Towards Improved Emergency Responses

Synthesis of Humanitarian Evaluations 2010-2016
Key message

- UNICEF’s humanitarian action has matured since 2010. It has provided relevant support for affected populations, acted in close partnership, and delivered significant results for affected populations.

- But evaluations find, after six years of humanitarian action, some weaknesses which need to be addressed. If addressed, these weaknesses present an important opportunity for further progress in the near term.
What did the Synthesis ask?

- **Three questions:**
  1. How has UNICEF’s humanitarian action from 2010-2015 performed, and how has it improved over time?
  2. What factors have supported or constrained improvement?
  3. What can be learned, and what improvements made for the future?
How was the Synthesis conducted?

- **30** evaluations, distilled from 76 in total
- **Other sources:**
  - Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations
  - Learning from Humanitarian Action: a synthesis of non-evaluative documents on UNICEF’s humanitarian action from 2010-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key characteristics</th>
<th>Number of evaluations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of global operational systems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of global approaches or key humanitarian functions of UNICEF</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of multi-country responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of single country responses</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Systematic evaluation framework**
Regional distribution of humanitarian action evaluations

N = 76

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECAR</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAPR</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAR</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACR</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCAR</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sectors covered by humanitarian action evaluations

- Multiple: 41
- Supply and logistics: 1
- Social Inclusion: 1
- WASH: 4
- Nutrition: 5
- Human Resources: 1
- Health: 1
- Education: 14
- Child protection: 8

N = 76
Features of humanitarian action evaluations

- Epidemic: 2
- Nutrition Crisis: 14
- Linked to Conflict: 15
- Natural Disaster: 20
- Evaluation of Systems/Approaches: 25

N = 76
Findings on evaluation coverage

- Comprehensive sectoral coverage
- Broad geographical /emergency type spread

Gaps and weaknesses:
- Weaker coverage below L2 and L3s
- Some duplication and overlap
- Gaps in coverage – IHPs and CCCs
- Joint commissioning weaker than 2013
How relevant was UNICEF’s humanitarian action?

Generally very relevant.

- **Strengths**
  - Strong alignment with humanitarian needs
  - Strong alignment with national priorities
  - Mixed strategic appropriateness but willingness to adapt

- **But**
  - Some opportunity- rather than needs-based programming
  - Weak strategic frameworks or designs
  - Assumptions made in response planning
  - Contextual challenges in aligning with the CCCs
How effective was UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action?

Mixed performance in achieving results

▪ Outputs:
  ▪ Half of evaluations = moderate/mixed achievement
  ▪ Variability across programme areas

▪ Outcomes
  ▪ Some significant gains e.g. reduced disease prevalence, children returned to families, reintegration of child soldiers

▪ Notable gains in system-strengthening for humanitarian action

▪ Why were intended results not achieved?
  ▪ Technical weaknesses - design
  ▪ Coverage limitations
  ▪ Over-ambitious targets
  ▪ Immediate effects but limited longer-term results
  ▪ Need for more structured engagement with government
How efficient was UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action?

**Mixed timeliness** overall

- **Why?**
  - Delays – context-related
  - Slow starts/swift starts followed by slowdown
  - Limited preparedness

- **Revised SSOPs** supported timeliness (L2 and L3)
  - Rapid staff deployment (IRTs)
  - Swift HR (recruitment, deployment)
  - Shortened admin procedures
  - Swift procurement

- **But:** SSOPs **not consistently employed**

- **Cost-effectiveness – evidence of progress**
  - Efficiency measures implemented
  - Cost savings delivered
How connected were the interventions?

An area of weakness:

- Planning for transition/resilience not consistently embedded
- Rapid emergency responses not always linked to recovery

- **Lessons:** Need
  - Clear transition plan/links from response to early recovery
  - Preparedness and ability to ‘flex’
  - Consistency across sectors in response plans
  - Seize opportunities to address social change
  - Shift emergency-transition as soon as conditions permit
  - Clarity on exit process

- **Weak sectoral integration:**
  - Insufficiently holistic needs assessments
  - Lack of inter-section planning/preparedness
  - Lack of internal operational co-ordination
  - Siloed approaches at RO level
How coherent was UNICEF’s humanitarian action with partners?

Generally strong external coherence

- …With joint response plans
- …With other partners working in the context
- …In cluster leadership

Strengths:

- Collaboration = based on UNICEF’s comparative advantage
- UNICEF willing to address gaps unfilled by other actors.
- Working with the ‘right’ partners incl. non-traditional ones

But:

- Coordination was generally weaker with partner UN agencies.
Equity, Protection and AAP?

- Equity
  - Not consistently integrated into responses

- Protection
  - Limited evidence, but also inconsistent

- AAP
  - Gaps and weaknesses - but also gradual improvement
Conclusions

- UNICEF’s humanitarian action has matured since 2010
- Mostly relevant and aligned to humanitarian needs and national priorities
- Serious ‘humanitarian citizen’ – joint responses and partnerships
- Delivered important results for children
- Risk-willing (mostly)
Conclusions

- **Weaknesses outstanding:**
  - Needs assessments for affected populations
  - AAP
  - Strategies and designs
  - Implementation of L2 and L3 procedures
  - Internal coherence
  - Articulation of position vis-à-vis IHPs
  - CCCs/HPM –contextualisation
  - Utilize learning
## Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More <strong>stringent requirements</strong> to evaluate</td>
<td><strong>Explicit triggers</strong> for evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Centralise **needs in design**                      | Clearer **logic chains**  
Monitor progress against **needs**  
**Learn lessons** on implementing needs assessments  
Robust approach to **AAP** |
| Build a **culture of confidence in procedures**     | **Training/awareness raising** on SSOPs  
**Partner awareness** on PCA commitments |
| **Risk-informed programming** within the localization agenda | **Stronger risk analysis**  
Build **local capacity for response**  
PCAs include **adaptive capacity** |
| Revisit the **CCCs**                                | **Revise/Addendum for new challenges**                                 |
| **Accountability with flexibility**                 | **HPM - aligned with country monitoring**  
- **extend outcomes** |
| Link **programme integration** to recovery          | **Collective planning** – multi-sector  
**Cross-sectoral support** from ROs  
Define strategy for **protracted crises**  
**Transition/resilience** within programme cycle |
Thank You

Questions and discussion