Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation	**Evaluation of the training programme for continuous professional development of social protection staff**
Sequence No	2017/001
Region	CEE/CIS
Office	Macedonia
Coverage	Macedonia
Evaluation Type	Programme
Year of Report	2017

OVERALL RATING

● ● ● – **Satisfactory**

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

Implications:

Overall, this is a satisfactory evaluation report that uses a strong methodology and presents insightful and useful findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations. This being said, there are still some areas for improvement. The quality of the contextual information on the actual situation of child protection in Macedonia (including the needs of both children and child protection staff) could be improved and would help to better ground the evaluation within the current thematic context. Additionally, the size and importance of the programme (both overall and to UNICEF) would be clearer to the reader if the report were to include information on the overall programme costs and UNICEF's contributions. While the methodology is strong, it would be helpful for the reader to understand why UNICEF staff appear to not have been included in any informant interviews. Additionally, unexpected findings should be clearly identified (preferably within a sub-section). The report could benefit from further clarification around how stakeholders were involved in the evaluation process. Particularly, it is important to mention if an evaluation reference group was used to guide the evaluation and it is necessary to outline the extent to which stakeholders were involved in developing the recommendations. The report is well structured but it needs to be edited for English-language errors. The number of errors found throughout the report (especially missing articles such as "a" or "the" reduce the report's professional tone). Additionally, it is important for a copy of the data collection tools to be included in the annexes, as this helps to validate the quality of the data collected.

Lessons for future evaluations:

Finally, the Executive Summary should include a more robust description of the object of evaluation and its context so that the reader does not need to reference the body of the report to gain an overall picture of what the evaluation is assessing.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

● ● ● – **Satisfactory**

Overall, the report includes a strong background section and description of the object of evaluation. The child protection reform process in Macedonia is well outlined and the positioning of the programme within this process is well explained. However, it would be useful to provide more information on the current contextual situation regarding child protection in Macedonia and to identify the specific needs of the children and the child protection staff that the reform process and the training programme are attempting to address. The report explains that the programme used no Theory of Change model but an elaborate model was retroactively produced by the evaluation team. While stakeholders are identified, the cost of the programme and UNICEF's specific contributions to the programme are not clearly specified.

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

● ● ● ●   **Highly Satisfactory**

The report explains why the evaluation is necessary at this point in time, how it will be used, and its intended audience. The evaluation report also provides well outlined evaluation objectives that link to its purpose. Changes made to the ToRs are well outlined and justified (i.e. changes that had to be made to the evaluation process due to a missing programme results framework and corresponding indicators). The evaluation scope in terms of geographic and time coverage are also specified.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

● ● ● –   **Satisfactory**

The evaluation faced several significant limitations in terms of inadequate quantitative data to draw from (i.e. outdated desk review documents), inexistent M&E data, and no programme performance management framework. Even so, the evaluators used a mixed methods approach, (which included key informant interviews, focus group discussions, a desk review, an online survey, direct observation, and a case study) to help overcome these limitations. The rationale for the selection of these methods is well explained and analysis methods are well outlined. Data sources (including documents and interviewees) are identified, although it seems odd that no UNICEF staff were included in any of the informant interviews. The ethical procedures followed by the evaluation team are exceptionally well outlined.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

● ● ● –   **Satisfactory**

Findings are well written, are structured around the standard evaluation criteria, and sufficiently marshal different levels and types of evidence. The evaluation is particularly strong at developing its own assessment benchmarks in light of a missing performance management framework. The report explains that the programme was entirely missing an M&E function. The findings include both positive and negative information, which is used to answer the evaluation questions. Unexpected findings are not clearly identified.

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

● ● ● ● **Highly Satisfactory**

Both overall conclusions and conclusions that are specific to each evaluation criterion are clearly presented, are analytical, and discuss the programme's strengths and areas for improvement. Lessons learned are particularly insightful and are written in a generalizable manner that easily facilitates applying them to other similar contexts.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

● ● ● – **Satisfactory**

Recommendations are logically derived from the findings and conclusions. They include both strategic and operational elements, which will likely be useful for the evaluation's intended users. The target group for action for each recommendation is clearly specified and the priority level of each recommendation is identified (i.e. high or medium priority). While the report explains in the methodology section that the evaluation was highly participatory and that the evaluators consulted with beneficiaries throughout the evaluation process, the extent to which beneficiaries were involved in developing the recommendations is unclear.

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

● ● – – **Fair**

The report is logically structured in the traditional order with one section logically leading to the next. The opening pages contain all of the required information, including the names of the consultants, the commissioning agency, and the programme name and date. The annexes include important information, such as an evaluation matrix and the ToRs. However, the data collection tools are not presented (i.e. a copy of the survey, a copy of the questions used to guide the KIIs and FGDs). In terms of report clarify, all acronyms should be fully spelled out the first time they are used in the report to facilitate easy reading. Additionally, the report would benefit from some English-language editing, as there are grammatical errors throughout the report. Articles such as "a" or "the' are regularly missing.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

● ● ● – **Satisfactory**

The evaluation report is strong at using human rights language and child rights frameworks. Gender equality is also thoroughly mainstreamed throughout the report. The evaluation provides a particularly in-depth assessment of the extent to which the programme is improving child protection services to those children most in need, using a strong equity lens. Evaluation questions include questions around equity, human rights, and gender equality and information on these issues can be seen throughout the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Even though the report explains that the evaluation used a highly participatory process, gaining feedback from stakeholders along the way, no reference is made in the report to an evaluation reference group and the extent to which stakeholders were involved in developing the recommendations is unclear. The use of an evaluation reference group is called for in the ToRs.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

Fair

An Executive Summary is included and is an appropriate length to inform decision-makers. It includes a summary of all of the relevant sections of the report (i.e. programme overview, evaluation purpose, findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations) but does not provide enough detailed information on the object of the evaluation to allow the reader to understand what is being evaluated without having to reference the body of the report. Information on the programme interventions and the context in which the programme operates is important information to include in the first section of the Executive Summary under the section title "Programme Background and Key Information".

Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

10	Meets requirements

Recommendations for improvement

Section A	Contextual information on the actual situation of child protection in Macedonia (including the needs of both children and child protection staff) would help to better ground the evaluation within the current thematic context. Additionally, the size and importance of the programme (both overall and to UNICEF) would be clearer to the reader if the report were to include information on the overall programme costs and UNICEF's contributions.
Section B	This section observes good practices. No further improvement is required.
Section C	This section observes good practices. However, it would be helpful for the reader to understand why UNICEF staff appear to not have been included in any informant interviews.
Section D	This section observes good practices. However, it is useful for the reader if the report clearly identifies any unexpected findings, ideally within a sub-section, labelled as such.
Section E	This section observes good practices. No further improvements are required.
Section F	It is important for the report to clearly articulate the extent to which beneficiaries were involved in the development of the evaluation recommendations, as this provides additional validity to the recommendations. A brief sentence or paragraph explaining stakeholder involvement in the development of recommendations can be useful at the beginning of the recommendations section before the recommendations are presented.
Section G	In terms of clarity, it would be useful if acronyms were fully spelled out the first time they are used in the report. Additionally, the report would benefit from some English-language editing, as there are grammatical errors throughout the report. Articles such as "a" or "the' are regularly missing. Additionally, it is important for a copy of the data collection tools to be included in the annexes, as this helps to validate the quality of the data collected.
Section H	The report could benefit from further clarification around how stakeholders were involved in the evaluation process. Particularly, it is important to mention if an evaluation reference group was used to guide the evaluation and it is necessary to outline the extent to which stakeholders were involved in developing the recommendations.

Section I	The Programme Background and Key Information section at the beginning of the Executive Summary does not provide enough detailed information on the object of the evaluation to allow the reader to understand what is being evaluated without having to reference the body of the report. An explanation of the programme interventions and the context in which the programme operates is important information to include in this first section.