

GEROS Evaluation Quality Assurance Tool

Version: November, 2020

Formative Evaluation of the Family-Based Care Component within the UNICEF Croatia Country Programme (2017-2020)

REPORT RATING SUMMARY			
Overall Rating		90%	Highly Satisfactory
●●●●●	Exceptional (96% - 100%)	5	
●●●●○	Highly Satisfactory (87.5% - 95.99%)	4	Exceeds UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports and decision makers may use the evaluation with a high degree of confidence
●●●○●	Satisfactory (62.5% - 87.49%)	3	
●●○●●	Fair (35% - 62.49%)	2	
●○○○○	Unsatisfactory (0% - 34.99%)	1	
REPORT DETAILS			
Title of the evaluation report		Formative Evaluation of the Family-Based Care Component within the UNICEF Croatia	
Report sequence number		Croatia/66/2020/16127	
Region		ECAR	
Year of report		2020	
Office		UNICEF Croatia	
Coverage (countries)		Croatia	
ToRs present		Yes	
Date of review (dd/mmm/yyyy)		17/01/2020	
Name of review firm		DeftEdge	
CLASSIFICATION OF EVALUATION REPORT			
Management of evaluation (Managerial control and oversight of evaluation)		UNICEF managed	
Unicef goal areas (Alignment with strategic plan priorities)			
Every child survives and thrives		Yes	
Every child learns		No	
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation		Yes	
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment		No	
Every child has an equitable chance in life		No	
Gender equality (cross-cutting)		Yes	
Humanitarian action (cross-cutting)		No	
Evaluation object		Joint Programme	
Evaluation type		Formative	
Evaluation strategy		Mixed methods	
Evaluation design (primary method used)		Theory-based	
Evaluation level		Output & Outcome	
Geographic scope		National	
Primary SDG(s) covered (number)		3, 16	
EQA Summary:			
<p>This evaluation assesses 'For a Stronger Family' - a joint program between UNICEF and the Ministry of Labor, Pension System, Family and Social Policy. The three areas of the program being evaluated include: provision of parenting support; services for at-risk families, and foster care. The evaluation was formative in nature and employed a mixed-methods approach which included individual interviews, group discussions, an online survey and a literature review. The sample of parents and caregivers was very small due to limitations related to Covid-19. A grounded theory approach was used to analyze data. The findings are detailed and use of a color-coded system (red, yellow, green) designed by evaluators helps to summarize findings against the evaluation indicators. The lessons learned are forward looking and the Recommendations are useful and are presented with useful guidance notes. The country/program background is particularly strong and useful for understanding the broader context of the program. The HRGE considerations were also noteworthy - the Annex included a table that detailed how gender was incorporated throughout each phase of the program.</p>			
Recommendations for Improvement:			
<p>Areas of improvement include the provision of further details on (a) the characteristics of the respondents, despite the sample being small, and (b) how sampling gaps were treated and how bias was mitigated during the evaluation. There are a few discrepancies between Annex citations within the report - the evaluation findings provide useful details but several of the indicator numbers do not match the evaluation matrix. Additionally, Annex 7 is cited when details of ethics and gender are discussed, but the relevant content on gender is actually in Annex 8. Lastly, the budget reports of UNICEF's contributions could be more consistent.</p>			
SECTION RATINGS			
SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)		67%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 1. Can the executive summary inform decision-making?			
i	Is clearly presented, serves as a standalone document useful for informing decision making, and is of relevant conciseness and depth for key users (Maximum of 5 pages unless otherwise specified in ToR).	Partially	At 6 pages the Executive Summary exceeds the 5-page maximum.
ii	Includes all necessary elements (overview of the intervention, evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience, evaluation methodology, key conclusions on findings, lessons learned if requested, key recommendations) as per the ToR.	Partially	The section on evaluation methodology describes the tools for qualitative data-collection but not quantitative. The lessons learned could be made more clear.
iii	Includes all significant information needed to understand the intervention and the evaluation AND does not introduce new information from what is presented in the rest of the report.	Yes	All significant information needed to understand the intervention and evaluation is included. New information is not introduced when compared to the rest of the report.
SECTION B: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)		79%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 2. Is the object of the evaluation clearly described?			

	i Clear and relevant description of the intervention, including: location(s), timelines, cost/budget, and implementation status.	Partially	While the status of different activities are clearly laid out in Annex 4, there are some discrepancies in presenting the programme budget and expenditures. The report states that 6.3M out of 8.1M HRK of UNICEF contributions has been spent on this country program (P.7), but later states that 8% of total expenditure was spent on this UNICEF program (P.15). In the Annex, UNICEF's contribution to a single initiative (For a Stronger Family) within the program is reported to be 10M HRK (Annex, P.7).
	ii Clear and relevant description of intended rightsholders (beneficiaries) and duty bearers (state and non-state actors with responsibilities regarding the intervention) by type (i.e., institutions/organizations; communities; individuals...), by geographic location(s) (i.e., urban, rural, particular neighbourhoods, town/cities, sub-regions...) and in terms of numbers reached, with disaggregation by gender, age, disability... (as appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation).	Yes	The report makes clear who the rightsholders are across the 3 main streams of intervention (parenting, at-risk families, quality foster care). The range of stakeholders that supported the implementation of the program are also clearly identified.
Question 3.	Is the context of the intervention clearly described?		
	i Clear and relevant description of the context of the intervention (i.e. relevant policy, socio-economic, political, cultural, power/privilege, institutional, international factors) and how context relates to the implementation of the intervention.	Yes	The context is very clear and many relevant details pertaining to the program are provided.
	iii Linkages drawn to the SDGs and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated.	No	Linkages to SDGs are not mentioned in the report.
	iii Clear and relevant description (where appropriate) of the status and needs of the rightsholders/beneficiaries of the intervention.	Yes	Detailed quoted accounts of the needs of beneficiaries are included as well as specific numbers of beneficiaries involved.
Question 4.	Are key stakeholders, their relationships and contributions clearly identified?		
	i Identification of implementing agency(ies), development partners, right holders, and additional duty bearers and other stakeholders; and of linkages between them (e.g., stakeholder map) (if relevant).	Yes	Implementing partners are identified and coordination between UNICEF and stakeholders is clear.
	ii Identification of the specific contributions and roles of key stakeholders (financial or otherwise), including UNICEF.	Yes	Evaluators note that across all 3 streams of the program, social workers, parents and caregivers were involved in the development of tools and training. Government, implementing partners and sector experts were involved in decisions within all 3 streams of the program.
SECTION C: EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)		100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 5.	Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly described?		
	i Purpose of evaluation is clearly defined, including why it was needed at that point in time, its intended use, and key intended users.	Yes	The evaluation purpose is clearly defined. It was formative in nature, designed to shape the remainder of the program and the strategic direction of UNICEF's work in the next implementation phase.
Question 6.	Are the objectives and scope of the evaluation clear and realistic?		
	i Clear and complete description of what the evaluation seeks to achieve by the end of the process with reference to any changes made to the objectives included in the ToR (if applicable).	Yes	The objectives of the evaluation are clear. Evaluators included a matrix detailing how the questions were changed from the ToR and the rationale for the changes are included in Annex 5.
	ii Clear and relevant description of the scope of the evaluation: what will and will not be covered (thematically, chronologically, geographically with key terms defined), as well as, if applicable, the reasons for this scope (e.g., specifications by the ToRs, lack of access to particular geographic areas for political or safety reasons at the time of the evaluation, lack of data/evidence on particular elements of the intervention).	Yes	The scope of the evaluation covers all aspects of family-based care initiatives within UNICEF Croatia from 2017-Spring 2020. The limitations reflected in the small sample size is adequately described under 'Limitations.'
Question 7.	Is the theory of change, results chain or logic well articulated?		
	i Clear description of the intervention's intended results, or of the parts of the results chain that are applicable to, or are being tested by, the evaluation.	Yes	The ToC/Logic model provides thorough details that clearly describe the objective, outputs and outcomes. The ToC is well-presented in both narrative and graphic form.
	ii Causal relationship between outputs and outcomes is presented in narrative and/or graphic form (e.g., results chain, logic model, theory of change, evaluation matrix).	Yes	The causal relationship between outputs and outcomes is carefully illustrated in Annex 2.
	iii For theory-based evaluations, the theory of change or results framework is assessed, and if requested in the ToR, it is reformulated/improved by the evaluators.	Yes	Evaluators found that the overall program design, including the ToC, did not adequately factor in horizontal linkages between the components of the program and how the programs could reinforce one another.
SECTION D: EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY (weight 20%)		90%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 8.	Does the evaluation use questions and the relevant evaluation criteria that are explicitly justified as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation? <i>UNICEF evaluation standards refer to the OECD/DAC criteria - Relevance; Coherence; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Sustainability; Impact (not all are necessarily relevant for all evaluations). Evaluations should also consider equity and leaving no-one behind, gender and human rights based approach (these can be mainstreamed into other criteria). Humanitarian evaluations should also consider Coverage; Connectedness; Coordination; Protection; Security.</i>		

	i	Evaluation questions and sub-questions are appropriate for meeting the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. The relevant criteria are specified and are aligned with the questions.	Yes	All 5 OECD/DAC criteria are included in the evaluation questions and there is also the additional criterium for assessment: 'participation, equity and gender.' Each criterium is aligned with relevant questions that are consistent with the objectives and purpose of the evaluation.
	ii	In addition to the questions and sub-questions, the evaluation matrix includes indicators, benchmarks, assumptions and/or other processes from which the analysis can be based and conclusions drawn.	Yes	The indicators, methods and sources, and stakeholders to be consulted in the process of analysis are clearly presented in a detailed evaluation matrix (Annex 5). Assumptions pertaining to the assessment are in a table on P.30 of the Annex.
Question 9.		Does the report specify adequate methods for data collection, analysis, and sampling?		
	i	Evaluation design and set of methods is relevant and adequately robust for the evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope; and are fully and clearly described.	Yes	The evaluation design and methodologies used are adequate for the purpose of the evaluation. A literature review was used to mitigate the inherent limitations of a small sample size.
	ii	Data sources are appropriate - these would normally include qualitative and quantitative sources (unless otherwise specified in the ToR) - and are all clearly described.	Yes	The evaluation employs a mixed-methods approach and the data sources are appropriate and clearly described.
	iii	Sampling strategy is provided - it should include a description of how diverse perspectives are captured (or if not, provide reasons for this).	Yes	A convenience sampling approach was used for all the primary data collected. Diverse perspectives were captured despite limitations arising from COVID-19.
	iv	Clear and complete description of the methods of analysis.	Yes	The evaluators describe using 'grounded theory analysis' for all the data sources. The online survey results went through a tabulation and means scoring process, and the open-ended questions were treated/analyzed according to common features.
	v	Methodology allows for drawing causal connections between outputs and expected outcomes.	Yes	The methodology allows for causal connections to be made between program outputs and expected outcomes.
	vi	Clear and complete description of limitations and constraints faced by the evaluation, including gaps in the evidence that was generated and mitigation of bias, and how these were addressed by the evaluators (as feasible).	Partially	Evaluators list 3 main limitations: limited sample of parents, limited sample of care leavers, and not being able to disaggregate findings by gender due to the sample size. There could be more information provided on how sampling gaps were treated (not just that there were limitations; and how literature selection may have partly mitigated issues around a small sample) and how bias was mitigated during the evaluation.
Question 10.		Are ethical issues and considerations described? The evaluation should be guided by the UNEG ethical standards for evaluation. As such, the evaluation report should include:		
	i	Explicit and contextualized reference to the obligations of evaluators (independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability).	Partially	The report mentions UNEG standards and mentions 4 out of 5 obligations, excluding conflicts of interest.
	ii	Description of ethical safeguards for participants appropriate for the issues relevant to methodology and how they are applied (respect for dignity and diversity, right to self-determination, fair representation, compliance with codes for vulnerable groups, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm). For those cases where the evaluation involves interviewing children, explicit reference is made to the UNICEF procedures for Ethical Research Involving Children.	Yes	Annex 8 contains a thorough section on degree of risk to evaluation participants and how this risk will be addressed and also a section on confidentiality, anonymity and data protection. Children were not interviewed or involved in the evaluation.
SECTION E:		EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 25%)	92%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 11.		Do the findings clearly address all evaluation objectives and scope?		
	i	Findings marshal sufficient levels of evidence to systematically address all of the evaluation's questions, sub-questions and criteria.	Partially	The report presents evidence to address the evaluation questions but the presentation could use more clarity. The indicator numbers frequently do not match the evaluation matrix numbers and the indicators referenced in the findings are sometimes not included at all in the evaluation matrix.
	ii	Explicit use of the intervention's results framework/ToC in the formulation of the findings.	Yes	The logic within the ToC is used in the findings.
Question 12.		Are evaluation findings derived from the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence.		
	i	Evaluation uses credible forms of qualitative and quantitative data. It presents both output and outcome-level data as relevant to the evaluation framework. Triangulation is evident through the use of multiple data sources.	Yes	Both qualitative and quantitative data are presented clearly within the findings. The data presented are linked to both outputs and outcomes and triangulation is evident in the color-coded tables as well as the paragraphs of descriptive text between them.
	ii	Findings are clearly supported by, and respond to, the evidence presented, including both positive and negative. Findings are based on clear performance indicators, standards, benchmarks, or other means of comparison as relevant for each question.	Yes	Positive and negative findings are both supported by evidence and are based on performance indicators. The findings also provide a detailed section listing the positive and negative factors that affected program results.
	iii	Causal factors (contextual, organizational, managerial, etc.) leading to achievement or non-achievement of results are clearly identified. For theory-based evaluations, findings analyse the logical chain (progression -or not- from implementation to results).	Yes	The causal factors leading to achievement and non-achievement are clearly identified. Below the tables containing indicators and summary findings, there are detailed descriptions of factors leading to achievement/non-achievement.
Question 13.		Does the evaluation assess and use the intervention's Results Based Management elements?		

	i Assessment of the adequacy of the intervention's monitoring system (including completeness and appropriateness of results/performance framework - including vertical and horizontal logic, M&E tools and their usage if required in ToR) to support decision-making.	Yes	The Findings has a section dedicated to the monitoring system. The program used quarterly reports from program partners to monitor progress. Evaluators note that an absence of indicators for monitoring some of the core areas of the program have made it hard to fully assess progress. Evaluators suggest the use of a developmental evaluation approach moving forward.
SECTION F:	EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 10%)	88%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 14.	Do the conclusions clearly present an objective overall assessment of the intervention?		
	i Conclusions are clearly formulated and reflect the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. They are sufficiently forward looking (if a formative evaluation or if the implementation is expected to continue or have additional phase).	Partially	The Conclusions reflect the objectives of the evaluation but would be clearer if presented by criteria.
	ii Conclusions are derived appropriately from findings, and present a picture of the strengths and limitations of the intervention that adds insight and analysis beyond the findings.	Yes	The conclusions are connected to the findings and reflect the strengths and limitations of the intervention. They offers insight into the limitations related to a lack of internal coherence that may affect program sustainability.
Question 15.	Are logical and informative lessons learned identified? [N/A if lessons are not presented and not requested in ToR]		
	i Identified lessons stem logically from the findings, have wider applicability and relevance beyond the object of the evaluation.	Yes	The lessons learned have applicability and relevance beyond the object of the evaluation and are logically connected to the findings.
	ii Lessons are clearly and concisely presented, yet have sufficient detail to be useful for intended audience.	Yes	Lessons are clearly presented and are accessible and useful for the intended audience.
SECTION G:	RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)	100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 16.	Are recommendations well grounded in the evaluation?		
	i Recommendations align with the evaluation purpose, are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions.	Yes	Recommendations align with the purpose and the findings of the evaluation and address relevant aspects of M&E needing improvement.
	ii Recommendations are useful and actionable for primary intended users and uses (relevant to the intervention); guidance is given for implementation, as appropriate.	Yes	They are useful and relevant and guidance is provided on strengthening different components of the intervention.
	iii Process for developing the recommendations is described, and includes the Involvement of duty-bearers, as well as rights holders when feasible (or explanation given for why they were not involved).	Yes	Under 'Methodology', evaluators state that implementing partners were given the opportunity to comment on draft reports for the evaluation. The process for this is presented in footnote 93 of the main report.
Question 17.	Are recommendations clearly presented?		
	i Clear identification of groups or duty-bearers responsible for action for each recommendation (or clearly clustered group of recommendations). Clear prioritization and/or classification of recommendations to support use.	Yes	The parties responsible for implementing recommendations are clearly assigned for each point made in the Recommendations section.
SECTION H:	REPORT STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION (weight 5%)	93%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 18.	Does the evaluation report include all relevant information?		
	i Opening pages include: Name of evaluated object, timeframe of the evaluation, date of report, location of evaluated object, names and/or organization(s) of the evaluator(s), name of organization commissioning the evaluation, table of contents -including, as relevant, tables, graphs, figures, annexes-; list of acronyms/abbreviations, page numbers.	Yes	All required information for the opening pages is present.
	ii Annexes include, if not in report body: terms of reference, evaluation matrix, list of interviewees, results chain/ToC/logical framework, list of site visits, data collection instruments (such as survey or interview questionnaires), list of documentary evidence. Other appropriate annexes could include: additional details on methodology, results chain, information about the evaluator(s).	Partially	A list of interviewees is not included in the Annex and it is unclear whether the data collection respondents were participants from focus groups or interviews.
Question 19.	Is the report logically structured?		
	i Structure is easy to identify and navigate (for instance, with numbered sections, clear titles and sub-titles, well formatted).	Yes	The structure is clear and easy to navigate.
	ii Structure accords to UNICEF guidelines for evaluation reports: context, purpose and methodology would normally precede findings, which would normally be followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.	Yes	The structure accords to UNICEF guidelines for evaluation reports.
Question 20.	Is the report well presented?		
	i Report is of reasonable length; it does not exceed number of pages that may be specified in ToR.	Yes	The report is within the 60-page limit set in the ToR.
	ii Report is easy to understand (written in accessible way for intended audience) and generally free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.	Yes	The report is generally free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.
	iii Frequent use of visual aids (such as infographics, maps, tables, figures, photos) to convey key information. These are clearly presented, labeled, and referenced in text.	Yes	Many tables are included in the report to synthesize and better understand key ideas.
SECTION I:	EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 10%)	86%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 21.	Did the evaluation design and style consider incorporation of the UN and UNICEF's commitment to a human rights-based approach to programming, to gender equality, and to equity?		
	i Reference and use of rights-based framework, and/or CRC, and/or CCC, and/or CEDAW and/or other rights related benchmarks in the design of the evaluation.	Yes	The evaluation objectives, questions and framework are informed by the CRC and this is explicitly mentioned in the report.

	ii Clear description of the level of participation of key rights holders and duty bearers in the conduct of the evaluation (for example, a reference group is established, stakeholders are involved as informants or in data gathering).	Partially	Participation of rights holders was limited in the evaluation due to factors related to the ongoing pandemic and ethical considerations around remote interviewing. Evaluators state that some progress has been made with reference groups and that there have been delays, but more detail about the composition of the reference group and what their involvement entailed during the evaluation period would be useful.
	iii Language is empowering and inclusive, avoiding gender, heterosexual, age, cultural and religious bias, among others; use terminology of rights holders and duty bearers; data is disaggregated by marginalized group; differential results are assessed (distribution of results across different groups).	Partially	Report is not biased but does not use the language of rights holders and duty bearers. As the evaluators mention, the sample size was too small to be meaningfully disaggregated by gender or marginalized group.
	iv Evaluation assesses the extent to which the implementation of the intervention addresses child rights and Leave No-one Behind (gender and other excluded and marginalized groups). It is disability inclusive.	Yes	The evaluation does discuss the particular vulnerabilities facing Roma families and children with disabilities and how they would benefit from more a specialized focus in ongoing initiatives related to family services and support.
Question 22.	Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators? (Note: this question will be rated according to UN SWAP standards)	9	
	i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.	Fully integrated	The evaluation considered gender across each program category (design, delivery, results), noting where it was HRGE was lacking within the program's monitoring framework. Gender is taken into consideration through questions and indicators across the entire evaluation matrix, structured around OECD/DAC criteria.
	ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.	Fully integrated	Evaluators note that it was not possible to disaggregate findings by gender or to explore equity fully because so few parents and young people were included in the evaluation due to the limitations around COVID-19. Ethical protocols are detailed in Annex 8 and confidentiality, anonymity and data protection measures are thoroughly described. Additionally, Annex 8 also includes a very helpful table that clearly specifies how gender was taken into account in all aspects of the evaluation.
	iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.	Fully integrated	The findings reflect a gender analysis, noting that while gender is recognized in some program planning documents, the program was gender-responsive rather than gender-transformative (not seeking to address the causes of inequity). Evaluators note that equity was considered more deeply during program delivery than gender, with details provided on P. 38-40. Recommendations 4 includes HRGE considerations.

SWAP Rating Guidance

i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.

- a. Does the evaluation assess whether sufficient information was collected during the implementation period on specific result indicators to measure progress on human rights and gender equality results?
- b. Does the evaluation include an objective specific to assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives?
- c. Was a standalone criterion on gender and/or human rights included in the evaluation framework or mainstreamed into other evaluation criteria?
- d. Is there a dedicated evaluation question or sub-question regarding how GEEW was integrated into the subject of the evaluation?

ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.

- a. Does the evaluation specify how gender issues are addressed in the methodology, including: how data collection and analysis methods integrate gender considerations and ensure data collected is disaggregated by sex?
- b. Does the evaluation methodology employ a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating GEWE considerations?
- c. Are a diverse range of data sources and processes employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility?
- d. Does the evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate?
- e. Were ethical standards considered throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality?

iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

- a. Does the evaluation have a background section that includes an intersectional analysis of the specific social groups affected by the issue or spell out the relevant normative instruments or policies related to human rights and gender equality?
- b. Do the findings include data analysis that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data, where applicable?
- c. Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights and gender equality described?
- d. Does the evaluation report provide specific recommendations addressing GEWE issues, and priorities for action to improve GEWE or the intervention or future initiatives in this area?