Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation

Sequence No
2018/016

Region
HQ

Office
Evaluation Office

Coverage
Global

Evaluation Type
System

Year of Report
2018

OVERALL RATING

Satisfactory
Meets UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports and decision makers may use the evaluation with confidence

Implications:

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

Fair

The background section provides a good overview of the evolution of UNICEF’s child protection systems strengthening. Examples of how UNICEF is supporting CPSS work per region are provided within the body of the report while Annex 2 provides additional information on key UNICEF interventions to strengthen child protection systems. The report also identifies the percentage of UNICEF’s investment in Child Protection Systems Strengthening (CPSS) as a share of its overall child protection expenditures - therefore nicely situating its CPSS work within its overall child protection portfolio. The report explains that in the absence of a UNICEF Theory of Change (ToC) or results framework for CPSS work, a conceptual framework for child protection systems strengthening was prepared to guide the evaluation. This framework clearly identifies desired results and presents the change logic within a ToC format. On the other hand, the report provides very little detail around the needs of children within a child protection framework and the background section does not provide a discussion around where some of the key weaknesses lay in national child protection systems. Contextual information around the challenges in implementing effective child protection systems is also not clearly discussed. Finally, the key stakeholders working on child protection systems and their contributions (including those of UNICEF) are not clearly identified.

SECTION B: EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)

Satisfactory
The twofold evaluation purpose around learning and accountability is clearly stated and the report specifies that the findings and recommendations will be used to "inform the mid-term review of UNICEF's current strategic plan and the planning and implementation of country programmes of partners' and UNICEF's positioning vis-à-vis the sustainable development goals, especially goal 16.2" (page 9). However, the evaluation users are identified only as "UNICEF" without further specificity (i.e. UNICEF Executive Board, UNICEF Child Protection HQ, UNICEF ROs, UNICEF COs, etc.). The evaluation goals are clearly stated and any changes made to the ToRs are discussed. Finally, the evaluation scope in terms of timeline, geographic coverage, and thematic coverage is clearly identified, including those elements that will not be covered.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

Satisfactory

Evaluation questions to guide the evaluation are presented within the methodology section and are reiterated in an evaluation matrix (in annex 3) along with analysis indicators and data collection methods and sources. The evaluation covers four out of the five standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and the report justifies why the criterion of impact was excluded. The report explains that the evaluation used a case based mixed methods approach that drew on 24 case studies. While the evaluation design and methods are presented, the report does not include a discussion around why the selection of these methods was most appropriate for achieving the evaluation objectives as opposed to alternative methods. In contrast, the report explains that a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) was used and clearly articulates why this was an appropriate analysis method for developing robust findings. Purposeful sampling was used to select the case study countries and the sampling criteria for selecting the case studies is presented in the report and further elaborated within the annexes. Ethical procedures, including the ethical obligations of evaluators and ethical safeguards used to protect children, are also clearly outlined. While the report provides an excellent description of the evaluation limitations, it does not present any mitigation strategies that describe how the evaluators sought to overcome or address these limitations.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

Satisfactory
The findings are based on a robust methodology that generally provides sufficient evidence to respond to the evaluation questions. Findings on effectiveness are strong by referring to the evaluative conceptual framework and by providing information on causal factors that have contributed towards the achievement and non-achievement of results. Additionally, evaluation questions are reiterated throughout the findings to help the reader to see how each question has been answered. However, the findings on relevance do not provide a clear analysis around the needs of child protection systems strengthening and whether or not UNICEF’s approach is focusing on the right areas to address these needs. Many of the findings on relevance are quite short and lack substance and detail, often including only one stakeholder quote (i.e. Finding 4). It is unclear in some cases how information was triangulated to develop the body of the findings. Finally, while unintended results are not clearly discussed, the report does provide a good assessment of how UNICEF’s M&E system is unable to adequately capture information on its CPSS work and effectively inform decision making.

SECTION E: EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 15%)

Fair
Conclusions are logically derived from the findings, present both strengths and weaknesses, and provide a high-level analytical assessment that brings out the major considerations emerging from the evaluation. However, they largely lack a forward-looking discussion that presents the implications of the findings on UNICEF’s future work. While lessons learned are presented within their own sub-section (which is good practice), they are not correctly identified. The information presented within the lessons learned section consists of a mix of findings, conclusions, and recommendations and generally does not contribute towards organisational learning, as lessons are intended to do.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

Satisfactory
Recommendations are logically derived from the findings and conclusions. They are presented in priority order and the report explains that stakeholders were involved in their validation. While they provide some implementation detail, some of the points lack specificity. Additionally, each recommendation identifies a number of actors who should implement them without clearly identifying which actor should implement which element.

SECTION G: EVALUATION STRUCTURE/PRESENTATION (weight 5%)

Satisfactory
The opening pages include all of the necessary information to understand the basic information regarding the object of evaluation and evaluation itself, including the name of the evaluated object, the timeframe of the evaluation, the publication date of the evaluation, names of the evaluators and the organisation commissioning the evaluation, a table of contents, a list of acronyms, etc. The annexes include all of the additional information required to support the body of the evaluation report and add credibility to the evaluation. While the report is logically structured and easy to read, it is a bit long at 89 pages and would likely be more accessible to stakeholders if it were shortened to somewhere around 60 pages.

### SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

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<td>The evaluation is well anchored within a human rights framework and it makes reference to the international Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also assesses the extent to which different vulnerable groups were served and it provides a good assessment around the level of participation of children in decision making concerning child protection systems. While the evaluation includes one evaluation question dedicated to human rights, equity, and gender equality, the assessment around gender is limited to this question and is not mainstreamed throughout the report. In fact, the evaluation methodology is not designed to collect sex disaggregated data and it is unclear whether any methodological decisions were made to ensure that the voices of women and girls would be equally captured as those of men and boys. A gender analysis is included under the specific evaluation question relating to gender but this analysis is not mainstreamed throughout the findings, conclusions, or recommendations. The report is strong at describing how stakeholders were involved in the design and management of the evaluation, including the validation of findings and recommendations.</td>
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### SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

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<td>The Executive Summary is slightly long at 7 pages, making it less accessible to high level stakeholders who may not have time to read such a long summary. Additionally, while it highlights some key findings, it doesn't provide a succinct overall synthesize of the findings, as one would expect to find in an Executive Summary. In fact, as opposed to providing an overall synthesis, the Executive Summary refers the reader back to the body of the report for a full list of the findings. An Executive Summary should be able to stand on its own without reference to the main body of the report. While it includes most of the relevant information, it does not identify the evaluation users and does not provide an overview of UNICEF’s child protection systems strengthening approaches to help ground the reader prior to presenting the findings.</td>
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Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

| 4 | Approaches requirements |
**Recommendations for improvement**

This evaluation of a complex system used a solid evaluation framework that was produced in collaboration with stakeholders. This level of stakeholder participation in the evaluation design, management, and validation of the findings and recommendations was likely a key element that helped to make this evaluation credible. This being said, the evaluation could have been more accessible to stakeholders had it included a stronger background section that provided more of an overview of the child protection areas needing strengthening and a description of how different implementing contexts affect child protection systems strengthening. Shortening the report to no more than 60 pages would also make it more accessible to evaluation users. In the future, the evaluation manager could request that more background and contextual information be included (even in an annex) and insist that the report remain within a 60 page limit. The evaluation manager could suggest that to do so, some information be moved to the annexes (i.e. details around the methodology, etc.). It would also be advisable for the evaluation manager to provide guidance to the evaluators on expectations concerning the forward-looking nature of evaluation conclusions, the structure around lessons learned, and how to mainstream gender throughout the methodology and analysis.

**Lessons for managing future evaluations:**

Even though the evaluation covers multiple regions and differing contexts, it would add significant value to the report if a discussion were to be presented around some of the common child protection needs of children and some of the major challenges surrounding the implementation of effective child protection systems and how different contexts affect these challenges. This information is key to help ground the reader prior to presenting the findings. A general discussion could have been included in the report with more specific country or regional details in an annex. Additionally, GEROS standards require evaluation reports to clearly identify the key stakeholders involved in the initiative under evaluation. In the case of CPSS work, these stakeholders likely include government ministries, CSOs, and potentially other international organisations or actors. Key stakeholders and their contributions towards implementing child protection systems could potentially be presented in a table format.

**Section A**

It is good practice to identify the specific evaluation users (these could include, for example, UNICEF's Executive Board, UNICEF Child Protection HQ, UNICEF ROs, UNICEF COs, etc.) and how each user will use the evaluation findings and recommendations. Different groups of users oftentimes use the evaluation in different ways and to serve different purposes and it is therefore important to clearly identify how each user will use the evaluation.

**Section B**

GEROS standards require evaluation reports to not only present the evaluation design and methods used but to explain why these methods were appropriate for achieving the evaluation objectives. Additionally, evaluation reports should not only present the evaluation limitations but should also describe how the evaluation attempted to overcome or mitigate them.
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<th>Section</th>
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<td><strong>Section D</strong></td>
<td>The findings sections could be improved by re-working the relevance section to better discuss the extent to which UNICEF’s CPSS approach is addressing the needs of child protection systems in target countries. The relevance section could be edited to better reflect how information was triangulated and to provide a more in-depth discussion around each finding. Additionally, it is good practice for evaluations to clearly identify any unexpected positive or negative results. To ensure that this information is captured, an evaluation question to investigate the occurrence of unexpected results could be included in the evaluation matrix.</td>
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<td><strong>Section E</strong></td>
<td>The report could be improved by re-working the conclusions section so that they provide a more forward-looking analysis that discusses how the information presented in the findings will likely affect the future of UNICEF’s CPSS work. The implications of the findings on the future of UNICEF’s work should be highlighted. Additionally, the lessons learned need to be re-written in the correct format so that they can contribute towards institutional learning. As of now, they are a mix of findings, conclusions, and recommendations. To learn more about how to craft high quality lessons learned, please see: <a href="https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/lessons_learnt">https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/lessons_learnt</a>.</td>
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<td><strong>Section F</strong></td>
<td>In order for recommendations to be effectively implemented and to facilitate a management response, it is good practice for recommendations to specifically identify which actor should be responsible for implementing which element of the recommendation as opposed to generally listing a number of actors per recommendation.</td>
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<td><strong>Section G</strong></td>
<td>Even large global evaluations should ideally be presented within a 40 - 60 page report so that the information is accessible to stakeholders. This evaluation report could be made more accessible by further synthesizing it to fit within a 60 page limit. To do so, some of the writing could be edited in order to make it more succinct and some of the information could be moved to the annexes.</td>
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<td><strong>Section H</strong></td>
<td>UNICEF evaluation guidelines require evaluations to mainstream gender throughout the evaluation process and analysis. This evaluation could have better mainstreamed gender by ensuring that the evaluation matrix include indicators that would collect sex disaggregated data and by developing data collection tools that could collect sex disaggregated data. For instance, focus group discussions could have been conducted separately between women/girls and men/boys to sex disaggregate qualitative data and the survey could have provided separate questions on girls and boys to collect quantitative sex disaggregated data. The production of sex disaggregated data likely would have helped the evaluation team to better mainstream gender throughout the analysis. To learn more about how to mainstream gender in evaluation, please see: <a href="http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook">http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook</a></td>
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An Executive Summary should be able to stand on its own and not require the reader to refer back to the main body of the report. It is essential that it include all of the information necessary to understand the object of evaluation as well as the evaluation itself. In the case of this evaluation, the Executive Summary could be strengthened by providing an overview of UNICEF’s child protection systems strengthening approaches and by identifying the intended key users of the evaluation. Additionally, it would add value to provide an overall synthesis of the evaluation findings as opposed to highlighting only a few. Finally, the Executive Summary should ideally be shortened to around 5 pages to make it more accessible to high-level users.