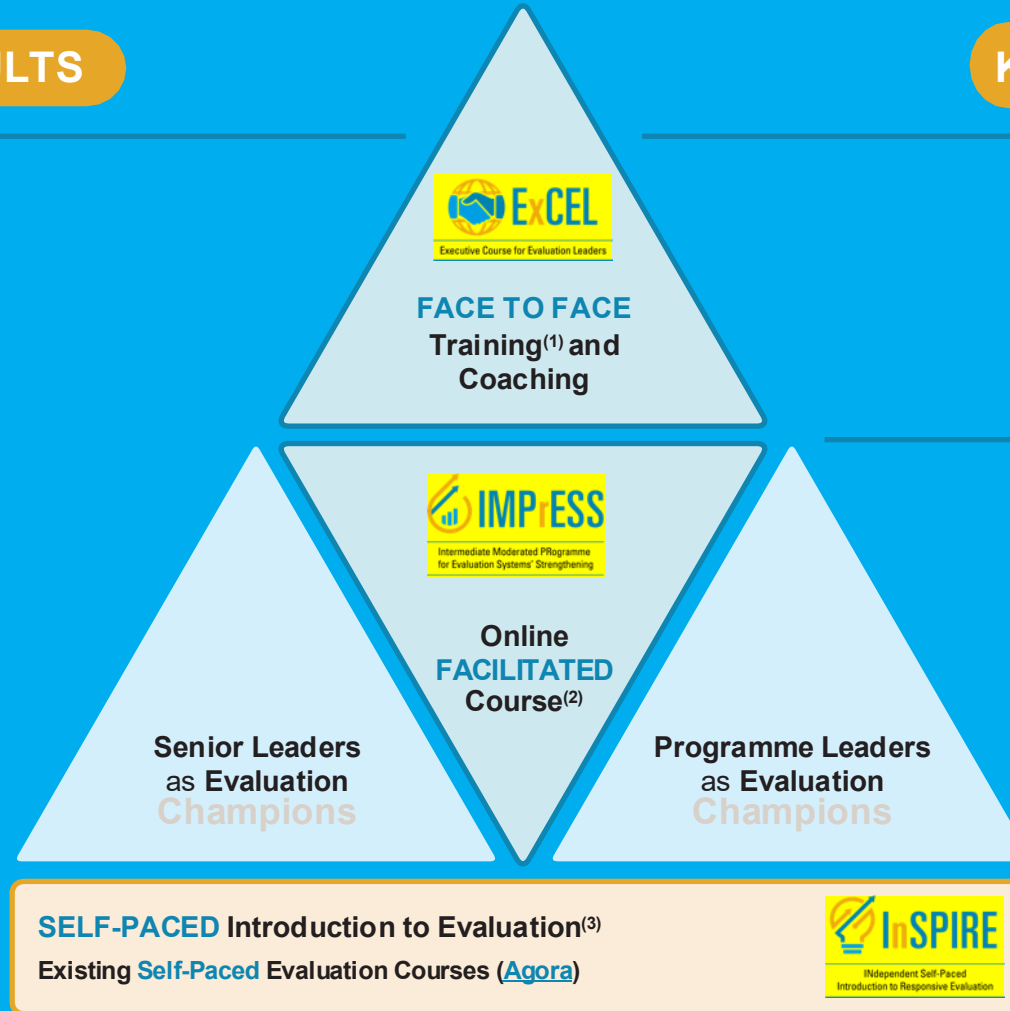
Senior Policy Makers and Leaders and UNICEF Evaluation Specialists

### IMPRESS

Evaluation Managers among partners and UNICEF Staff

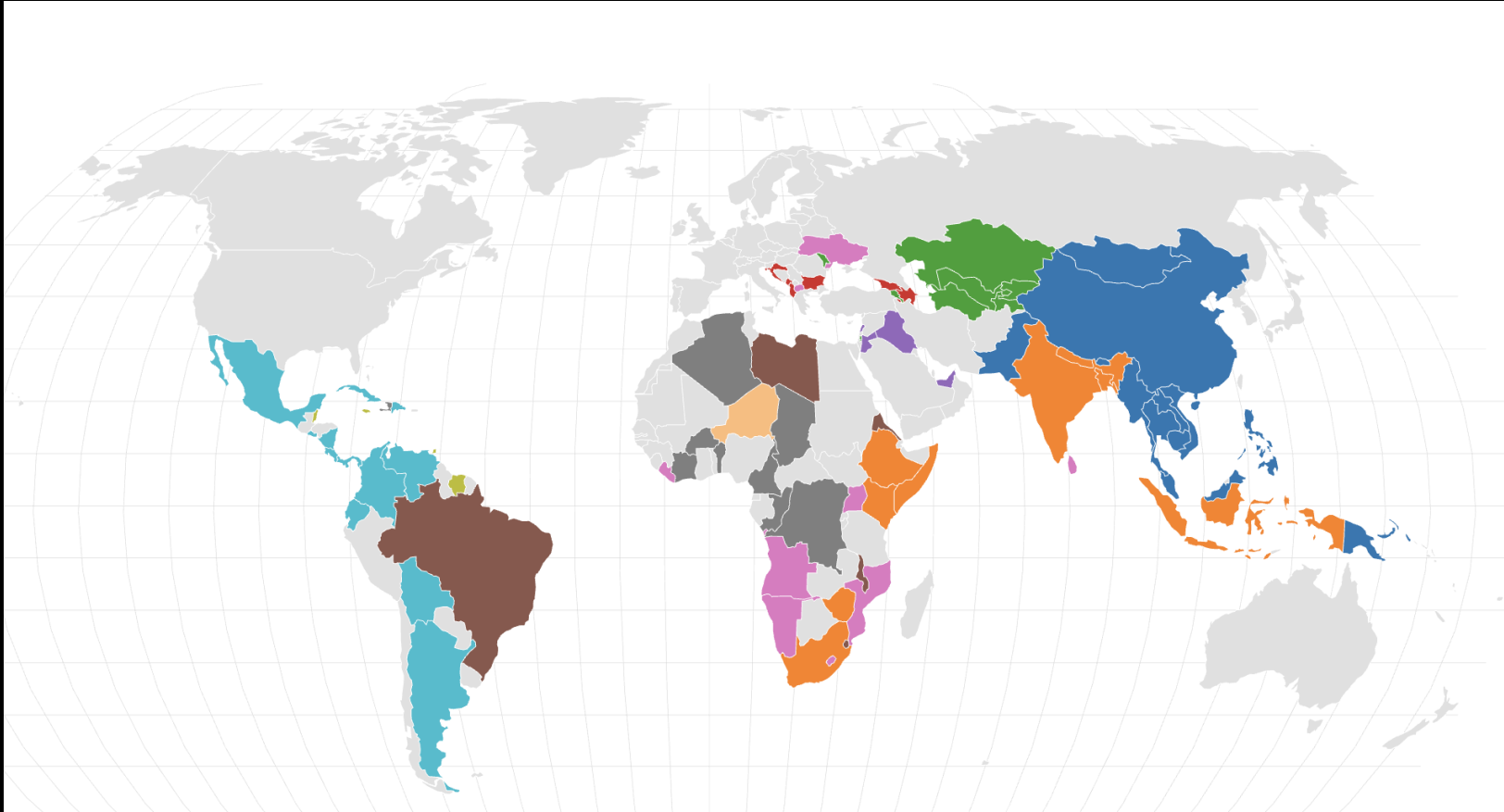
### InSPIRE

Partners and UNICEF Staff interested in Evaluation and Evidence- Based Programming



Certificate of Completion by: <sup>1</sup>National University of Singapore, <sup>2</sup>Key Aid Consulting, <sup>3</sup>UNICEF

# The ExCEL Movement is **Expansive** and **Growing**



**408** Total Graduates  
294 Partners + 114 UNICEF

**84**  
Countries

**104**  
Delegations

**12** Cohorts delivered since Sep 2022

- 2022 Cohorts 1–2: 73 graduates
- 2023 Cohorts 3–6: 108 graduates
- 2024 Cohorts 7–10: 150 graduates
- 2025 Cohorts 11–12: 77 graduates

## East Asia & Pacific

Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam

## South Asia

Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

## Europe & Central Asia

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

## Middle East & N. Africa

Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, State of Palestine, UAE

## Eastern & Southern Africa

Angola, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe

## West & Central Africa

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Niger

## Latin America & Caribbean

Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Rep., Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela

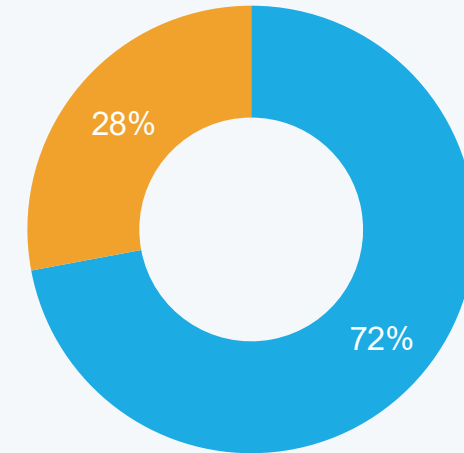


Executive Course for Evaluation Leaders

# ExCEL is for **Senior Leaders** and **Policy Makers**

Cohorts 1–12, September 2022 – November 2025

**294** partners' graduates



■ Partners (294) ■ UNICEF (114)

**408** Total Graduates  
from **84 Countries**

# Highlights of ExCEL Action Plans- Training

**394** verified action plans across **81** countries from Cohorts 1–11:

**126** Evaluations (64 programme/project, 18 study/research, 14 evaluability assessment, 11 policy, 8 impact, 7 formative, 4 other)

**100** NECD Activities (81 training/workshops, 14 capacity assessment, 5 institutional and academic)

**78** Evaluation Culture and Advocacy (36 culture promotion, 23 awareness-raising, 15 coalition/network, 4 communication)

**40** Evaluation Policies, Plans and Legislation (18 evaluation plan, 13 evaluation policy, 9 legislation)

**25** Evaluation Guidelines and Standards

**25** Institutional Strengthening

# IMPrESS Rollout and Participants

English, French, Spanish, Portuguese

41

cohorts delivered

1,695

learners

101

countries covered

- Started in 2023 with 11 cohorts in English
- 2024–2025 rollout in French, Spanish and Portuguese; 1,066 graduates

Participants are invited based on their responsibilities with commissioning, managing, and using the results of evaluations. Priority is given to government partners and UNICEF staff who have been working together on strategic evaluations or other evaluation-related projects.

# Enhanced Engagements with Government: Country Examples

## India

- **M&E workshops and conferences (South-South)** – participation in Excel training on evaluation leadership at National of University Singapore, APEA Conference Philippines, and other opportunities to showcase India best practices (like OOMF).
- **Technically review and support toolkits and guidelines of the government** – tools, methods, techniques relevant for Government of India scheme-level and potentially policy evaluations
- **In-country workshops on methods and techniques** – mixed methods training, data ethics, evaluation management and leadership, innovative MEL toolkit, etc.
- **Technically support government of India evaluations in an advisory, reference capacity. Reciprocal reference group membership on UNICEF evaluations.**

## Global

Ongoing engagement with the **Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation** (GPFE) to strengthen political leadership for evaluation

**Bangladesh- High-level study visit** of a Bangladeshi delegation to Sri Lanka,

- Included the Secretary General and several IMED directors, as well as the President of the Evaluation Association, to exchange practices on national evaluation systems in 2024.

## Sri Lanka

- Support to the **academic sector in Sri Lanka** to establish a Master's programme in Evaluation (**University of Sri Jaywardenepura**); three universities now offering evaluation courses in 2023-2025
- UNICEF support to the **first national academic symposium** on Monitoring and Evaluation in Sri Lanka, held in 2024.
- Development of an evaluation module at the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (**SLIDA**), the national training institute for public officials in 2024.
- Launch of the **first INCE** (Index of National Evaluation Capacities) diagnostic in Asia, conducted in Sri Lanka through a partnership between WFP, DeVAL, and UNICEF; discussions

# Enhanced Engagements with Government: Selected Country Examples

## **Cambodia**

- Partnership with National University of Management for an evaluation certificate course was established in late 2024, targets relevant line ministries, development partners and graduate students

## **Lebanon**

- Advocacy for a law to include M&E function in the public sector

## **Djibouti**

- Support to national evaluation days

## **Egypt**

- Support development of national evaluation policy

## **Thailand**

- UNICEF Thailand, in collaboration with local academia partners, is supporting the Office of Education Commission (OEC) of Thailand in leading the development of a National Education Evaluation Framework

## **Uruguay**

- Scholarships for a 10-month, online evaluation degree;

## **Europe and Central Asia (ECA)**

- National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD) Survey

# UNICEF Capacity Development: Challenges Faced

- Limited frameworks and guiding policies
  - Few governments in South Asia have an evaluation policy
- Government staff turn over
- Failure to cascade lessons and knowledge
- Complex and some times disjointed monitoring and evaluation systems
- Lack of coordination by partners supporting government
- More focus at national level
  - Fewer partners at the sub national level
- Attitude
  - Capacity development is a long-term effort
    - Failure to show immediate results discourages donors and policy makers
    - Perception towards the role of evaluation in policy making
- Insufficient culture of evidence use

# Lessons Learned: Capacity Development

- Capacity development must move beyond training
- Political will and leadership are important
- Sustainability and transition planning must be incorporated at the very beginning
- Use of country institutions is a must
- While outputs are important, the goal should focus on the outcomes
  - System strengthening and functioning
- Continued need to prove results and value add to leaders
- Government ownership should be at the center of any effort
- Some challenges are long term
  - Need to plan with these in mind
- Alignment, targeting, segmentation, and timing are key

# Lessons Learned: Enhancing effectiveness of Knowledge Sharing with government

## Importance of joint Planning

- Effectiveness increases when activities are planned jointly
- Expectations, outputs/outcome should be clear- so what clearly articulated

## Role of timing

- Timing around decision making time points and/or utilization points

## Targeting and segmentation

- Decisions around who needs what knowledge, at what depth and frequency
- Whole of government versus sectoral; Central versus sub national
- Practitioners, expert inclusion

## Alignment with unit/divisional goals

- Alignment with goals, plans, strategies and mandates

## Frequency/ format

- Formal versus informal; one of versus on going; online versus face to face



---

Intermediate Moderated PRogramme  
for Evaluation Systems' Strengthening

---

# Key Take Aways

- Partnerships, knowledge exchange and capacity development are a critical part of the UNICEF Evaluation function's mandate
- Several platforms and approaches exist for effective partnership with government
  - These have to be maximized
- Partnerships, knowledge management and capacity development activities with government must be planned and systematic
  - Ad hoc activities will not create the change we need
- Alignment, targeting, segmentation, and timing of knowledge management are key to effective activities
- For sustainability, there is need to engage local institutions
- Challenges exist but can be mitigated if activities are planned well

**Thank You**