Evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations

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UNICEF Executive Board
Informal briefing – 20 August 2020

Item 9 - Evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations
Reference document: E/ICEF/2020/19
Background

Global

128 million children and young people living in crisis-affected countries out of school (2018)

194 countries experienced school closures impacting 91.3 per cent of the students, due to COVID-19 (2020)

Poor quality of education in humanitarian settings is one of the major drivers of the learning crisis

More crises are protracted - average length of crises increased from 5.2 years in 2014 to 9.3 years in 2018 – require adjustment to strategy and resourcing

Education as a percentage of total global humanitarian funding is low - at 4.3 per cent in 2018 (2.1 per cent in 2013)

UNICEF

UNICEF is the de facto agency lead for EiE, co-lead of the IASC global education cluster (with Save the Children), and the designated provider of last resort

EiE is a significant part of UNICEF education expenditure (45 per cent in 2018)

First global evaluation focusing on education in emergencies

The evaluation was undertaken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, reflections on COVID-19 are presented in the last slide
Objectives

Determine the extent to which UNICEF is ‘fit-for-purpose’ in providing education in humanitarian contexts

Determine whether UNICEF programmes contribute to the improvement of education outcomes for various groups of children

Examine adaptations to increase efficiency and effectiveness as UNICEF’s footprint in EiE grows

Approach and methods

Theory-based approach, using retrospective theory of change

Data collection methods:

Extensive document review

670 internal and external stakeholders interviewed

Analysis of financial and performance data

Cases from: Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Dominica, Jordan, Liberia, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Turks and Caicos

Contribution analysis

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Key Evaluation Findings

1. Appropriateness of approach and strategies

   • Programmes generally adhered to humanitarian principles and normative frameworks (i.e., CCCs, INEE minimum standards)

   However...

   There is need to
   (i) clarify the additional measures, beyond minimum quality standards

   (ii) build stronger capacity at the country level UNICEF is an active global partner and private partnerships are growing

   ...with a focus on improving learning outcomes in emergency contexts

2. Coherence and coordination

   • WASH and child protection were generally well-coordinated with education - success partly attributed to education cluster lead role

   • Strong coherence and coordination with government/MoEs

   However...

   Not fully leveraged cluster lead role in support of alignment across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus
Key Evaluation Findings

3. Results from EiE work

- Successful global advocacy (ECW; funding proposals to GPE, etc.)
- Co-leadership of Education Cluster, mobilizing partners
- Convening role in key EiE networks (GCPEA, INEE, GADRRRES, UNGEI)
- Working efficiently and at a larger scale in rapid onset emergencies: e.g. back-to-school campaigns, temporary learning spaces, etc.
- Significantly advanced work on preparedness and risk-informed programming
- Valuable experience was also gained on the peacebuilding agenda at the global level

However...

- The package of solutions for education in emergencies is not well adapted to needs in protracted crises
- Shift to working at scale with governments often results in smaller civil society space
- Multiple roles increase coherence, but "double or triple hatting" often leads to perception of conflict of interest
- Work on peacebuilding continues, with limited coverage at the country level
Key Evaluation Findings

4. Humanitarian-development-peace programming

• Leadership and guidance at global level drive organizational commitments in this area

• Partnerships established for multi-year resourcing (e.g. ECW, GPE)

• Financial resources to local partners but focus is on sub-granting to NGOs

• Untapped potential to leverage roles and connect partners to align across nexus for greater impact

• Participation of affected populations through work with school committees, but limited two-way accountability

5. Gender equality and disability inclusion

• Targeted initiatives for girls as part of the humanitarian response/programmes: (e.g., GBV prevention, WASH and menstrual hygiene services)

However...

• Need for systematic approach to incorporating disability inclusion in programme planning, design and implementation at country level

• Need to improve capacities and systems for data disaggregation, monitoring and reporting at all levels
Recommendations

1. Equip UNICEF leaders with adequate capacities and tools that reflect the commitment to deliver education as an essential part of the humanitarian response
   - UNICEF leadership to champion prioritization of a strong education response in humanitarian settings

2. Promote equitable learning opportunities in humanitarian education response, with particular emphasis on gender equality and disability inclusion
   - Pursue more effective equity approaches and tailor interventions to the specific needs and characteristics of the children
   - Seek out girls and children with disabilities, understand their barriers, views, priorities and capacities and support their participation at all levels of education
Recommendations

3. UNICEF should lead key education partners to develop innovative learning solutions that are suited to the needs of children affected by different types of emergencies, and for protracted crises in particular, and implement them at scale

   • Focus strongly on innovation for learning in protracted crises – this will have a significant impact on addressing the learning crisis

4. Strengthen capacities of staff and partners to identify and target the most marginalized children, and in the monitoring and reporting of interventions and outcomes

   • Update capacity building strategies to include mandatory training on beneficiary identification, targeting and programming that upholds the revised CCCs

5. Strengthen engagement with governments, private sector and civil society to ensure that the design and implementation of EiE interventions capitalize on national capacities, enhance the localization agenda and reinforce accountability to affected populations.

   • Engaging a full range of actors at national and sub-national levels facilitates better decision-making on targeting and coverage of all groups of children, sustainability of results, and “building back better”
Early insights from the education response to COVID-19

Utilizing lessons from the Ebola response, UNICEF education teams mobilized new resources and reprogrammed education thematic funds to support response plans and/or learning platforms at the country level.

Provided package of resources for countries that are new to humanitarian programming, and to facilitate cross-country dialogues and exchanges of experiences.

Issued global framework and guidance for reopening schools, duly emphasizing public health and safety concerns, and programming for inclusion (disability inclusion and to mitigate other forms of marginalization).

That said...

The usual patterns of education humanitarian funding persist! Only a few countries report additional donor assistance directed to their education response to COVID-19.

Strongest barriers to learning for marginalized children remain: (i) the digital divide; (ii) food insecurity, undue exposure to GBV, and related social ills; (iii) social norms around chores in the home and division of labour, etc.

The effectiveness of these efforts, and other elements of the response will be explored further in subsequent evaluative exercises on the effects of the COVID-19.
Thank you for your participation and attention!