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Management response to the evaluation report

Evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the UNICEF response to the evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations, completed in 2020. It provides a summary of the actions that UNICEF will take to address the recommendations.

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section III.

* E/ICEF/2020/17.
Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.

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I. Overview

1. The evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations sought to assess whether UNICEF had made the necessary adjustments to increase its efficiency and effectiveness as an organization with a growing footprint in humanitarian programming.

2. The evaluation time period, from 2014 through 2018, spanned the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014–2017 and the first year of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. The evaluation covered UNICEF work at all levels as well as all components outlined in the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. It also covered policy advocacy, capacity-building, education systems strengthening, knowledge management and creating an enabling environment.

3. The evaluation found that UNICEF:

(a) Strengthened its role as lead in global advocacy and dialogue on education in emergencies;

(b) Substantially contributed to the evolution of the global education in emergencies architecture;

(c) Provided evidence-based programmes;

(d) Consistently mainstreamed gender;

(e) Contributed substantively to the development and strengthening of the policies and capacities of Governments and partners;

(f) Introduced innovation at the country level;

(g) Provided appropriate surge support;

(h) Acted as the provider of last resort, often filling gaps by delivering assistance in remote and hard-to-reach areas, in collaboration with local partners.

4. Challenges captured in the evaluation include:

(a) Levels of education outside of basic education have been less consistently prioritized;

(b) The concept of provider of last resort has limited practical relevance in low-resourced settings;

(c) Targeting the most vulnerable is challenged by data limitations;

(d) Some vulnerable groups have been insufficiently prioritized;

(e) Funding remained insufficient and accounted for not more than 10 per cent of the humanitarian funding received by UNICEF, with the expenditure unevenly distributed;

(f) The skills development of UNICEF education staff on aspects of education in emergencies has not been sufficiently prioritized;

(g) UNICEF requires a greater focus on building internal understanding and technical capacity as well as partnerships to shift focus from supplies to quality teaching and learning in protracted crises.

5. The initial findings of the evaluation were shared in August 2019, and the subsequent roll-out of the UNICEF Education Strategy, 2019–2030 and the revision of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action provided opportunities to implement some of the findings prior to the receipt of the final evaluation report and recommendations in 2020.

6. UNICEF agrees with the recommendations, including the need to:

(a) Better equip representatives, deputy representatives, chiefs of education and emergency officers to reflect the organization's commitment to education as an essential part of the humanitarian response, to be incorporated into linked humanitarian, development and peace programming;

(b) Promote equitable learning opportunities in the humanitarian education response, with an emphasis on gender equality and disability inclusion;

(c) Implement and share innovative learning solutions at scale;

(d) Strengthen the capacities of staff and partners with responsibilities for education in emergencies in the identification and targeting of affected children and the monitoring and reporting of interventions and outcomes;

(e) Strengthen the localization agenda and reinforce accountability to affected populations.

II. Key evaluation recommendations and UNICEF management response

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Evaluation recommendation 1: UNICEF should equip leaders (including representative, deputy representative, and chief of education and emergency officers) with adequate leadership capacities and tools to work in a manner that reflects the organization's commitment to education as an essential part of the humanitarian response, across the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus. **Management response:** Agree The accountabilities for UNICEF representatives, deputy representatives and chiefs of education are clear and various tools and technical support are already available. Additional tailored tools for advocating for the recognition of education as a core component of humanitarian response and to support working in education in linked humanitarian, development and peace programming should be provided to country teams. This will continue to be supported by global-level advocacy and engagement.				
Action 1.1 Advocate for a joint statement from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Executive Director of UNICEF to United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators reaffirming the recognition of education as a core component of humanitarian response and within linked humanitarian, development and peace programming.	Headquarters.	31 December 2020	Not started	
Action 1.2 Issue an advocacy brief on education in emergencies for country teams that describes the UNICEF approach to working in education within linked humanitarian, development and peace programming.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Not started	

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Action 1.3 Develop a specific tool for country teams that reflects the guidance for the UNICEF role as a cluster lead agency, in line with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Not started	
Action 1.4 Seventy-five per cent of the UNICEF chiefs of education working in countries in which the clusters are activated will complete the online cluster training.	Regional offices	31 December 2021	Not started	
Evaluation recommendation 2: Recognizing the priorities of the education strategy, UNICEF should promote equitable learning opportunities in humanitarian education response, with particular emphasis on gender equality and disability inclusion. **Management response:** Agree UNICEF is identifying, targeting and, resources permitting, reaching and supporting the most vulnerable children in humanitarian settings with appropriate education solutions in many contexts. It is acknowledged that quality is unequal, particularly with regard to gender equality and disabilities. UNICEF agrees to further strengthen this work as a universal, non-negotiable commitment.				
Action 2.1 As part of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response, share with country teams the document, "Inclusive school reopening: supporting the most marginalized children to go to school".[1]	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 May 2020	Completed "Inclusive school reopening: supporting the most marginalized children to go to school" has been developed and shared; global webinars with	"Inclusive school reopening: supporting the most marginalized children to go to school"

[1] Available at https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/inclusive_school_reopening_-_supporting_marginalised_children_during_school_re._.pdf.

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			education staff has been completed.	
Action 2.2 Develop a toolkit for education in emergencies for girls.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31December 2020	Under way Terms of reference have been drafted.	
Action 2.3 Deploy the innovative learning solution, the Learning Passport, in a minimum of seven countries as part of the COVID-19 education response.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Under way The Learning Passport is at various stages of deployment in six countries as part of the COVID-19 education response.	Programme document materials, investment case, digital resources
Action 2.4 Develop a global resource pack and practitioners' guide for disability-inclusive education, including in humanitarian settings.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Not started	
Action 2.5 Share good practices and tools for needs assessments, analysis, monitoring and reporting (including real-time monitoring) through two webinars.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 March 2021	Not started	
Action 2.6 Support Governments applying for the Global Partnership for Education's Education Sector Programme Implementation Grants over the remaining period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 to include conflict and risk	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31December 2021	Under way The final draft of *Education Sector Analysis: Methodological Guidelines,* vol. 3,	

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analysis to inform education sector plans.			focusing on conflict and risk, has been completed.	
Action 2.7 Support country offices in humanitarian settings to conduct reviews on inclusive education, using multiple indicator cluster survey reports and other relevant data at key programming moments over the remaining period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021.	Regional offices	31 December 2021	Not started	
See also action 1.4 and related actions under recommendation 3				
Evaluation recommendation 3: UNICEF should lead key education partners to develop, implement at scale and share innovative and impactful learning solutions that are suited to the needs of children affected by acute emergencies and protracted crises, including public-health crises. **Management response:** Agree UNICEF does not have the mandate to lead other partners. However, as the findings of the evaluation show, UNICEF is recognized within the education community as a lead within the education-in-emergencies field. UNICEF will use this positioning to influence and make critical contributions to the development of successful, impactful learning solutions for children affected by acute emergencies and protracted crises. UNICEF is developing innovative learning solutions for humanitarian situations in collaboration with key partners. The organization will capitalize on this ongoing work on education innovations to implement them at scale and share impactful learning solutions.				
Action 3.1 Establish a global technical team for education in emergencies to improve knowledge sharing and technical guidance across headquarters, regional offices and country offices that addresses programmatic principles and approaches within the UNICEF Education Strategy, 2019–2030.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 January 2020	Completed The technical team has been established and is now involved in technical discussions, knowledge sharing and the	Terms of reference for a global technical team for education in emergencies

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			development of technical tools.	
Action 3.2 Conduct 10 webinars with external partners across external networks on the COVID-19 response.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 August 2020	Under way For the COVID-19 response, multiple webinars have been conducted globally, sharing guidance, evidence and tools, including with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Bank.	Record of webinars
Action 3.3 In collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), develop a blueprint for joint action and for nine country action plans to (a) build the capacity of Governments to integrate refugees in protracted crises into government systems; (b) improve equitable access to	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Under way The final draft of the blueprint for joint action has been completed by UNHCR and UNICEF. Country-level action plans	

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education for children from the pre-primary to the secondary level; and (c) build the capacity of Governments to improve learning.			are under development in nine countries.	
Action 3.4 Undertake 16 case studies on education-in-emergencies response and systematically collate and share lessons learned.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	30 June 2021	Under way The first case study on teaching at the right level has been finalized, along with 10 case studies highlighting the COVID-19 education response, including the continuation of learning and the reopening of schools.	Completed case studies
Action 3.5 Hold five dedicated knowledge-sharing events on Yammer and other internal platforms on education-in-emergencies issues, targeting education staff at all levels.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2021	Under way The first dedicated knowledge-sharing event was held on Yammer over a one-week period across all time zones in February 2020. The event covered innovative and alternative learning solutions in humanitarian situations, safe	Summary document of the first dedicated knowledge-sharing event

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			schools in natural disasters and conflict and education planning and action in pandemic response. The second dedicated knowledge-sharing event on Yammer was held over one day across all time zones in May and focused on the reopening of schools as part of the COVID-19 response.	
Action 3.6 In collaboration with the global education cluster, develop a toolkit to support country offices to effectively respond across different education emergency contexts in both acute and protracted crisis, linking to national systems and development processes.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2021	Under way Terms of reference have been developed with the global education cluster strategic advisory group.	
See also related actions under recommendation 2				
Evaluation recommendation 4: In implementing the Core Commitments for Children on education, UNICEF should strengthen capacities for staff and partners with responsibilities for education in emergencies in the identification and targeting of affected children, monitoring and reporting of interventions and outcomes, to ensure that education in humanitarian action reaches the most marginalized children.				

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Management Response: Agree				
Action 4.1 The first cohort completes the pilot of the global online eLearning course on education in emergencies.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Under way All content for the global online eLearning course on education in emergencies has been developed in four United Nations official languages and the content is currently being packaged into the stand-alone online course for UNICEF education staff, with peer-support options built in. The course is built on the facilitated online course on education in emergencies, developed by the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, which was piloted in 10 countries in 2019.	Contract for the development of the course

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Action 4.2 Conduct two webinars on the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action for education staff.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Not started	
Action 4.3 Implement webinar-based training on risk-informed programming.	West and Central Africa Regional Office	30 June 2021	Under way Plans for the webinar training in the West and Central Africa Regional Office are in place.	Risk-informed and resilience programming guidance documents
See also related actions under recommendations 1, 2 and 3				
Evaluation recommendation 5: UNICEF should strengthen engagement with the education sector (Government, private sector and civil society) by ensuring that the design and implementation of education-in-emergencies interventions capitalize on national capacities to strengthen the localization agenda and reinforce accountability to affected populations. **Management response:** Agree As stated in the findings, UNICEF has contributed substantively to the development and strengthening of the policies and capacities of Governments and, in some cases, of the non-governmental organization partners that are responsible for much of the education delivery. The rationale for this recommendation includes strengthening the link between humanitarian and development programming in education through national involvement in risk-informed programming and to support sustainability by reinforcing national capacities. The recommendation is relevant for every country programme across all sectors, and many actions to address this cross-cutting issue have already been actioned in UNICEF-approved plans. Two specific actions are included that contribute to the wider ongoing actions.				
Action 5.1 Incorporate training on localization and accountability to affected populations into the global online education in emergencies eLearning course, building on the work of the	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 December 2020	Under way The content has been developed and is being packaged into learning	

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UNICEF Emergency Operations Division and the UNICEF Programme Division.			modules.	
Action 5.2 Develop a generic Learning Passport deployment plan that includes the capacity development of local expertise and the creation of feedback systems for children and administrators.	Headquarters, Programme Division, Education Section	31 October 2020	Not started	
See action 2.6.				

III. Draft decision

The Executive Board

Takes note of the evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to education in humanitarian situations, its summary (E/ICEF/2020/19) and its management response (E/ICEF/2020/20).