Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation: Formative Evaluation of the Out-of-School-Children Initiative (OOSCI)
Sequence No: 2018/002
Region: HQ
Office: Evaluation Office
Coverage: Multicountry
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%)

- • • • • Highly Satisfactory
  The report does a good job at describing the object of the evaluation as well as the global context of out of school children in which the OOSCI took place. Also, the report discusses the importance of the initiative within UNICEF's programming and explains the evaluation status, key stakeholders and their roles and contributions, including those of UNICEF. Furthermore, the evaluation provides a thorough explanation of the initiative's Theory of Change, which clearly identifies outputs, long and medium-term outcomes, as well as the key assumptions within the logic chain.

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

- • • • • Highly Satisfactory
  The purpose of the evaluation is described as to test the validity of the programme theory of change and its assumptions, to provide a formative assessment of progress towards the achievement of the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school, and to strengthen the programme logic. The report clearly identifies the intended use and primary users of the evaluation. Also, the report presents a discussion around the objectives and the scope both in geographical terms. The geographic coverage seems realistic and adequate for the task at hand.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

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The report describes the methodology used and evaluation criteria that are aligned with the OECD/DAC criteria, and evaluation questions are presented. The complete evaluation matrix is included in annexes 3 and 4. On the other hand, the absence of the impact criterion is not discussed in the evaluation. The report does a good job at describing the methods of analysis and explaining the triangulation done among different levels of evidence. Furthermore, the limitations faced by the evaluation and the mitigation strategies are duly discussed. The report addresses the ethical safeguards for participants, and the obligations of the evaluation are listed. However, no discussion is presented around any special safeguards when interviewing children.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

Highly Satisfactory
The report presents findings that follow the evaluation framework and that use robust evidence to support both the identification of successes and challenges of the initiative as assessed using different methods. Similarly, the evaluation report makes reference to the initiative's M&E system and the way this system was used, or could have been used, during the implementation period for greater success. Also, the evaluation the report presents a discussion around the occurrence of unintended negative effects, although unintended positive effects are not explicitly dealt with.

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

Fair
The report does a good job at presenting conclusions that offer a deep level of analysis of the evidence presented in the findings section. Furthermore, the report presents the conclusions according to the evaluation framework and includes a table and a summary statement. The conclusions clearly highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative. On the other hand, the report does not include lessons learned.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

Satisfactory
The report presents recommendations that stem logically from the findings and conclusions and the target stakeholders are clearly identified in each case. Furthermore, recommendations are clearly classified and structured to cover programme strengthening, sustainability, and areas for further research and child protection system strengthening. This being said, the report does not describe the process followed in developing the recommendations and the participation of key stakeholders in this process.

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

Satisfactory
The opening pages include all necessary elements to understand the object of the evaluation, timeframe, commissioning organization, evaluation team, table of contents, etc. Similarly, the information presented in the annexes is copious and it includes the ToRs, the evaluation matrix, further information on methodological tools, lists of people interviewed, etc. The report is overall logically structured, with clear sections and subsections following the typical order of the different sections. However, lessons learned are not included in the report.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

**Satisfactory**

The evaluation explicitly discusses how the initiative adopted a human-rights and equity-based approach to programming and evaluation. The evaluation discusses equity issues within the initiative, and attempts to mainstream GEEW. However, GEEW is not included as a cross-cutting issue and very few evaluation questions talk about gender-sensitive issue. Also, although both women and men are included as data sources, the report does not identify any especially gender-sensitive methodological tools to ensure that women are comfortable to share their perspectives, and gender is not fully mainstreamed throughout the findings and recommendations. The level of stakeholder involvement in the different stages of the evaluation, and their particular involvement regarding the development of recommendations is well addressed.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

**Highly Satisfactory**

The executive summary is very thorough and clearly informs decision makers of the most important aspects of both the intervention and the evaluation. Every piece of information included in the executive summary is fully developed in the core of the report.

Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

| 3 | Missing requirements |

Recommendations for improvement

**Lessons for managing future evaluations:**

The evaluation generally observes good practices and can be used with confidence by decision-makers. However, it would have been possible to better mainstream GEEW and use a gender-sensitive approach through, for example, the inclusion of a specific gender equality evaluation criterion and the use of methodological tools that ensure that women will be empowered to participate in the evaluation process.

**Section A**

This section observes good practices. No further improvement is required.

**Section B**

This section observes good practices. No further improvement is required.

**Section C**

It is good practice to explain why the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criterion of impact was not used for this evaluation. It is also necessary to discuss the ethical principles followed specifically when interviewing minors. It is recommended that the report explicitly make reference to the UNICEF procedures for Ethical Research Involving Children.

**Section D**

This section observes good practices. No further improvement is required.
### Section E
Lessons learned are an important contribution to general institutional knowledge. Therefore, it is recommended that a section be included in the evaluation report that explains the lessons learned from the OOSCI initiative that could be applied to other initiatives in different contexts.

### Section F
It is important that the report explain the process followed in developing the recommendations as well as the level of stakeholder participation in this process. Recommendations that are the result of the exchange of feedback from a wide range of stakeholders provide more complete and insightful information to end users. They are also more likely to be used once they have been validated by stakeholders.

### Section G
This section observes for the most part good practices. However, it is recommended that the report present a section on lessons learned which are understood as contributions from the object of evaluation to general knowledge.

### Section H
UNICEF and GEROS standards require that GEEW be included as a cross-cutting issue in every evaluation. This can be done through the mainstreaming of gender equality concerns throughout the evaluation matrix and by the inclusion of GEEW as a stand-alone evaluation criterion. Also, it is good practice to design methodological tools in a way that ensures that women are capable and comfortable of participating in the evaluation without gender bias. Finally, findings, conclusions and recommendations should more thoroughly reflect a gender analysis. For more information on how to conduct gender sensitive evaluations, please see: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook

### Section I
The executive summary observes good practices. No further improvement is required.