Evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations

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Item 9 - Evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations
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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% 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
Selected Evaluation Findings

1. Successful global advocacy and dialogue on prioritizing education humanitarian action and funding; co-leadership of GEC; convening role in key EiE networks.

2. Programmes aligned with humanitarian principles and normative frameworks; appropriate, coherent programme strategies.

3. WASH and child protection well-coordinated and integrated with education; successful coordination with governments, partly attributed to education cluster lead role.

4. Working efficiently, at a relatively larger scale in rapid onset emergencies for the pre-primary and primary levels.

5. Most programmes target girls for services (e.g., GBV prevention, WASH and menstrual hygiene).

6. Commendable contribution to global public goods on emergency preparedness and risk-informed programming.

However...

1. While readily available for efficient response, package of education services not well adapted for protracted crises, or for the secondary school level.

2. Leadership capacities for EiE and advocacy tools need strengthening at all levels.

3. Greater collaboration required between GEC and education team at HQ to leverage cluster lead role for humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

4. Shift to working at scale with Governments needs to include opportunities for engaging civil society in support of the localization agenda.

5. Technical capacities required to target vulnerable children effectively, and to strengthen disability inclusion in programming, monitoring and reporting.
Recommendations

1. Equip UNICEF leaders with adequate capacities and tools
   • Reflect the commitment to deliver education as an essential part of the humanitarian response

2. Promote equitable learning opportunities at all levels
   • Disability inclusion
   • Further work on gender equality
   • Coverage for pre-school, primary and secondary aged learners

3. Lead development of innovative learning solutions and implement at scale
   • Coverage of different types of crises
   • In particular, promote learning in protracted crises
   • Innovation to promote learning outcomes, skills and certification

4. Identify and target the most vulnerable and marginalized children
   • Improve capacities for targeting
   • Improve capacities for monitoring and reporting

5. Strengthen capacities for national actors in support of the localization agenda
   • Strengthen capacities of national partners
   • Engage government, private sector and civil society in programme design and implementation
   • Reinforce accountability to affected populations
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 convened platforms to facilitate cross-country dialogues and exchanges of promising practice.

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...

Historical patterns for low funding of EiE persist with only a few countries reporting additional donor assistance for their education response to COVID-19. Success dependent on increased funding assistance and innovation.

Barriers to learning are amplified (e.g., acute digital divide; food insecurity; perpetual exposure to gender-based violence; social norms on division of labour that disadvantage girls, etc.). Effective mitigation requires a multisectoral response.

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!