Executive Feedback

Title of the evaluation

Summative evaluation to strengthen implementation of justice for children system in the Republic of Serbia (2010-2017)

Sequence No 2017/005
Region CEE/CIS
Office Serbia
Coverage Serbia
Evaluation Type Project
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:
The timing and methodology of the evaluation do not facilitate a thorough assessment of "impact". In future, when a project has not yet been terminated and when the evaluation scope does not facilitate a thorough impact assessment, it may be wiser to assess the project's "potential for impact" rather than full impact. Additionally, evaluators may require some additional guidance from UNICEF around how to conduct gender sensitive evaluations. To learn more on how to conduct a gender sensitive evaluation, please see: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

Satisfactory

The evaluation covers two projects targeting children in the justice system. The project activities, budgets, and implementation status are well outlined, as well as the context in which they both operated. The evaluators present a Theory of Change that covers both projects, which was retroactively constructed by UNICEF. The evaluators present a useful critique of the Theory of Change, highlighting the fact that it does not clearly distinguish between outcome and impact level results. However, it would have perhaps been useful to include the logical frameworks of each project as part of the report annexes, since the Theory of Change does not distinguish between outcome and impact level results. The report is exceptionally strong at identifying project stakeholders and at describing their contributions to the projects.

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

Satisfactory
The report clearly outlines the evaluation purpose, including who will use the information generated by the evaluation and to what ends. Although the evaluation objectives are also identified, they are mislabelled. The report also discusses changes that were made to the evaluation questions included in the ToRs. What will be included in the evaluation scope is clearly outlined. However, the report does not discuss whether any project elements lay outside of the evaluation scope.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

- Satisfactory -

The evaluation is based on a strong mixed methods methodology that is designed to assess all 5 OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. Methodological choices are well explained and justified. However, the evaluation conditions do not facilitate a full assessment of the criterion "impact" due to the fact that one of the two projects had not yet been completed at the time of the evaluation (therefore likely not providing enough time after the project to generate clear impact) and that final beneficiaries were not included in the methodology as sources of information. The evaluation timing would have needed to be different and the methodological design would have needed to be more rigorous for impact to have been effectively assessed.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)

- Satisfactory -

The findings are based on multiple sources of evidence that provide answers to the evaluation questions. They discuss the causal factors for the achievement and non-achievement of results, and include a discussion around unexpected results. The evaluators structure the effectiveness section around the goals and objectives of the projects but are not able to structure the findings around the output, outcome and impact level results due to challenges in the Theory of Change in differentiating between outcomes and impact. While the quality of the M&E systems are assessed and the report discusses how information was shared with partners, more of an analysis would be useful around how information generated through the monitoring system was used by decision makers.

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

- Satisfactory -

The conclusions are well written and generally provide analytical insight that goes beyond information presented in the findings, although they could be even more forward-looking to further discuss the implications of the findings for the future of the interventions. The report presents several lessons learned and most of them (but not all) are correctly identified and generalizable so that they could be applied to different contexts.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)

- Satisfactory -
The report identifies numerous strategic and operational recommendations that are prioritized and that clearly identify the target group for action. Each recommendation includes a description as to why it is needed and provides a general explanation around how it could be implemented. They are logically derived from the evaluation's findings and conclusions, and will likely be very useful to decision makers. They were validated by stakeholders during a validation meeting.

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

**Highly Satisfactory**

The evaluation report is well structured in a traditional evaluation format with one section logically leading to the next. The opening pages include all of the required information but include both the titles "Final Report" and "Final Draft", which could be somewhat confusing for the reader. Additionally, it would be useful for the name of the organisation commissioning the evaluation (i.e. UNICEF) to be placed on the cover page. The report includes all required annexes, such as the ToRs, an Evaluation Matrix, an ethical consent form, list of data sources, and copies of the evaluation tools. This adds significant credibility to the report. Additionally, the names of the evaluators are clearly presented on the cover page, and information on the evaluation team is also provided in the annex. Although the report is generally well written, grammatical articles such as "the" are often missing.

SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)  

**Fair**

The evaluation references international human rights benchmarks and conventions, and uses human rights language throughout the report. The Evaluation Matrix (EM) includes one question on equity and gender equality, which led to the finding that equity and gender equality were not particularly considered during the design of the projects. However, apart from this finding and its corresponding recommendation, equity and gender equality are not further discussed in the report. Regarding SWAP principles: 1) Indicators in the EM do not ensure that collected data will be sex disaggregated; 2) Only one question is included in the EM that assesses the extent to which the project design was gender sensitive, and the extent to which the project was implemented in a gender sensitive manner is not examined; 3) The evaluation methodology is participatory and includes the voices of both women and men, but no further efforts are made to make the methodology or the evaluation process particularly gender sensitive; and 4) One finding is dedicated to GE and a recommendation to make future programming more gender sensitive is provided.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)  

**Satisfactory**
The Executive Summary is an appropriate length (5 pages) and includes all of the required elements, with the exception of a description of the object of evaluation. The evaluation findings are presented as "conclusions" and should likely be labelled as "findings". It would be helpful to use sub-headings to guide the reader from one section to the next (i.e. sub-headings: background, object of evaluation, evaluation methodology, etc.). The Executive Summary is referred to as the "Evaluation Summary" rather than "Executive Summary", which could cause some confusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Recommendations for improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section A</td>
<td>Since the Theory of Change does not distinguish between outcome and impact level results, it may have been useful to include the logical frameworks of each project as part of the report annexes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section B</td>
<td>It is useful to not only mention what is included in the evaluation scope, but to also explain whether any project elements lay outside of the scope of evaluation. For instance, an assessment of the quality of certain project results may sometimes fall outside of the evaluation scope.</td>
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<td>Section C</td>
<td>The evaluation is designed to assess &quot;impact&quot; even though one of the two projects had not yet been completed at the time of the evaluation and final beneficiaries were not included as sources of information. Under these conditions, it would have perhaps been wiser to assess the project's &quot;potential for impact&quot; since the methodology is not designed to effectively assess the full impact of the projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section D</td>
<td>While the quality of the M&amp;E systems are assessed and the report discusses how information was shared with partners, more of an analysis would be useful around how information generated through the monitoring system was used by decision makers.</td>
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<td>Section E</td>
<td>The conclusions could be strengthened by providing an even greater forward-looking analysis to further discuss the implications of the findings for the future of the interventions. All of the lessons learned should clearly present the &quot;lesson&quot; that was learned so that they can be applied to other contexts rather than providing specific information about how the particular initiatives under evaluation could have been improved.</td>
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<td>Section F</td>
<td>Although the recommendations are quite strong, they could be even further strengthened by including a more detailed explanation around how they could be implemented, especially those requiring additional resources.</td>
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<td>Section G</td>
<td>The cover page should clearly specify whether the report is in its final state or a draft state. If the report has been finalized by UNICEF (which is assumed to be the case), then the word &quot;draft&quot; should be removed. Also, it is good practice to place the name of the organisation commissioning the evaluation (i.e. UNICEF) on the cover page. The report should be thoroughly edited to ensure that it complies with all English grammatical rules and that articles such as &quot;the&quot; are included where relevant.</td>
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### Section H

Conducting gender sensitive evaluations requires a thorough integration of gender equality considerations throughout the evaluation process and report. To learn more on how to effectively design and conduct gender sensitive evaluations, please see: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook

### Section I

It would be helpful to include a brief description of the object of evaluation to assist the reader in understanding the information presented. The body of the Executive Summary consists of a summary of the evaluation findings and should likely be labelled as "findings" rather than "conclusions". The Executive Summary would be easier to read if it contained sub-titles, and it should be titled "Executive Summary" rather than "Evaluation Summary", to avoid any confusion.