Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation: Evaluation of the Justice for Children Reform in Kazakhstan

Sequence No: 2018/002
Region: ECAR
Office: Kazakhstan
Coverage: Kazakhstan
Evaluation Type: System
Year of Report: 2018

OVERALL RATING

• • • - Satisfactory

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

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

• • • • Highly Satisfactory

The background elements are very clearly presented, which helps the reader to understand the evaluation. The context is described in a holistic way, including background information, precise data (that which is available), policy scenery and analysis of the situation. The object of the evaluation is well described, including its history and elements to be improved. The rationale of the intervention (hypothesis) with its 3 intermediate results are also well explained. Finally, the stakeholders involved, along with their roles and contributions are also clearly presented in section 1.3 (page 15).

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

• • • – Satisfactory

The evaluation purpose is clearly stated along with the evaluation objectives, aligning with those identified in the Terms of Reference. The primary intended users of the evaluation are mentioned, including those implementing and designing the system and those in charge of decision-making relating to scaling-up the programme to nation-wide coverage. The scope is also defined, using geographical and temporal dimensions. The report states that the object of evaluation is the reform in general, including some programmes that had built on it (such as the European Union (EU)-UNICEF Joint Action “System for Justice for Children and Child Rights Improved”). However, the report lacks clarity as to whether any elements of the reform lay outside of the evaluation scope.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

• • • – Satisfactory
The methodology section complies with UNICEF standards. It includes the evaluation questions structured around the OECD/DAC criteria. It sets the methods used and the sample of respondents, it includes some information about data management and analysis and it discusses the limitations faced and how they were mitigated. It also covers in a very satisfactory way all ethical questions linked to the evaluation exercise. However, it lacks detail when describing which evaluation approach guided the exercise. The report states that “the consultants adopted a participatory approach to data collection. The evaluation adopted mixed qualitative data collection methods” but it does not mention the specific evaluation design that was used and how the criterion of impact was assessed.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

Highly Satisfactory
The report does a very good job at presenting the findings. Each of the evaluation questions are presented and thoroughly answered, combining a mix of data, analysis, quotes and other evidence (including pictures, which are not frequently used in evaluation reports and that make the reading more user-friendly). Given that the object had no clear theory of change and results framework as such (beyond the programmes within it), their use is not considered relevant in this case.

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

Satisfactory
The conclusions provide a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention and are properly derived from the findings. They provide an overall view of the most important aspects of the reform, answering the evaluation questions. However, they provide primarily a summary of the findings and do not go beyond this to provide an analytical discussion around the implications of the findings on the future of the initiative. For example, conclusions around impact provide a summary of the achievements but do not enter into an analysis of what they mean in a deeper way. Lessons learned are correctly presented and add usefulness to the report.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

Satisfactory
The recommendations provide practical suggestions as to how to continue to improve the justice system in order to better protect and support minors. They are well described, include the target group they are addressed to, and are ranked by priority. They also include a timeframe for implementation, which is particularly useful. However the process used to produce them is not clearly described, including whether or not stakeholders were involved in this process.

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

Highly Satisfactory
The structure of the document fully complies with UNICEF standards. Initial sections offer introductory information and this precedes evaluation results, such as findings, conclusions and recommendations. The annexes are rich in information and complement the main body of the report. The length of the document is reasonable, which facilitates the report likely being read and used.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

Fair

The report has some consideration regarding gender and equity issues, although it does not appear that these issues were mainstreamed throughout the evaluation process. Human Rights frameworks are mentioned but the report does not contain frequent references to equity or gender questions. Participation of stakeholders is also superficially discussed. The report claims to have used a participatory approach to data collection. However, the level of participation is limited to consulting a variety of stakeholders as sources of information. Participation (understood as participation of right-holders from different groups in the decision making processes of the evaluation exercise) is not evident.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

Satisfactory

The executive summary presented at the beginning of the report gives a good overview of the evaluation results and process. It is useful for users and summarizes key findings and recommendations. It includes most of the elements required, although there are some key elements that are missing, such as the evaluation limitations, ethical issues, as well as the design used to evaluate impact.

Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

| 3 | Missing requirements |

Recommendations for improvement

This is a good quality evaluation report that provides useful inputs to continue the reforms that have improved the justice system and its protection of children. The report's main strengths are the background and findings sections that comply with UNICEF requirements. The report could be further reinforced by making the evaluation design as a whole (and for the impact criterion in particular) more intentional and technical, and by making the conclusions more analytical by entering into a deeper analysis around how the findings will likely influence the future of the initiative. Additionally, gender and equity considerations could have been much more present and stakeholder participation in the evaluation could have been strengthened to guide the exercise.

Lessons for managing future evaluations:

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

Section A

To reinforce this section, and given the dimension of the object of evaluation (a "reform" of the Justice System regarding children in conflict with the law), the scope of the evaluation could have been further developed by identifying any elements that may have been beyond the scope of the evaluation exercise.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The evaluation methodological framework could be reinforced by making reference to the selected evaluation approach, such as human rights-based and equity-focused, theory-based, utilization-focused, etc. To learn more about evaluation designs, please see: <a href="https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/approaches">https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/approaches</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>This section reflects good practices. No further improvement is required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The conclusions could be reinforced by having a more forward-looking approach that goes beyond a summary of the findings to provide an analysis of how they will likely affect the future of the intervention.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>GEROS standards require evaluation reports to explain how stakeholders were involved in the development and/or validation of recommendations. Stakeholder participation in this process is important in order to ensure that recommendations are realistic and useful and to build stakeholder buy-in. To learn more about conducting participatory evaluations, please see: <a href="http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/participatory_evaluation">http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/participatory_evaluation</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>This section reflects good practices. No further improvement is required. However, it can add value to the annexes to include the biographies of the evaluators.</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>To reinforce the report and to make it more aligned with UNICEF’s requirements and policies regarding equity, human rights, and gender equality, the evaluation should have included gender sensitive evaluation questions or even a criterion on GEEW, used methods such as a gender analysis, and have made very clear reference to how the reform affected groups differently. The evaluation process could also have been much more participatory by including stakeholders as decision-makers throughout the evaluation process. To learn more about conducting gender sensitive and participatory evaluations, 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>. And please see: <a href="http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/participatory_evaluation">http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/participatory_evaluation</a>.</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>The executive summary could be improved by including a brief mention of the limitations faced during the evaluation, ethical questions and processes used throughout the evaluation, and an explanation as to how the criterion of impact was assessed.</td>
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