Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

Executive Board Annual Session 2019
20 May 2019
Purpose, Objectives, Scope and Methodology

✓ Generate practical solutions to inform how UNICEF can improve the coverage and quality (C&Q) of its humanitarian response in complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE)

✓ Assess UNICEF’s performance in achieving C&Q based on a sample of countries over the years 2015-2018, identifying enablers and barriers

✓ 11 countries included in the evaluation:
  ✓ 5 field missions (Nigeria, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Philippines and Somalia);
  ✓ 4 desk reviews + remote interviews (Pakistan, Ukraine, Burundi, Mali, State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic);
  ✓ 3 additional countries included for in-depth interviews (South Sudan, Yemen and Iraq)
Underlying Analytical Framework and Evaluation Questions

- Analytical framework articulates critical building blocks and enablers of C&Q in UNICEF’s humanitarian response in CHE on 3 levels (Inputs - Ways of achieving outcomes - Outcomes)
- Evaluation questions developed around this framework
Key Findings - Overall

✓ Across all the country case studies, UNICEF was among the largest and most important provider of humanitarian assistance and protection, and often worked in some of the most challenging areas.

✓ UNICEF programme coverage in these environments has been significant, and large populations have benefited greatly from the organization’s humanitarian action.

✓ UNICEF has established good partnerships in all countries with national authorities Govts, local and international NGO, and UN partners – they’ve played an important role in enhancing coverage of humanitarian needs in these conflict-affected countries.

✓ UNICEF’s leadership, organization and its staff, and its systems and procedures, through their ability to mobilize people and funds, have largely enabled its coverage and quality in complex humanitarian emergencies.
Key Findings – Coverage, Quality and Equity

- **Coverage**
  - Coverage is often significant, but calculations are made against targets rather than against estimates of population in need.
  - Pragmatic decisions are made about targets which are based on three inter-connected factors; (i) needs, (ii) responsibilities, (iii) opportunities.

- **Coverage with quality and equity**
  - UNICEF frequently disaggregates by sex and age but there is no systematic approach to undertaking broader vulnerability analysis.
  - Coverage is consistently prioritized over quality and equity, particularly at the onset of a crisis.

- **Programme quality**
  - UNICEF staff have a good awareness of the CCCs and global quality standards.
  - Contextualization of the CCCs increases their relevance but makes it difficult to aggregate results or compare across different contexts.
Key Findings – **influencing others** to strengthen protection and increase quality and coverage

- UNICEF is a strong advocate for child rights in CHE, particularly on the Children and armed conflict (CAAC) agenda
- Challenges of meeting its obligations are linked to resourcing and quality control
- Where there are concerns about government sensitivities, and risk of access denials, UNICEF was cautious in the strategies it adopted, e.g. letting others take the lead and sharing of responsibilities

- UNICEF is well-placed to advocate on access, but variable across the countries
- UNICEF has used its role as Cluster Lead Agency to strengthen the coverage and quality of the response to complex humanitarian emergencies
- There is a perception that UNICEF’s advocacy tends to be focused on its own access rather than that of its partners

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**Reporting on Grave Violations**

**Advocacy to expand access**
## Key Findings – Programme approaches that UNICEF employs to gain principled access and improve coverage and quality

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<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
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| **Humanitarian principles & negotiation** | ✓ Senior staff have more knowledge and understanding of principles; among front-line staff, limited understanding and lack of structured way to make decisions on managing trade-offs between principles, and tendency is to prioritize the principle of ‘humanity’ over ‘impartiality’, ‘neutrality’ and ‘independence’  
✓ With some notable exceptions (Syria, South Sudan, Yemen), UNICEF has limited formal negotiations with non-state entities (NSEs). It frequently participates in coordinated efforts (e.g. Afghanistan, Ukraine, Nigeria), but in several of the case studies, UNICEF was comparatively silent when it came to speaking out on the need to engage with states or NSEs on issues of humanitarian access |
| **Security risk management**      | ✓ UN SMS often constrains UNICEF’s efforts to gain access and hinders coverage  
✓ The Programme Criticality framework enhanced access when it was implemented properly  
✓ The use of security officers by UNICEF strengthened access (e.g. low profile missions); but it was noted that a deep knowledge of SMS and risk appetite were essential for success |
| **Integrated UN Presences & CIMCCORD** | ✓ Integrated UN presence influences perception of UNICEF’s neutrality and independence. The use of armed convoys in particular constrains access of UNICEF staff which affects coverage and quality  
✓ UNICEF can be slow to counter these perceptions but some examples exist of action taken to reduce risk, address perceptions and defending humanitarian principles (e.g. Mali)  
✓ UNICEF engages with military actors through established UN Security Management structures and uses military assets as a last resort (e.g. Somalia) |
### Key Findings – Programme approaches that UNICEF employs to gain principled access and improve coverage and quality – cont...

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<td>Remote management modalities</td>
<td>✓ Use of ‘third party service providers’ has strengthened oversight and monitoring but in number of countries, they did not possess either the authority or the broader skillset, meaning they can only make relatively small contributions to expanding humanitarian access beyond the locations where they are based</td>
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<td>Integrated programmes</td>
<td>✓ Integration between programme sections often exists, but is rarely systematic; siloed programming raised by UNICEF staff and partners as a concern   &lt;br&gt; ✓ Where integrated programmes were observed, there was strong evidence of the contribution they make to strengthening coverage and/or quality; &lt;br&gt; ✓ Successful integration was that which started from assessment and planning of the programmes</td>
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<td>Rapid response mechanisms</td>
<td>✓ RRMss significantly increase coverage but challenges exist with the quality and adequacy of assistance and transition from short to longer-term support. &lt;br&gt; ✓ Assistance delivered by RRMss is often integrated</td>
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Key Findings - **Partnership strategies** to gain for principled access and improve coverage and quality

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<th>Government partnerships</th>
<th>Local and national NGO partnerships</th>
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<td>✓ UNICEF places a high value on Govt partnerships; they play an important role in enhancing coverage even in conflict-affected countries; however, Govt capacity is often limited and delivery of quality programmes can be variable</td>
<td>✓ Frequently have strong community links and acceptance OR higher risk tolerance, but capacities vary.</td>
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<td>✓ In a number of contexts, the Govt sought to control or constrain humanitarian operations;</td>
<td>✓ UNICEF has a reductive view of localization and offers limited capacity building or support to local/national NGOs on security risk management.</td>
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<td>✓ Where Govt is engaged in internal conflict, this has implications for perceptions of UNICEF’s independence and/or neutrality in conflict situations; and examples show that UNICEF can do more to defend Humanitarian Principles and IHL in cases where government is not meeting its responsibilities</td>
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<th>International NGO partnerships</th>
<th>Partnership with UN agencies</th>
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<td>✓ Some case studies show a shift from INGO partnerships to NNGO due to higher cost; although they can have good partnership models with local counterparts enabling them to deliver effectively in CHE</td>
<td>✓ Good engagement with UN agencies on preparedness and resilience, and strengthening speed of response and coverage. Good examples exist - e.g. UNICEF/WFP(WHO) collaboration on the integration of SAM/MAM)</td>
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Key Findings - Design of UNICEF’s humanitarian response to ensure relevance in evolving needs and priorities

✓ **Context Analysis** – considered essential for operational agility in CHE; UNICEF’s focus has been on broader strategic analysis; it could undertake more frequent and operational analysis (e.g. conflict mapping, power analysis, hot-spot analysis, access, etc)

✓ **Community engagement** – UNICEF engages communities for a range of reasons, however, there is no systematic means of eliciting feedback for the purpose of accountability or to identify and address programme quality or coverage issues

✓ **H-D linkages** – countries take a pragmatic approach to strengthening preparedness and resilience; but is hampered in contexts of limited government capacity and/or engagement.
## Key Finding - How UNICEF’s inputs enable or constrain programme coverage and quality

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<th>Key Findings</th>
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| Leadership and management     | ✓ UNICEF’s decentralized structure permits decisions on security risk management and access to be made by COs, in consultation with ROs  
✓ However, there is scope to ensure that roles and responsibilities for decision-making on access and negotiations e.g. in field office locations are clear – the roll-out of UNICEF’s Access Framework is expected to enhance this |
| Human resources               | ✓ UNICEF has been successful in recruiting talented staff but this is variable, and there are often skills gaps in complex humanitarian emergencies; adequate capacity and understanding of humanitarian principles and negotiations critical in these contexts  
✓ UNICEF appears to have found a balance of using international and increasingly national staff in pivotal programme management roles in COs and in field locations |
| Resource mobilization         | ✓ HAC is consistently well-funded, but there are still gaps and disparities between COs and between sectors. There is no consistent pattern to under-funding.  
✓ The lack of predictable funding frequently constrained programme coverage and, in some cases, compromised UNICEF’s ability to reach and maintain quality standards |
| Systems and procedures        | ✓ SSOPs play an important role in fast-tracking procedures in L2/L3 emergencies, but there are inconsistencies in their application within countries. Delays in processing PCAs reported in a number of countries |
Conclusions

• UNICEF has shown organizational courage and tenacity in sustaining its work in complex humanitarian emergencies despite significant challenges.

• Lack of adequate data collection, disaggregation and reporting means that UNICEF cannot reliably calculate its coverage in relation to need; neither can it determine accurately enough whether it is targeting those whose needs are the greatest.

• While UNICEF routinely uses quality standards to guide its work, the delivery of these are affected by a range of internal and external factors that tend to push UNICEF towards prioritising coverage over equity and quality.

• The UN security management systems in place to assist UNICEF to ‘stay and deliver’ often fail to fulfil their functions, leading UNICEF to maintain its own security risk management capacity.

• UNICEF’s systems and procedures are consistent with its access aspirations which can be applied more widely, or adapt them to better suit this objective.

• In a number of countries, UNICEF had a wealth of good practice in accessing those in greatest need, and these can be replicated or taken to scale.
Recommendations (1/2)

✓ 5 key areas of practice to strengthen further in humanitarian response

1. Calculate targets based on an assessment of people in need
2. Prioritize coverage with equity – balancing reaching the greatest number of people with reaching those in greatest need
3. Undertake regular analysis in order to adapt programme approaches and partnerships to reach those in greatest need.

1. Support the practical use of humanitarian principles for structured, ethical decision-making
2. Strengthen competencies in negotiating access
3. Resolve ethical dilemmas in development-humanitarian linkages
4. Security management and risk transfer – ethical decision-making in unsafe environments

1. Generation /use of evidence for Coverage and Quality
2. Ethical decision-making for humanitarian access
### Recommendations (2/2)

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<th>3. Improving accountability</th>
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<td>1. Engage with communities to strengthen accountability and quality</td>
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<td>2. Strengthen localization and invest in sustained partnerships</td>
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<th>4. Influencing the humanitarian architecture</th>
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<td>1. Advocate for greater consistency in how UNDSS applies its policies to ensure support for UNICEF to stay and deliver</td>
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<td>2. Partnership with WFP and WHO to strengthen the integration of SAM and MAM treatment</td>
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<th>5. Adapting internal approaches and systems</th>
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<td>1. Clarify the use of SSOPs in countries with L2/L3 humanitarian response</td>
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<td>2. Strengthen humanitarian learning and knowledge management in complex emergencies</td>
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<td>3. Promote integrated programming</td>
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THANK YOU!