Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation: Evaluation of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programme within the UNICEF Country Programme in Lebanon (2013-2016)

Sequence No: 2017/001
Region: MENA
Office: Lebanon
Coverage: Lebanon
Evaluation Type: Programme
Year of Report: 2017

OVERALL RATING

Satisfactory

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

Lessons for future evaluations:
This is a strong evaluation report that is based on a good qualitative methodology and that presents useful findings, analytical conclusions, and actionable recommendations. Even so, there are some minor areas for improvement. It is very helpful to the reader if the evaluators present the programme's logic model and full results framework (including results targets) during the programme description section of the report. If the programme does not have a theory of change model, then it is good practice for the evaluators to recreate one. This information is key to help the reader understand how the programme's interventions are designed to lead to medium and long-term results. To learn more about how to develop a theory of change, please see the following online resource: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/define/develop_logic_model. It is also good practice to discuss any unintended findings or results that the programme has contributed towards. To ensure that this information is collected and analysed, it can be useful to create a stand-alone evaluation question to investigate unexpected results. Finally, it is important for the report to explain how stakeholders were involved in the management of the evaluation and how they were consulted throughout the evaluation process. If an evaluation reference group led the evaluation, then this should be mentioned. It is important to discuss the level of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process since stakeholder engagement provides additional credibility to the evaluation.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

Satisfactory

An excellent programme summary table is presented at the beginning of the report that identifies the programme timeframe, locations, key stakeholders and beneficiaries, and the programme budget per year of operation. The country context in terms of WASH services and the extra stress that the Syrian refugee crisis has added to the provision of services is very well outlined and relates to the object of evaluation. Different sub-groups of marginalized beneficiaries are well identified (i.e. well educated Syrians, Bedouins from Syria, rural and urban Lebanese, women and men, etc.) and stakeholders along with their contributions are clearly identified. The report would be even stronger if the programme description section provided a more in-depth look at the programme's implementation modalities. Additionally, even though the programme's key output areas are identified, it would be useful to include specific results targets or to specify if they do not exist. A Theory of Change model is not presented within the report.

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

Highly Satisfactory
The evaluation purpose (including how the evaluation findings and recommendations will be used and by whom) and its specific objectives are clearly stated and are properly linked. The report is particularly strong at outlining the evaluation scope through a detailed table on pp. 22 and 23, which also identifies what programme elements were not covered by the evaluation.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

Satisfactory

The evaluation uses a good qualitative methodology and the report is strong at describing why each data collection method was chosen and how it was applied to the evaluation. The evaluation uses the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria but does not explain why the criterion of impact was not included other than to say that UNICEF requested that it be excluded. The sampling strategy, methods of analysis, and evaluation limitations and mitigation strategies are all well outlined and thoroughly discussed. Additionally, the ethical standards upheld by the evaluation team (including the ethical obligations of the evaluation team and the ethical safeguards put in place to protect participants) are clearly presented.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

Satisfactory

The report presents strong findings that are structured around the evaluation criteria; are based on multiple lines of evidence; reference the programme's results framework; and provide in-depth assessments of the programme's strengths, weaknesses, and causal factors for the achievement and non-achievement of results. The findings also present a strong assessment of the programme's M&E system, including how monitoring data is used for decision making. While some unexpected findings are briefly touched upon throughout the findings, the report could be strengthened by highlighting these findings and further discussing them within their own sub-section.

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

Highly Satisfactory

The conclusions are very strong and present an analytical summary of the findings that helps to highlight the programme's primary strengths, areas for improvement, and issues of concern. The report is particularly strong at describing the foreseeable implications of the findings for the future of the intervention, as can be seen on p. 60 where the report discusses the risks of the lack of coordination between the MoEW and the WEs. Three key lessons learned are properly identified and thoroughly discussed. They are particularly well written as they discuss how the lesson learned relates to the programme but then also explain how the lesson is applicable to similar programmes in other contexts.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

Satisfactory

Recommendations are clearly presented and are logically derived from the findings and conclusions. They are addressed to the UNICEF Beirut Office and are numbered. This being said, it would strengthen the report to add a sentence to explicitly state that they are presented in priority order. The recommendations are particularly strong at describing how they can be implemented, taking into consideration the local context. The report also explains how they were discussed and clarified during a meeting with the UNICEF team, before their validation by the WASH team. This stakeholder involvement adds additional credibility to the recommendations.

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

Satisfactory
The report presents all of the most necessary information on the cover page including the name and location of the object of evaluation, the evaluation timeframe, the report date, the name of the commissioning agency, and the name of the evaluation firm. The report also includes the evaluation firm's contact information, which is a useful addition. The annexes are complete and add significant credibility to the report. They include the ToRs, an evaluation matrix, lists of data sources, and copies of the data collection tools. The report is very well structured with one section logically leading to the next. It would be easier to read the report if all acronyms were spelled out fully the first time they are used.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

Satisfactory

The report reflects a strong commitment to integrating and mainstreaming human rights, equity, and gender equality principles and concerns throughout the evaluation process and the final report itself. Specific cross-cutting evaluation questions have helped the evaluation to assess the extent to which these principles were considered during both the programme's design and implementation. The report is very strong at discussing these cross-cutting themes throughout the findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations. The report mentions that the recommendations were reviewed by stakeholders prior to being finalized but there is no further reference anywhere else in the report concerning stakeholder involvement in the evaluation in terms of its management. Even though the ToRs call for the creation of an evaluation reference group, the report does not mention this or discuss how the reference group led the management of the evaluation (apart from approving the recommendations).

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

Satisfactory

The Executive Summary is very concise (2 pages) and includes all of the main evaluation elements. However, it could be strengthened by providing more information regarding the object of evaluation and the programme rationale and by clearly separating the key findings and conclusions. The Executive Summary would also be easier to read if it used sub-headings to clearly define the different sections within it.

Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

11 Exceeds requirements

Recommendations for improvement

Section A

The report's programme description section would be even stronger if a brief overview of the programme's key implementation modalities was provided. Additionally, it is best to include results targets to accompany outcome areas if they exist. If the programme does not have results targets, then it is important for the evaluation report to state this. Finally, it is useful to present a theory of change model to explain to the reader how the designed interventions are expected to lead to results. If the programme does not already have a theory of change, then it is good practice for the evaluators to retroactively create one for the use of the evaluation. To learn more about how to develop a theory of change, please see the following online resource: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/define/develop_logic_model

Section B

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

Section C

If the evaluation does not use all of the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (i.e. the evaluation excludes "impact" from the criteria), it is important for the report to explain why the criteria were excluded. Simply stating that UNICEF requested for it to be excluded is an insufficient justification. The evaluators should explain the rationale behind the decision to exclude the standard criteria.

Section D

While some unexpected findings are briefly touched upon throughout the findings, the report could be strengthened by highlighted these findings and further discussing them within their own sub-section. Ensuring that a separate evaluation question is developed to assess unexpected results can be a useful way to ensure that they are systematically considered and addressed within their own sub-section of the report.

Section E

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