Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation: EVALUATION OF THE GUYANA NURSERY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Sequence No: 2018/001
Region: LACR
Office: Guyana & Suriname
Coverage: Guyana

Evaluation Type: Programme
Year of Report: 2018

OVERALL RATING

- Satisfactory

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

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

- Satisfactory

The object of evaluation is a government programme with the World Bank and UNICEF as partners. The report provides a good description of the historical evolution of the GNAP as well as the involvement of UNICEF in the programme and its implementation since 1976. Also, the locations and coverage of the object of evaluation in chronological and geographic terms are well explained. However, not enough details are provided as to the budget allocated to the GNAP and the particular needs of girls and boys in urban vs rural locations, or regarding any special needs by some specific groups. Similarly, a description of the sociopolitical, economic and institutional context in Guyana is missing. On the other hand, the report presents a logical framework for the initiative and a Theory of Change (ToC) is presented which includes clear definitions of the different levels of results as well as bottlenecks and barriers, risks, and assumptions at each results level. Finally, the report does a good job at explaining the implementing partners involved in the GNAP as well as their respective roles and contributions. However, while the World Bank's technical and financial contributions are clearly outlined, those of UNICEF are only vaguely described. Finally, the report does not clearly explain the importance of ECE for UNICEF specifically.

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

- Fair
The report explains that the evaluation is to provide an assessment of the performance of the GNEP in order to inform a revision of the existing curriculum and to provide strategies for more effective implementation of nursery education in Guyana. However, primary users of the evaluation and how they will specifically use the evaluation results are not clearly identified. Additionally, while the report clearly outlines the evaluation scope and objectives, one of the objectives is not aligned with the evaluation timeframe. Indeed, the scope indicates that the evaluation covers the last 10 years of programme implementation while the first objective is "to determine whether the quality of the GNEP offered to children and their parents, over the last 40 years, has achieved their objectives and to what extent." Finally, the report discusses the timeframe to be evaluated (2006-2016) and a rationale is provided for this, but no information is provided as to the specific geographic scope for the evaluation and even if the sampling strategies used are discussed, no rationale is provided for this.

### SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

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<td>The methodology uses a solid mixed-methods approach that draws on the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders. However, while the evaluation design, methods, and data sources are clearly outlined, the report does not provide a justification for their selection. Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions are clearly outlined but some evaluation questions are not logically linked to their corresponding evaluation criteria (i.e., there are several questions under &quot;efficiency&quot; that do not correspond to that criterion). Additionally, an evaluation matrix with indicators is lacking and the analytical framework for answering evaluation questions is therefore not entirely clear. The report identifies four limitations but does not propose clear mitigation strategies to address them. The report simply notes that it was not possible to answer two evaluation questions due to lack of data. Finally, the report does a good job of describing ethical safeguards for evaluation participants but the ethical obligations of evaluators are not discussed.</td>
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### SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

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<td>The report provides answers to most evaluation questions set out in the ToRs and explains that the evaluation team was unable to answer two (2) evaluation questions due to lack of data. However, the report does not present mitigation strategies to address this lack of data. The use of mitigation strategies (such as through the use of additional qualitative data) could have potentially helped the evaluators to answer these two questions. The report does a nice job of triangulating data and presenting the perspectives of different stakeholder groups. Additionally, both positive and negative factors are presented, as are the factors enabling and hindering effectiveness. However, unexpected effects are not clearly discussed. Finally, the evaluation provides an excellent assessment of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme's monitoring system and the extent to which it is used by national stakeholders for decision-making purposes.</td>
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### SECTION E: EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 15%)
The conclusions are well written, are linked to the evaluation findings and provide a nice overview of the programme's main strengths and weaknesses. However, the conclusions do not provide an insightful discussion on the implications of the findings on the foreseeable future. Additionally, the report does not clearly present lessons learned, even though evaluation objectives seek the generation of such lessons.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

Satisfactory

The recommendations are clearly linked to the findings and conclusions, provide sufficient details to be actionable, and are clearly targeted to specific stakeholders. The report presents several recommendations (i.e., 22 in total), of which 6 are identified as critical. However, the level of priority of the remaining recommendations is unclear. Finally, the process for developing recommendations, including any stakeholder involvement, is not explained.

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

Satisfactory

The opening pages include several key elements, including the name of the evaluated object and its location, the name of the commissioning organization, a table of contents, and an acronym list. However, the timeframe of the evaluated object and the names of the evaluator(s) are not clearly presented. Additionally, the fact that this is a jointly managed evaluation by UNICEF and the MoE of Guyana is not indicated. Similarly, annexes include relevant elements such as the ToRs, data collections tools and informed consent forms but some key annexes are missing (including an evaluation matrix, list of consulted stakeholders and bibliography). Finally, the report is logically structured. However, the sections are not numbered which makes it somewhat difficult for the reader to navigate through the report.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

Satisfactory
The evaluation uses an equity focused approach. It does a particularly good job of explaining the differential effects of the programme on children from different age groups and children from vulnerable groups (i.e., children with learning disabilities, children whose mother tongue is not the official language, etc.). Additionally, the report presents sex-disaggregated data and provides an interesting analysis of the impact of early childhood education on women's economic development. Even so, the evaluation questions and the methodology only partially address gender equality and the recommendations do not reflect a gender analysis. The report explains that the initiative was aligned with the CRC, the SDGs, the Kingston Consensus, and other commitments made at the UN level regarding child rights. The report also describes in detail the stakeholder participation in the conduct of the evaluation. However, it is unclear the extent to which stakeholders participated in the development and/or validation of recommendations.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

Satisfactory

The report includes an executive summary that provides most of the elements that are necessary to understand the evaluation. However, the executive summary does not provide a description of the object of the evaluation itself other than mentioning that it is an early stimulation programme for children between 3 years 9 months and 5 years 9 months old. Additionally, the presence of an evaluation steering committee is only mentioned in the Executive Summary and is not discussed within the body of the report. Furthermore, the executive summary is somewhat lengthy (i.e., 9 pages) which could potentially limit its accessibility to senior management and other high level officials who may only have time to read a short summary.

Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

| 6 | Approaches requirements |

Recommendations for improvement

Considering that this evaluation assesses a government-led programme, the decision to conduct a joint evaluation was appropriate. Indeed, the participation of the Ministry of Education in the elaboration of evaluation questions maximizes the likeliness that evaluation findings and recommendations will be used to improve programming. In the future, similar evaluations could be further improved by presenting a clear discussion on the programme's unexpected results. To ensure that this is systematically included, an evaluation question to that effect could be included in the ToRs. Additionally, the evaluation manager could request that the evaluators include a separate section on lessons learned. During the inception phase, the evaluation manager could also brainstorm with the evaluators about potential mitigation strategies to address data gaps. Finally, the evaluation manager could share guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality into evaluations to ensure that the methodology fully integrates GEWE considerations.
Good practices recommend that a complete description of the sociopolitical, economic and institutional context in which the initiative took place be presented so as to provide a thorough understanding of the context in which the initiative is situated. Also, the report should include a detailed account of the budget of the initiative. If financial figures are not available (or only partially available), the report should mention this. Additionally, UNICEF evaluation standards require that evaluation reports identify the particular needs and characteristics of the different groups of beneficiaries (urban vs rural, different language groups, etc.). In case this information is not available, this should be explicitly mentioned in the report. Finally, the report could be improved by further explaining the roles and contributions of all implementing partners, especially contributions made by UNICEF. The background section identifies UNICEF’s contribution to the programme using the following vague language "UNICEF’s support to the GNEP has been through technical assistance support to the nursery education programme since 1976." More clarity on UNICEF’s specific contributions would be desirable.

The report could be improved by ensuring consistency between the evaluation scope and objectives. Additionally, it is good practice for evaluations to clearly identify the evaluation’s primary users, and to explain how each user intends to use the evaluation. This could be done using a table format. Similarly, good practices recommend to always present a full description of the timeframe and geographic scope of the evaluation along with a rationale justifying the decisions made in this regard.

The evaluation matrix constitutes the main analytical framework of any evaluation and it is therefore essential for such a matrix to be included in the report. A good evaluation matrix presents indicators, data sources and methods that will be used to answer each evaluation question. It is also important that each evaluation question is logically linked to its corresponding evaluation criterion. Some questions under "efficiency" should be moved to other criteria. For example, the question "What are the enabling factors for and/or hindrances to the effective implementation of the GNEP?" should be placed under effectiveness. Additionally, GEROS standards require the evaluation design, methods, and sources to not only be clearly presented, but to also provide a justification for why they were selected as opposed to alternative methodological options. It is also important for evaluations to present mitigation strategies for each limitation encountered. This could be done using a table format. When statistical data is not available, the evaluator could try - while acknowledging data gaps - to use alternative data sources such as qualitative data. Finally, GEROS standards require that the ethical obligations of evaluators be explicitly stated.

It is good practice for evaluations to discuss the positive and negative expected and unexpected effects of a programme so as to identify all of the potential effects that a programme is generating and to explore areas where the programme could be improved in the future. If no unexpected effects were encountered, the evaluation should explicitly mention this. To make sure that unexpected effects are discussed, an evaluation question to that effect could be included in the evaluation matrix. Finally, the evaluation could have potentially answered all of the evaluation questions had the evaluators more thoroughly looked for mitigation strategies, including alternative data sources, for those questions lacking data.
Section E

It is good practice for evaluation reports to present a separate section on lessons learned. Lessons learned should provide an insightful analysis of how past experiences can be used to inform similar programming in other contexts. For more information on how to craft good lessons learned, please consult: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/lessons_learnt. Finally, conclusions should be analytical and could be improved by explaining the implications of the findings on the future of the programme.

Section F

The recommendations could be made more actionable by indicating the priority order in which each one should be addressed. Additionally, it is good practice for evaluation reports to explain whether the process of developing recommendations followed a participatory approach. When key stakeholders are involved in developing and/or validating recommendations, they are usually more relevant and actionable to the stakeholders who will be implementing or buying-into them. GEROS standards require that the process used to develop recommendations, and any stakeholder participation in this process, be clearly described.

Section G

The report could be improved by including additional key elements in the opening pages and in the annexes. The opening pages should clearly identify the timeframe of the evaluated object, as well as the name(s) of the evaluator(s), and should specify that the evaluation is jointly commissioned with the Government of Guyana. Additionally, the annexes should include an evaluation matrix, a list of consulted stakeholders, and a bibliography. Finally, numbering evaluation sections and sub-sections would make the

Section H

The report could be improved by further describing the methodological approach used to ensure that GE considerations are thoroughly addressed and that the methodological process was sensitive to gender inequalities and power imbalances. Also, it is important that a gender analysis cascade down throughout the findings, conclusions as well as the recommendations of the evaluation. The latter is particularly important as these are the most forward-looking part of the evaluation and should convey important messages on how to improve future programming regarding GEEW. For more information on how to meaningfully integrate gender equality into evaluations, please refer to: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook. It is also good practice to explain how stakeholders were involved in the development and/or validation of evaluation recommendations.

Section I

Executive summaries that effectively inform decision-makers should include a brief yet comprehensive description of the object of the evaluation, i.e. its main programmatic elements as well as its geographic coverage and timeframe, in order to provide a thorough understanding of the object of evaluation for end users. Also, the executive summary should only include information that is already mentioned within the body of the report. The presence of an evaluation steering committee should have been discussed within the body of the evaluation report. Finally, it would be wise to further synthetize all major elements within no more than 5-6 pages in order to effectively and readily inform high-level users who may not have time to read a longer document.