Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation: Real Time Evaluation on Emergency Drought Situation Response in Kenya, 2017

Sequence No: 2018/002
Region: ESAR
Office: Kenya
Coverage: Kenya
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%)

Satisfactory
The object of evaluation is clearly outlined, including key stakeholders and their contributions. The factors that led to the onset of the disaster are also well explained. While the report explains that rural areas were particularly vulnerable, it does not provide an adequate discussion around the specific vulnerabilities of women and children (who are the initiative's primary target beneficiaries). While the social, economic, and political contexts surrounding the crisis are well described, the report does not explicitly link these contexts with the challenges and opportunities surrounding the intervention. The report provides the intervention's results framework but does not describe the intervention's logical framework.

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

Satisfactory
The report clearly identifies the purpose of the evaluation, including how the information generated by the evaluation will be used to further improve UNICEF's response to the Kenyan crisis. However, the report lacks some clarity around whether UNICEF HQ and its development partners will use the evaluation to inform operations outside of Kenya. The report clearly outlines the evaluation objectives and scope and makes explicit reference to changes that have been made to the initial ToRs.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

Satisfactory
The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory phased approach that was designed to allow the evaluation findings to inform decision-making in real time. While the evaluation used appropriate criteria and methods, the justification for their selection is not adequately described within the report. While ethical considerations are mentioned, the report does not reference the UNEG Ethical Guidelines.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

Satisfactory

The findings are based on a wide array of stakeholder views and adequately answer the evaluation questions. However, they do not clearly assess performance based on the results outlined in the initiative's Results Framework. While they discuss strengths and areas for improvement, they do not adequately reference international benchmarks used to make these assessments. The report discusses monitoring systems but could provide a more in-depth assessment around strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

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

Fair

Conclusions provide an insightful analysis of the evaluation findings and present both the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention. However, they could be more forward looking by discussing how they may be relevant to future disaster responses in Kenya and elsewhere. Lessons learned are overly specific to the object of evaluation and do not provide clear guidance on how the experience in Kenya could inform both UNICEF's future disaster responses in Kenya and in other global areas.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

Satisfactory

Recommendations are clearly and logically derived from the evaluation findings and conclusions, and provide useful insight. They have been clearly prioritized in collaboration with stakeholders. While they identify concrete steps that UNICEF should consider taking, they generally do not specify which group within UNICEF should be responsible for the implementation of each recommendation.

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

Highly Satisfactory

The report is logically structured, following a traditional evaluation report format. The opening pages clearly identify all of the required information. Annexes are extensive and include additional information often not found in other evaluation reports, such as information on the evaluation team.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

Satisfactory
The evaluation methodology is highly participatory and ensures that a wide range of stakeholder voices are captured. The evaluation uses human rights sensitive language but does not frame the evaluation around human rights-based frameworks or benchmarks. While the report distinguishes between urban and rural beneficiaries, more disaggregation could have been done between other vulnerable groups (i.e. by regional location, people with disabilities, ethnic groups, etc.). Overall, the report is strong at including GEEW principles but does not adequately describe the specific vulnerabilities facing women and children during emergency situations.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

Satisfactory

The Executive Summary clearly presents the key messages from the evaluation. However, the executive summary is missing an overall description of UNICEF’s disaster response and does not present a summary of the lessons learned. It is somewhat long (at 9 pages) and could benefit from further synthesizing the findings and conclusions.

Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

8 Meets requirements

Recommendations for improvement

This evaluation is based on a well constructed participatory methodology that has the potential to inform real-time decision-making. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations are based on triangulated data and will likely be useful to inform future programming. However, it is important that the Evaluation Manager or Evaluation Reference Group emphasize with the evaluators the importance of constructing valuable lessons learned that can be used to not only inform future interventions in Kenya but that could also inform UNICEF’s disaster responses in other global areas. There is also room to strengthen the evaluation’s focus on human rights, equity, and gender equality as cross-cutting themes. UNICEF evaluation managers can use the resources mentioned in this review to help guide evaluators towards better integrating these principles. The evaluation mentions an important point for UNICEF Evaluation Managers to consider, which is the importance of conducting real-time evaluations near the beginning of an intervention so that the information obtained through the evaluation can be better used in real-time to make improvements to the intervention (the evaluators state that this evaluation was commissioned quite late and its usefulness was reduced as a result).
In alignment with UNICEF’s gender and equity principles, it is desirable to include a description of the specific vulnerabilities facing women and children during emergency situations (this is especially true since the object of evaluation specifically targets women and children). It is also good practice to explicitly link the context in which the intervention operates with challenges and opportunities that can affect the intervention. While there may be some flexibility around the requirement to present a logical framework for a real-time evaluation of an emergency response initiative, it can still be a useful tool to help the reader to understand how the intervention’s activities are designed to mitigate the situation and lead to change.

It would be useful for the report to explicitly discuss whether the information generated by this evaluation will be used to inform the operations of UNICEF (and potentially its partners) outside of the Kenyan context.

It is important that the evaluation report not only describe the evaluation criteria methods employed, but to also justify why their selection was appropriate in terms of addressing the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. It is also good practice to explicitly mention that the evaluation follows the guidance set out in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines (http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102).

Even though a thorough assessment of actual versus planned results may not be expected from a real-time evaluation, the report could be strengthened by better framing the results achieved around the intervention’s Results Framework. Additionally, it is good practice to reference the benchmarks used to identify an intervention's strengths and areas for improvement. Due to the nature of the real-time assessment and the opportunities it holds for immediate action, it could have been useful to provide a more in-depth analysis of the intervention's monitoring system including its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

The conclusions could be more forward looking by discussing their implications on future disaster response planning both in Kenya and elsewhere. Lessons learned should be presented in a more generalizable format that provide insight on how key learnings from the Kenya experience could help inform and improve both UNICEF’s disaster response in Kenya and in other global areas.

Recommendations can be made even more actionable by indicating specifically which UNICEF actor (i.e. country office, HQ, thematic sector, etc.) should be responsible for their implementation.

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

It is good practice to frame evaluations around human rights-based frameworks or benchmarks. To learn more about using a human rights evaluation framework, please see: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980. It is also good practice to distinguish between vulnerable groups to ensure that equity principles are fully reflected in the evaluation. To learn more about incorporating equity principles into evaluations, please see: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/node/4427. Finally, it is important to explicitly outline the specific vulnerabilities facing women and children during emergency situations, as some readers may be unfamiliar with these particular vulnerabilities.
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<td>It is helpful for the reader when the Executive Summary provides a brief description of the UNICEF activities under evaluation. Additionally, a brief summary of the lessons learned should also be included. It is important that the Executive Summary be as succinct as possible to ensure that it is easily usable for high level decision makers. While the findings and conclusions are clearly stated, they could be further synthesized to help shorten the length of the Executive Summary.</td>
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