Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation | Evaluation of the Level 3 Response to the Cholera Epidemic in Yemen: A Crisis within a Crisis
---|---
Sequence No | 2008/001
Region | HQ
Office | Evaluation Office
Coverage | Yemen
Evaluation Type | Programme
Year of Report | 2018

OVERALL RATING

• • • • | Fair
Meets UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports in some regards, but not all. Decision makers may continue to use the evaluation with caution, but substantive improvements are possible.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

• • • • | Satisfactory
The report describes the context of the crisis in which the humanitarian response to the severe outbreak of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) operated within as of April 2017, which is clearly portrayed as a ‘crisis within a crisis.’ Also, extensive information is provided to understand the theoretical basis for cholera response and prevention and the report describes the intended beneficiaries of the intervention in terms of numbers reached. On the other hand, the report only presents a diagram of the Theory of Change and although it explains that the ToC is described in detail in a separate document, the said document is irretrievable. Finally, the report could have done a better job at outlining the programme in terms of geographic coverage and time period and by discussing who the main stakeholders were as well as their main roles and contributions.

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

• • • • | Satisfactory
The purpose of the evaluation is clearly described as being threefold. Namely, it should inform the current and future UNICEF response in Yemen; provide a basis for accountability; and add to the organization’s wider institutional learning by providing an evaluative analysis of the UNICEF response to the 2017 cholera/AWD epidemic in Yemen. Also, the intended use and primary and secondary users of the evaluation are clearly described in the report. On the other hand, even if it stated that the main focus of the evaluation is the response to the 2017 cholera outbreak, the report could provide more precise information on the evaluation scope including its chronological and geographic coverage. Furthermore, there is no discussion regarding what will and will not be covered in terms of thematic coverage or on the extent to which the interviews and FGDs in the field were a representative sample of the overall UNICEF response in Yemen.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

Fair
The report presents a set of methods designed to collect primary and secondary data, specifying that the ongoing crisis that affects Yemen kept the evaluators from visiting the country and the evaluation had to heavily rely on secondary data and interviews conducted by local consultants. The report also discusses the way the data was triangulated in order to validate the evidence. On the other hand, the report could do a better job at presenting a clear evaluation matrix, including a complete explanation and justification of the OCDE/DAC criteria retained for this evaluation, as well as a list of evaluation questions and sub-questions. Similarly, there is no discussion around the sampling strategies or the representativeness of such samples. Furthermore, although some of the limitations are discussed in subsection 1.2.4 Evaluability, the report does not consistently address the number of limitations encountered by this evaluation or provide mitigation strategies to overcome them. Finally, the report does not discuss anything whatsoever regarding ethical safeguards used in the conduct of the evaluation or the obligations of the evaluators.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

Fair
The evaluation presents large amounts of evidence to support the assertions made in the assessment of UNICEF’s response to the cholera outbreak. However, the evidence is not clearly presented so as to respond to the intervention’s results framework or to consistently respond to evaluation criteria or questions, which makes the comprehension of the findings more challenging than necessary. Also, even if the findings discuss both positive and negative findings, there is little reference to the intervention’s logicframe, which is also not very clearly explained to begin with. Furthermore, the report does not sufficiently explain whether the achievements discussed correspond to the outcome or output levels and there is no discussion around unexpected findings, negative or positive. Finally, the evaluation report dedicates a section to analyze the M&E system and the way its performance could be improved.

SECTION E: EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 15%)
Fair
The report does a good job at presenting conclusions that correctly draw upon the evidence presented in the previous sections and fairly address both weaknesses and strengths of the intervention. Furthermore, conclusions add further insight and deeper analysis of the UNICEF’s response in its entirety as well as of its specific aspects, i.e. context and cholera prevention, preparedness to respond, etc. On the other hand, even if the ToRs call for the production of lessons learned “to support advocacy efforts, both internally within the country, and externally with relevant partners,” the report does not present a discussion around this topic.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)
Satisfactory
The report does a good job at presenting recommendations that are very clearly presented, indicating their priority level, target groups for action, current status, among others. Recommendations are actionable and provide succinct but straightforward indications on how to improve future emergency response in the different areas. The report briefly discusses the process followed in the formulation of recommendations. However, there is no mention of the way stakeholders participated in this process.

SECTION G: EVALUATION STRUCTURE/PRESENTATION (weight 5%)
Fair
The overall structure of the report could be made easier to navigate had it followed the standard order of sections and subsections for evaluation reports, i.e. background and context would be discussed in the first section, followed by the evaluation purpose and scope, and then the findings, conclusions, etc. The opening pages include the object of the evaluation, commissioning organization and information on the evaluation team. However, there is no mention of the time period or the specific geographic location of the intervention. Similarly, even if the annexes include some important elements such as the ToRs, list of interviewees and guiding evaluation questions, there is no evaluation matrix or list of documentary evidence used. Finally, several tables and charts are low-resolution images and their content cannot be easily read, e.g. the Table on page 27.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)
Fair
The report does not make any reference to the use of a human rights framework, CEDAW, CRC, CCC or another rights-based framework. Also, even if the ToRs talk about the creation of an ERG, this is not mentioned in the report whatsoever and little reference is made to the input by stakeholders in the conduct of the evaluation. While the report makes reference to efforts within UNICEF’s response deployed to reach the most vulnerable children, the design of the intervention does not take a gender-sensitive perspective. Furthermore, it is hard to establish the extent to which there was a proportionality between the involvement of stakeholders in the intervention and the evaluation as in both cases the information presented in the report is insufficient.

### SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The executive summary successfully captures the essence of the humanitarian response by UNICEF to the cholera outbreak in Yemen and does so in a succinct fashion (4 pages). The executive summary briefly explains the overall humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the restrictions and limitations this context has exerted on the response's implementation. Similarly, the executive summary provides a brief overview of the evaluation methodology, key findings and key conclusions and recommendations, although the difference between findings and conclusions is not well distinguished.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

| 3 Missing requirements |

### Recommendations for improvement

This evaluation contains some valuable information to inform UNICEF on its emergency response efforts to cholera outbreaks and other infectious diseases. It provides copious information on the effectiveness and management of a large-scale humanitarian response as well as useful recommendations for future improvements. However, the evaluation report is also missing some key elements (information on limitations, ethics, lessons learned, and human rights, equity, and gender equality concerns) and presents information in a way that is difficult for the reader to follow and to understand, therefore potentially reducing its usefulness. Even though the evaluation was conducted under difficult circumstances and within a short timeframe, the international evaluation team who prepared the report should have ensured that the report contains these important elements and that information is clearly presented and easy to understand. There are also some inconsistencies between the ToRs and the evaluation report regarding the creation of a small ERG about which nothing is mentioned in the report. This adds to a rather poor description of the involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation as well as a patchy account of their involvement of their involvement in UNICEF’s response. It is also good practice to include the evaluation questions within the body of the report to help guide the reader in understanding the evaluation findings.

**Lessons for managing future evaluations:**
It is recommended that all necessary information be included in and annexed to one single document. For example, the full explanation of the Theory of Change should ideally be included in the core of the evaluation report, next to the diagram on page 30, or among the annexes. Also, it is important to clearly state both the scope of the intervention and that of the evaluation in terms of the geographic coverage and time period. Similarly, when describing the object of the evaluation, it is good practice to explain who the main stakeholders were and their main roles and responsibilities as this is only referred to in the findings section and, yet again, not in enough detail. It can be useful to present information on stakeholders through a table format.

It is recommended that the report include a more detailed discussion around the scope of the evaluation, specifically as to what will and will not be covered by the evaluation and the way that decisions regarding these questions were made throughout the evaluation process in order to obtain a faithful representation of UNICEF’s response in Yemen.

The report should present a complete evaluation matrix that covers the evaluation criteria selected along with evaluation questions and sub questions and the corresponding data sources. Similarly, it is important to be transparent about the choices made regarding the evaluation criteria, sampling strategies and the level of representativity of the samples. Also, its good practice to dedicate a subsection to discuss the methodological limitations and the corresponding mitigation strategies so as to clearly indicate the ways the evaluation mitigated bias and the overall accuracy of the collected evidence. Finally, it is important to present a discussion around the way ethical safeguards were designed and implemented in the conduct of this evaluation, including the obligations of the evaluators.

The findings section is one of critical importance in an evaluation report and the clarity in the presentation of the evidence in it is as important as its content so that it is accessible and can be easily understood and used by stakeholders. Consequently, it is important that the different lines of evidence be presented in an orderly fashion, i.e. responding to the intervention's results framework and/or the evaluation criteria and key questions. Also, it is important to clearly identify unexpected positive and negative effects of the intervention as this information greatly contributes to improve UNICEF’s programming and humanitarian response.

It is important that the report discuss the lessons learned through the evaluation process in order to capture that which worked well and what should be improved for future responses. The idea of lessons learned is to contribute to the global institutional learning of UNICEF as well as other governmental and implementation partners.

It is important to clearly indicate in detail the process followed in the development of recommendations. In particular, it is recommended to discuss the level of participation of key stakeholders in that process in order to ensure the validity of the recommendations by a multiplicity of voices.
Section G

It is important that the evaluation report follows the standard order of sections so as to facilitate the navigation by end users and to help them to easily retrieve information. Also, it is recommended that all of the essential information appear clearly stated in the opening pages of the report to readily inform the user as to the object of the evaluation, i.e. its chronological and geographic scope. Also, it is recommended to always include the evaluation matrix among the annexes as this is a central tool to understand what the evaluation was set out to investigate. Similarly, other data collection tools and methods should be included among the evidence, such as interview questionnaires, survey templates, documentary evidence, etc. All of the latter greatly contribute to increase the credibility of the report.

Section H

It is important for UNICEF that all evaluations (including humanitarian evaluations) reflect a gender-sensitive approach. This can be implemented by including a specific evaluation criterion on cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights and equality and/or by mainstreaming these concerns throughout the evaluation questions. Similarly, it is recommended to specifically design gender-sensitive evaluation methods that successfully capture women's voices and effectively demonstrate the effects that UNICEF's response has had on women and girls, if any. Also, it is important that evaluations reflect a consistent rights-based approach and that human rights, equity and gender equality are mainstreamed throughout the evaluation process. Finally, it is recommended that the report provide a description of stakeholders’ level of participation in the evaluation as well as a description of their involvement during the intervention's implementation.

Section I

The executive summary for the most part observes good practices. Minor recommendations would be to introduce each subsection with a subtitle for greater clarity, e.g. methodology, key findings, etc., and to differentiate between findings and conclusions.