

EVALUATION OF THE BACK TO LEARNING INITIATIVE IN SYRIA

2013 / mid-2019



Girls in School Khudr Al Issa, Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, September 2018 © UNICEF

Commissioned by UNICEF Syria Country Office

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| IDP | Internally Displaced People |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| SitRep | Situation Report |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |

Executive Summary

Background and Context

a) In September 2013, at the start of the school year, almost 4000¹ schools – or around one in five- were damaged, destroyed or sheltering internally displaced families. By 2017, this number had increased to one in three schools in Syria either damaged or destroyed². The Syrian Education System has also been severely affected by the conflict with a loss of 150,000 education personnel through crisis or inadequate capacity to adapt to the complex needs that the conflict has presented³.

b) In 2019, eight years into the conflict, Syria remains one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Years of conflict dramatically reduced access to basic social services, with 2.1 million children aged 5 to 17 years out of school and 1.3 million children at risk of dropping out⁴. School enrolment in Syria before the crisis was around 98 per cent. However, since the beginning of the crisis the situation deteriorated and over the past years the number of out of school children oscillated around two million children, with geographical differences.

c) Responding to this challenging situation UNICEF launched the Back to Learning initiative adopted from the global Back to School campaigns, focusing on *“increasing overall school enrolment by encouraging families and community members to send children back to school and keep them in school”*⁵. It was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other partners in Syria. It consisted of distribution of supplies, support to home-based self-learning programmes and public messaging. It was launched in September 2013 to increase access to education for children in the lower primary school grades (1-4) in all fourteen governorates.

d) The evaluation assesses Back to Learning, a multi-donor funded initiative implemented by UNICEF in the Syrian Arab Republic. It was commissioned by the UNICEF Syria country office and covers the period from 2013 to mid-2019. The timing of this evaluation was subject to the availability of expertise and access to information in Syria.

Objective

e) The objective of the evaluation is to provide accountability to rights holders, partners and contributors and to learn for future situations where learning faces similar restrictions. This evaluation will also document the initiative and its direction changes over time.

Subject of the Evaluation and Scope

f) The subject of the evaluation is the Back to Learning initiative, from 2013 to mid-2019. It covers all three pillars: 1) provision of education supplies, 2) community mobilization / media campaign, and 3) school rehabilitation (light). The evaluation covers the implementation in all 14 provinces.

Methodology and Limitations

g) The key evaluation criteria selected are Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability, Coverage and Coordination – a mix of development and humanitarian domains, considering the protracted crisis characterizing the Syrian context. Given the complexity of the context

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¹ UNICEF Syria Media September 2013 https://www.unicef.org/media/media_70390.html

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/media/80796/file/2019-HAC-Syria-revised-May.pdf>

⁵ Source: ToR (Annex 1)

and the circumstances under which this evaluation had to be finalized, a mix methods approach has been utilized, based on a desk review, key informants' interviews and observation.

h) The evaluation process faced several challenges and the evaluation was implemented over a duration of two years from 2017 to 2019. The evaluation team faced challenges in obtaining the required approvals to access some field locations which consequently affected data collection and verification in those areas. As access has been limited, findings, conclusions and recommendations were distilled from the triangulation of secondary and primary sources providing an indicative way forward for this initiative.

Conclusions

i) The strength of the initiative is that it brought different stakeholders together on the right of education of the Syrian children, and UNICEF managed to mobilize resources and partnerships.

j) The Back to Learning initiative provided much needed support to the education sector in terms of provision of supplies and light rehabilitation of the many crisis affected schools. Over the years management, coordination, and monitoring systems of the Back to Learning initiative have continuously improved.

k) UNICEF's position as co-lead of the education sector and its network of implementing partners has enabled efficient coordination of the initiative. However, the lack of non-government organizations (NGOs) prior to the crisis and the need to build capacity of implementing partners in combination with donor conditionalities posed numerous constraints.

l) The evaluation finds that overall, the population receives information about schooling directly from schools and the directorates of education and is aware of the benefits of education in general. Therefore, the messaging of the community mobilization and communication campaign might need to be refocused on emerging challenges such as preventing dropouts and on non-formal education.

m) The challenge of bringing children back to learning in Syria remains with the education supply side, especially the availability of schools and classrooms, teachers, and financial resources being the main challenge. Prior to the crisis, enrolment rates of public sector education were 98 percent while now, there are currently two million out of school children. In order to decrease this number and ensure every child can learn in a good quality system a system strengthening approach to enhance enrolment and retention is critical.

Lessons Learned

n) Documentation is essential, especially if there is a high staff turnover and it is a flagship intervention. It is time well invested to enhance the chances of learning systematically.

o) Monitoring the situation and relevance of the response and adjusting accordingly is essential for making sure UNICEF addresses the needs of the affected population and build strong cases for donor support.

p) Data collection is a complex exercise that requires the dedicated support of data / survey / sampling experts to ensure data is of good quality and interpreted and analysed correctly.

q) The strategy for improving enrolment and retention has to take into consideration the environment and analyse bottlenecks on both the education demand and supply sides as well as the capacity of partners.

Key Findings

Key finding 1

r) The Back to Learning initiative is in line with national priorities, international commitments and the priority of the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF. Economic and security reasons are among the key barriers to reach school. Therefore, the overall initiative and in particular the rehabilitation and provision of supplies were relevant and appropriate.

Key finding 2

s) The education section led systematizing of the intervention has improved relevance within the available political space.

Key finding 3

t) The community mobilization and media campaign could have been more adapted to the Syria context with regards to possible social barriers to education.

Key Finding 4

u) The monitoring system was strengthened and integrated over time especially at the activity and output levels.

Key Finding 5

v) Coordination between different departments and integration of monitoring and analysis has improved over the years and especially with the arrival of the information management officer.

Key Finding 6

w) The funding structure and conditionalities led to a focus on implementing the initiative through NGOs which required significant capacity building and has not always been the most cost-efficient delivery method

Key Finding 7

x) Output level results have been largely achieved.

Key Finding 8

y) While sustainability or connectedness has been achieved to some degree the change of the circumstances and limited availability of resources in the formal and non-formal sector point to the question of sustainability of the current intervention not being of a high priority.

Key Finding 9

z) UNICEF managed to reach children in identified vulnerable areas and supports them to go back to school.

Key Finding 10:

aa) External coordination has been successful with the internal coordination having scope to improve to harvest synergies between sections and partners.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

bb) Document and streamline the Back to Learning initiative. It should include a problem tree, a strength weaknesses opportunities and threats analysis, theory of change, changed line of authorities, political landscape and donor approaches as well as a strategy for increasing enrolment and retention

that is costed and identifies clear deliverables⁶. It could consider the option to keep the Back to Learning initiative as a separate “programme” versus making it a pillar of a more articulated effort to tackle out of school children. Roles and responsibilities within the office need to be clearly covered.

Key Recommendation 2

cc) Expand the monitoring to include unit cost of different implementing arrangements and advocate with donors to use the most cost-efficient method of delivery.

Key Recommendation 3

dd) Advocate for longer term funding, to finance UNICEF programme (and report as per UNICEF reporting system) and use short term funds for short-term interventions.

Key Recommendation 4

ee) Document the capacity of the implementing partners, strengthen their capacities and document the improvement in their performance and in the achievement of the expected results; try economies of scale by reflecting on a critical mass to be reached by the implementing partners and by entrusting them a higher budget (to increase also coverage) for a longer period of time (changes take time).

Key Recommendation 5

ff) Document lessons learned on Back to Learning at the end of each year / academic year.

Key Recommendation 6

gg) Design a gender and age disaggregated monitoring system to monitor progress and to respond to the reporting needs identified.

Key recommendation 7

hh) During the discussion about a follow up programme explicitly include the discussion on how the initiative will be sustained, the exit strategy and who in the longer term will finance the different components.

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⁶ With results indicators to be monitored regularly, in order to monitor the contribution of the Back to Learning initiative (progress and success) to the reduction of the out of school children (enrolment, retention, learning), and considering education needs of children and effective, integrated, child centred programming (versus silos approaches such as supply/communication/rehabilitation

Background of the intervention

Context

1. Since the crisis started in 2011 the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic remains unstable. Demonstrations and violent discontent spread across Syria with the size and intensity of protests fluctuating. The ongoing crisis and continued unrest and economic decline worsened the humanitarian crisis, necessitating high levels of international assistance. The government's efforts to address unrest and armed opposition activity led to extended clashes and eventually a crisis between government forces, their allies, and oppositionists; soon regional and global powers intervened in the crisis.

2. Even in 2019 the Syrian refugee crisis remains the largest displacement crisis in the world, and about 11.7 million people (out of a population of less than 20 million) remain in need inside Syria out of which about 5 million are children; the number of registered Syrian refugees are over 5.6 million, more than 2.5 of which are children [situation report](#).

3. In 2018 the World Bank reclassified Syria from [Lower-Middle Income to Low Income country](#). Syria's economy has deeply deteriorated since the ongoing crisis started in 2011. The government has struggled to fully address the effects of international sanctions, widespread infrastructure damage, diminished domestic consumption and production, reduced subsidies, and high inflation, which have caused deteriorating foreign exchange reserves, rising budget and trade deficits, a decreasing value of the Syrian pound, and falling household purchasing power. The economic activity remains depressed and GDP fell.

Education in the Syrian Arab Republic

4. Before the crisis, Syria had a developed education system, with nearly 22,000 schools nationwide and an enrolment rate of around 98 per cent⁷. It was so well recognized that engineers, nurses and other professions educated in Syria were highly regarded in Europe and around the world.

5. More than eight years after the starting of the crisis, with Education budgets decreasing, many schools used by internally displaced persons, overstraining of school facilities, and attacks on schools, many of these schools are dysfunctional or inadequate. It is estimated that one in three schools are damaged or destroyed, while around 75 per cent of school age children are in school ([Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019 p. 61](#)).

6. The education system was affected by the crisis and saw the gradual deterioration of education services of a thus far fully resilient education system, the fact that access to education became more and more dangerous and 'unsafe' (with attacks on schools increasing), thousands of teachers leaving the country, and education supplies becoming scarce- Government of Syria continued and continues to pay education salaries both in government controlled areas and areas outside of the control of the Government of Syria).

7. It is estimated that about half of teachers and education personnel have left the education system⁸ (, and the curriculum changed requiring retraining should the teachers return.

8. In this situation UNICEF decided to move from serving an existing education system to a humanitarian education service provider and provide emergency aid to areas controlled by diverse factions to prevent the loss of a generation and to protect the future of the children affected by the

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⁷ The national GER (Gross Enrolment Rate) of Syrian children in preschool and basic education levels was 104 percent one of the highest GER in the region. (Humanitarian Needs Overview 2015, p.29). The figure is not available disaggregated by gender

⁸ <https://www.nolostgeneration.org/page/education>

crisis. The main initial component was a large-scale supply and delivery operations in a crisis environment.

9. This operation faced a variety of challenges such as access not being guaranteed, permission to travel difficult to obtain, movement of international being restricted, visas for international experts and staff turn-over made the delivery challenging. Generation of data and research was usually highly restricted initially adding to the challenges of planning and prioritization in a very changeable and unpredictable environment. Donor funding was heavily conditioned, short-term in nature, with education partners frequently requiring special government approvals that could not be speedily secured.

Back to Learning initiative

10. Given the turbulences of the crisis, the unpredictability of access, the short-termed funding, the geographical redlines and restrictions of donors, and mindful that education interventions had to be coordinated with diverse authorities and aligned with authority demands, UNICEF had limited space to manoeuvre. The initial Back to Learning programs was therefore short term and did not have a comprehensive planning or theory of change. It had to make use of opportunities to communicate and network as they became accessible in different parts of the country, and take advantage of pre-established partnerships.

11. Back to Learning was aligned with and a practical response - although partial - to the diagnostic of the education section in Syria which resulted from a workshop held by Ministry of Education and UNICEF at the end of August 2013, with the participation of the governorates, NGOs and other UN agencies. Some of the key challenges identified at that workshop included: unsafe and uncondusive learning environments, highlighting the need for construction and rehabilitation of schools (many damaged or used as shelter), and the lack of teaching and learning materials – so the key elements of the Back to Learning initiative (awareness campaign and supplies distribution, plus school rehabilitation) had been identified at a very early stage (together with other activities for promoting access, quality and better learning environment). The interventions and strategies were integrated into the sector's strategic response plan. The participants also reached an agreement on scaling up of on-going initiatives such as self-learning and the introduction of a curriculum on accelerated learning for out-of-school children – what later would have been known as self-learning programme / non-formal education and curriculum B (outside of the scope of this evaluation).

12. The Back to Learning initiative started in September 2013, when the education section of the UNICEF country office launched the first nationwide Back to Learning campaign. This initiative was designed to increase access to education for children in the lower primary school grades (grades 1-4) in all 14 governorates through a combination of community mobilization and provision of education supplies.

13. Back to Learning was integrated as a component into larger projects funded by various donors, rather than a stand-alone initiative / project. The first, big project funded by a donor and which included Back to Learning as a component has been the *“Creating a Path to Early Recovery for Education in Syria”*, financed from the European Union, from mid-2013 to early 2016.

14. UNICEF Syria country office identified the need to work with communities (on the demand side of access to education), so in 2015 the Communication for Development section was created in Damascus, and it started to support the work at community level, and strengthened this pillar of Back to Learning.

15. In 2013 key humanitarian donors initiated the No Lost Generation initiative⁹, a concerted effort by donors, UN agencies, NGOs and governments to ensure that children and young people affected by the crises in Syria and Iraq had access to education, protection and opportunities to engage positively in their community and society. The initiative is comprised of programming and advocacy under three pillars: Education, Child Protection and Adolescents and Youth. From 2013 onwards Back to Learning has been a component of larger education and / or emergency programmes, funded by different donors, for different periods of time and in different areas of the country under the No Lost Generation initiative.

16. The implementation modalities varied across time and space, mostly community mobilization was done through partnerships with NGOs and INGOs (who occasionally engaged also in schools' rehabilitation), the media campaigns were implemented through contracts with service providers (once the messages were agreed with the Ministry of Education), while supplies distribution and the bulk of school rehabilitation was done in coordination with the Ministry of Education¹⁰. The coordination was established through the annual work planning that included detailed descriptions of which activities would be conducted in which locations and were signed off by the Ministry of Education.

17. The mapping of the needs was centralized and then supplies distributions were sent from UNICEF Country Office to the directorates of education and in some instances down to school level.

18. Since its start in 2013 until 2017 Back to Learning was a key component of the Education programme (including in terms of budget), then the section started to give more focus to system strengthening.

19. The stakeholders of the initiative are the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and the other education sectors actors, NGOs and the donor community; UNICEF is the main stakeholder supporting the Back to Learning, with funds coming from several donors such as Canada, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

20. The definition of Back to Learning, though, is not univocal¹¹, and often even the textbooks and teaching / learning materials distribution is referred to as being part of Back to Learning. The Back to Learning initiative has three pillars / components:

- Provision of education supplies,
- Community mobilization / media campaign, and
- School rehabilitation (mainly light).

21. Over time the situation has evolved and the Back to Learning initiative had different management arrangements. It moved from a more supply driven approach to a more structured approach. The components were mostly stable over time

- **provision of education supplies** – *(to mitigate the worsening economic situation of families not being able to provide for all supplies, as well as to enable teacher to conduct lessons)* The provision of the school bags – with their stationery content – has been the major component of the Back to Learning initiative at its early stage. It is estimated that from 2013 to 2016, in

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⁹ <https://www.nolostgeneration.org>

¹⁰ But not DCT (direct cash transfer) were signed with Ministry of Education

¹¹ Reference to the activities linked to Back to Learning and to its achievement are found in most donor reports (including in the framework of No Lost Generation) and situation reports.

the framework of the Back to Learning initiative, around one million school supplies have been distributed to Syrian children, for a value of around USD 10 million every year. In 2017 the number of school supplies decreased to 800.000 and in 2018 to 200.000 and mainly in the framework of the Non-Formal Education strategy. Initially the bags were imported, while later a decision was taken to locally purchase the bags, aiming at reducing the cost and improve the quality. The main partner in the distribution of the school supplies, at least until 2017, has been the Ministry of Education.

- Efforts have been made to distribute the school supplies to the children most in need, including by delivering them to hard-to-reach and insecure areas through convoys and airplanes' dropping.

For equity and practicality, UNICEF and partners had agreed upon the following target selection criteria for the Back to Learning education supply assistance.¹²

Selection criteria for target **schools**:

- Functioning schools in accessible areas
- Schools with relatively larger populations of internally displaced children (more than 20 internally displaced children per school)

Selection criteria for target **beneficiaries**:

- All the first graders enrolled in the selected target schools
- The upper graders enrolled in the selected target schools IF the quantity of bags exceeds the number of the first graders.

- **Community mobilization / media campaign** – *(initially to raise awareness about the right to education, later to address gaps in knowledge on how to best achieve education)* The media campaign has been an essential component of the Back to Learning initiative from the very beginning. Billboards, posters and flyers have been prepared and installed / distributed for the first campaign in 2013. In the following years the campaign became more sophisticated, adding several medias such as radio, tv and social media. The messages have been agreed with Ministry of Education, focusing on the right to education, on the importance to go to school (addressed to children not in school and their families) and on the importance to accept new students (addressed to teachers and households in the communities hosting big numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)). In the last campaign messages about the importance to include children with disabilities have been added. From 2015 to 2016, Communication for Development started to associate a small number of NGOs (mainly local) for door-to-door campaigns for penetrating physically among communities identified to host large numbers of out of school children. Using mainly volunteers, the NGOs had the duty to visit all the households of the targeted area and find out whether there were school age children in the family, whether they were going to school, and if they were not going find out why.¹³ The NGO implementing partners are responsible for the identification of beneficiaries who will then be invited to go to the closer school and find out how to register children to school, including those who do not have previous years records and / or no documentation.

The community outreach has over time become more sophisticated including activities such as help desks, open school days, and meeting with community leaders.

UNICEF, along with education sector partners, launched the nationwide Back to Learning campaign in September 2013¹⁴ which aimed to improve education enrolment and attendance for internally displaced children through education supply distributions in all 14 governorates. Based on the evidential data collected from the Ministry of Education, UNICEF generated the

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¹² Source: Back to Learning 2016/17 (internal UNICEF document)

¹³ The door-to-door modality is used also by other education programmes focusing mainly on non-formal education, and the education section has been working on assuring to every community access to information to all leaning options available, both formal and non-formal.

¹⁴ Source: Back to Learning 2013/14 (internal UNICEF document)

proportion of registered children per district and selected target districts as per the following criteria:

- Scale of the internally displaced students
- Accessibility
- Areas affected by the crisis

Based on the criteria, UNICEF developed the district-level supply distribution plan covering more than 80 priority districts in all 14 governorates.

- **School rehabilitation (light)** – *(to address the lack of adequate school infrastructure)* The crisis in Syria brought schools destruction, damage or their use as shelter. Soon it became evident that apart from encouraging school demand, the capacity of the school system to offer spaces for learning had to be supported. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to light rehabilitate schools or installed prefabricated classrooms, and also upgraded the Water and Sanitation Health (WASH) facilities, ensuring facilities were gender segregated and paying special attention to the needs of adolescent girls and allow them to go to school also during their menstruations (convergent education and WASH strategies).

Below, the criteria for the selection of schools for rehabilitation or prefabricates' installation.¹⁵

- Affected by crises.
- Schools in Safe areas (or at least no clashes are going on).
- Level of damage is only need light rehabilitation (no construction elements damage).
- Located in area with large concentration of IDPs.
- Crowded Classrooms.
- Schools with Double shift.
- Schools was IDP shelters.
- Schools which located in unsafe areas and became safe areas.
- Schools in Rural area (this year will take in consideration rural area because we missed them during the crises)
- Schools Which adopting curriculum B
- Provide prefabricated classrooms for destroyed schools as quick solution.
- Consistence with number of schools in each governorate

22. The list of targeted schools is proposed by Ministry of Education, in alignment with the selection criteria originally agreed in the annual work plans. The work was implemented using three different modalities¹⁶:

- **Through Ministry of Education**¹⁷: contributing in capacity strengthening of local institutions: that school building department in all governorates which have the technical human resources and system already in place with experience for more than 40 years. The assessment and monitoring will be planned and undertaken by technical engineers in line with the education sector minimum standards for school rehabilitation and prefabricated classrooms within the scope of work. The payment will be done directly to the contractors against invoices from Ministry of Education for the implementing contractors which Ministry of Education have a contract with them.
- **Through NGO / INGO**: via programme coordination agreements / small scale funding agreements to conduct a comprehensive intervention and to plan for sustainable solutions and community participation. Local NGOs have a lack of experience in school rehabilitation and WASH in School. UNICEF to provide capacity building for local NGOs.

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¹⁵ Source: UNICEF 2017 Rehabilitation strategic plan

¹⁶ Source: UNICEF 2017 Rehabilitation strategic plan

¹⁷ Implementing through MoE was a practice at the beginning which has been discontinued. Currently, UNICEF implement through independent partners.

- **Through Private Company / Contractors:** UNICEF to sign an institutional contract with local company or contractor to implement the work. In order to expedite the implementation process, private sector should be considered as a strategic solution in case the capacity and the number of the NGO, INGO is limited, and the scope of work is very big.

23. UNICEF relied mainly on inter-agency collaboration and mechanisms for monitoring. The Humanitarian Needs Overview estimates the number of people in need and the severity scale at the sub-district level against a range of criteria including crisis intensity, displacement trends and sector specific criteria – this needs-based vulnerability mapping approach is then reflected in the severity ranking methodology of the humanitarian response plan.

24. In particular, for the education programme, the identification and prioritization of interventions and site locations (schools), is largely determined by the following programmatic processes: first, through three types of analysis: a) government managed school surveys which feed the education statistical report (which, however, seems to take long to be compiled), b) the inter-agency REACH survey, and c) rapid assessments undertaken largely through the Back to Learning Campaign, using questionnaires administered during door-to-door visits); second, through the highly consultative sector coordination and planning process for the humanitarian response plan, which is also based on NGOs reports and partners mapping, to avoid duplication and ensure effectiveness. The processes are guided by the following criteria¹⁸:

- The availability of partners in the identified area.
- Priority is given to locations in newly, safe and populated accessible areas.
- Schools located in areas with high numbers of out of school children, concentration of returnees and links to high severity scale.
- Level of school infrastructures damage (UNICEF focuses on light rehabilitation only).
- Schools with crowded classrooms, especially schools with double shifts
- Schools which are also adopting curriculum B.
- Locations with opportunity for programmatic convergence in teacher education, ECE, etc.

25. Field monitoring systems were put in place by UNICEF to support management and accountability functions in Syria. They were aimed to maintain neutrality and impartiality, and allow triangulation, monitoring was conducted through three modalities: through Implementing Partners, UNICEF staff and third-party monitors.

26. The approach of Back to Learning has been adopted over time with the more supply driven approach being gradually replaced by a more structured approach as mentioned above.

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

27. The purpose of the evaluation was to serve both an accountability function (summative) and a learning function (formative). The expectations were that the evaluation would have provided evidence for decision-makers regarding the extent to which the Back to Learning initiative contributed to a change in the number of children enrolled in school and recommendations regarding any suggested adjustments or new approaches for the Back to Learning initiative. It must be emphasized again that adjustments to the approach have been made already in 2017 / 2018, precisely when the evaluation was launched, and the report was expected. The main intended users of the evaluation had been identified in the managers and staff in the UNICEF Syria Country Office; managers and advisors in the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, Headquarters and country offices in

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¹⁸ Source: 'Prioritisation', UNICEF document

humanitarian emergencies; UNICEF partners including national governmental and non-governmental organizations, other education sector partners, donors and other UN Agencies.

28. More specifically the evaluation aims to:

- Assess the key programme interventions of the various components of the Back to Learning initiative, including the collaboration between different sections and teams in the UNICEF Syria country office (central office and field offices, Supply and Logistics Team, Communication for Development Team), and the collaboration with various national and international partners across Syria as well as the interaction with beneficiaries.
- Identify good practices, challenges faced, and lessons learned from the Back to Learning initiative.
- Provide recommendations on the future scope and approach of the Back to Learning initiative, including any suggested adjustments or new approaches as well as specific recommendations for similar initiatives in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.

29. The thematic scope of the evaluation rests on Back to Learning's three pillars: provision of school supplies, media campaign and community mobilization, and support for the rehabilitation of schools. Geographically, the Back to Learning initiative covered all the 14 Syrian governorates; primary data, however, have been collected only in five governorates: Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Aleppo and Tartous. In terms of duration, the evaluation covers from 2013 to mid-2019.

30. The evaluation was planned in 2017, when the UNICEF education section in Damascus started to reflect on the importance to work on system strengthening, considering the protracted crisis context. A shift, in fact, happened at that time, with UNICEF starting to reflect more on systems strengthening and quality of education.

Evaluation Methodology

31. The methodology is based on the questions asked in the terms of reference (see Annex 1). The key evaluation criteria selected are Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability, Coverage and Coordination – a mix of development and humanitarian domains, considering the protracted crisis characterizing the Syrian context. Given the context Impact and Sustainability could have been replaced by Resilience and Connectedness. The evaluation team has taken notice of this and answered the questions under Impact and Sustainability accordingly.

32. The team has aimed at answering all evaluation questions in the relevant section. However, the structure is not one of one question one answer to allow a better flow of the arguments and the elaboration of some of the items at a higher level.

33. According to the terms of reference, multiple data sources and data collection methods were used in the evaluation including, desk review, observation, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Throughout the evaluation process, opinions on how the initiative can move forward were sought from the main actors; the debriefing was a key moment for discussing the preliminary findings and recommendations; and finally, there has been a formal commenting process, to give the chance to all stakeholders to contribute to the report, including the recommendations. Recommendations are necessarily forward looking, as it can only be recommended what the programme should consider doing as a way forward

34. The report relies on an extended desk review of the documentation and information available, including information collected by the Afkar-Triangle team of consultants between August and September 2018, and on a two week visit to Damascus (30th of June to 11th of July 2019) and additional key informant interviews (see annex 2).

Desk Review:

35. The desk review focused on the Back to Learning concept notes and workplans, on the Humanitarian Needs Overviews, on the situation reports, on the donor reports, on the available project documents and programme coordination agreements. Focus group discussions and Key informant interviews conducted at the earlier stage between August and September 2018 (translated into English) were reanalysed.

Sampling Strategy:

36. The evaluation's sampling strategy developed by Afkar-Triangle has been based on preliminary discussions with UNICEF staff concerning the composition of schools and databases. This data collection focussed on parents and ensured that both parents of children benefitting as well as parents not benefitting had a voice. Some attention was given to include groups of vulnerable parents. After several discussions, it was decided that a purposive sampling approach would have been adopted to conduct focus group discussions and the online survey. Similarly, they adopted a purposive snowball sampling method for key informant interviews (the sampling is attached in Annex 7).

37. In the country visit on in July 2019 only selected key informants have been interviewed, mainly from UNICEF Country Office, so there has been no need for a sampling strategy.

38. During the evaluation the assumptions of the programme have been questioned, and joined reflections done during the key informant interviews.

39. Essentially, in order to finalize the analysis and thus the report, the attempt has been to triangulate the available written sources with the interviews and with observation when in Damascus. The analysis is necessarily qualitative, based on the evidence found.

Evaluation Limitations

40. Given challenges in available capacity, visa issues, the need for authorization, change in data collection company and quality concerns the evaluation process has been very long with the approach of the education section shifting in duration of the evaluation. Consequently, the delivery models of the Back to Learning has changed over time and the original main purpose of the evaluation has changed as well. This report aims to address all evaluation questions and adopts to the changed situation as much as possible. The security situation and the brevity of the visit did not allow for fieldwork visits during the 2019 part of the evaluation and during the initial data collection only areas under control of Government were accessible to the data collectors.

41. The documentation of the initiative, its definition, its role in the education and humanitarian programme, were not clearly articulated in the documents available to the evaluators. Gaps in documentation were mitigated to the extent possible through interviews with staff that has been involved in the programme for long durations.

42. Given the situation in Syria meta data on school enrolment are challenging to analyse and the attribution of results to the (relatively small) Back to Learning initiative is unreliable.

43. Financial data on UNICEF procedures such as the harmonized approach to cash transfers and third-party monitoring was available, however, given the lack of information on alternatives it was challenging to assess how efficient financial and risk management of the Back to Learning initiative has been.

44. Given the sensitive situation in Syria it was decided not to interview children for the evaluation but to focus on parents input instead.

45. To improve the data quality of the initially collected survey data additional analysis was conducted.

46. A theory of change for Back to Learning was not available. Given the changes over time it did not seem appropriate to develop one at the last stage of the evaluation. Therefore, the intervention logic as mentioned in the documentation serves as a basis for the analysis.

47. Sustainability / connectedness could be questioned in the context¹⁹ of Syria. The analysis is further complicated by the fact that both humanitarian / emergency and development funds are used for financing the initiative.

Child Rights, Equity and Gender

48. This evaluation has been designed and implemented taking into consideration the main rights-based framework such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

49. Both duty bearers (UNICEF staff, the education sector, are representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Implementing Partners and of the donors) and rights holders have been interviewed for this evaluation. Attention was given to ensure men, women, and vulnerable populations such as IDP parents, parents living in vulnerable host communities and parents of school-age children not enrolled in any learning programme were engaged.

50. The evidence available and analysed has been disaggregated in this report, as much as possible, by gender, age, disability, and social group.

Ethical considerations

51. This evaluation has been undertaken with integrity and honesty, with independence and impartiality, guided by the UNEG ethical standards for evaluation and compliant with the conduct prescribed by and expected from UNICEF and OECD development assistance committee. All the evaluators involved have abided to their obligations of credibility and accountability, and conflicts of interests have been consciously avoided.

52. The report is based on available data and observations. Obligations to ethical safeguards for participants have been respected – respect for dignity and diversity, right to self-determination, fair representation, compliance with codes for vulnerable groups, avoidance of harm. The consultation with the stakeholders has been transparent, the rights of the respondents and confidentiality have been respected. The inception report, redacted by the Afkar-Triangle team of consultants before engaging in the data collection phase, went through an ethical clearance process.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance / Appropriateness

53. The education needs of children in the Syria Arab Republic have changed significantly over time. The well-established education system came under serious strain and the number of out of school children increased significantly.

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¹⁹ Resilience and/or earlier recovery might be more appropriate. Or connectedness, recommended for humanitarian evaluations (see www.alnap.org). However, initially the Back to Learning initiative was more properly a response to an emergency situation, and later has been more integrated in a broader attempt to support learning in the country.

54. The government has very limited financial resources to invest in the education sector, and the large majority of the donors are not ready to support the public education system as they do not wish to provide support to institutions owned by the Syrian government, opting rather for direct support to children or to the communities. Education remained a priority for government, however government was not able to dedicate adequate resources to ensure a sufficient number of schools are open and operating to provide for all children.

55. UNICEF has a clear mandate and programmatic focus on education and is one of the main actors in the education sector on the ground in Syria, and the co-lead (together with the government) of the education working group.

56. The needs in terms of access to (and quality of) education have been and continue to be very large in Syria, considering that the country went from a pre-crisis situation where only two per cent of school age children were out of school, to a situation where around two million of children have been and are out of school. The various components of the Back to Learning initiative (provision of school supplies, community mobilization / media campaign and support for the rehabilitation of schools) have been appropriate and proportionate to needs to different extents, and at different moments in time in the past five years.

57. Notwithstanding the name of the initiative, the Back to Learning has been mainly an outreach effort for promoting enrolment (in its supply distribution and community mobilization components – while the school rehabilitation is more an access-type intervention) of children in public schools. UNICEF has been considering a resilience-based approach through community engagement as part of other education programmes, focusing mainly on non-formal education.

58. During the crisis supplies became scarce and the reaction of the Back to Learning initiative was mainly to this situation to avoid the lack of supplies would become a reason for children not attending school. Therefore, at the beginning of the emergency, with the whole country in crisis, the first type of support from UNICEF directly to the children in need has been in the form of supply of school bags and stationary (among other supplies as well), considering the drop in purchasing power of households and also as a mean to encourage children and families to continue to believe on the importance of education. This assumption of the lack of school supplies preventing children to attend school had not been verified during the first phase of the Back to Learning initiative. The Syria country office management has recognized that school supplies are not necessarily linked to learning outcomes and is therefore reconsidering the component.

59. From the data collected it is clear that economic and security concerns do rank high in the factors that affect the ability of children to attend school. Therefore, support in school supplies does to some degree address the key concerns of families.

60. Then it became evident that schools needed to be rehabilitated in order to welcome back pupils, hence the school rehabilitation pillar. In 2015 the Syria country office created the Communication for Development section, in charge of the Back to Learning media campaign and the community mobilization. The messaging in the campaigns started with generic messages and limited door to door outreach as there were no experienced partners established in the Syria context. Over time the messaging has been improved as the campaigns assessed the effectiveness of the messaging in the context. There has however not been a reduction of the out of school children with this number oscillating around two million children.

61. Syria country office in 2017 reflected on the appropriateness of Back to Learning and shifted from a supply-centred response towards a more system strengthening approach, with an emphasis on an organic role of community mobilization within the education section strategy within the limits of

donor conditionalities. The office recognized the need to transition from an emergency response towards supporting a protracted crisis. While the Ministry of Education is the main duty bearer funding for Back to Learning are conditional and could not be used for direct government support. The evaluation confirmed the appropriateness of the approach of the Syria country office as lack of awareness of the benefits of education in parents or lack of willingness to send children to school do not seem to be the main challenge in bringing children back to school. The demand for schooling overall has been far greater than the opportunities provided for education. Schools were running at multiple shifts and in some areas no schools were available within easy reach for children.

62. Given the long duration of the crisis new groups of children that require different types of services have manifested itself, such as long-term dropouts, and children in danger of dropping out.

63. The reorganization of the Back to Learning initiative in 2017 as well as the constant assessment of the results have led to a useful redirection of the initiative. However, the long-term emergency and high-pressure environment prevented the systematic documentation of the changed approach and the streamlining of the management of the initiative that is still managed across departments.

64. The existing concept note (dating 2013) does not contain specific equity nor gender considerations. From existing documentation, it does not seem that gender equality and empowerment of women was part of the objectives or strategies of the Back to Learning initiative. Especially, in the later phases there could have been a scope to differentiate the different intra family roles and differentiate the communication, rehabilitation, and provision of supplies by sex. Likewise, different strategies might have been needed for younger children versus adolescents (if target was actually the 6-15 years old), as they might experience different barriers, linked to age.

65. Over time, Back to Learning became a Ministry of Education priority, while parents continued to function under the expectation that the crisis would eventually abate and that things would turn back to normal and as they used to be before the crisis. As a result, there was more need to deliver supplies and keep schools functioning, than to urge parents to send their children back to school, especially because Syrians have always appreciated the value of education and always wanted their children to be educated. As child safety and security deteriorated, schools became more and more dysfunctional, as education governance became ineffective and social and economic constraints exhausted families and communities, it made sense to launch Back to Learning campaigns.

66. School rehabilitation has been always important to attract children to access education, and hence has been included from the beginning. At the same time, it made sense to use partner agencies operating in geographically limited areas to send Back to Learning messages through community networks which continued to function despite the crisis, and with which UNICEF and partner agencies had already established a relationship. Most donors do not have diplomatic relations with the Syrian Government and do not intend to support it with the strengthening of the school system – while at the same time dedicate important financial resources to benefit directly communities to promote children learning and reduce missing out education.

Key finding 1

67. The Back to Learning initiative is in line with national priorities, international commitments and the priority of the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF. Economic and security reasons are among the key barriers to reach school. Therefore, the overall initiative and in particular the rehabilitation and provision of supplies were relevant and appropriate.

Key finding 2

68. The education section led systematizing of the intervention has improved relevance within the available political space.

Key finding 3

69. The community mobilization and media campaign could have been more adapted to the Syria context with regards to possible social barriers to education.

Recommendation 1

70. Document and streamline the Back to Learning initiative. It should include a problem tree, a strength weaknesses opportunities and threats analysis, theory of change, changed line of authorities, political landscape and donor approaches as well as a strategy for increasing enrolment and retention that is costed and identifies clear deliverables²⁰. It could consider the option to keep the Back to Learning initiative as a separate “programme” versus making it a pillar of a more articulated effort to tackle out of school children. Roles and responsibilities within the office need to be clearly covered.

Efficiency

71. The Back to Learning initiative has been complex with multiple sources of funding, multiple implementation modalities (contracts with services providers, memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education, programme coordination agreements with NGOs). Syria is also still an emergency setting, where needs are high and funds abundant and the imperative was and is to deliver.

72. At the beginning of the response the focus has been on supply procurement and distribution. UNICEF worked in coordination with the Ministry of Education for assuring as much as possible delivery on time where most needed. When NGOs started to be involved, they needed strengthening capacities²¹ as pre crisis not many NGOs were active in the Syria context. UNICEF played an active role in building partner capacities through partnership. However, particularly in the education sector NGOs are still not numerous nor strong.

73. During the hardest years of the Syrian crisis, the main risks were security related and managed according the procedures (for example, convoys for supply distribution). Financial management has been dealt with UNICEF procedures such as the harmonized approach to cash transfers and third-party monitoring.

74. UNICEF has been using several funding sources for the implementation of the Back to Learning initiative. Some of the funding was restricted through conditionalities that led to implementation through NGOs with limited capacity. This kind of business model is quite new in a country where education used to be assured by the state, where NGOs did not play a role in education undertakings, and where Ministry of Education is reluctant to accept and approve NGOs in education programming and campaigning.

75. Starting in 2015, the UNICEF education section in Damascus maintains quite detailed – but separated - databases on the delivery of education supplies, on the school rehabilitation and on community mobilization (in collaboration with the Communication for Development section). The quality of the programme monitoring – on the supply / hardware components such as school supply distribution and school rehabilitation – improved starting from 2015, when the position of information management officer was integrated in the education section organigram. The monitoring of the activities of distribution and rehabilitation is quite precise, with the localities / schools to be targeted identified together with the Ministry of Education and the localities listed, together with the details of boys and girls enrolled in the schools and thus benefiting from the two interventions. The two lists

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20 With results indicators to be monitored regularly, in order to monitor the contribution of the Back to Learning initiative (progress and success) to the reduction of the out of school children (enrolment, retention, learning), and considering education needs of children and effective, integrated, child centred programming (versus silos approaches such as supply/communication/rehabilitation

21 NGOs were created or reactivated or expanded to respond to the crisis and this is partially the nature of their limited capacity.

(again, for bag distribution and school rehabilitation) are separated, and the feedbacks for populating them come for the different partners involved – both government and NGOs. A third list establishes visits on community mobilization (visits door-to-door). The three lists are not integrated, and synergies are not monitored. As an anecdote, when the data collection company hired for data collection had to select the localities and schools for data collection, it simply asked the information management officer to provide a list with 10 schools per province, where the three activities were happening at the same time; it took around a day to the information management officer to compile such a list²². The monitoring focused on inputs and outputs while no systematic monitoring at outcome level was done.

76. The community mobilization and communication component did not benefit from a Syria specific analysis of possible social barriers to education. NGO and INGO implementing partners collected data on out of school children, that were available for planning purposes. However, these data collected were not aggregated and analysed, and the education section was not aware of them until 2019. When the education sector coordination analysed the 2018 data it flagged some issues (for example aggregability of data and lack of protocol). Messaging has been diversified, since most parents want to send their children to school. The information needs of the parents are more diverse as schools are overcrowded and many families are internally displaced²³. The factors preventing children from attending school are diverse and different in different locations. Often several factors are relevant for the same household. It is hard to assess whether specific attention has been given to the disaggregated analysis of the needs of children, parents, caregivers and families in the different parts of the country, precisely because the use of data is left to the implementing partners.

77. UNICEF's choice of partners and the adequate assessment of their capacity has been challenging initially given the historic development in Syria. Before the crisis the public education system was able to assure an enrolment rate of 98 per cent and NGOs did not play a role in providing education services. The type of NGO partners that UNICEF traditionally establishes partnerships with did not exist. Therefore, in the first years the main partnership was with the Ministry of Education. As the crisis continued local NGOs were founded and UNICEF started to work with them primarily on community mobilization, in the framework of the Back to Learning initiative. This partnership also benefitted other UNICEF programmes on education and non-formal education. One of the challenges in working with NGOs in Syria is linked to their capacity, their ability to geographically access communities and to their approval from the Government, and the fact it is possible to work only with a certain specific NGO in a certain area, and UNICEF recurs most of the time to direct selection of the existing partner in the identified geographical area.

78. In terms of procurement procedures, UNICEF used multiple options. School supplies, were initially procured internationally with the support of the supply division in Copenhagen. Already in 2013 options to procure locally was explored, however it was assessed that the cost was higher than the international procurement. From 2014, with the protracting of the crisis, the negative impact on the national economy, the increase of the price of storage space, UNICEF opted for the local purchasing of the school supplies, both bags as well as pens and stationary, which also allowed some space for the customization of the products and for a higher quality and durability. UNICEF used three options to rehabilitate schools by contracting a company, by using the Ministry of Education procedures and in the framework of agreements with NGOs. Although UNICEF technicians assessed that the most cost-

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²² And still, see Table 2 in Annex 7, where the schools are disaggregated according to the type of intervention of which they did benefit (only one, not the three at the same time).

²³ Source: focus group discussions. Parents reported that the main source of information about how to enroll children in school are the schools themselves.

efficient process is to use the Ministry of Education procedures, however some fund conditionalities meant that the country office had to focus on the other two options.

Key Finding 4

79. The monitoring system was strengthened and integrated over time especially at the activity and output levels.

Key Finding 5

80. Coordination between different departments and integration of monitoring and analysis has improved over the years and especially with the arrival of the information management officer.

Key Finding 6

81. The funding structure and conditionalities led to a focus on implementing the initiative through NGOs which required significant capacity building and has not always been the most cost-efficient delivery method

Key Recommendation 2

82. Expand the monitoring to include unit cost of different implementing arrangements and advocate with donors to use the most cost-efficient method of delivery.

Key Recommendation 3

83. Advocate for longer term funding, to finance UNICEF programme (and report as per UNICEF reporting system) and use short term funds for short-term interventions.

Key Recommendation 4

84. Document the capacity of the implementing partners, strengthen their capacities and document the improvement in their performance and in the achievement of the expected results; try economies of scale by reflecting on a critical mass to be reached by the implementing partners and by entrusting them a higher budget (to increase also coverage) for a longer period of time (changes take time).

Effectiveness

85. Both right holders (children, parents, communities and civil society) and duty bearers (Ministry of Education, school principals and teachers) have been involved in the initiative. The Ministry of Education is heavily involved in the identification of areas and schools in need for assistance, the directorate of education in the rehabilitation work, and the school principals and teachers in the distribution of supplies. The right holders are targeted by the media campaign and are actively engaged by NGOs during the door-to-door campaign (although the scale of this component is quite small). Particularly vulnerable right holders have been reached by the initiative, such as IDP children and the community hosting them and their families, and also children in hard to reach areas; in the last years a special attention has been given also to children with disabilities.

86. Along the implementation of the initiative, 'reflection' and 'implementation' notes have been produced, however with little gender considerations – for example the documents refer to children, parents, teachers as a whole, referring to boys and girls mainly when mentioning adolescents – while equity is evocated mainly when introducing the target selection criteria for supply assistance – when it is mentioned that also hard to reach schools have been targeted; also, lower primary school children are identified as right holders, but also adolescents and pre-primary school children.

87. The Back to Learning initiative was intended to contribute to increase overall school enrolment and attendance by raising awareness and encouraging families and community members to allow children to continue learning, and at the same support the Ministry of Education in the provision of

education services. UNICEF, along with education sector partners, launched the nationwide Back to Learning campaign in September 2013 with the aim *“to improve education enrolment and attendance for internally displaced children through education supply distributions in all 14 governorates”* (Back to Learning 2013/14, internal UNICEF document). The campaign was accompanied by a communication component in the form of audio-visual messages through radio and TV and social media, billboards, posters and leaflets.

88. The “learning” term used seems to imply also some quality of the education, the actual outcome of learning while in school. However, looking back at the time when the initiative was launched, the wording was rather coined in a context where going physically back to school was not an option for all children, and the initiative did not want to leave any of them behind and did advocate for and promote other options for learning.

89. With the school supplies distributed in the schools, the messaging being initially quite generic and the flow of information to parents not being fully understood with word of mouth playing a role, the attribution of effects of the initiative not easy. While enrolment overall has not increased and now the main challenges on the supply side the effects in a rapidly changing environment are hard to assess. The school supplies might have played a role in retention. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews seem to suggest that the content of the bag might not have been sufficient for a school year, was shared among brothers and sisters, and even that children might have subsequently left school for various reasons, including overcrowded classes, bullying, etc. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the crisis reduced the spending capacity of households and to provide for the children’s schooling, so the measure of school supplies distribution in the early stage of the crisis has been used for encouraging the households in their effort to keep their children in school. Moreover, anecdotally it can be said that bag distribution directly to children made them very happy; the fact that the bags are a tangible and direct support to children who are suffering because of the crisis, makes this measure one of the preferred under the humanitarian response²⁴.

90. The project documents for the door-to-door campaign to reach out households in the identified communities were very short (one to four months)²⁵. When renewed, mostly partners had to move to different areas, in order to reach more children, and were not able to assure a follow up on the children reached previously. More recently, Communication for Development developed a one-year project document template; it is not clear yet whether it will bring higher effectiveness. According to the data collected during the 2018 campaign, analysed by the education sector (mainly for internal use, because of issues with the quality and aggregability of data), there are several reasons why children do not go to school. A thorough analysis of data and its use for tailoring the response could be highly useful. Parents of children in and out of school also share that the main source of information on school enrolment are the schools themselves, even if exposed to door-to-door and/or media campaigns²⁶. The campaign has responded with more sophisticated outreach such as help desks, open school campaigns as well as involving local leaders.

91. The media campaign is a pillar of the Back to Learning initiative from its very beginning. The Ministry of Education is highly satisfied and involved in it, with the media messages agreed at central level – the messages tend to be quite similar, year after year, and quite generic. At the other ends,

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²⁴ On the other hand, it should be noted also that lately students wanted UNICEF bags without logo, because the logo might indicate poverty and lead to stigmatization. Moreover, it has been observed that schools where only children of certain grades received bags were at risk of conflict, and this was a concern for the Ministry of Education (source: UNICEF staff).

²⁵ The campaign itself would last only one month, and thus focusing solely on enrollment in school (not on retention).

²⁶ Source: FGDs.

parents and communities seem to be often not aware of the campaign, are not exposed to the messages. The main source of information seems to be the schools, for those parents who reach out to get information. For the 2016 “Back to School” media campaign there are two pieces of analysis available, a survey and an analysis. The documents contain interesting information that has only been partially used. Both analyses report that the high cost of school and learning is the main problem for parents – and since schooling is compulsory for children until grade nine in Syria, this is a delicate subject for parent to discuss. According to the surveys’ findings, “42 per cent out of the sample that has heard about the campaign mentioned that it was not that effective, most of them were not interested at all”²⁷.

92. The light rehabilitation component is generally appreciated by stakeholders, considering that one in three schools have been destroyed or damaged ([Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019 p. 61](#)), are under attack and / or used for temporary shelters – and 180,000 teachers would no longer have a school to work at ([8-facts-after-8-years-conflict-syria](#)). UNICEF has developed protocols for rehabilitation, focusing on light rehabilitation and WASH. Anecdotal evidence exists on the positive effect of a better school environment on the school going children, and on adding learning spaces (including with the provision of containers) in overcrowded schools. The children going to the schools which have been rehabilitated and repainted with bright colours appreciate the improvement in their learning environment, thus the school rehabilitation makes a direct change of the lives of children.

93. The monitoring process has been assured by UNICEF staff (officers and engineers) and the government school building department staff – considering that Ministry of Education has a system in place for implementing and monitoring rehabilitation works in all governorates.

94. The more cost-efficient option, according to UNICEF staff interviewed, would be to implement the rehabilitation activities through the Ministry of Education, however donor conditionalities might make opt for one of the other two options available.

95. As mentioned above, the supply and rehabilitation components of the initiative were delivered mainly in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, with the involvement of the Directorate of Education at governorate level (and with the schools themselves for the supplies distribution component), while the communities were mobilized mainly by NGOs which engaged in door to door campaign. It is not evident from the existing reports to what extent the three components were delivered at the same time to the communities in need for the three types of interventions, and if this indeed created a synergy and contributed to enrolment and retention.

96. The reporting system of UNICEF Syria country office and its implementing partners, consists of various types of reports. UNICEF publishes regularly achievements in the [situation reports](#) – in the context of the Back to Learning mainly in terms of number of schools rehabilitated and “Back to Learning” supplies distributed – and annually in the country office annual report. Moreover, UNICEF reports to donors, according to the donor agreements. What has been more difficult to find – and thus does not seem to be systematic or systematized – is how UNICEF implementing partners – both NGOs and government – report to UNICEF, especially in terms of narrative reports to explain how the results have been attained.

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²⁷ B2S Survey Syria, 2016

Table 1: The Back to Learning initiative in Syria - the three pillars in numbers

| | Enrolment | | PILLARS – number of children/people reached | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| | School enrolment | out of school children | # Children reached with supplies | # Children who benefited from infrastructure improvement | # people reached by the media campaign | |
| 2010 | 5.5 Million | | - | - | - | |
| 2012 | 2.9 Million | | - | - | - | |
| 2013 | - | | 760.000 | - | - | |
| 2014 | [3.6 M (SitRep 2014) 3.2 (COAR 2015)] 3.24 million children (60% of school-age population) (SitRep/COAR 2016) | 2.12 million (40%) in 2014/15 to | 2.8 M (out of the targeted 2.9) (730.000 school bags) | 15.200 | - | |
| 2015 | 3.66 million (68% of school-age population) 2015/16 (SitRep/COAR 2016) | 1.75 million (32%) in 2015/16 | 1 Million | 272.000 (incl. IDPs) [327 schools lightly rehabilitated in 11 govvs; 245 prefabricated classrooms in 10 govvs] | 6.2 Million | |
| 2016 | 3.67 million academic year 2016/17 (COAR 2017) | 1.75 million children (5-17 years old) out of school and 1.3 million at risk of dropping out | More than 3 M | rehabilitated 401 schools benefitting over 189,000 children and provided 324 prefabricated classrooms that ensured learning spaces for close to 25,000 children | 6.5 M (including door-to-door) | |
| 2017 | - | - | About 1.7 M | Rehabilitated 398 schools (5,903 classrooms) benefitting over 249,000 children and provided 217 prefabricated classrooms that ensured learning spaces for more than 12,000 children | Over six million people were reached with BACK TO LEARNING education messages (through radio, TV and mobile SMS), and some 156,000 community members, teachers and children were also reached with door-to-door visits for awareness raising | |
| 2018 | 3.6 M Over 270,000 children were enrolled through Back to Learning campaigns through door to door visits and media outreaches* | between 1.75 and 2.25 million | * school bags small school items were also provided to the children enrolled | UNICEF contributed to the functioning of 274 schools in newly accessible areas through light rehabilitation and temporary structures benefitting a total of 255,000 children | The campaign reached an estimated 10 million people through outreach activities, radio, TV, billboards and flyers, including over 122,000 door-to-door visits | |
| Note: Disaggregated data (by gender, etc) are not available | | | | | | |
| Source: country office annual reports and SitReps 2013-2018 | | | | | | |

97. The implementation of the Back to Learning initiative has been mainly together with the Government and to a limited extent with NGOs (through programme coordination agreements), but it is not evident what the capacity building activities might have been (content, duration, etc) and how the quality delivery of interventions might have been assured – especially considering the complex context, the aim to bring out of school children Back to Learning and the weak monitoring of results.

98. The partnership options available to UNICEF in the context of the Back to Learning are not many, either the government or the NGOs. In the more recent years the resources available had more conditionalities, including the requirement to be channelled through NGOs, moving the partnership away from a public sector which used to assure the education in the country, to relying on a civil society

still weakly structured, ending up by favouring short term type of intervention instead of a more organic support to system strengthening.

99. The Back to Learning initiative is implemented in centralized fashion. There is no evidence that UNICEF and partners engage with children (boys and girls) and families regarding the design and the implementation of the initiative²⁸.

100. Cross-cutting issues such as equity, gender and disability have been taken into consideration to a certain extent in the implementation of the Back to Learning initiative (see dedicated section above). Adequate attention was given to child rights, with a big emphasis on the right to education, and some attention has been put into discrimination and social exclusion, although it is not clear what difference the initiative made in the life of the children most discriminated and excluded.

101. Some attention has been put also in reaching hard to reach areas, and there is some anecdotal evidence (from interviews and reports) that the school items supplied contributed to encourage families to enrol children in school. The Ministry of Education seems to be particularly interested in focusing on those hard to reach, rural areas from now on – as opposed as to work in urban areas – however, a sound assessment of the situation, the needs, the chances of success is not yet available.

102. Finally, different strategies might have been needed for younger children versus adolescents (if target has been, indeed, 6-15 years old), as they might experience different barriers, linked to age. If indeed there are different strategies, this is not clear.

Key Finding 7

103. Output level results have been largely achieved.

Key Recommendation 5

104. Document lessons learned on Back to Learning at the end of each year / academic year.

Key Recommendation 6

105. Design a gender and age disaggregated monitoring system to monitor progress and to respond to the reporting needs identified.

Impact

106. Once enrolled in school thanks to supply distribution, school rehabilitation and media / community campaign, it would be needed to follow up on the children to make sure s/he does not drop out and completes her/his education; there is no system in place to allow this follow up. The environment in Syria is still very complex, and the Ministry of Education had not been able to have reliable retention numbers. In the effort to increase enrolment and retention, several programmes exist²⁹ in support of out of school children to catch-up and be reintegrated to the formal system. All in all, there is not strong evidence concerning the results of the Back to Learning initiative since its launch in 2013, more specifically its contribution to increase of school enrolment and reduction of out of school children.

107. As for the unintended impact, some parents reported that their older children who were not targeted by the bag distribution complained and refused to go to school. Moreover, the sharing of stationary with siblings meant that the child who had received the bag and its content, would have not

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²⁸ Although, according to UNICEF staff, youth have been mobilized to support and execute Back to Learning campaigns.

²⁹ Including Non-Formal Education programmes managed by UNICEF).

enough stationary until the end of the year. The life of the bag was limited to a school year – definitely its content – creating a sort of reliance on bag distribution year after year for the same child.

Sustainability / Connectedness

108. Supply distribution is not meant to be sustainable but should be embedded in a context moving from relief to development with school rehabilitation is intended to be sustainable. The community mobilization component is also supposed to be sustainable, making households more aware of the existing options to which their children have access for learning and also hosting communities, schools' principals and teachers of their duty to integrate all children in school; more in general, this component should contribute to a more aware civil society vis a vis learning³⁰. Having considered this all, it is worth remembering that UNICEF is the main partner of Back to Learning, and the Ministry of Education still relies on UNICEF when it comes to back to learning.

109. All in all, it can be said that in the context of the Back to Learning activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out while at the same time UNICEF takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account, starting from 2015, and more clearly since 2017. Over time the crisis became increasingly politicized to the point that the solution wished by many donors does not include the strengthening of the education sector as it is now.

110. The distribution of school supplies seems to have had a small connectedness challenge as during the data collection for the evaluation it was mentioned frequently that there is now an expectation for school supplies to be provided by UNICEF. However, this is not a major issue as the socioeconomic situation is still challenging and the needs persist.

111. The light rehabilitation will be sustainable if the Ministry of Education has an adequate maintenance routine for schools. This is unclear at the moment but with the education system underfunded this is unlikely. Moreover, according to UNICEF Syria country office staff, there have been episodes vandalism in rehabilitated schools, and supposedly very little efforts from the communities to protect the newly rehabilitated facilities, and this represent a major problem.

112. The community mobilization / communication component has mainly promoted messages that the population had already embraced and the attitude towards education is likely to persist. The Back to Learning initiative has provided information on the right to education to the parents and communities that managed to reach, however, information on right to education might not be necessarily an issue in a country like Syria. The media and door-to-door campaign encouraged parents to go to the schools to enquire about options for their children to continue learning. As mentioned previously the messaging of the community mobilization / communication component might need to be adjusted to ensure additional ownership and sustainability and include information about non formal education.

113. The main challenge will be to maintain the overall positive effects of the Back to Learning initiative and especially to address the new challenges faced by the education sector in terms of preventing dropouts, ensuring that every child learns through formal or non-formal education. To ensure sustainability in this aspect the government, UNICEF and other stakeholders will need to develop an education strategy that is based on a good analysis and takes into account the changed situation.

114. Ownership is a key component of sustainability. The ownership of the Back to Learning initiative at national and local level varies. The Ministry of Education fully owns what they tend to refer

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³⁰ Although, according to UNICEF Syria country office staff, it is worth recalling that another problem is represented by the forced sharing of insufficient materials, when the supplies are not enough for all children and there is a risk of conflict.

to as Back to School campaign, in its media and supply distribution³¹ components – although in the school year 2018-2019, for the first time, most of supplies have been distributed to the children in non-formal education, through the NGOs implementing partners. The media messages are agreed with the Ministry of Education, and the identification of schools for education supply distribution is done in partnership. The Ministry of Education also feel full ownership of the school rehabilitation component; again, the schools to rehabilitate are identified jointly.

115. The Ministry of Education is more committed to bring children back to the official schools, than to the broader Back to Learning concept, and it relies completely on UNICEF, especially in terms of supply and financial support. The ownership of the Back to Learning initiative at more local, community level, is more difficult to assess. The NGO implementing partners interviewed are dedicated to the mission to reduce out of school children, but they can work with the communities only because of the support they receive. The recruitment of NGOs for partnership is very slow and difficult; many NGOs wait for months to obtain approval to implement services (including Back to Learning) because it is not easy to get the ministerial approval.

116. Given the changed situation in Syria from the time the programme started, the components will all have to be revisited and therefore sustainability of the status quo is not desirable.

Key Finding 8

117. While sustainability or connectedness has been achieved to some degree the change of the circumstances and limited availability of resources in the formal and non-formal sector point to the question of sustainability of the current intervention not being of a high priority.

Key Recommendation 7

118. During the discussion about a follow up programme explicitly include the discussion on how the initiative will be sustained, the exit strategy and who in the longer term will finance the different components.

Coverage

119. The Back to Learning initiative reached areas under government control easily while other areas were accessed through convoys and airdrops³².

120. Mechanisms exist in Syria for need assessment and situation analysis, both OCHA and UNICEF (for education) continuously assess the situation and identify areas – together with the government - where interventions are most needed. The humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response plan frameworks help identify geographical areas to reach. For as much as the humanitarian community has developed mechanisms for assuring the selection of the areas where people are more in need, the needs in the country have been and remain large. Moreover, among the target areas where the ones with most IDPs, and so where at the same time there was less space in schools to welcome new pupils.

121. According to the supply distribution lists that UNICEF keeps – per schools and recording how many boys and girls are registered in each school – there is not a gender bias in the ability of the initiative to reach children. The same applies to school rehabilitation. While the community mobilization and communications component did not record gender disaggregated data³³ the intention was to reach both female and male persons equally. The initiative made and effort reaching the

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³¹ Although the approvals for the release and transportation of materials are difficult to obtain and can take long time.

³² There are many reasons behind the accessibility such as access is not granted to UNICEF, no government approvals, or lack of security, etc

³³ See the UNICEF Communication for Development Annual Report 2018, for example

households with disabled children and provide them information on how to assure their children's learning.

122. The age target of the different components of the Back to Learning initiative varies. The school supplies distribution targets first-grade children, the community mobilization and communication component refer to behavioural barriers such as, child marriage and child labour indicating all age groups as key target groups.

Key Finding 9

123. UNICEF managed to reach children in identified vulnerable areas and supports them to go back to school.

124. **Recommendations** under relevance and efficiency cover this section as well.

Coordination

125. UNICEF as the education sector co-lead (together with Ministry of Education) coordinates the efforts of the international partners for the reduction of the out of school children. This role has enabled the Syria country office to easily coordinate the Back to Learning initiative with national actors, namely the Ministry of Education and the directorate of education. The activities were specified in the agreed annual work plans.

126. Initially delays on approvals of activities posed serious challenges. In more recent years, the Communication for Development section managed to get the agreement of Ministry of Education and other relevant ministries for the association of NGOs to the Back to Learning campaign, mainly for the door-to-door community mobilization. UNICEF established effective working relations with national partners at central and local levels and provided limited support for capacity development of the non-governmental partners – not all of them necessarily with a specific expertise in education and community mobilization.

127. A cross sectoral approach has been applied mainly in terms of the association of the Communication for Development section, the supply section and engineering unit to the Back to Learning initiative. However, if the supply component and the work of the engineering unit³⁴ seems to have been completely embedded in the work the education section has been doing, as the leader of the initiative, on the other hand the coordination between the education and the Communication for Development sections does not seem to have been symbiotic. The negotiations with the Ministry of Education on the messages of the Back to Learning communication campaign seems to have happened somehow in parallel to the coordination work that education has been doing with the same ministry. Moreover, it could not be clarified from the existing databases nor from the existing reports, whether the activity of community mobilization - for encouraging parents to send their children to school and schools to receive new pupils – has been carried on in coordination with the supply side activities under the other two pillars of the initiative – at least, of course, in communities where schools needed rehabilitation and / or were overcrowded, and where lack of stationary and bags had been identified as a bottleneck for the children out of school. What emerged from the interviews with key informants is that there are communities where only one pillar of the initiative has been implemented, and communities where activities under two or three pillars were delivered – with the main component having been, for many years, the bag and stationary distribution. A couple of lessons here: education and Communication for Development need to coordinate more strongly among them and speak one voice to Ministry of Education, and the data maintained must be able to show clearly how selection has been made and what synergies exist among the three pillars of the initiative. The coordination with

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³⁴ Including the WASH component.

the field offices also has been generally positive, although there was and is one education officer in each field office, in charge of all the logistics of the initiative, and of the main role to execute what has been agreed between the Ministry of Education and the Syria country office.

128. The last few years saw a convergence of the Back to Learning component into the education's programme coordination agreement on out of school children. Especially since the donors conditionalities increased, UNICEF had to focus more and more on non-formal education. Nonetheless, pulling funds and resources together, UNICEF manages to work on both formal and non-formal education (remedial, catch-up, etc.) and manages to reach out to communities informing them and proposing to them the various options available for their children to learn. In this framework, UNICEF and its partners are able to refer students with special needs or vulnerable to child protection, for their support. All of this, however, is outside the scope of this evaluation, and it is difficult to say whether it contributed to the achievement of the Back to Learning initiative expected targets.

Key Finding 10:

129. External coordination has been successful with the internal coordination having scope to improve to harvest synergies between sections and partners.

130. **Recommendations** under relevance, and efficiency also cover the way forward for coordination.

Conclusions

131. The strength of the initiative is that it brought different stakeholders together on the right of education of the Syrian children, and UNICEF managed to mobilize resources and partnerships.

132. The Back to Learning initiative provided much needed support to the education sector in terms of provision of supplies and light rehabilitation of the many crisis affected schools. Over the years management, coordination, and monitoring systems of the Back to Learning initiative have continuously improved.

133. UNICEFs position as co-lead of the education sector and its network of implementing partners has enabled efficient coordination of the initiative. However, the lack of non-government organizations (NGOs) prior to the crisis and the need to build capacity of implementing partners in combination with donor conditionalities posed numerous constraints.

134. The evaluation finds that overall, the population receives information about schooling directly from schools and the directorates of education and is aware of the benefits of education in general. Therefore, the messaging of the community mobilization and communication campaign might need to be refocused on emerging challenges such as preventing dropouts and on non-formal education.

135. The challenge of bringing children back to learning in Syria remains with the education supply side, especially the availability of schools and classrooms, teachers, and financial resources being the main challenge. Prior to the crisis, enrolment rates of public sector education were 98 percent while now, there are currently two million out of school children. In order to decrease this number and ensure every child can learn in a good quality system a system strengthening approach to enhance enrolment and retention is critical.

Lessons learned

136. Documentation is essential, especially if there is a high staff turnover and it is a flagship intervention. It is time well invested to enhance the chances of learning systematically.

137. Monitoring the situation and relevance of the response and adjusting accordingly is essential for making sure UNICEF addresses the needs of the affected population and build strong cases for donor support.

138. Data collection is a complex exercise that requires the dedicated support of data / survey / sampling experts to ensure data is of good quality and interpreted and analyzed correctly.

139. The strategy for improving enrolment and retention has to take into consideration the environment and analyze bottlenecks on both the education demand and supply sides as well as the capacity of partners

Annexes

Annex 1 - Terms of References

Annex 1a Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative 2017

Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in Syria Section Content

Background.

Since March 2011 the crisis in Syria has turned into a wide-ranging conflict that affected millions of people including children who have endured serious suffering and hardships for several years with no end in sight yet. In January 2013 UNICEF declared a Level 3 (L3) emergency and vastly scaled up its programmatic and operational support, both from the UNICEF Syria Country Office (SCO) in Damascus as well as through cross-border assistance from Gaziantep and Amman. A total of five Field Offices were established across Syria and the number of UNICEF SCO staff, both national and international, increased significantly.

As the detrimental effects of the Syria crisis on children and youth became ever more visible, in September 2013 the Education Section of the UNICEF SCO launched the first nationwide Back to Learning (BTL) initiative. The initiative was designed to increase access to education for children in the lower primary school grades (grades 1-4) in all 14 governorates through a combination of community mobilization and provision of education supplies. Due to the crisis many schools were suffering from a shortage of textbooks and teaching-learning materials, hampering children's meaningful learning. Many of the printing facilities in Syria did not function anymore and the ongoing crisis resulted in the devaluation of the local currency, thereby making it difficult for the Ministry of Education (MOE) to procure and provide textbooks and teaching-learning materials for all schools and children across the country. Furthermore, given the economic downturn and the loss of livelihoods caused by displacement and conflict, many parents were not able to buy school bags, stationery and other school items for their children anymore. As one of the mitigation measures, the Ministry of Education collected all the used textbooks from students at the end of the school year and re-distributed these to newly enrolled students for the next school year. However, many children had to share textbooks with others and found themselves unable to study at home or after school hours.

Therefore, there was a critical need for support which provided the rationale for the BTL initiative to be launched. The BTL initiative focused on increasing overall school enrolment by encouraging families and community members to send children back to school and keep them in school. The main components of the BTL initiative include:

provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools. Apart from school bags and basic stationery, other items were also included in the BTL package, such as Early Childhood Education (ECE) kits and recreation-in- a carton kits.

As noted in the 2015 Evaluation of UNICEF's Humanitarian Response in Syria and the Sub-Region Evaluation of UNICEF's Humanitarian Response in Syria and the Sub-Region (2015) , education programming in Syria supported over 2.8 million children with access to essential education materials in 2014, nearly one million children were provided access to essential education materials in 2013, which increased significantly to more than 2.8 million children in 2014. As outlined in the UNICEF SCO 2016 Annual Report, the nationwide Back to Learning initiative reached over 3 million children with textbooks, stationery, and school bags during 2016. In addition, UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 4(1) schools, benefitting over 189,000 children, and provided 324 prefabricated classrooms, ensuring learning spaces for close to 25,000 children in 2016. In addition to Syrian children the interventions also benefitted the children of Palestinian refugees living in Syria.

Throughout the years the Back to Learning initiative has been implemented in a very challenging context with many access limitations and security constraints. Several modalities were used to access hard-to-reach areas across the country, including UN inter-agency convoys in various governorates. However, for areas such as Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor air lifting and air dropping education materials was the only modality to reach children.

In terms of funding, since 2013 the Back to Learning initiative constituted a significant proportion of the Education Section expenditures as well as of the overall SCO budget allocation. The BTL initiative received support from several donors over the years, most notably the European Union (EU), Educate a Child/US Fund, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan and Norway.

For the 2017 Integrated Monitoring & Evaluation Plan (IMEP) the UNICEF Syria Country Office Management

Team (CM T) agreed to commission an independent evaluation to assess the various components of the Back to Learning initiative.

Objective The UNICEF Syria Country Office is seeking an institution (e.g. consulting firm, research institute) which will offer an evaluation team of 3 qualified professionals, including one international evaluation team leader, one international evaluation expert (team member) and one national expert in the area of evaluation and/or education (team member).

The evaluation intends to serve an accountability function (summative) as well as a learning function (formative). The significant scale of the programmatic support, including supplies, provided under the Back to Learning initiative since 2013 in combination with the significant amount of funding necessitates an accountability function towards the expected beneficiaries, i.e. children and their families, as well as UNICEF and key stakeholders including national and international partners. At the same time the learning function is important for drawing

lessons from the implementation of such a wide-scale initiative over a period of 4 years (2013-2016) in a protracted emergency context. The evaluation is expected to provide evidence for decision-makers regarding the extent to which the BTL initiative contributed to a change in the number of children enrolled in school and recommendations regarding any suggested adjustments or new approaches for the BTL initiative.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The focus will be on Syrian children as well as children of Palestinian refugees living in Syria. The evaluation will collect and analyze relevant data through various methods (as indicated in the Description of the assignment below), and will generate key findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations for enhanced programming by UNICEF in Syria and potentially in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the key programme interventions of the various components of the BTL initiative, including the collaboration between different sections and teams in the UNICEF SCO (central office and field offices, Supply & Logistics Team, C4D Team), and the collaboration with various national and international partners across Syria as well as the interaction with beneficiaries.
- Identify good practices, challenges faced and lessons learned from the BTL initiative.
- Provide recommendations on the future scope and approach of the BTL initiative, including any suggested adjustments or new approaches as well as specific recommendations for similar initiatives in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.

The evaluation should take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights. Refer to United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. New York: UNEG, www.unevaluation.org/guidance/HRGE More specific evaluation questions are outlined in the section below# #.

The main intended users of the evaluation include managers and staff in the UNICEF Syria Country Office; managers and advisors in the UNICEF MENA Regional Office, Headquarters and Country Offices in humanitarian emergencies; UNICEF partners including national governmental and non-governmental organizations, other education sector partners, donors and other UN Agencies; as well as other interested stakeholders. Description of the assignment Scope of Work:

- The timeframe of the evaluation is expected to cover the period from May 2013 to September 2017. The geographic focus of the evaluation covers all 14 governorates of Syria. It is suggested that Focus Group

Discussions and Key Informant Interviews are conducted only in a sample of five governorates. It should be noted that there are a number of besieged and hard-to-reach areas in certain governorates where no UNICEF support could be provided through the BTL initiative. In terms of programmatic focus the evaluation will cover the following three key components of the BTL initiative included: provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools. The C4D component consists of a comprehensive media campaign, including messages via radio, TV, sms, and billboards, as well as community mobilization through

door-to-door visits to raise awareness on school registration and timely enrollment. The evaluation will not include UNICEF-supported interventions to enhance non-formal education which were only initiated fairly recently. Overall, the evaluation should take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights.

In order to achieve the main objectives of the evaluation, the following specific evaluation questions will need to be answered:

Relevance

- Considering UNICEF's mandate and programmatic focus, how relevant has the Back to Learning initiative been in response to the education needs of children in Syria? To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with UNICEF's actual or perceived comparative advantage?
- Did UNICEF SCO develop a clear strategy for the BTL initiative from the start? How clear was the theory of change and was it plausible? Were other strategic options considered?
- To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with national priorities and international commitments, e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Core Commitments to Children (CCC), No Lost Generation (NLG Initiative)?
- To what extent have the various components of the BTL initiative been appropriate and proportionate to need? Key components include the provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools.
- Was the BTL initiative adequately informed by a needs assessment and a clear situation analysis? To what extent were these reviewed and updated on a regular basis? To what extent is the C4D component of the BTL initiative informed by an analysis of possible social barriers to education? Has specific attention been given to disaggregated analysis of the needs of children, their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of the country?
- How responsive has the BTL initiative been to changes in the external environment, including the evolving role of national and international partners?

Effectiveness

- .How effective has the BTL initiative been in achieving its objectives? Which components have been most and least effective? Which evidence exists concerning the results of the BTL initiative since its launch in 2013?
- What is the quality of the programme monitoring and reporting systems of UNICEF SCO and its partners in the BTL initiative? To what extent have results been disaggregated by sex, age, disability, geographic location and other variables?
- To what extent has UNICEF#s choice of partners been appropriate and based on an adequate assessment of capacity? Were implementing partners engaged in pre-BTL capacity building activities to ensure effective quality delivery of interventions? Has consideration been given to any alternative partnership options available to UNICEF?
- How effectively did UNICEF and its partners engage with beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, including children (girls and boys), their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of Syria, regarding the design and implementation of the support? Which - if any - processes of beneficiary feedback were put in place, and if so, how were the key findings used for decision-making?
- As the situation in the country evolved over the years, to what extent did UNICEF consider a resilience-based approach through community engagement as part of the BTL initiative?
- .To what extent has UNICEF SCO taken into consideration cross-cutting issues including equity, gender and disability in implementing the BTL initiative? Was adequate attention given to child rights and equity issues, including discrimination and social exclusion?

Efficiency .

- How efficiently did UNICEF SCO use its resources, including funds, staff and supplies in implementing the BTL initiative?
- To what extent has the staff capacity and skills mix at UNICEF SCO and partners been adequate for the implementation of the BTL initiative over the years?
- Has there been specific training provided to staff and partners to ensure quality planning and management of BTL interventions?
- How efficient was the financial management and risk management of the BTL initiative?
- .To what extent have donors provided adequate, un-earmarked and multi-year resources to the Education Section to enable the full implementation of the BTL initiative? To what extent did any dependence on particular funding sources constrain or support UNICEF#s implementation of the BTL initiative?

Coverage

- To what extent has the BTL initiative been able to reach families and children in different areas of the country without gender bias or geographical bias?
- What have been the enabling and constraining factors in reaching families and children? Which lessons can be learned about the most effective means of ensuring access?
- Ø Through innovation
- Ø Through the application of alternative programming
- Ø By advocating for increased access
- Ø By forming partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and other actors

Coordination

- .To what extent has UNICEF coordinated the BTL initiative with national and international actors?
- .To what extent has a cross-sectoral approach been applied and which lessons can be drawn from that?
- To what extent has UNICEF established effective working relations with national partners (governmental and non-governmental) at central and local levels in Syria? To what extent has UNICEF provided support for capacity development of partners where necessary to better coordinate and implement the BTL initiative?
- To what extent has the BTL initiative maximized convergence with other programmes within UNICEF SCO and how did this support the achievement of the expected targets?

Sustainability

- How sustainable are the results of the BTL initiative, especially considering the continuously changing situation in the country, the role of national and international partners, and funding prospects?
- To what extent is there ownership of the BTL initiative at national and local level?
- Has the BTL initiative equipped parents with adequate information on the right to education and options for their children to continue learning?

- .What are the possibilities for the BTL model of intervention (as a whole or some of its components) to be more widely replicated or adopted?
- . To what extent have other stakeholders provided financial support for the operationalization of the BTL initiative? Which possibilities would there be for the Ministry of Education to financially contribute to the BTL initiative to enhance sustainability?

Impact

- .To what extent has the BTL initiative contributed to increased school enrollment of children aged 6-15 years (grades 1-9) in Syria since 2013? To what extent have girls and boys benefitted equally from the BTL initiative?
- Which other factors have positively or negatively contributed to any change in school enrollment?
- .How has the BTL initiative worked in conjunction with other interventions or services to achieve its intended objectives? What has helped or hindered the initiative to achieve its intended objectives?
- .What have been the particular features of the BTL initiative that have made a difference in the lives of girls and boys as the intended beneficiaries?
- .Which unintended impact, positive and negative, has the BTL initiative produced?

METHODOLOGY

During the inception phase, the Evaluation Team will formulate in further detail the proposed methodology, informed by the following key principles:

- . The evaluation will be both summative and formative with an appropriate balance between these two aspects.
 - . The evaluation will ensure a participatory and transparent approach.
 - . Triangulation of data and Information will be applied throughout the evaluation process to ensure a robust evidence base.
- The evaluation approach, data collection and analysis methods will consider child rights, gender sensitivity and equity, and data will as much as possible be disaggregated by sex, age, disability status, geographical location, etc.
- . The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation.

Ethical considerations:

Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed in all phases of the evaluation. Specific reference is made to the UNEG and UNICEF ethical guidelines and code of conduct for evaluation. The evaluation methodology should not introduce risks to participants in the evaluation by exploring sensitive issues, or by exposing stakeholders (including children) to security or other risks.

Research protocols for collecting primary data from stakeholders and beneficiaries will need to be submitted for ethical review by the independent institution engaged by UNICEF through a regional Long-Term Agreement (LTA).

Bidders should indicate as part of their technical proposal how they intend to avoid introducing any harm in the conduct of the evaluation as per the ethical guidelines.

The evaluation is expected to use multiple data sources and data collection approaches, including at least the following:

. **Desk Review:** The Evaluation Team will conduct a detailed desk review of relevant documents and data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the context of the evaluation and key issues.

Key Informant Interviews: The Evaluation Team is expected to conduct 30 to 40 detailed interviews with key informants, either face-to-face where possible or alternatively by telephone or Skype. Key informants may include, but not be limited to, UNICEF SCO managers and staff, national governmental and non-governmental partners, beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, and if relevant staff from other UN Agencies. Semi-structured interview protocols are to be prepared in advance with special attention to be paid to UNICEF's ethical standards.

Focus Group Discussions: The Evaluation Team is also expected to conduct 10 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) - in a sample of five governorates - with UNICEF staff as well as key stakeholders and beneficiaries as referred to above. Such discussions, when appropriately facilitated, may generate a variety of different views from a homogeneous group of people that would provide added value to key informant interviews. Protocols for such FGDs are to be prepared in advance by the team. Methods for consulting effectively with beneficiaries will need to be developed in consultation with UNICEF staff and partners in the relevant areas with a particular focus on the #do no harm# principle, i.e. ensuring that the safety of beneficiaries and partners is not compromised by any actions of the evaluation team.

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

One of the main limitations of the evaluation will be the access restrictions to certain areas in the country due to the security situation, which is likely to limit the collection of primary data as it may be complicated to conduct interviews, focus group discussions and field visits. This can be mitigated by involving one or more local experts and agreeing in advance on a selected number of sites that are accessible and as representative as possible. In general, every effort should be made to use existing information sources as much as possible, while at the same time triangulating data through various methods. Another expected challenge may be the limited availability of data, especially in the early stages of the BTL initiative, which may complicate the assessment of some aspects of the initiative. The evaluation team is expected to

reconstruct the overall Theory of Change (TOC), as part of the Inception Report, based on information provided by UNICEF staff. Staff turnover over the last 4 years means that it may require additional effort to contact first hand informants from the early stages of the BTL initiative. However, this is not considered a significant challenge because current UNICEF SCO will assist with establishing such contacts.

In the technical proposal bidders are expected to indicate how the limitations might be mitigated.

Deliverables and reporting requirements. The main deliverables of the evaluation are as follows:

A. Inception Report

This report should outline the evaluation teams understanding of the issues under evaluation including a clear evaluation matrix, a reconstructed Theory of Change for the BTL initiative, a detailed work plan as well as the proposed structure of the evaluation report. The Inception Report is expected to be maximum 15 pages (approximately 6,000 words) plus any annexes.

Due dates:

- Draft Inception Report by 05 November 2017
- Comments from UNICEF provided by 10 November 2017
- Inception Report finalized by 15 November 2017

(incl. feedback by the evaluation team on how the comments have been incorporated)

B. Draft Evaluation Report and Presentation of Key Findings

The Draft Report should be maximum 50 pages (approximately 20,000 words) plus annexes. A presentation of the draft report, including key evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, should be prepared for a validation meeting with key stakeholders.

Due dates.

Draft Evaluation Report by 15 December 2017

Key Findings Presentation by 20 December 2017

Comments on the draft evaluation report provided by 15 January 2018

(incl. feedback by the evaluation team on how the comments have been incorporated)

C. Final Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Report should be maximum 50 pages (approximately 20,000 words) plus an Executive Summary and Annexes.

Due date:

(i) Final Evaluation Report by 15 February 2018

(incl. feedback by the evaluation team on how the comments have been incorporated)

Following the finalization of the report it will be widely disseminated among key national and international stakeholders, while the evaluation findings and recommendations will be used to inform decision-making.

The proposed indicative timeframe for the evaluation is as per the table below. The time frame presented in this TOR is approximate and subject to change. Once the evaluation team has been selected and before the contract is issued, the time frame will be finalized based on discussions between UNICEF and the evaluation team .

Key Tasks Timeframe (by date)

Responsible

Inception report

By 5 Nov 2017 Evaluation Team

Data collection

By 5 Dec 2017

Evaluation Team

Draft evaluation report

By 15 Dec 2017

Evaluation Team

Presentation and validation of preliminary findings with key stakeholders

By 20 Dec 2017

Evaluation Team

Final evaluation report

By 15 Feb 2018

Evaluation Team

Dissemination of final evaluation report

By 15 Mar 2018

Location and Duration

Location: Home-based with 2 weeks of data collection in Syria.

Duration: 5 months from October 2017 to February 2018

Qualification requirements The UNICEF Syria Country Office will contract with an institution (e.g. consulting firm, research institute) which will offer an evaluation team of at least 2 qualified professionals, including one international evaluation team leader, one international evaluation expert (team member) and one national Syrian expert in the area of evaluation and/or education (team member). The national expert should be based in Syria and can be sub-contracted by the consulting firm.

The international evaluation team leader (estimated 50 working days) should have the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in international development, public administration, education or a related field.
- A minimum of 15 years of professional experience specifically in the area of monitoring and evaluation of international development and humanitarian assistance.
- Substantial international track record of conducting a variety of evaluations, preferably including outcome and impact evaluations in different countries and organizations.
- Demonstrated experience in leading multi-disciplinary evaluation teams.
- General understanding of the context of working in a humanitarian emergency.
- Knowledge of UNICEF's mandate and scope of work, including in the area of education, child rights, gender and equity, would be an advantage.
- . Advanced understanding of the Core Commitments for Children, humanitarian principles, Core Humanitarian Standards, gender, equity, human rights based approach to programming, #Do No Harm# principles, and INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards.
- Excellent communication and interview skills in English .Excellent report writing skills in English.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.

The international evaluation expert (Team Member, estimated 40 working days) should have the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in international development, public administration, education or a related field.
- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience specifically in the area of monitoring and evaluation of international development and humanitarian assistance.
- Substantial international track record of conducting a variety of evaluations, preferably in different countries and for various organizations.
- General understanding of the context of working in a humanitarian emergency.
- Knowledge of UNICEF's mandate and scope of work, including in the area of education, child rights, gender and equity, would be an advantage.
- . Advanced understanding of the Core Commitments for Children, humanitarian principles, Core Humanitarian Standards, gender, equity, human rights based approach to programming, #Do No Harm# principles, and preferably the INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards.
- Excellent communication and Interview skills.
- Excellent report writing skills.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.

The national expert (Team Member, estimated 40 working days) should have the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in International development, public administration, education or a related field.
- A minimum of 7 years of professional experience specifically in the area of monitoring and evaluation of international development and humanitarian assistance.
- Track record of conducting a variety of evaluations.
- In-depth understanding of the context in Syria.

- Knowledge of UNICEF's mandate and scope of work, including in the area of education, child rights, gender and equity, would be an advantage.
- .Basic understanding of the Core Commitments for Children, humanitarian principles, Core Humanitarian
- Standards, gender, equity human rights based approach to programming, #Do No Harm# principles, and preferably the INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards.
- Excellent communication and interview skills in Arabic and English.
- Excellent report writing skills in English.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.

Please note that the evaluation team leader will:

- .Report to the evaluation manager at UNICEF Syria Country Office.
- .Work full time on the evaluation throughout its duration.
- Agree on the plan for all aspects of the evaluation with the evaluation manager.
- Conduct the evaluation according to UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008), the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016), and UNICEF Ethical Research Guidelines involving children in humanitarian settings (<https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/278/>).
- Prepare the evaluation report according to the UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards (2010), with all evaluation product(s) written in English.
- Ensure that the evaluation produces evidence and analysis to the highest possible standards.
- Flag any limitations/constraints to the evaluation manager at the earliest opportunity, so that, as far as possible, they can be addressed, with any outstanding limitations noted in the evaluation report .Propose and conduct the evaluation with appropriate methodologies.
- . Ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that the evaluation does not increase physical or reputational risks for UNICEF stakeholders.
- Take responsibility for delivering the evaluation in accordance with the Terms of Reference, ensuring the quality of all the evaluation products.

Evaluation process and methods Interested organizations are requested to submit a technical proposal and a financial proposal. The two proposals should be submitted as separate files. The technical proposal should outline the following:

- Details on how the scope of work, including all deliverables, will be implemented.
- Demonstrated experience and expertise, including CVs of proposed personnel to be involved in the evaluation, and client references.
- At least 2 samples (reports) of previous evaluations conducted.

The criteria for evaluation of the technical proposal will be as follows:

Item

Technical Evaluation Criteria

Max. points

Quality of the technical proposal including a clear outline of the scope of work and a plan for implementation of all key deliverables 30 points

Qualifications of the international Team Leader (as per the requirements) 20 points

Qualifications of the international Team Member (as per the requirements) 15 points

Qualifications of the national Team Member (as per the requirements) 15 points

High quality samples (reports) of previous evaluations conducted by the team leader and team members 20 points

TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE 100

Minimum required technical score: 70/100

Evaluation criteria are defined as follows: Technical proposal: 70 points

Financial proposal: 30 points

The financial proposal should cover all costs related to the delivery of the services specified in the scope of work.

Administrative issues

The financial proposal should cover all costs related to the delivery of the services specified in the scope of work, taking into account the following:

The evaluation team will use its own equipment, including computers and other materials, in the implementation of this assignment.

The evaluation team will not work from UNICEF offices.

Any estimated travel costs in the financial proposal should be calculated based on Economy class travel.

Any costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals should not exceed applicable Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) rates as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

The proposed mission to Syria by the international evaluation team members to conduct the data collection together with the national expert is subject to the obtaining of a visa for Syria. In the event of a rejection of the visa applications, this will be considered as force majeure and in that case no travel-related costs will be paid. Part of the data collection, e.g. interviews, can then be done by telephone or Skype.

UNICEF does not provide or arrange life or health insurance coverage for consultants.

Project management

The M&E Section at the UNICEF Syria Country Office will manage the evaluation in close collaboration with the MENA Regional Office for the required quality assurance throughout the various phases of the evaluation. More specifically, the SCO Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist (P4), supported by the M&E Officer (NOB), will manage the evaluation process from start to end, under the guidance of the UNICEF SCO Deputy Representative.

The SCO Monitoring & Evaluation Team in consultation with the Education Programme Section and C4D Team will provide the evaluation team with all relevant reference documents and will facilitate the communication with stakeholders as well as any other data collection. A letter of introduction can be arranged for the evaluation consultants if necessary to facilitate interviews and communication with key stakeholders. The consultants are expected to be fully self-sufficient in terms of office equipment, stationery, communication, office space, transport and other logistics. It will not be possible to work from the UNICEF office.

Payment

Payments for the deliverables will be made in 3 installments as follows:

- 30% upon acceptance of the inception report.
- 30% upon delivery of the draft evaluation report.
- 40% upon acceptance by UNICEF of the final evaluation report.

Conditions of payment:

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of the payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/output is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines. In case of unsatisfactory performance the payment will be withheld until quality deliverables are submitted and approved. If the contractor is unable to complete the assignment, the contract will be terminated by a notification letter sent 30 days prior to the termination date. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another selection in order to identify appropriate contractors.

Terms of Payment:

Payments shall be made by UNICEF upon receipt of a specified invoice and subject to acceptance of the deliverables by UNICEF.

Conditions of payment:

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of the payment in case of unsatisfactory performance or a failure to meet deadlines or deliverables. Payment will be withheld until quality services are delivered and approved. If the contractor is unable to conduct the full scope of work, the contract will be terminated by a notification letter sent 30 days prior to the termination date. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another competitive bidding process in order to identify appropriate service providers. ANNEX 1. Financial Proposal template

Consultancy fees: US\$

Team Leader (international) - 50 working days

Team Member (international) - 40 working days Team Member (national) - 40 working days

Data collection: US\$

Local transportation costs in Syria for data collection (2 weeks)

DSA for national team member in Syria for data collection (10 days)

FGDs and KIIs (communication, meeting halls, refreshments/catering) (lump-sum)

Other operational costs: US\$

Communication, stationery, other office supplies, etc. (lump-sum)

inception report upon the delivery of draft report upon acceptance on final report

Annex 1 b Terms of Reference for the Institutional Contract

Field Work for the Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in Syria

| Section | Content |
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| Background | <p>Since March 2011 the crisis in Syria has turned into a wide-ranging conflict that affected millions of people including children who have endured serious suffering and hardships for several years with no end in sight yet. In January 2013, UNICEF declared a Level 3 (L3) emergency and vastly scaled up its programmatic and operational support, both from the UNICEF Syria Country Office (SCO) in Damascus as well as through cross-border assistance from Gaziantep and Amman. A total of five Field Offices were established across Syria and the number of UNICEF SCO staff, both national and international, increased significantly.</p> <p>As the detrimental effects of the Syria crisis on children and youth became ever more visible, in September 2013 the Education Section of the UNICEF SCO launched the first nationwide Back to Learning (BTL) initiative. The initiative was designed to increase access to education for children in the lower primary school grades (grades 1-4) in all 14 governorates through a combination of community mobilization and provision of education supplies. Due to the crisis many schools were suffering from a shortage of textbooks and teaching-learning materials, hampering children's meaningful learning. Many of the printing facilities in Syria did not function anymore and the ongoing crisis resulted in the devaluation of the local currency, thereby making it difficult for the Ministry of Education (MOE) to procure and provide textbooks and teaching-learning materials for all schools and children across the country. Furthermore, given the economic downturn and the loss of livelihoods caused by displacement and conflict, many parents were not able to buy school bags, stationery and other school items for their children anymore. As one of the mitigation measures, the Ministry of Education collected all the used textbooks from students at the end of the school year and re-distributed these to newly enrolled students for the next school year. However, many children had to share textbooks with others and found themselves unable to study at home or after school hours.</p> <p>Therefore, there was a critical need for support which provided the rationale for the BTL initiative to be launched. The BTL initiative focused on increasing overall school enrolment by encouraging families and community members to send children back to school and keep them in school. The main components of the BTL initiative include: provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools. Apart from school bags and basic stationery, other items were also included in the BTL package, such as Early Childhood Education (ECE) kits and recreation-in- a-carton kits.</p> <p>As noted in the 2015 Evaluation of UNICEF's Humanitarian Response in Syria and the Sub-Region³⁵, education programming in Syria supported over 2.8 million children with access to essential education materials in 2014, nearly one million children were provided access to essential education materials in 2013, which increased significantly to more than 2.8 million children in 2014. As outlined in the UNICEF SCO 2016 Annual Report, the nationwide Back to Learning initiative reached over 3 million children with textbooks, stationery, and school bags during 2016. In addition, UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 401 schools, benefitting over 189,000 children, and provided 324 prefabricated classrooms, ensuring learning spaces for close to 25,000 children in 2016. In addition to Syrian children the interventions also benefitted the children of Palestinian refugees living in Syria.</p> <p>Throughout the years, Back to Learning initiative has been implemented in a very challenging context with many access limitations and security constraints. Several modalities were used to access hard-to-reach areas across the country, including UN inter-agency convoys in various governorates. However, for areas such as Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor air lifting and air dropping education materials was the only modality to reach children.</p> <p>In terms of funding, since 2013 the Back to Learning initiative constituted a significant proportion of the Education Section expenditures as well as of the overall SCO budget allocation. The BTL initiative received support from several donors over the years, most notably the European Union (EU), Educate a Child/US Fund, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan and Norway.</p> |

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³⁵ Evaluation of UNICEF's Humanitarian Response in Syria and the Sub-Region (2015)

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| | <p>For For the 2017 Integrated Monitoring & Evaluation Plan (IMEP) the UNICEF Syria Country Office Management Team (CMT) agreed to commission an independent evaluation to assess the various components of the Back to Learning initiative.</p> |
| <p>Objective</p> | <p>UNICEF Syria Country Office is seeking an institution (e.g. consulting firm, research institute) which will offer an evaluation team to provide qualitative and quantitative data collection and entry service for the Back to Learning Evaluation.</p> <p>The evaluation intends to serve an accountability function (summative) as well as a learning function (formative). The significant scale of the programmatic support, including supplies, provided under the Back to Learning initiative since 2013 in combination with the significant amount of funding necessitates an accountability function towards the expected beneficiaries, i.e. children and their families, as well as UNICEF and key stakeholders including national and international partners. At the same time the learning function is important for drawing lessons from the implementation of such a wide-scale initiative over a period of 4 years (2013-2016) in a protracted emergency context. The evaluation is expected to provide evidence for decision-makers regarding the extent to which the BTL initiative contributed to a change in the number of children enrolled in school and recommendations regarding any suggested adjustments or new approaches for the BTL initiative.</p> <p>The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The focus will be on Syrian children as well as children of Palestinian refugees living in Syria. The evaluation will collect and analyze relevant data through various methods (as indicated in the Description of the assignment below), and will generate key findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations for enhanced programming by UNICEF in Syria and potentially in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.</p> <p>The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Assess the key programme interventions of the various components of the BTL initiative, including the collaboration between different sections and teams in the UNICEF SCO (central office and field offices, Supply & Logistics Team, C4D Team), and the collaboration with various national and international partners across Syria as well as the interaction with beneficiaries. (ii) Identify good practices, challenges faced and lessons learned from the BTL initiative. (iii) Provide recommendations on the future scope and approach of the BTL initiative, including any suggested adjustments or new approaches as well as specific recommendations for similar initiatives in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts. <p>The evaluation should take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights.³⁶ More specific evaluation questions are outlined in the section below.</p> |

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1. ³⁶ Refer to United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*. New York: UNEG, www.unevaluation.org/guidance/HRGE

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| | <p>The main intended users of the evaluation include managers and staff in the UNICEF Syria Country Office; managers and advisors in the UNICEF MENA Regional Office, Headquarters and Country Offices in humanitarian emergencies; UNICEF partners including national governmental and non-governmental organizations, other education sector partners, donors and other UN Agencies; as well as other interested stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>Description of the assignment</p> | <p>Scope of Work:</p> <p>It is important to note that this contract only covers the data collection component of the entire evaluation.</p> <p>The scope of the evaluation is expected to cover the period from May 2013 to May 2018. The geographic focus of the evaluation covers all 14 governorates of Syria. The Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews will be conducted in a sample of five governorates. It should be noted that there are a number of besieged and hard-to-reach areas in certain governorates where no UNICEF support could be provided through the BTL initiative. In terms of programmatic focus the evaluation will cover the following three key components of the BTL initiative included: provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools. The C4D component consists of a comprehensive media campaign, including messages via radio, TV, sms, and billboards, as well as community mobilization through door-to-door visits to raise awareness on school registration and timely enrollment. The evaluation will not include UNICEF-supported interventions to enhance non-formal education which were only initiated fairly recently. Overall, the evaluation should take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights.</p> <p>In order to achieve the main objectives of the evaluation, the following <i>specific evaluation questions</i> will need to be answered:</p> <p>Relevance</p> <p>Considering UNICEF’s mandate and programmatic focus, how relevant has the Back to Learning initiative been in response to the education needs of children in Syria? To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with UNICEF’s actual or perceived comparative advantage?</p> <p>Did UNICEF SCO develop a clear strategy for the BTL initiative from the start? How clear was the theory of change and was it plausible? Were other strategic options considered?</p> <p>To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with national priorities and international commitments, e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Core Commitments to Children (CCC), No Lost Generation (NLG Initiative)?</p> <p>To what extent have the various components of the BTL initiative been appropriate and proportionate to need? Key components include the provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools.</p> <p>Was the BTL initiative adequately informed by a needs assessment and a clear situation analysis? To what extent were these reviewed and updated on a regular basis? To what extent is the C4D component of the BTL initiative informed by an analysis of possible social barriers to education? Has specific attention been given to disaggregated analysis of the needs of children, their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of the country?</p> <p>How responsive has the BTL initiative been to changes in the external environment, including the evolving role of national and international partners?</p> <p>Effectiveness</p> <p>How effective has the BTL initiative been in achieving its objectives? Which components have been most and least effective? Which evidence exists concerning the results of the BTL initiative since its launch in 2013?</p> |

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| | <p>What is the quality of the programme monitoring and reporting systems of UNICEF SCO and its partners in the BTL initiative? To what extent have results been disaggregated by sex, age, disability, geographic location and other variables?</p> <p>To what extent has UNICEF's choice of partners been appropriate and based on an adequate assessment of capacity? Were implementing partners engaged in pre-BTL capacity building activities to ensure effective quality delivery of interventions? Has consideration been given to any alternative partnership options available to UNICEF?</p> <p>How effectively did UNICEF and its partners engage with beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, including children (girls and boys), their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of Syria, regarding the design and implementation of the support? Which - if any - processes of beneficiary feedback were put in place, and if so, how were the key findings used for decision-making?</p> <p>As the situation in the country evolved over the years, to what extent did UNICEF consider a resilience-based approach through community engagement as part of the BTL initiative?</p> <p>To what extent has UNICEF SCO taken into consideration cross-cutting issues including equity, gender and disability in implementing the BTL initiative? Was adequate attention given to child rights and equity issues, including discrimination and social exclusion?</p> <p>Efficiency</p> <p>How efficiently did UNICEF SCO use its resources, including funds, staff and supplies in implementing the BTL initiative?</p> <p>To what extent has the staff capacity and skills mix at UNICEF SCO and partners been adequate for the implementation of the BTL initiative over the years? Has there been specific training provided to staff and partners to ensure quality planning and management of BTL interventions?</p> <p>How efficient was the financial management and risk management of the BTL initiative?</p> <p>To what extent have donors provided adequate, un-earmarked and multi-year resources to the Education Section to enable the full implementation of the BTL initiative? To what extent did any dependence on particular funding sources constrain or support UNICEF's implementation of the BTL initiative?</p> <p>Coverage</p> <p>To what extent has the BTL initiative been able to reach families and children in different areas of the country without gender bias or geographical bias?</p> <p>What have been the enabling and constraining factors in reaching families and children? Which lessons can be learned about the most effective means of ensuring access?</p> <p>Through innovation</p> <p>Through the application of alternative programming</p> <p>By advocating for increased access</p> <p>By forming partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and other actors</p> <p>Coordination</p> <p>To what extent has UNICEF coordinated the BTL initiative with national and international actors?</p> <p>To what extent has a cross-sectoral approach been applied and which lessons can be drawn from that?</p> <p>To what extent has UNICEF established effective working relations with national partners (governmental and non-governmental) at central and local levels in Syria? To what extent has UNICEF provided support for capacity development of partners where necessary to better coordinate and implement the BTL initiative?</p> <p>To what extent has the BTL initiative maximized convergence with other programmes within UNICEF SCO and how did this support the achievement of the expected targets?</p> <p>Sustainability</p> |
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| | <p>How sustainable are the results of the BTL initiative, especially considering the continuously changing situation in the country, the role of national and international partners, and funding prospects?</p> <p>To what extent is there ownership of the BTL initiative at national and local level?</p> <p>Has the BTL initiative equipped parents with adequate information on the right to education and options for their children to continue learning?</p> <p>What are the possibilities for the BTL model of intervention (as a whole or some of its components) to be more widely replicated or adopted?</p> <p>To what extent have other stakeholders provided financial support for the operationalization of the BTL initiative? Which possibilities would there be for the Ministry of Education to financially contribute to the BTL initiative to enhance sustainability?</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the BTL initiative contributed to increased school enrollment of children aged 6-15 years (grades 1-9) in Syria since 2013? To what extent have girls and boys benefitted equally from the BTL initiative? Which other factors have positively or negatively contributed to any change in school enrollment?</p> <p>How has the BTL initiative worked in conjunction with other interventions or services to achieve its intended objectives? What has helped or hindered the initiative to achieve its intended objectives?</p> <p>What have been the particular features of the BTL initiative that have made a difference in the lives of girls and boys as the intended beneficiaries?</p> <p>Which unintended impact, positive and negative, has the BTL initiative produced?</p> <p>METHODOLOGY OF THE BTL EVALUATION</p> <p>The key guiding principles for the BTL Evaluation are:</p> <p>The evaluation will be both summative and formative with an appropriate balance between these two aspects.</p> <p>The evaluation will ensure a participatory and transparent approach.</p> <p>Triangulation of data and information will be applied throughout the evaluation process to ensure a robust evidence base.</p> <p>The evaluation approach, data collection and analysis methods will consider child rights, gender sensitivity and equity, and data will as much as possible be disaggregated by sex, age, disability status, geographical location, etc.</p> <p>The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation.</p> <p>Guided by these principles, the aim of contracting a local evaluation firm/institute under this TOR is to provide evaluation field work service (data collection and entry) for the Back to Learning Evaluation.</p> <p>Ethical considerations:</p> <p>Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed in all phases of the evaluation. Specific reference is made to the UNEG and UNICEF ethical guidelines and code of conduct for evaluation. The evaluation methodology should not introduce risks to participants in the evaluation by exploring sensitive issues, or by exposing stakeholders (including children) to security or other risks.</p> <p>Data Collection Methods:</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews: The Evaluation Field Team is expected to conduct about 40 detailed interviews with key informants, either face-to-face where possible or alternatively by telephone or Skype, exact number of KIIs is subject to importance and feasibility. Key informants may include, but not be limited to, UNICEF SCO managers and staff, national governmental and non-governmental partners, beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, and if relevant staff from other UN Agencies. Semi-structured interview protocols are prepared in advance with special attention to be paid to UNICEF's ethical standards.</p> |
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| | <p>Focus Group Discussions: The Evaluation Field Team is also expected to conduct 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) - in a sample of five governorates - with UNICEF staff as well as key stakeholders and beneficiaries as referred to above, exact number of FGDs is subject to importance and feasibility. Such discussions, when appropriately facilitated, may generate a variety of different views from a homogeneous group of people that would provide added value to key informant interviews. Protocols for such FGDs are prepared in advance. Methods for consulting effectively with beneficiaries protocols are prepared in advance with a particular focus on the “do no harm” principle, i.e. ensuring that the safety of beneficiaries and partners is not compromised by any actions of the evaluation team.</p> <p>A brief and voluntary Online Survey: will be designed and disseminated to a purposive sample of UNICEF Staff, implementing partners, focal points in the field and other relevant parties. The survey will allow researchers to record feedback against key evaluation questions in a manner that is timely and unobtrusive, as well as allow for the quantification and cross-verification of qualitative information. The questionnaires will be developed according to basic humanitarian standards and BTL programme documents for each component</p> <p>POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION</p> <p>One of the main limitations of the evaluation will be the access restrictions to certain areas in the country due to the security situation, which is likely to limit the collection of primary data as it may be complicated to conduct interviews, focus group discussions and field visits. This can be mitigated by involving one or more local experts and agreeing in advance on a selected number of sites that are accessible and as representative as possible. In general, every effort should be made to use existing information sources as much as possible, while at the same time triangulating data through various methods. Another expected challenge may be the limited availability of data, especially in the early stages of the BTL initiative, which may complicate the assessment of some aspects of the initiative. The evaluation team is expected to reconstruct the overall Theory of Change (TOC), as part of the Inception Report, based on information provided by UNICEF staff. Staff turnover over the last 4 years means that it may require additional effort to contact first hand informants from the early stages of the BTL initiative. However, this is not considered a significant challenge because current UNICEF SCO will assist with establishing such contacts. In addition, the approach of having two entities to implement the BTL Evaluation on consequent phases, one for data collection (under this TOR) and another for analysis and reporting, might pose a challenge in terms of consistency and smoothness of implementation and will require additional communication and communication through UNICEF.</p> <p>In the technical proposals bidders are expected to indicate how the limitations might be mitigated.</p> |
| <p>Deliverables and reporting requirements</p> | <p>The main deliverables of this service are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Detailed data collection plan, to be provided prior to the initiation of field work (field work is supposed to be conducted from approximately 16 July 2018 to 20 August 2018). (ii) Mid-term Progress Report on the field work (iii) Final Progress Report and soft copy of the cleaned collected data (MS Excel format) for the KIIs, FGDs, and any other data collection method, to be provided by 31 August 2018. <p>All the data forms (soft and hard) should be thoroughly disposed or deleted in accordance with timeframes for secure storage and inquiries pre-determined by UNICEF.</p> <p>The proposed indicative dates for these deliverables are approximate and subject to change. Once the evaluation team has been selected and before the contract is issued, the timeframe will be finalized based on discussions between UNICEF and the evaluation team.</p> |
| <p>Location and Duration</p> | <p>Location: Syria.</p> <p>Duration: 2 months starting from July 2018</p> |
| <p>Qualification requirements</p> | <p>The service should be led by an Evaluation Field-team Leader with the following qualifications:</p> <p>The Evaluation Field-team leader should have the following qualifications:</p> <p>Master’s degree in international development, public administration, education or a related field.</p> |

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| | <p>A minimum of 7 years of professional experience specifically in the area of monitoring and evaluation of international development and humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Track record of conducting a variety of evaluations.</p> <p>In-depth understanding of the context in Syria.</p> <p>Knowledge of UNICEF’s mandate and scope of work, including in the area of education, child rights, gender and equity, would be an advantage.</p> <p>Basic understanding of the Core Commitments for Children, humanitarian principles, Core Humanitarian Standards, gender, equity, human rights based approach to programming, ‘Do No Harm’ principles, and preferably the INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards.</p> <p>Excellent communication and interview skills in Arabic and English.</p> <p>Excellent report writing skills in English.</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.</p> <p>Please note that the Evaluation Field-team Leader will:</p> <p>Report to the evaluation manager at UNICEF Syria Country Office.</p> <p>Work full time on the evaluation throughout its duration.</p> <p>Agree on the plan for all aspects of the evaluation with the evaluation manager.</p> <p>Conduct the evaluation according to UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008), the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016), and UNICEF Ethical Research Guidelines involving children in humanitarian settings (https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/278/).</p> <p>Ensure that the quality of collected data which can be analysed to the highest possible standards.</p> <p>Flag any limitations/constraints to the evaluation manager at the earliest opportunity, so that, as far as possible, they can be addressed, with any outstanding limitations noted in the data collection progress report.</p> <p>Conduct the evaluation with appropriate methodologies.</p> <p>Ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that the evaluation does not increase physical or reputational risks for UNICEF stakeholders.</p> <p>Take responsibility for delivering the tasks in accordance with the Terms of Reference, ensuring the quality of all the evaluation products.</p> |
| <p>Evaluation process and methods</p> | <p>Interested organizations are requested to submit a technical proposal and a financial proposal. The two proposals should be submitted as separate files. The technical proposal should outline the following:</p> <p>Details on how the scope of work, including all deliverables, will be implemented.</p> <p>Demonstrated experience and expertise, including CVs of proposed personnel to be involved in the evaluation, and client references.</p> <p>At least 2 samples (reports) of previous evaluations conducted.</p> |
| <p>Administrative issues</p> | <p>The financial proposal should cover all costs related to the delivery of the services specified in the scope of work, taking into account the following:</p> <p>The evaluation team will use its own equipment, including computers and other materials, in the implementation of this assignment.</p> <p>The evaluation team will not work from UNICEF offices.</p> <p>Any estimated travel costs in the financial proposal should be calculated based on Economy class travel.</p> <p>Any costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals should not exceed applicable Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) rates as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).</p> <p>UNICEF does not provide or arrange life or health insurance coverage for consultants.</p> |

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| <p>Project management</p> | <p>The PME/HACT Section at the UNICEF Syria Country Office will manage the evaluation in close collaboration with the Education Section and the MENA Regional Office, for the required quality assurance throughout the various phases of the evaluation. More specifically, the SCO Chief of Planning, M&E and HACT (P4), supported by the M&E Officer (NOB), will manage the evaluation process from start to end, under the guidance of the UNICEF SCO Deputy Representative.</p> <p>The SCO Monitoring & Evaluation Team in consultation with the Education Programme Section and C4D Team will provide the evaluation team with all relevant reference documents and will facilitate the communication with stakeholders as well as any other data collection. A letter of introduction can be arranged for the evaluation consultants if necessary to facilitate interviews and communication with key stakeholders. The consultants are expected to be fully self-sufficient in terms of office equipment, stationery, communication, office space, transport and other logistics. It will not be possible to work from the UNICEF office.</p> |
| <p>Payment</p> | <p>Payments for the deliverables will be made in 2 installments as follows:</p> <p>50% upon completion of field research activities (indicated in a progress report delivered accordingly). 50% upon provision of collected cleaned data (electronic format) to UNICEF.</p> <p>Conditions of payment:</p> <p>UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of the payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/output is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines. In case of unsatisfactory performance the payment will be withheld until quality deliverables are submitted and approved. If the contractor is unable to complete the assignment, the contract will be terminated by a notification letter sent 30 days prior to the termination date. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another selection in order to identify appropriate contractors.</p> <p>Terms of Payment:</p> <p>Payments shall be made by UNICEF upon receipt of a specified invoice and subject to acceptance of the deliverables by UNICEF.</p> <p>Conditions of payment:</p> <p>UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of the payment in case of unsatisfactory performance or a failure to meet deadlines or deliverables. Payment will be withheld until quality services are delivered and approved. If the contractor is unable to conduct the full scope of work, the contract will be terminated by a notification letter sent 30 days prior to the termination date. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another competitive bidding process in order to identify appropriate service providers.</p> |

Prepared by:

Signature: _____

Arturo Romboli, Chief PME

Date: _____

Reviewed by:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Alessandra Dentice , Deputy Representative

Approved by:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Fran Equiza, Representative

Annex 1c 2018 ToR

**TERMS OF REFERENCE/ADVERTISEMENT FORM**

TITLE OF THE CONSULTANCY: Expert (Analysis and Reporting) for the Evaluation of Back to Learning (BTL) Initiative

SECTION IN CHARGE: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME)

BACKGROUND (RATIONALE AND CONTEXT)

Since March 2011 the crisis in Syria has turned into a wide-ranging conflict that affected millions of people including children who have endured serious suffering and hardships for several years with no end in sight yet. In January 2013 UNICEF declared a Level 3 (L3) emergency and vastly scaled up its programmatic and operational support, both from the UNICEF Syria Country Office (SCO) in Damascus as well as through cross-border assistance from Gaziantep and Amman. A total of five Field Offices were established across Syria and the number of UNICEF SCO staff, both national and international, increased significantly.

As the detrimental effects of the Syria crisis on children and youth became ever more visible, in September 2013 the Education Section of the UNICEF SCO launched the first nationwide Back to Learning (BTL) initiative. The initiative was designed to increase access to education for children in the lower primary school grades (grades 1-4) in all 14 governorates through a combination of community mobilization and provision of education supplies. Due to the crisis, many schools were suffering from a shortage of textbooks and teaching-learning materials, hampering children's meaningful learning. Many of the printing facilities in Syria did not function anymore and the ongoing crisis resulted in the devaluation of the local currency, thereby making it difficult for the Ministry of Education (MOE) to procure and provide textbooks and teaching-learning materials for all schools and children across the country. Furthermore, given the economic downturn and the loss of livelihoods caused by displacement and conflict, many parents were not able to buy school bags, stationery and other school items for their children anymore. As one of the mitigation measures, the Ministry of Education collected all the used textbooks from students at the end of the school year and re-distributed these to newly enrolled students for the next school year. However, many children had to share textbooks with others and found themselves unable to study at home or after school hours.

Therefore, there was a critical need for support which provided the rationale for the BTL initiative to be launched. The BTL initiative focused on increasing overall school enrolment by encouraging families and community members to send children back to school and keep them in school. The main components of the BTL initiative include: provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools. Apart from school bags and basic stationery, other items were also included in the BTL package, such as Early Childhood Education (ECE) kits and recreation-in- a-carton kits.

As noted in the 2015 Evaluation of UNICEF's Humanitarian Response in Syria and the Sub-Region³⁷, education programming in Syria supported over 2.8 million children with access to essential education materials in 2014, nearly

1.

³⁷ Evaluation of UNICEF's Humanitarian Response in Syria and the Sub-Region (2015)

one million children were provided access to essential education materials in 2013, which increased significantly to more than 2.8 million children in 2014. As outlined in the UNICEF SCO 2016 Annual Report, the nationwide Back to Learning initiative reached over 3 million children with textbooks, stationery, and school bags during 2016. In addition, UNICEF and partners rehabilitated 401 schools, benefitting over 189,000 children, and provided 324 prefabricated classrooms, ensuring learning spaces for close to 25,000 children in 2016. In addition to Syrian children the interventions also benefitted the children of Palestinian refugees living in Syria.

Throughout the years, Back to Learning initiative has been implemented in a very challenging context with many access limitations and security constraints. Several modalities were used to access hard-to-reach areas across the country, including UN inter-agency convoys in various governorates. However, for areas such as Al-Hasakeh and Deir- ez-Zor air lifting and air dropping education materials was the only modality to reach children.

In terms of funding, since 2013 the Back to Learning initiative constituted a significant proportion of the Education Section expenditures as well as of the overall SCO budget allocation. The BTL initiative received support from several donors over the years, most notably the European Union (EU), Educate a Child/US Fund, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan and Norway.

For the 2017 Integrated Monitoring & Evaluation Plan (IMEP) the UNICEF Syria Country Office Management Team (CMT) agreed to commission an independent evaluation to assess the various components of the Back to Learning initiative.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY (PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT)

UNICEF Syria Country Office is seeking a qualified evaluation expert in the area of education to analyze existing data and prepare a report that will serve as the final document of the BTL Evaluation. It is important to note that UNICEF SCO has hired a local service provider who is currently conducting the field work in order to collect the necessary data to inform the evaluation.

The BTL evaluation intends to serve an accountability function (summative) as well as a learning function (formative). The significant scale of the programmatic support, including supplies, provided under the Back to Learning initiative since 2013, in combination with the significant amount of funding, necessitates an accountability function towards the expected beneficiaries, i.e. children and their families, as well as UNICEF and key stakeholders including national and international partners. At the same time, the learning function is important for drawing lessons from the implementation of such a wide-scale initiative over a period of 4 years (2013-2016) in a protracted emergency context. The evaluation is expected to provide evidence for decision-makers regarding the extent to which the BTL initiative contributed to a change in the number of children enrolled in school and recommendations regarding any suggested adjustments or new approaches for the BTL initiative.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The focus will be on Syrian children as well as children of Palestinian refugees living in Syria. The evaluation will collect and analyze relevant data through various methods (as indicated in the Description of the assignment below), and will generate key findings,

conclusions, lessons and recommendations for enhanced programming by UNICEF in Syria and potentially in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- I. Assess the key programme interventions of the various components of the BTL initiative, including the collaboration between different sections and teams in the UNICEF SCO (central office and field offices, Supply & Logistics Team, C4D Team), and the collaboration with various national and international partners across Syria as well as the interaction with beneficiaries.
- II. Identify good practices, challenges faced and lessons learned from the BTL initiative.
- III. Provide recommendations on the future scope and approach of the BTL initiative, including any suggested adjustments or new approaches as well as specific recommendations for similar initiatives in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.

The study should take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights³⁸. The proposed study, in all its phases, should adhere to UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008)³⁹, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016)⁴⁰, “UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis⁴¹”, and UNICEF Ethical Research Guidelines involving children in humanitarian settings⁴².

The main intended users of the evaluation include managers and staff in the UNICEF Syria Country Office; managers and advisors in the UNICEF MENA Regional Office, Headquarters and Country Offices in humanitarian emergencies; UNICEF partners including national governmental and non-governmental organizations, other education sector partners, donors and other UN Agencies; as well as other interested stakeholders.

The temporal scope of the evaluation is expected to cover the period from May 2013 to May 2018. The geographic focus of the evaluation covers all 14 governorates of Syria. The Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews were conducted in a sample of five governorates. It should be noted that there are a number of besieged and hard-to-reach areas in certain governorates where no UNICEF support could be provided through the BTL initiative. In terms of programmatic focus the evaluation will cover the following three key components of the BTL initiative included: provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools. The C4D component consists of a comprehensive media campaign, including messages via radio, TV, sms, and billboards, as well as community mobilization through door-to-door visits to raise awareness on school registration and timely enrollment. The evaluation will not include UNICEF-supported interventions to enhance non-formal education which were only initiated fairly recently. Overall, the evaluation should take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights.

1. _____

2. ³⁸ Refer to United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*. New York: UNEG, www.unevaluation.org/guidance/HRGE

³⁹ Refer to UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>

⁴⁰ Refer to UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787>

⁴¹ Refer to: https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

⁴² Refer to: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/706-ethical-research-involving-children.html>

In order to achieve the main objectives of the evaluation, the following specific evaluation questions will need to be answered:

Relevance

- Considering UNICEF's mandate and programmatic focus, how relevant has the Back to Learning initiative been in response to the education needs of children in Syria? To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with UNICEF's actual or perceived comparative advantage?
- Did UNICEF SCO develop a clear strategy for the BTL initiative from the start? How clear was the theory of change and was it plausible? Were other strategic options considered?
- To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with national priorities and international commitments, e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Core Commitments to Children (CCC), No Lost Generation (NLG Initiative)?
- To what extent have the various components of the BTL initiative been appropriate and proportionate to need? Key components include the provision of school supplies; Communication for Development (C4D); and support for the rehabilitation of schools.
- Was the BTL initiative adequately informed by a needs assessment and a clear situation analysis? To what extent were these reviewed and updated on a regular basis? To what extent is the C4D component of the BTL initiative informed by an analysis of possible social barriers to education? Has specific attention been given to disaggregated analysis of the needs of children, their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of the country?
- How responsive has the BTL initiative been to changes in the external environment, including the evolving role of national and international partners?

Effectiveness

- How effective has the BTL initiative been in achieving its objectives? Which components have been most and least effective? Which evidence exists concerning the results of the BTL initiative since its launch in 2013?
- What is the quality of the programme monitoring and reporting systems of UNICEF SCO and its partners in the BTL initiative? To what extent have results been disaggregated by sex, age, disability, geographic location and other variables?
- To what extent has UNICEF's choice of partners been appropriate and based on an adequate assessment of capacity? Were implementing partners engaged in pre-BTL capacity building activities to ensure effective quality delivery of interventions? Has consideration been given to any alternative partnership options available to UNICEF?
- How effectively did UNICEF and its partners engage with beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, including children (girls and boys), their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of Syria, regarding the design and implementation of the support? Which - if any - processes of beneficiary feedback were put in place, and if so, how were the key findings used for decision-making?
- As the situation in the country evolved over the years, to what extent did UNICEF consider a resilience-based approach through community engagement as part of the BTL initiative?
- To what extent has UNICEF SCO taken into consideration cross-cutting issues including equity, gender and disability in implementing the BTL initiative? Was adequate attention given to child rights and equity issues, including discrimination and social exclusion?

Efficiency

- How efficiently did UNICEF SCO use its resources, including funds, staff and supplies in implementing the BTL initiative?
- To what extent has the staff capacity and skills mix at UNICEF SCO and partners been adequate for the implementation of the BTL initiative over the years? Has there been specific training provided to staff and partners to ensure quality planning and management of BTL interventions?
- How efficient was the financial management and risk management of the BTL initiative?
- To what extent have donors provided adequate, un-earmarked and multi-year resources to the Education Section to enable the full implementation of the BTL initiative? To what extent did any dependence on particular funding sources constrain or support UNICEF's implementation of the BTL initiative?

Coverage

- To what extent has the BTL initiative been able to reach families and children in different areas of the country without gender bias or geographical bias?
- What have been the enabling and constraining factors in reaching families and children? Which lessons can be learned about the most effective means of ensuring access?
 - o Through innovation
 - o Through the application of alternative programming
 - o By advocating for increased access
 - o By forming partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and other actors

Coordination

- To what extent has UNICEF coordinated the BTL initiative with national and international actors?
- To what extent has a cross-sectoral approach been applied and which lessons can be drawn from that?
- To what extent has UNICEF established effective working relations with national partners (governmental and non-governmental) at central and local levels in Syria? To what extent has UNICEF provided support for capacity development of partners where necessary to better coordinate and implement the BTL initiative?
- To what extent has the BTL initiative maximized convergence with other programmes within UNICEF SCO and how did this support the achievement of the expected targets?

Sustainability

- How sustainable are the results of the BTL initiative, especially considering the continuously changing situation in the country, the role of national and international partners, and funding prospects?
- To what extent is there ownership of the BTL initiative at national and local level?
- Has the BTL initiative equipped parents with adequate information on the right to education and options for their children to continue learning?
- What are the possibilities for the BTL model of intervention (as a whole or some of its components) to be more widely replicated or adopted?
- To what extent have other stakeholders provided financial support for the operationalization of the BTL initiative? Which possibilities would there be for the Ministry of Education to financially contribute to the BTL initiative to enhance sustainability?

Impact

- To what extent has the BTL initiative contributed to increased school enrollment of children aged 6-15 years (grades 1-9) in Syria since 2013? To what extent have girls and boys benefitted equally from the BTL

initiative? Which other factors have positively or negatively contributed to any change in school enrollment?

- How has the BTL initiative worked in conjunction with other interventions or services to achieve its intended objectives? What has helped or hindered the initiative to achieve its intended objectives?
- What have been the particular features of the BTL initiative that have made a difference in the lives of girls and boys as the intended beneficiaries?
- Which unintended impact, positive and negative, has the BTL initiative produced?

METHODOLOGY OF THE BTL EVALUATION

During the inception phase (already completed by another consultant), a detailed methodology was agreed, informed by the following key principles:

- The evaluation will be both summative and formative with an appropriate balance between these two aspects.
- The evaluation will ensure a participatory and transparent approach.
- Triangulation of data and information will be applied throughout the evaluation process to ensure a robust evidence base.
- The evaluation approach, data collection and analysis methods will consider child rights, gender sensitivity and equity, and data will as much as possible be disaggregated by sex, age, disability status, geographical location, etc.
- The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation.

The methodology used in the data collection phase, relied on multiple data sources and data collection approaches, including:

- Key Informant Interviews: The consultant conducted around 40 detailed interviews with key informants, which included, amongst others, UNICEF SCO managers and staff, national governmental and non-governmental partners, beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, and relevant staff from other UN Agencies. Semi-structured interview protocols were prepared in advance with special attention to be paid to UNICEF's ethical standards.
- Focus Group Discussions: The consultant conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) - in a sample of five governorates - with UNICEF staff as well as key stakeholders and beneficiaries as referred to above. Protocols for FGDs were prepared in advance by the team.
- Online Survey: The consultant conducted a brief online survey with UNICEF Staff, implementing partners, focal points in the field and other relevant parties.
- Desk Review: in addition to analyzing the data collected by the other consultant, the Evaluation Team will conduct a detailed desk review of relevant documents to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the context of the evaluation and key issues.

Guided by this methodology, the aim of contracting an evaluation consultant under this TOR is to conduct data analysis and prepare the evaluation report for the Back to Learning Evaluation.

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

A potential challenge may be the limited availability of data, especially in the early stages of the BTL initiative, which may complicate the assessment of some aspects of the initiative. The evaluation expert is expected to reconstruct the overall Theory of Change (TOC), as part of the Evaluation Report, based on information provided by UNICEF staff. Staff turnover over the last 4 years means that it may require additional effort to contact first hand informants from the early stages of the BTL initiative. However, this is not considered a significant challenge because current UNICEF SCO will assist with establishing such contacts. In addition, the approach of having two entities to implement the BTL Evaluation on consequent phases, one for data collection (under other consultancy) and another for analysis and reporting (under this TOR), might pose a challenge in terms of consistency and smoothness of implementation and will require additional communication and communication through UNICEF.

In the technical proposals bidders are expected to indicate how the limitations might be mitigated.

LOCATION (GEOGRAPHIC AREA/ DUTY STATION):

On-site working days: N/A

Off-site working days: 35 working days within 3 months' period

Field Missions/Travel: N/A

DURATION

Estimated Start Date: 15 October 2018

Estimated End Date: 25 December 2018

The selected consultant will work for a period of (35) work days within (3) months. It is envisaged that the assignment will be home-based. The exact schedule of the activities will be agreed with the consultant based on the consultancy implementation progress. The approximate deadline for submission of final deliverables to UNICEF is at the end of the contract.

SUPERVISOR

The PME Section at the UNICEF Syria Country Office will manage the evaluation in close collaboration with the MENA Regional Office for the required quality assurance throughout the various phases of the evaluation. More specifically, the SCO Chief of PME/HACT (P4), supported by the M&E Officer (NOB), will manage the evaluation process from start to end, under the guidance of the UNICEF SCO Deputy Representative.

The SCO PME section in consultation with the Education and C4D sections will provide the evaluation expert with all relevant reference documents and will facilitate the communication with stakeholders as well as any other data collection validation. The expert is expected to be fully self-sufficient in terms of office equipment, stationery, communication, office space. It will not be possible to work from the UNICEF office.

SOURCING OF THE CONSULTANCY: (Please specify)

Roster/Desk Review Advertisement/Recruitment Others (Single sourcing) NFR attached

The section will advertise the post in the case the roster/desk review process is not successful.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT (TASKS, SMART DELIVERABLES, DEADLINES):

| Tasks | End Products/ Deliverables | Duration/ Deadline |
|---|--|--|
| Conduct a desk review of relevant project documents and information. | Desk review is conducted to be included in the draft evaluation report. | By the end of 1 st month of the contract. |
| Analyze the collected data of FGDs, KIIs, and survey, knowing that the FGDs and KIIs data are in Arabic. | Tabulated results summarized for each interviewed group according to the questionnaires and the evaluation matrix. Disaggregation of results (by sex, age, category of respondent, and geography) is required. The tables should be provided in MS Excel sheets. | By the end of 1 st month of the contract. |
| Draft an Evaluation Report based on UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards. This includes reconstructing a Theory of Change (TOC) for the BTL Initiative. | Standard draft evaluation report (written in English). The draft report should be about 50 pages (approximately 20,000 words) plus Executive Summary and annexes. | By the end of 2 nd month of the contract. |
| Prepare the final report of the BTL Evaluation through revising the draft report incorporating/addressing the feedback and comments provided by the Evaluation Management Team. | Final evaluation report (written in English). | By the end of the contract. |

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)

ICT CONSIDERATIONS (PLEASE CHECK IF APPLICABLE)

Access to electronic Information Resources UNICEF email ID ICT Hardware (please specify):

TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS (PLEASE CHECK IF APPLICABLE)

None Commencement travel (consultant’s cost) Mission travel (schedule/itinerary required):

For individual contractors and consultants, all travel arrangements to commence the assignment, including insurance and visas, will be managed and paid by the individual. Therefore, expected travel costs must be included as a budget item in the financial proposal. Should “mission travel” be required, UNICEF will manage and pay for travel via Travel Authorization. However, this will be subject to the following prerequisites: Medical Clearance, Security Clearance

through the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) system, the Basic and Advanced Security in the Field Trainings, Travel Visa, and liability waiver. Trip prerequisites will be met at the expense of the consultant.

Travel cost shall be calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel. Costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC at <http://icsc.un.org>). The consultant must travel on UNICEF approved airlines.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Education:

Advanced university degree (minimum Master's degree) in international development, public administration, education or a related field.

2. Work experience:

- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience specifically in the area of monitoring and evaluation of international development and humanitarian assistance.
- Substantial international track record of conducting a variety of evaluations, preferably including outcome and impact evaluations in different countries and organizations.
- Demonstrated experience in leading multi-disciplinary evaluation teams.

3. Technical knowledge/ competencies:

- General understanding of the context of working in a humanitarian emergency.
- Knowledge of UNICEF's mandate and scope of work, including in the area of education, child rights, gender and equity, would be an advantage.
- Advanced understanding of the Core Commitments for Children, humanitarian principles, Core Humanitarian Standards, gender, equity, human rights based approach to programming, 'Do No Harm' principles, and INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards.
- Excellent communication, data analysis and reporting skills in Arabic and English.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines

4. Language:

- Proficient in Arabic and English.

FUNDING SOURCE AND ESTIMATED COST TO UNICEF

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| WBS/ Funding Reference | 4140/A0/05/880/013/001 |
| Grant and its Expiry Date | SM149910, expiry date: 31 December 2018, amount to be committed: USD 18,375 |
| Budget Year | |
| Estimated Cost to UNICEF | The envisaged consultancy fee is 525 USD a day. The total consultancy fee for 35 workdays will be 18,375 USD paid in following two instalments: a) First installment is 65% (11,944 USD) upon submission of Draft evaluation report, second month of the contract; b) Second installment is 35% (6,431 USD) upon submission/provision of Final evaluation report, end of the contract. |

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

UNICEF will only make milestone payment based on achievement of specific deliverables as listed on the table above. These payments should be stated in terms of percentage. Also note that UNICEF does not make advance payment except under certain conditions in line with UNICEF Financial Rules and Regulations.

EVALUATION PROCESS (OF APPLICATIONS)

Qualified candidates are requested to submit

1. Cover letter/application.
2. Financial quote as lump sum for professional fees, and lump sum for travel/administrative/subsistence, if applicable.
3. CV.
4. Examples of previous, relevant work as applicable
5. Proposed methodology/approach to managing the project.
6. At least 2 Referees.
7. P 11 form (which can be downloaded from our website [here](#).)

Successful applicants may be invited for further technical assessment and offers will be evaluated by the following criteria:

| | Applicant |
|---|-----------|
| TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION (max. 80 points) | |
| Overall Response (10 points) | |
| Understanding of tasks, objectives and completeness and coherence of response | |
| Overall match between the TOR requirements and proposal | |
| Proposed Methodology and Approach (20 points) | |
| Quality of proposed approach/methodology | |
| Quality of proposed work plan | |
| Technical Capacity (50 points) | |
| Relevance of consultant's experience with similar projects and as per required qualifications | |
| Quality of previous work | |
| References | |
| TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION - Total Points | |
| | |
| FINANCIAL PROPOSAL (max. 20 points) | |
| Professional fees | |
| Administrative costs (travel, per diems, insurance, etc.) | N/A |
| Total estimated cost of contract (proposed contract fee only) | |
| FINANCIAL PROPOSAL - Weight Combined Score | |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| TOTAL SCORE (max. 100 points) | |
|--------------------------------------|--|

Prepared by

Supervisor/ Chief of Section

Date

Reviewed by

Human Resources Manager/ Officer

Date

Endorsed by

Deputy Representative

Date

Approved by

Representative

Date

Annex 2 - Key Informants

| Name | Position |
|-----------------------|---|
| Abdel Karim Al Khoder | Director of Planning, Ministry of Education, Syria |
| Adriana Vogelaar | Chief Education, UNICEF MENA Regional Office |
| Arturo Romboli | Chief PME, UNICEF Syria County Office |
| Aurelia Ardito | Education Specialist, UNICEF SCO |
| Aya Elbizem | PME Officer, UNICEF SCO |
| Bart Vrolijk | Previous Chief of Education UNICEF SCO |
| Basel Haj Hasoun | Logistics officer, Operation Section, Damascus, UNICEF |
| Bayan Al Mekdad | Information Management Officer, Education SCO |
| Charles Nabongo | Education Specialist, UNICEF SCO |
| Essau N'Gatta | Supply & Logistics Manager, Operation Section, Damascus, UNICEF |
| Etab Khajo | Education Officer, UNICEF Qamishli FO |
| Farida_Aboudan | Education Specialist, UNICEF MENA Regional Office |
| Fayez Al-Mikdad | Director of Research, Afkar |
| Fiaz Shah | Education Specialist UNICEF SCO |
| Fran Equiza | Representative, UNICEF SCO |
| Friedrich Affolter | Chief Education, UNICEF SCO |
| Hala Alsebaai | Education Officer, UNICEF Homs FO |
| Hani Al-Hassoun | Director of Projects, Afkar |
| Hassan Kabboul | Construction engineer, UNICEF SCO |
| Hassan Murtada | Aoun (NGO), Homs |
| Hiroki Miyoshi | First Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Syria |
| Ibrahim Elsheikh | C4D specialist/chief of section, UNICEF SCO |
| Ibrahim Elsheikh | C4D Specialist UNICEF SCO |
| Jaydaa Warde | Education Officer, UNICEF DFO |
| Karim Rizk | Planning Specialist, UNICEF SCO |
| Lidia Tutarinova | Reports Specialist, UNICEF SCO |
| M. Osama Antabi | Education Officer, UNICEF Aleppo FO |
| Mai AlMeer Ghaleb | Education Officer, Tartous UNICEF FO |
| Mais Allobaidy | C4D Officer, UNICEF SCO |
| Manal Kheder | Education consultant, UNICEF DFO |
| Mohamad Kinan Turkawi | Education Officer, UNICEF Homs FO |
| Mohammad Taleb | Information Management Officer, Sectors / Education & Child Protection, UNICEF SCO |
| Nadine Shneker | Admin. Ass. Education / Project Coordinator BtL, Mar Afram |
| Oula Takouz | Senior Supply Associate, Programme Section, Damascus, UNICEF |
| Rafi Yoseph | Education Officer, UNICEF Qamishli FO |
| Rania Zakhia | Education Sector Coordinator UNICEF Syria Country Office |
| Ranim Ahmad | Former BTL focal point in MoE |
| Rasha Rayes | Education Specialist, UNICEF SCO |
| Samar Serafi | Former BTL focal point in MoE |
| Sawsan Youssef | Resource Mobilization Manager, UNICEF SCO |
| Serene Habbal | C4D Officer, UNICEF DFO |
| Shaza Mouawad | Programme Associate, C4D, UNICEF SCO |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Shirin Kanhoush | Education Officer, UNICEF SCO |
| Siham Zakaria | Education Officer, UNICEF SCO |
| Simon Stumpf | First Secretary – Syria Team Multilateral Coordination, Stabilization and Resilience German Embassy in Lebanon |
| Yasser Hemidy | Education Officer, UNICEF Aleppo FO |

Annex 3 – Focus groups

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Aleppo | 1- FGD Beneficiaries Nyrab 2- FGD Beneficiaries Jibreen 3- FGD Beneficiaries Maysaloun 4-FGD Drop out_ Non enrolled 5-KII Principal Maysaloun 6-KII Principal Jibreen 7-KII Principal Nyrab 8-KII Community Outreach 9-KII Stakeholders and MOE 10-KII Education Officers |
| Hama | 1- FGD Beneficiaries Al-Salmiya 2- FGD Beneficiaries Hama 3- FGD Beneficiaries Musayaf 4-FGD Drop out_ Non enrolled 5-KII Principal Al-Salmiya 6-KII Principal Musayaf 7-KII Principal Hama 8-KII Community Outreach 9-KII Stakeholders and MOE 10-KII Education Officers |
| Homs | 1- FGD Beneficiaries Al-Arman Neighborhood 2- FGD Beneficiaries Fahel 3- FGD Beneficiaries Hassia 4-FGD Drop out_ Non enrolled 5-KII Principal Al-Arman Neighborhood 6-KII Principal Hassia 7-KII Principal Fahel 8-KII Community Outreach 9-KII Stakeholders and MOE 10-KII Education Officers |
| Rural Damascus | 1- FGD Beneficiaries Al-Ghizlaniyah 2- FGD Beneficiaries Ashrafeyat Sehnaya 3- FGD Beneficiaries Njha 4-FGD Drop out_ Non enrolled 5-KII Principal Al-Ghizlaniyah 6-KII Principal Ashrafeyat Sehnaya 7-KII Principal Njha 8-KII Community Outreach 9-KII Stakeholders and MOE 10-KII Education Officers |
| Tartous | 1- FGD Beneficiaries Al-Raml neighborhood |

- 2- FGD Beneficiaries Bserah
 - 3- FGD Beneficiaries Banyas
 - 4- FGD Beneficiaries Sheikh Saad
 - 5-KII Principal Banyas
 - 6-KII Principal Al-Raml neighborhood
 - 7-KII Principal Bserah
 - 8-KII Principal Sheikh Saad
 - 9-KII Community Outreach
 - 10-KII Stakeholders and MOE
 - 11-KII Education Officers
-

Annex 4 – Mapping of PCAs

| Governorate | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-------------|------|---|--|------|------|
| | | Al Ihsan charity / campaign 22 Nov 2015 - 22 sept 2016 | GVC / campaign and rehab 18 months - 1,287,561 \$ Target: 36,208 children (aged 5-17) with follow activities: - 15000 out of school children will be sensitized through the Back to Learning campaigns, Self-Learning Program Campaign and Mining Awareness Campaign. 8,250 children will receive school bags as part of the campaign. - 5000 children at risk of dropping will benefit from remedial classes. - 2000 children out of the school will be enrolled in supervised Self Learning Programme and will receive supplementary materials. - 5938 children will benefit from school rehabilitated. In addition to receiving recreational materials. - 320 teachers and educational personal will be trained on Self Learning Program and PSS - 1000 teachers will receive pedagogical guides on PSS and mine awareness Location: Aleppo Governorate | | |

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| | | <p>Al Ihsan charity / campaign 1 month - 14,326.6 \$ Target 40,000 children</p> <p>Aleppo city and rural areas</p> | <p>Ahl Alkheir / campaign - NOT IMPLEMENTED 4 months - 23,691 \$ Target: 4,000 out of school children 28,000 parent/care giver trough door to door visit 30,000 adults and parents through on-street promotion 300 school principal, parent, caregiver through community dialogue 300 adolescent through initiatives 15,000 children with special focus on disabilities</p> <p>Location: Aleppo governorate (city and rural including 30 location in As-Safira, 5 locations in Al-Bab, 20 location in Manbej, 20 location in Jebel samnan, 2 location in Azaz)</p> | | |
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| <p>Hama</p> | | <p>Masyaf / campaign 2 months - 45,045.93 \$ Target 50,000 people (35,000 children and 15,000 parents)</p> <p>Location Masyaf and rural area -jeb ramleh-oj-ein halaqim –wadi el-oyoun</p> | <p>Masyaf / campaign 4 months - 18,747 \$ Target 4,000 caregivers (3,300 Caregivers door-to-door + 700 parents through activities) + 2,400 children through activities</p> <p>Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 4,000 parents/caregivers and 2400 children through door-to-door activities • 12 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 10 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 11 Theatre shows organized by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses. <p>Location Masyaf city and rural area -Jeb Ramleh – Almahrouseh –Ba'arin-Albydiah – Oj – Nisaf –Deirmama- Albayda - Ein halaqim – Wadi el-oyoun and Salhab city.</p> | | |
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| | | <p>Social care / campaign 2 months - 49,953.14 \$ Target 60,000 people (40,000 children and 20,000 parents)</p> <p>Location Hama city and rural (Suran, Kazo, Teizine , Kafr Bihem, Al-masafi, Mbarkat- Alswaeq- Halfaya)</p> | <p>Social care / campaign 4 months - 19,815 \$ Target 4,000 Care givers (3,300 Caregivers through door-to-door visits + 700 parents through activities) + 2,400 children through activities Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 3,300 parents/caregivers and 2400 children through door-to-door activities • 12 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 12 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 12 Theatre shows organized by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses. <p>Location Hama City Janoub Al-Malaab, Gharb Al-Mashtal, Hader, Tareeb Halab, Qusour Hama Countryside: Al- Sawaek</p> | | |
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| | | | <p>Al Bir Hama / campaign 4 months - 18,825 \$ Target 4,000 Caregivers (3,300 Caregivers door-to-door + 700 parents through activities) + 2,400 children through activities Hama City: Hay Teshreen Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 4,000 parents/caregivers and 2400 children through door-to-door activities • 12 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 1 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 12 Theatre shows organized by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses. <p>Location Hama rural: Jarjisah, Bserin, Om Jerm, Smakh, Job Khsara, Rasm amoun, Enak Bajerah, Bashakem, Kasr Ibn Wardan, Nabee Altayeb, Madiqu (HTR), Sheer(HTR), Khatab</p> | | |
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| <p>Homs</p> | | <p>Al Bir Homs / campaign 2 months - 29,479.69 \$ Target 18,000 People (8000 children&10000 parents)</p> <p>Loation Farqalas , Qaryatein , Maskana , Dahiet Elasad , Der Baalba , Aldablan , Karm Ash- shami , Al mokhayyam , Al mahatta , Masaken Almsfa</p> | <p>Al Bir Homs / campaign 4 months - 17,795 \$ Target 3,100 caregivers (2,700 families door-to-door visits + 400 parents through activities) + 2,400 children through activities</p> <p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 2,700 parents/caregivers and 1,800 children through door-to-door activities • 7 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 7 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 7 Theatre shows organized by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses <p>Location Maskana , Dahiat Alasad , Der Baalba and Alzhouria , Dablan and Jourat Ashayyah , Karm Alshamy , Mahatta and Midan , Alqusour.</p> | | |
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| | | <p>Aoun / campaign 2 months - 45,382.06 \$ Target 22,600 (4,600 children , 18,000 families</p> <p>Location Homs City: Alghota & Malaab, Midan, Old city, Allkhydr, Shammass, Idikhar, Masaken algharbia HTR: Alwaer, Teermaale, Ghanto Rural Homs: Kafraya, Talelshoor, Rubaiaa, Manzul</p> | <p>Aoun / campaign 4 months - 19,913 \$ Target 4,200 Caregivers (3,500 through door-to-door visits + 700 through activities) + 2,400 children through activities</p> <p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 4,200 parents/caregivers and 2400 children through door-to-door activities • 12 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 10 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 12 Theatre shows organized by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses. <p>Location Ghota, Malaab, Manzol, Khidr, Oldcity, Shammass, Idikhar, Masaken gharbia, Kafraya, Talelshor, Rubaia, Waeer</p> | | |
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| | | <p>Inshaat / campaign 2 months - 35,440.41 \$ Target 19.000 people (9000 children and 10.000 parents/caregivers)</p> <p>Target Homs, Tawze Ejbari Fardos: Inshaat Homs, Amr wa Sultaniya: Baba Amr Homs: Oras Homs: Rayyan Hasyaa: Hasyaa albalad Hasyaa: Hasyaa Industrial Hasyaa: Dibeh Hasyaa: Breij Hadideh: Hadideh Al Quasir: Hseiniyeh Al Quasir: Shinshar</p> | <p>Inshaat / campaign 3 months - 15,420 \$ Target 4,400 caregivers (3800 families door-to-door + 600 parents through activities) + 2,400 children through activities Acheived</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 3,800 parents/caregivers and 2400 children through door-to-door activities • 10 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 10 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 10 Theatre shows organised by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses. <p>Location Homs City: Tawze Ejbari, Fardos, Amr wa Sultaniya Homs rural: Oras, Rayyan, Hasyaa albalad, Hasyaa Industrial, Dibeh, Hseiniyeh, Shinshar</p> | | |
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| | | <p>Kareem Charity / campaign 2 months - 32,572.47 \$ Target (22,000 people, 12000 children and 10,000 parents/caregivers)</p> <p>Location Homs (muhajireen , eastern arman,wadiaddahab , ikrima – shein – al mukharam – kherbet tin noor – al kabu –Tadrin - sabil)</p> | <p>Kareem Charity / campaign 3 months - 14,954 \$ Target 4,000 Caregivers (3,300 caregivers through door-to-door + 700 through activities) + 2,400 children through activities Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 volunteers trained on Communication skills • 3,300 parents/caregivers and 2400 children through door-to-door activities • 10 community meetings were held and attended by influential community figures. • 4 Child & Parents engagements activities were organized • 5 BTL help desk setting up and managed • 4 initiatives lidded by adolescent were implemented targeting BTL barriers • 10 Theatre shows organised by children and adolescents discussing BTL barriers • 500 children receiving BTL promotional items addressing social barriers • 200 children benefited from school ID enrolment cards photocopying and other minor expenses. <p>Location Homs city; Al Mohajreen; Eastern AL Arman; Asabil, Ekrema, ALzahra'a, Abbasia, Wadi Al Zahab and Ashera Rural Homs: Shin , Mokharam Fokani , Talkalakh</p> | | |
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Annex 5 – List of Documents

| | Title | Author | Year |
|----|--|---|------|
| 1 | 2013 AWP Emergency - Education | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 2 | 2014 AWP – Quality Education | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 3 | 2015 AWP – Quality Education | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 4 | 2015 HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW - Syrian Arab Republic | OCHA on behalf of humanitarian partners working on the Syria Response | 2014 |
| 5 | 2016 HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW - Syrian Arab Republic | OCHA | 2015 |
| 6 | 2016-2017 Consolidated AWP | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 7 | 2017 HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW - Syrian Arab Republic | OCHA | 2016 |
| 8 | Al Birr Hama-Social welfare charity – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Al Birr Hama-Social welfare charity | 2018 |
| 9 | Al-Birr Association for charity and social services – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Al-Birr Association for charity and social services | 2018 |
| 10 | B2S Survey – Syria – January – February 2016 (ppt) | J. Walter Thompson Worldwide | 2016 |
| 11 | Back to Learning - Syria Communication for Development Activities (ppt) | UNICEF - Tamara Abu Sham | 2016 |
| 12 | Back to Learning 2017-18 Campaign Evaluation | Memac | 2018 |
| 13 | Back to Learning C4D Programme – Final Report | Monastery of Saint James | 2019 |
| 14 | Back to Learning Campaign Report | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 15 | Back to Learning Initiative - “Effective Interpersonal Communication for Behavioral Change” - Training of Trainers Workshop Report | Darine Najem | 2018 |
| 16 | Back to Learning Pre-Campaign Report | Memac | 2017 |
| 17 | Barrier Analysis for Back to Learning | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 18 | BTL 2013/14 (Reflection on BtL) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 19 | BTL 2014/15 (Reflection on BtL) | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 20 | BTL 2015/16 (Reflection on BtL) | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 21 | BTL 2016/17 – Implementation of the action - Progress towards the expected results (Reflection on BtL) | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 22 | BtL Campaign 2016 – Final Report | Nour Foundation | 2016 |
| 23 | BTL Communication Campaign Strategy Note | Memac | 2017 |
| 24 | BtL Distribution Plan 2015-16 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 25 | BtL Distribution Plan 2016-17 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 26 | BtL messages 2018-2019 | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 27 | BtL School bags (distribution) 2017 | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 28 | BtL TOT Module Production and Training and cascade training plan | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 29 | BTL-2015 Brief Paper for Aleppo Campaign | UNICEF? | 2015 |
| 30 | C4D PD template and Itemized Cost Estimate | UNICEF | |
| 31 | Child Rights Society – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Child Rights Society | 2019 |
| 32 | Communication for Development Annual Report 2018 | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 33 | Consolidated Emergency report – Luxembourg – 2015-2016 | UNICEF | 2016 |

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| 34 | Consolidated Emergency report – Luxembourg – June-December 2015 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 35 | Consolidated Emergency report – Sweden – 2015-2016 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 36 | Consolidated Emergency report – Sweden – April-December 2015 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 37 | Consolidated Emergency report ‘Whole of Syria’ – UK – January 2015-March 2016 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 38 | Contribution Summary – Denmark 2012 | UNICEF | 2012 |
| 39 | Contribution Summary (Multi-year funding from the Government of Canada) March 2017 – December 2018 | UNICEF | 2019 |
| 40 | Country Programme Document – Syrian Arab Republic | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 41 | Creating a Path to Early Recovery for Education in Syria (June 2014 to May 2015) - Progress Report to the EU | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 42 | Creating a Path to Early Recovery for Education in Syria (June 2013 to 31 January 2016) - Donor Report to the EU | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 43 | Creating a Path to Early Recovery for Education in Syria-Phase II – Donor Proposal (to the EU) | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 44 | Creating a Path to Early Recovery for Education in Syria-Phase II (September 2015 - November 2017) – Donor Report to the EU | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 45 | Donor Report – Norway – December 2016-December 2017 | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 46 | Donor Report – Norway – December 2017-December 2018 | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 47 | DRAFT C4D Concept Note to support: “BACK TO LEARNING INITIATIVE” 2018-2019 | UNICEF Syria in collaboration with MOE and other partners | 2018 |
| 48 | Emergency Assistance to Syrian Children in Schools - Proposal to the Government of Japan for Assistance through Supplementary Budget | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 49 | EPDC – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - EPDC | 2019 |
| 50 | Equitable Access to Education for Out-of-School Children affected by the Crisis in Syria – Donor Proposal | UNICEF | |
| 51 | Equitable Access to Education for Out-of-School Children affected by the Crisis in Syria - A report prepared for the Educate A Child Initiative of the Education Above All Foundation | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 52 | Equitable access to education for out-of-school children affected by the crisis in Syria - Progress Report - Educate a Child (EAC) and the US Fund for UNICEF - 1 April – 31 December 2014 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 53 | Equitable Access to Education for Out-of-School Children affected by the Crisis in Syria - A report prepared for the Educate A Child Initiative of the Education Above All Foundation | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 54 | Evaluation of Back to Learning initiative in Syria – survey tabulated results | Afkar? | 2018 |
| 55 | Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide | ALNAP | 2016 |
| 56 | Everybody Keep on Learning - “Tabi’ou Ta’leemakom” campaign - Concept Note | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 57 | Final [donor] Report Canada Contribution to UNICEF - Syria Crisis Support to 2015 ‘No Lost Generation’ | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 58 | Final messages | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 59 | Final Report to the Government of Japan for assistance through the Supplementary Budget (February-November 2015) | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 60 | GoPa – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - GoPA | 2019 |
| 61 | Inshaat Association - Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Inshaat Association | 2018 |
| 62 | Islamic Charity Association-Aoun - Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Islamic Charity Association - Aoun | 2018 |

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| 63 | Kareem Charity for Social and Charitable Services - Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Kareem Charity for Social and Charitable Services | 2018 |
| 64 | Mabarrat – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Mabarrat | 2019 |
| 65 | Masyaf charity NGO - Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Masyaf charity NGO | 2018 |
| 66 | Modified campaign messages | Memac | 2017 |
| 67 | Monastery of Saint James – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Monastery of Saint James | 2019 |
| 68 | No Lost Generation 2015 Syria Crisis Update | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 69 | No Lost Generation initiative 2015 – Proposal to Luxembourg | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 70 | No Lost Generation initiative 2015 – Proposal to the Government of Canada | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 71 | No Lost Generation Update, January – June 2016 | No Lost Generation | 2016 |
| 72 | Prioritization (internal document) | UNICEF | |
| 73 | Programme Document | Nour Foundation for Relief and Development | 2016 |
| 74 | Programme Document | Syrian Mar Afram Patriarchy for Development (EPCD) | 2016 |
| 75 | Programme Document - ‘We are with you’ 2 | Jameyat Osrat Al Ikhaa Al Souriya Bi Allazikia | 2017 |
| 76 | Programme Document – Ageal Al Ghad (4) | Islamic Charity Association Aoun for Relief & Development | 2017 |
| 77 | Programme Document – AL-Jadawel | Al-Birr Association for charity and social services | 2017 |
| 78 | Programme Document – Amal 2 | Kareem Charity for Social and Charitable Services | 2017 |
| 79 | Programme Document – Back to Learning Back to Hope | Al Maraa Al Zakia NGO | 2016 |
| 80 | Programme Document – Back to Learning C4D Programme | Syrian Mar Afram Patriarchy for Development (EPCD) | 2017 |
| 81 | Programme Document – Back to Learning C4D Programme | Al Birr Association Hama | 2017 |
| 82 | Programme Document – Back to Learning Campaign 2019 | Syrian Mar Afram Patriarchy for Development (EPCD) | 2019 |
| 83 | Programme Document – BtL 2016/2017 campaign on Aleppo | Al Ihsan | 2016 |
| 84 | Programme Document - Btl campaign (AMAL) | Kareem charity for social and charitable services | 2016 |
| 85 | Programme Document – BtL-C4D Campaign 2015/16 | Social Care | 2015 |
| 86 | Programme Document – BTL-C4D campaign 2016/17 | Social Care Society | 2016 |
| 87 | Programme Document – C4D | MASYAF | 2016 |
| 88 | Programme Document – C4D (2) | Mysiaf charity NGO | 2017 |
| 89 | Programme Document – Education – BtL-C4D Campaign 2015/16 | Islamic Charity Association – Aoun for Relief and Development | 2015 |
| 90 | Programme Document – Education C4D in Aleppo Governorate | Ahl Alkhein Society | 2017 |

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| 91 | Programme Document – Education Project (C4D - BTL) | Social Care Society | 2017 |
| 92 | Programme Document – Education Project (C4D - BTL) | Social Care Society | 2017 |
| 93 | Programme Document – Education-Curriculum B social mobilisation in Lattakia | Al Bostan Charity Foundation | 2016 |
| 94 | Programme Document – Ensure protection and quality learning opportunities for children to build their future | GOPA-DERD | 2017 |
| 95 | Programme Document - For A Better Life | Al Inshat Association | 2016 |
| 96 | Programme Document – For a Better Life (2) | Inshaat Association | 2017 |
| 97 | Programme Document - Generation of tomorrow – Back to school | Islamic Charity Association Aoun for Relief & Development | 2016 |
| 98 | Programme Document - My school is my hope | AlBirr society and social services (Association) | 2016 |
| 99 | Programme Document – School is calling us-BTL-C4D campaign 2015/16 | Jameyat Osrat Al Ikhaa Al Souriya Bi Allazikia | 2015 |
| 100 | Programme Document – Ya Hala: Promotion of access to and enhance the quality of educational services in Aleppo | Gruppo Volontariato Civile (GVC) | 2017 |
| 101 | Programme Planning Meetings (PPMs); C4D support to Education sector 2019 and beyond – two pages for the PPMs – 06 November 2018 | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 102 | Reasons of not attending school – unpublished analysis of 2018 BtL campaign data by the education sector | UNICEF | 2019 |
| 103 | School level reports - all supplies 2015-16 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 104 | School level reports - all supplies 2016-17 | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 105 | Social Care Society - Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Social Care Society | 2018 |
| 106 | Social Care Society – Joint Partnership Review | UNICEF - Social Care Society | 2018 |
| 107 | SSFA (Small-Scale Funding Agreement) with Child Rights Society for Community Mobilization / C4D for BtL | UNICEF - Child Rights Society | 2015 |
| 108 | SSFA (Small-Scale Funding Agreement) with Nour Foundation for Community Mobilization / C4D for BtL | UNICEF - Nour Foundation | 2015 |
| 109 | Standard Operating Procedures for Community Engagement Door to Door Visits | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 110 | Strategic Plan for Light Rehabilitation/Wins in Schools | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 111 | Summary of the Reference guide on Communication for Behavior Change Back to Learning | AUB - UNICEF | 2018 |
| 112 | Support to No Lost Generation Initiative - Progress Report to the Government of Germany | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 113 | Support to No Lost Generation Initiative 2017-2018 - Proposal to the Government of Germany | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 114 | Support to the Syria Crisis Response – Final Report – State of Kuwait Contribution to UNICEF | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 115 | Syria Back to Learning Campaign 2015- 2016, C4D activities' log frame | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 116 | Syria Country Office Annual Report 2010 | UNICEF | 2011 |
| 117 | Syria Country Office Annual Report 2015 | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 118 | Syria Country Office Annual Report 2016 | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 119 | Syria Country Office Annual Report 2017 | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 120 | Syria Country Office Annual Report 2018 | UNICEF | 2019 |

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| 121 | Syria Crisis – 2014 Annual Situation Report (SitRep) | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 122 | Syria Crisis - 2015 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 123 | Syria Crisis - 2015 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 124 | Syria Crisis – 2016 – Consolidated Emergency Report | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 125 | Syria Crisis - 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 126 | Syria Crisis – 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 127 | Syria Crisis - 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 128 | Syria Crisis – 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 129 | Syria Crisis – 2018 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 130 | Syria Crisis – April 2015 Humanitarian Situation Report | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 131 | Syria Crisis – April 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 132 | Syria Crisis - April 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 133 | Syria Crisis – August 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 134 | Syria Crisis – August 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 135 | Syria Crisis - February 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 136 | Syria Crisis - February 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 137 | Syria Crisis – January Humanitarian Highlights and Results | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 138 | Syria Crisis - July 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 139 | Syria Crisis - July 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 140 | Syria Crisis – June 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 141 | Syria Crisis – June 2017 Humanitarian Situation Report | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 142 | Syria Crisis - June Humanitarian Situation Report | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 143 | Syria Crisis – March 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 144 | Syria Crisis – May 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 145 | Syria Crisis – May 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 146 | Syria Crisis – Monthly Humanitarian Highlights and Results – August 2015 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 147 | Syria Crisis – Monthly Humanitarian Highlights and Results – March 2015 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 148 | Syria Crisis – Monthly Humanitarian Highlights and Results – November 2015 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 149 | Syria Crisis – Monthly Humanitarian Highlights and Results – October 2015 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 150 | Syria Crisis – Monthly Humanitarian Highlights and Results – September 2015 | UNICEF | 2015 |
| 151 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (April/May 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 152 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (August/September 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 153 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (July/August 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 154 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (June/July 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 155 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (May/June 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 156 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (November/December 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 157 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (October/November 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 158 | Syria Crisis - Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report (September/October 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |

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| 159 | Syria Crisis – November 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 160 | Syria Crisis - November 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 161 | Syria Crisis - October 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 162 | Syria Crisis - September 2016 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2016 |
| 163 | Syria Crisis - September 2017 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 164 | Syria Crisis 2012 – Consolidated Emergency Report | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 165 | Syria Crisis 2013 – Consolidated Emergency Report | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 166 | Syria Crisis April 2019 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2019 |
| 167 | Syria Crisis August 2018 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 168 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (August 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 169 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (December 2013/January 2014) | UNICEF | 2014 |
| 170 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (January) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 171 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (July/August 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 172 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (November/December 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 173 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (October 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 174 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (October/November 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 175 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (September 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 176 | Syria Crisis Bi-Weekly Humanitarian Situation Report (September/October 2013) | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 177 | Syria Crisis July 2018 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 178 | Syria Crisis Mid-Year 2019 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2019 |
| 179 | Syria Crisis October 2018 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 180 | Syria Crisis September 2018 Humanitarian Results | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 181 | Syria Education Sector Analysis. The effects of the crisis on education in areas controlled by opposition groups, 2010-2015 | Suguru Mizunoya and Robert West | 2016 |
| 182 | Syria Emergency Student School Bags Kit (Kit for 10 students) School year 2017-2018 | UNICEF | 2017 |
| 183 | Syrian: Humanitarian Needs Overview | OCHA | 2013 |
| 184 | The cost of conflict for children. Five years of the Syria crisis | World Vision International | 2016 |
| 185 | The school missed you (The great 74) (ppt) | Memac | 2016 |
| 186 | The Syria Back to School Initiative – “Let’s Keep on Learning” | UNICEF | 2013 |
| 187 | UN Syria Joint Programme - Education for All – Phase II – Proposal for the Government of Japan | UNICEF | 2018 |
| 188 | UNICEF Back to School Campaign Evaluation 10/2016 | Data Collection and Analysis done by Sami Ismail | 2016 |
| 189 | We made a promise (Brussels Conference) | No Lost Generation | 2018 |
| 190 | Whole of Syria (WoS) education: Severity scale methodology for the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2018 | Whole of Syria Education Focal Point | 2018 |

Annex 6 - Inception Report

Formative and Summative Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in the Syrian Arab Republic

Research Protocol & Inception Report

Submitted to: UNICEF Syria Country Office

Final Draft: December 07, 2017

1. Preface

This Research Protocol and Evaluation Plan describes the methodology and action plan to conduct an external evaluation of the UNICEF Syria Country Office's Back to Learning Initiative (BLT). The document will outline the various elements of the evaluation and provide details on the research activities accordingly.

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2. Executive Summary

The Syrian Arab Republic remains one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child. Violence, exploitation and abuse, including recruitment into armed forces and groups, early marriage, child labour and family separation are all risks that children across Syria face. The rights of children enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are consistently violated in the country: Thousands of children are killed and maimed due to the persistent use of explosive weapons in civilian areas, while access to fundamental basic services such as health care, clean water and sanitation are limited or non-existent for millions of children. Increasingly, these services are deliberately targeted and used as tactics of war by parties to the conflict.⁴³

An estimated 6 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance inside the Syrian Arab Republic, including 420,000 children living in besieged locations with limited access to humanitarian aid⁴⁴. With almost 3 million children are internally displaced, many children have missed out on months or even years of education and are at greater risk of exploitation. Children in hard-to-reach and besieged locations remain at high risk of malnutrition and require preventative interventions. With 1.7 million children out of school, high youth unemployment and limited opportunities for development and growth, the odds are increasingly stacked against the next generation of Syrians.⁴⁵

Across Syria, over 6 million children as well as thousands of education personnel are in need of education assistance, while 1.75 million children and youth are out of school and 1.35 million at risk of dropping out.⁴⁶ As of 2017, some 1 in 3 schools in Syria either damaged, destroyed, used as collective shelters or otherwise inaccessible.⁴⁷ The Syrian education system (SES) has also been severely affected by the conflict: A total of 150,000 education personnel have been lost and many of those still active do not possess adequate capacity to adapt to the complex needs that the conflict has presented.⁴⁸

In this context, the nationwide Back to Learning (BTL) initiative was launched in September 2013 by the UNICEF Syria Country Office (UNICEF). The BTL initiative was designed to increase access to education for children in the lower primary school grades (Grades 1-4) in all 14 governorates through a combination of community mobilization and provision of education supplies. The three main components of the BTL initiative are: The provision of school supplies, a Communication for Development (C4D) component including support for school enrolment, and support for the rehabilitation of schools, amongst other activities. The reasons for the fall in the number of enrolled children range from lack of WASH facilities in schools, to lack of teaching and learning materials and physical infrastructure. Changes in enrolment also varies widely across Syria with governorates such as Quneitra and Aleppo witnessing a decrease in enrolment rates of up to 80 percent and 90 percent respectively, compared to As-Sweida and Tartous where enrolment has actually increased by some 20 percent.⁴⁹

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⁴³ Humanitarian Action for Children, Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF (2017). Retrieved from: [https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/2017_Syria_HAC\(2\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/2017_Syria_HAC(2).pdf)

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, '2017 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview', OCHA (2016).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ OHCA 2016, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Accordingly, UNICEF has commissioned an external evaluation to help inform the agencies current and future programming in the protracted crisis context across Syria. To achieve this end, UNICEF is conducting a third-party evaluation of the program by engaging beneficiaries, UNICEF staff, implementing partners and government agencies. The scope of the evaluation covers a selection of five of the governorates where the BLT was and is currently being implemented.

This evaluation's sampling strategy adopts a purposive sampling approach to conduct focus group discussions, online surveys, and key informant interviews. In total the evaluation team will aim to conduct approximately 35 key informant interviews, 20 focus groups discussions and one online survey.

Throughout, the evaluation team will be comprised of the core team members (International Team Leader, International Evaluation Expert, National Evaluation Expert) and up to six enumerators. Evaluation fieldwork will take place over a period between mid-December 2017 to mid-January 2018 and will adopt a mixed-methods approach described in detail below. Once field work has been completed, the evaluation team will commence with analysis and report writing, a process which will end with a final evaluation report and presentation to be submitted and accepted by early March 2018.

All through the research implementation, the research team will uphold ethical standards as identified in chapter 5 below. The ethical standards draw on UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008), the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016), and UNICEF Ethical Research Guidelines involving children in humanitarian settings.

3. Evaluation Objectives & Scope

3.1. Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. Findings, as such, are expected to provide opportunities for learning on the planning, implementation and management aspects of program phases, which will be useful for informing decisions on future programming and management of BLT operations as well as serve an accountability function through a summative evaluation of outputs and outcomes.

Accordingly, UNICEF has set out a set of evaluation objectives as follows:

1. Assessment of the key programme interventions of the various components of the BTL initiative, including the collaboration between different sections and teams in the UNICEF SCO (central office and field offices, Supply & Logistics Team, C4D Team), and the collaboration with various national and international partners across Syria as well as the interaction with beneficiaries.
2. Identification of good practices, challenges faced and lessons learned from the BTL initiative.
3. Provision of recommendations on the future scope and approach of the BTL initiative, including any suggested adjustments or new approaches as well as specific recommendations for similar initiatives in other protracted humanitarian emergency contexts.

The evaluation will take into consideration aspects of gender, equity and child rights⁵⁰. Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed in all phases of the evaluation. Specific

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3. ⁵⁰ United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*. New York: UNEG, web: www.unevaluation.org/guidance/HRGE

reference is made to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNICEF ethical guidelines and code of conduct for evaluation.

3.2. Evaluation Framework

In order to provide an objective, evidence-based assessment as well as actionable recommendations, Triangle/Afkar propose adopting an action oriented participatory evaluation approach to evaluate the BTL initiative from May 2013 to May 2017. Throughout the course of the evaluation, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards will guide the evaluation appraisal criteria.⁵¹ The five domains covered by INEE Minimum Standards will also be employed in order to benchmark appraisal throughout the course of the evaluation.

In order to adequately respond to the evaluation criteria laid out in the TOR, Triangle/Afkar have developed an evaluation matrix to fit our understanding of the assignment and developed a (non-exhaustive) list of questions, with a view to identify lessons, examples of good practice and recommendations.

As such, the questions in Figure 1 are aligned with Triangle's evaluation criteria and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria for use in appraisals of humanitarian and development interventions.

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⁵¹ See INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery. INEE (2010). Retrieved from: [http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1012/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010\(HSP\)-English_LoRes.pdf](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1012/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010(HSP)-English_LoRes.pdf)

Figure 1: Evaluation Matrix

| 1. RELEVANCE: | |
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| <i>Overarching Questions</i> | <i>Primary Target Groups & Tools⁵²</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How relevant has the Back to Learning initiative been in response to the education needs of children in Syria? To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with UNICEF’s actual or perceived comparative advantage? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How did UNICEF decide on the main targets and objectives of BTL? KIIs with Education Officers: (1 per governorate): To what extent were the objectives of BTL initiative interventions under each of the main components still valid in the regions where they take place? KIIs with School Principals: Is BTL relevant to Syrian Education System (SES) needs and local communities? FGDs with affected communities: How relevant is BTL to community needs and are there areas that are more relevant which are not covered? KIIs with stakeholders⁵³: How relevant is BTL initiative to nation-wide level reality and Syrian national education targets? Online survey: Do BTL programme staff and partners feel the interventions are relevant to enrolment and retention of students? KIIs with NGOs, community outreach teams: What are the main reasons that prevent people from enrolling their children to school? [probe specific issues that require awareness raising]. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did UNICEF SCO develop a clear strategy for the BTL initiative from the start? How clear was the theory of change and was it plausible? Were other strategic options considered? <p>143.</p> <p>144.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Are the activities and outputs of BTL initiative interventions consistent with the overall goal and attainment of the UNICEF’s Education Sector objectives? KIIs with Education Officers (1 per governorate): Were mechanisms in place to facilitate interventions which were tailored to local realities? KIIs with School Principals: Have the various components of BTL continued to evolve in relation to SES local needs? FGDs with affected communities: How relevant do beneficiaries see BTL to their communities’ needs? |

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⁵² Categories and methods are suggested, with the understanding that there may be alternate tools and areas of inquiry employed as the situation requires.

⁵³ KIIs with stakeholders in this table include NGOs and Ministry of Education implementing partners

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the BTL initiative in line with national priorities and international commitments, e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Core Commitments to Children (CCC), No Lost Generation (NLG Initiative)? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: to what extent were the objective and design of BTL consistent with international commitments and standards? KIIs with Education Officers (1 per governorate): How are national priorities and international conventions integrated with activities on the ground? KIIs with stakeholders: How much buy-in did national and international partners have in relation to the BTL initiative's design and implementation? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the various components of the BTL initiative been appropriate and proportionate to need? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Were needs and their magnitude adequately considered during design and adapted during implementation? KIIs with Education Officers: (1 per governorate). Was BTL initiative based on needs assessments conducted in various regions? KIIs with School Principals: How relevant is the implementation of BTL to schools' specific needs? FGDs with affected communities: Are the activities and outputs of BTL consistent with beneficiaries needs? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the BTL initiative adequately informed by a needs assessment and a clear situation analysis? To what extent were these reviewed and updated on a regular basis? To what extent is the C4D component of the BTL initiative informed by an analysis of possible social barriers to education? Has specific attention been given to disaggregated analysis of the needs of children, their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of the country? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What mechanisms were employed in the design of BTL (needs assessment, situational analysis) and how is it updated? How were gender roles taken into account during the BTL initiative's design and implementation? KIIs with Education Officers (1 per governorate): How were issues surrounding children needs, their parents and families in different areas disaggregated and included in the process of design and implementation? FGDs with affected communities: Are there specific children needs and/or social barriers that beneficiaries feel they are not reflected in the design and implementation of BTL? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How responsive has the BTL initiative been to changes in the external environment, including the evolving role of national and international partners? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How does the agency review and adapt BTL planning based on the changing environment? KIIs with Education Officers: (1 per governorate): Are there governorate-specific tools that are used to tailor interventions? |
| <h2>2. EFFECTIVENESS:</h2> | |
| <p><i>Overarching Questions</i></p> | <p><i>Primary Target Groups & Tools</i></p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective has the BTL initiative been in achieving its objectives? Which components have been most and least effective? Which evidence exists concerning the results of the BTL initiative since its launch in 2013? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with School Principals: What palpable effects can be seen as a result of the different interventions made under BTL, specifically in terms of enrolment and retention? • KIIs with Education Officers: What are the differences in effect across components of the BTL initiative? • Online survey: Do BTL programme staff and partners feel the interventions are effective in bringing non-enrolled children to school and keeping them in education? • |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has UNICEF’s choice of partners been appropriate and based on an adequate assessment of capacity? Were implementing partners engaged in pre-BTL capacity building activities to ensure effective quality delivery of interventions? Has consideration been given to any alternative partnership options available to UNICEF? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What are the global objectives and methods of measurement, methods of global reporting, and how is data as well as feedback from field incorporated in future design and management? • KIIs with Education Officers: How did BTL incorporate disaggregated indicators of efficiency to measure outputs and efficiency appropriately? Did field teams receive guidance or support from regional or UNICEF SCO & RO managements? to what extent objectives have been realized? • KIIs with stakeholders: Has the choice of partners on the ground affected programme implementation? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively did UNICEF and its partners engage with beneficiaries of the BTL initiative, including children (girls and boys), their parents, caregivers and families in different parts of Syria, regarding the design and implementation of the support? Which - if any - processes of beneficiary feedback were put in place, and if so, how were the key findings used for decision-making? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with Education Officers: How communities participate in feedback processes? Probe for Country-specific examples. • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How are lessons learned collected and documented? How are lesson learned used to revise strategy at global level? • FGDs with affected communities: How has UNICEF and schools engaged with you in order to understand your needs and support you accordingly? • KIIs with NGOs, community outreach teams: What were the most effective methods of communication with the local community that increased awareness? [probe for billboards, fliers, radio, and printing on buses]. • FGDs with affected communities: What were the most effective methods of communication that increased awareness of local communities? [probe for billboards, fliers, radio, and printing on buses]. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the situation in the country evolved over the years, to what extent did UNICEF did community engagement help to increase the effectiveness the BTL initiative? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs with affected communities: How engaged do parents feel in BTL initiative? How were issues surrounding discrimination and social exclusion of minorities, IDPs and marginalised population segments dealt with in the BTL initiative’s design and implementation? • KIIs with education officers: Were the factors which contribute to lower enrollment and retention incorporated into the BTL initiative’s design and implementation? • |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has UNICEF SCO taken into consideration cross-cutting issues including equity, gender and disability in implementing the BTL initiative? Was adequate attention given to child rights and equity issues, including discrimination and social exclusion? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with education officers: How were gender roles taken into account during the BTL initiative’s design and implementation? Provide examples of ways the BTL design was sensitive to gender, disability and equity. KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How were cross-cutting issues including gender, disability and equity incorporated in programme design? |
| <h3>3. EFFECIENCY</h3> | |
| <p><i>Overarching Questions</i></p> | <p><i>Primary Target Groups & Tools</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How efficient has the BTL initiative been in achieving its objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Were the BTL initiative’s intervention objectives achieved on time? If they were not achieved on time, were the factors which contributed to their non-achievement the result of contextual or programmatic issues? KIIs with Education Officers: To what extent did/does the project design reflect specific, measurable and time bound indicators? How are field teams supported in meeting/measuring progress? KIIs with NGOs, community outreach teams: Do you think the communication tools utilized in BILT with local communities achieved their intended results [probe: radio, fliers, billboards, and printing on buses]? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the quality of the programme monitoring and reporting systems of UNICEF SCO and its partners in the BTL initiative? To what extent have results been disaggregated by sex, age, disability, geographic location and other variables? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Are UNICEF’s M&E systems adequately geared towards measuring the intended outcomes of the BTL initiative? KIIs with Education Officers: How are various regional field teams involved in the process of monitoring and reporting? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How efficiently did UNICEF SCO use its resources, including funds, staff and supplies in implementing the BTL initiative? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What was the process of distribution of staff and resources across geographies and does it reflect needs in different locations? Are financial systems in place at UNICEF SCO suited to funding the operations of the BTL initiative? KIIs with Education Officers (1 per governorate): What are the main processes of allocating funds and staff at the field level and what are the main gaps. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with School Principals: Was the extent of support sufficient to cover the needs of schools and local populations? • FGDs with affected communities. Have they received sufficient sensitization activities, supplies and tools. • KIIs with stakeholders: Were the BTL initiative’s interventions cost-efficient in relation to alternatives? |
| <p>➤ To what extent has the staff capacity and skills mix at UNICEF SCO and partners been adequate for the implementation of the BTL initiative over the years? Has there been specific training provided to staff and partners to ensure quality planning and management of BTL interventions?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How is staff capacity and skill mix monitored. Does UNICEF have regular human resource evaluations and does BTL have specific skill gaps. What staff trainings have been conducted on national levels. • KIIs with Education Officers: What are the main disparities across different locations? What are the main mechanisms for organizational learning employed by management? What level of training has been conducted with regional staff and what are the main gaps? • KIIs with School Principals: Were the teams that implemented the BTL sufficiently skills and operationally sound to achieve their objectives? • KIIs with stakeholders: Have donor agenda’s decontextualized interventions had adverse effects on the BTL initiative’s operations? Were donor requirements flexible enough to allow the BTL initiative to adapt to the developing context on the ground in Syria? |
| <p>➤ How efficient was the financial management and risk management of the BTL initiative?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What are the mechanisms put in place to make sure financial management is allocated to serve main priorities. (check for cost per child, fulfilment of targets and etc). • KIIs with Education officers: What are the mechanisms of monitoring main cost centres, spending per region and in what manner? • KIIs with School Principals: What are the main gaps felt on the field level and does BTL contribute to the main priorities at school level. |
| <p>➤ To what extent have donors provided adequate, un-earmarked and multi-year resources to the Education Section to enable the full implementation of the BTL initiative?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What are the mechanisms put in place to make sure financial management is allocated to serve main priorities? (check for cost per child, fulfilment of targets and etc.). • KIIs with Education officers (1 per governorate): Are there areas in BTL initiative which are underfunded? Is this reported to SCO management? • KIIs with School Principals: What are the main operational gaps felt on the field level over time? |
| <p>➤ To what extent did any dependence on particular funding sources constrain or support UNICEF’s implementation of the BTL initiative?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What are the main funding sources and has there been particular funding constraints for particular programmatic sections? |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with stakeholders: How has the international funding mechanism affected operations on the ground and what are the future projections? Are there certain priorities that are under-funded? |
| <h4>4. COORDINATION</h4> | |
| <p><i>Overarching Questions</i></p> | <p><i>Primary Target Groups & Tools</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has UNICEF coordinated the BTL initiative with national and international actors? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with external stakeholders: Are the BTL initiative’s objectives developed as part of the broader Whole-of-Syria design process across the UN system? • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What are the mechanisms employed to ensure that coordination with national and international actors are constructive? How is feedback incorporated? • KIIs with principals: Have coordination mechanisms and lessons learnt been implemented at the school-level? • Online survey: How effective do different programme actors feel UNICEF is at coordination? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has a cross-sectoral approach been applied and which lessons can be drawn from that? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with stakeholders: Provide details on interagency coordination and pathways. Are cases referred to them that they cannot handle (or do their teams refer out appropriately)? • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Details on cross-sectoral learning approach. How are lessons shared between different departments? • KIIs with NGOs, community outreach teams: How are the utilized communication tools to raise awareness of BILT campaigns decided upon? Which actors decide on messages and how does this change locally? • |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has UNICEF established effective working relations with national partners (governmental and non-governmental) at central and local levels in Syria? To what extent has UNICEF provided support for capacity development of partners where necessary to better coordinate and implement the BTL initiative? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with stakeholders: Details on governmental and non-governmental coordination pathways. Are there specific challenges and cases referred to UNICEF which they cannot handle (or do their teams refer out appropriately)? • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Details on coordination mechanisms with other external stakeholders and capacity development programmes initiated from head office. • KIIs with Education officers: How are schools and DoE representatives engaged at the local level? How are the capacity needs of schools and DoE representatives assessed and addressed? • KIIs with school principals: How are the capacity of BTL staff members and coordination mechanisms between schools and provincial education officers verified? |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the BTL initiative maximized convergence with other programmes within UNICEF SCO and how did this support the achievement of the expected targets? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with stakeholders: Do UNICEF interventions complement the work of other relevant United Nations (UN) agencies, non-governmental organization (NGOs), foundations, donors and national actors? KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What systems and agreements govern the partnership between UNICEF and its partners? How is this relationship managed on the field? KIIs with education officers: Are there specific programmes at the field level that could be of use to BTL initiative that has not been addressed? KIIs with school principals: What are the coordination mechanisms between schools and provincial education officers? FGDs with affected communities: Do affected communities feel that field level operations are well coordinated between different actors and institutions? |
| <h2>5. COVERAGE</h2> | |
| <h3><i>Overarching Questions</i></h3> | <h3><i>Primary Target Groups & Tools</i></h3> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the BTL initiative been able to reach families and children in different areas of the country without gender bias or geographical bias? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with stakeholders: Are there specific geographical areas or vulnerable sections of society that BTL did not sufficiently reach out to? KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Did the BTL initiative take into consideration inclusion and exclusion bias and are measures taken to mitigate against both? KIIs with education officers: Are there specific procedures employed at field level to ensure inclusion and access? KIIs with school principals: Are there specific groups that are more vulnerable than others and are not being covered by BTL? FGDs with affected communities: Are there specific groups and/or geographical areas that have not been covered by BTL. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have been the enabling and constraining factors in reaching families and children? Which lessons can be learned about the most effective means of ensuring access? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through innovation Through the application of alternative programming By advocating for increased access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs with stakeholders: Did accessibility play a role in how the BTL initiative was implemented in different areas? If so, was this because of contextual or programmatic factors? KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Details on the efforts made to reach population residing in areas with limited accessibility. KIIs with education officers: What efforts have been made to expand the BTL initiative's geographical coverage across and between its components? KIIs with school principals: Probe the main lessons learned to ensure children's access to education. How can BTL be augmented and improved? |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By forming partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and other actors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FGDs with affected communities: probe the most effective methods in increasing access to children’s education needs. |
| 6. IMPACT | |
| Overarching Questions | Primary Target Groups & Tools |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To what extent has the BTL initiative contributed to increased school enrollment of children aged 6-10 years (grades 1-4) in Syria since 2013? To what extent have girls and boys benefitted equally from the BTL initiative? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KIIs with stakeholders: Probe main results of BTL initiative’s intervention under each of its component parts and in relation to age groups and gender. ● KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Extent of increased enrolment per age groups, and gender. ● KIIs with education officers: Has BTL increased enrolment among girls and boys equally? Are there age differences? ● KIIs with school principals: Did BTL initiative’s interventions successfully increase school enrolment and what are the main obstacles? Are there specific differences in relation to gender and/or grades? ● FGDs with affected communities: What real difference have the BTL initiative’s made to end beneficiaries? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How has the BTL initiative worked in conjunction with other interventions or services to achieve its intended objectives? What has helped or hindered the initiative to achieve its intended objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KIIs with stakeholders: What are the main obstacles that prevented BTL from reach intended objectives and targets? ● KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How did BTL initiative work with other interventions to achieve targets? ● KIIs with education officers (1 per governorate): What has helped or hindered implementation on field level to achieve intended results? ● KIIs with school principals: Were there specific obstacles to reaching intended objectives in terms of design and implementation? ● FGDs with affected communities: What real difference have the BTL initiative’s made to end-beneficiaries? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What have been the particular features of the BTL initiative that have made a difference in the lives of girls and boys as the intended beneficiaries? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: How did BTL initiative work with other interventions to achieve targets? ● KIIs with education officers (1 per governorate): What has helped or hindered implementation on field level to achieve intended results? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with school principals: Probe particular features of BTL initiatives that made a difference in life of girl and/or boy. • FGDs with affected communities: Probe particular features in BTL that beneficiaries think has been particularly successful. [probe for communication like fliers, billboards, radio and printing on buses]. • KIIs with NGOs, community outreach teams: What specific communication tools utilized in BILT achieved their intended results and which did not? [probe: radio, fliers, billboards, and printing on buses]? • |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which unintended impact, positive and negative, has the BTL initiative produced? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: Were there any specific positive or negative un-intended results of BTL? How did UNICEF deal with these? • KIIs with education officers (1 per governorate): Probe main mechanisms for dealing with unintended results and how it is communicated to UNICEF SCO & RO management. • KIIs with school principals: Probe particular features of BTL initiatives that made a difference which were not planned. • FGDs with affected communities: Probe particular features in BTL that beneficiaries think has been particularly successful. |
| <h2>7. SUSTAINABILITY</h2> | |
| <h3><i>Overarching Questions</i></h3> | <h3><i>Primary Target Groups & Tools</i></h3> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How sustainable are the results of the BTL initiative, especially considering the continuously changing situation in the country, the role of national and international partners, and funding prospects? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff and external stakeholders: Is the BTL initiative designed in a manner that takes into consideration the longer-term impact? • KIIs with education officers (1 per governorate): to What extent would the benefits of the BTL initiative’s interventions under each component continue subsequent to funding? • KIIs with school principals: Will BTL results continue on the longer-run after decrease of funding? • FGDs with affected communities: Has BTL built self-sufficiency of children and their households to access formal education on the long run? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is there ownership of the BTL initiative at national and local level? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs stakeholders: Has BTL improved the long-term capacity of relevant national actors and partners? • KIIs with school principals: Are local principals aware of the importance of community outreach and synthetization? Are they better equipped to elevating access barriers? |

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs with affected communities: How is BTL relevant to community members on short to medium terms? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the BTL initiative equipped parents with adequate information on the right to education and options for their children to continue learning? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff and external stakeholders: Is the BTL initiative designed in a manner that takes into consideration the longer-term impact? • KIIs with education officers (1 per governorate): to What extent would the benefits of the BTL initiative’s interventions under each component continue subsequent to funding? • KIIs with school principals: How did BTL improve the long term capacity of your school and local community to increase enrolment and retention? • FGDs with affected communities: Has BTL built self-sufficiency of children and their households to access formal education on the long run? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the possibilities for the BTL model of intervention (as a whole or some of its components) to be more widely replicated or adopted? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIIs with stakeholders: What are the possibilities of replicating BTL campaign and/or extending it? To what extent have other stakeholders provided financial support for the operationalization of the BTL initiative? • KIIs with school principals: Can BTL initiative be replicated on national level by local actors. • |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which possibilities would there be for the Ministry of Education to financially contribute to the BTL initiative to enhance sustainability? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • KIIs with UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management staff: What are the possibilities of Syrian government’s financial contribution to BTL initiative in the future? • KIIs with school principals: Can BTL initiative be replicated on national level by national or local actors? |

Building on the evaluation matrix above, Triangle/Afkar will employ a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) matrix and perform gap analyses in order to draw lessons learned and inform future decisions. The SWOT be helpful in finding recommendations for good practices and improvements if needed in the BTL initiative's component interventions as well as allow the evaluation team to develop strategic opportunities for UNICEF to consider in upcoming phases of the BTL initiative. Accordingly, both qualitative and quantitative tools will be tailored to accommodate the SWOT matrix approach as well as inform final reporting and recommendations. Figure 2 below lays out the methodological process by which the proposed evaluation will take place.

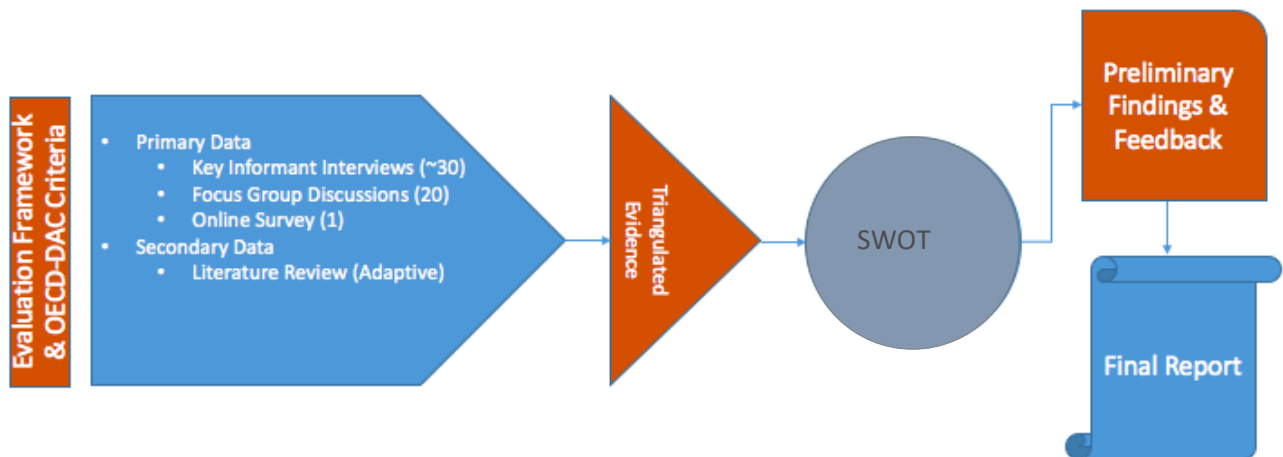


Figure 2: Methodological Process

4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

4.1. Theory of Change Reconstruction

Triangle/Afkar will re-examine the BTL initiative's theory of change in order to provide an updated basis on which the evaluation's activities can be built. As part of this reconstruction process, backwards mapping of the theory of change will be conducted: Evaluators will work with UNICEF staff to reconstruct how the BTL initiative was originally conceived and adapted during implementation. This reconstruction exercise will begin by understanding how the logic and context within which each of the BTL initiative's components were originally conceived. Subsequently, the evaluation team and UNICEF will assess how and why the BTL initiative evolved over time in relation to the developing context and apply INEE Minimum Standards as a benchmark. Based on these activities, a reconstructed common and accepted theory of change will be devised and agreed as the basis for analysis.

4.2. Desk Review:

Data acquired during the desk review will be incorporated at several levels of the research in order to inform the findings of the final report. Information provided by the desk review already went towards the compilation and content of adaptable research tools employed during the evaluation. The information gap analysis will be triangulated with emerging data from the field to produce the final analysis. Primary and secondary data sourced from the desk review will also be referenced in the final report.

4.3. Sampling Strategy

This evaluation's sampling strategy is based on preliminary discussions with UNICEF staff concerning the composition of their schools and focal points databases. After several discussions, it was decided

that a purposive sampling approach would be adopted to conduct focus group discussions (FGDs) and the Online Survey (OS). Similarly, a purposive snowball sampling method will be adopted for key informant interviews (KIIs).

4.3.1. FGD Sampling Strategy

Particularly, the FGD sampling strategy seeks to reflect UNICEF's operations on the ground through a series of criteria (See Figure 3):

Figure 3: FGD Selection Criteria

| Criteria | Explanation |
|--|--|
| Coverage | Coverage of all of the hubs out of which the BTL is rolled out and accessible. |
| Concentration of assistance | The geographical concentration of assistance will also be considered (See map below) |
| Proportion / scale of distribution | Proportion of assistance that is provided under BTL supplies and School Rehabilitation. |
| Amount of support/beneficiaries | Within each of the four hubs, the largest and the two largest for Damascus hub given its size. |
| Beneficiary profile | Both IDP, vulnerable children from communities hosting IDPs, and non-displaced children in areas where schooling is disrupted by violence and insecurity will be covered proportionally to how UNICEF targets recipients |
| Facility type | Built up schools and prefabricated schools will be considered |
| Student Enrolment Rates | Student Enrolment Rates by Governorate will also be considered |
| Access and security for enumerators; Do-no-harm | Security of enumerators and UNICEF's operations has highest priority in the site selection. Hence Qamishli Hub is disqualified |
| Logistical considerations | Availability and access of enumerators will be considered |

Given that the BTL initiative is targeted at both IDP and non-IDP beneficiaries, the inception phase identified the need to facilitate for this further elements of disaggregation. Hence, the number of proposed FGDs was increased from 10 to 20 FGDs. The profile of beneficiaries will consist of parents of children covered by the BTL initiative. UNICEF and its partners will work with Triangle to select a random sample of beneficiaries from a total of three to four schools in each governorate. Whether three or four schools are covered in each governorate will depend on the feasibility of conducting FGDs with parents of non-enrolled and parents of dropouts, both of which will constitute control groups against which to appraise treatment groups (i.e. beneficiaries of the BTL initiative). Figure 4 shows the complete disaggregation of FGDs accordingly.

Figure 4: FGD Disaggregation

| <u>School No</u> | <u>No. of Participants</u> | <u>Profile</u> | <u>Geography</u> | <u>Gender</u> | <u>Residency Status</u> | <u>Programme Component</u> |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Rural Damascus | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies ⁵⁴ |
| 2 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Rural Damascus | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom |
| 3 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Rural Damascus | Male | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation |
| 4 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Rural Damascus | Female | Non-enrolled | N/A |
| 5 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Homs | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies |
| 6 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Homs | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom |
| 7 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Homs | Male | Non-enrolled | N/A |
| 8 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Homs | Female | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation |
| 9 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Hama | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies |
| 10 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Hama | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom |
| 11 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Hama | Male | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation |
| 12 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Hama | Female | Dropout | N/A |
| 13 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Aleppo | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies |
| 14 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Aleppo | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom |
| 15 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Aleppo | Male | Dropout | N/A |
| 16 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Aleppo | Female | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation |
| 17 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Tartous | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies |
| 18 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Tartous | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom |
| 19 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Tartous | Male | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation |
| 20 | 6-10 | Parent/caregiver | Tartous | Female | Non-IDP | BTL Supplies |

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⁵⁴ BTL Supplies refers to School bag kits (20 children per kit), School in a carton (40 children per carton), Recreation in a carton (90 children per carton), ECD in a carton (50 children per carton).

- A total of two evaluation staff will be present during FGDs in order to facilitate the discussion and to document focus group participant responses. FGD discussions will comprise of a maximum of two 45-minute sessions separated by a 10-minute refreshments break.⁵⁵ At the outset of the discussions, researchers will introduce themselves and the purpose of the discussion. Once this has been established, participants will be asked if they have any further inquiries and to verbally consent to partaking in the discussion.⁵⁶ Participants will also be made aware that the discussion is purely for research purposes and has no bearing on participants in terms of future assistance, nor can the moderators affect that process. Due to security sensitivities, recorders will not be used. However, a dedicated FGD assistant will be employed to take notes alongside the FGD facilitator. All participants will be informed that their identities will remain anonymous as well as that discussions will not be shared with anyone and are purely for UNICEF's research purposes.

UNICEF focal points will coordinate with the evaluation team to organize logistics surrounding FGDs. In particular, UNICEF and partner organisations will be responsible for identifying of beneficiaries with the appropriate profiles and a suitable location to conduct focus groups. FGDs should take place without the presence of UNICEF staff and in a reasonably comfortable location where participants can sit close enough to facilitators to be heard.

4.3.2. Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) will be informed by semi-structured questionnaires that are relevant to the person(s) being interviewed. In order to garner the most nuanced and useful information KIIs will cover both high-level and field-level research participants. The purpose of field KIIs will be to identify dynamics, gaps and issues faced by persons in the field, not least among UNICEF staff and implementing partners. HQ Staff KIIs will be conducted as the last iteration of the field research phase in order to allow high-level staff to address dynamics, gaps and issues identified during previous evaluation activities (online survey, FGDs and field KIIs). Accordingly, field KIIs will be selected using a purposive sampling strategy based on conversations between UNICEF and the evaluation team. Figure 5 lays out the disaggregation of KIIs across all types of interviews.

Figure 5: KII Disaggregation

| Profile | Internal External | or Details | Number |
|---|----------------------|---|-----------|
| UNICEF SCO Senior Management & Sector Technical Leads | Internal | UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management Staff | 5 |
| UNICEF Field Offices-level staff | Internal | UNICEF Education Officers (1 per Field Office) | 5 |
| MOE Governorate Managers | External | Directorate of Education Representatives | 5 |
| Education Response Field-level | Internal External | / School Principals (1 per school as per FGD disaggregation) | 16 |
| C4D Implementation | External | NGOs, community outreach teams, and community leaders (1 per governorate, or as relevant) | 5 |
| | | Total | 36 |

Each interview with a key technical respondent should last anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour depending on the depth and significance of the interview to the evaluation and the responses of the

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4. ⁵⁵ Triangle reserves the right to adapt FGDs to make them longer or shorter depending on various factors such as response time, FGD participant engagement, etc.

⁵⁶ For security reasons and in order to ensure candid responses, FGD proceedings will not be recorded.

interviewee. Interviews with non-technical subjects should be shorter than 30 minutes. The output of interviews will be in the form of a near-verbatim write up that can accommodate verbatim quotes. The outputs will then be used to inform an analysis and respond to objectives listed in Section 2.

4.3.3. Online Survey

A brief and voluntary survey will be designed and disseminated to a purposive sample of UNICEF Staff, implementing partners, focal points in the field and other relevant parties. The survey will allow researchers to record feedback against key evaluation questions in a manner that is timely and unobtrusive, as well as allow for the quantification and cross-verification of qualitative information. The questionnaires will be developed according to basic humanitarian standards and BTL programme documents for each component.

The survey will consist of around 25 questions which cover various elements related to how the BTL initiative was designed and implemented as well as questions which correspond to the evaluation criteria above. The sample population will consist of potential respondents from across the BTL initiative (all 11 governorates) including UNICEF staff (HQ and field level), MoE partners (Ministry-level and field-level) as well as C4D implementing partners (INGOs, Local NGOs).

The survey should be sent out to the entire population by UNICEF via email with a directive to fill and complete the surveys by a specified date. A response rate threshold of 40% will be set in order to establish significance. If the threshold is not set, UNICEF and the evaluation team will discuss options to reach the statistical significance.

Figure 5 provides the distribution of survey respondents as per the sampling strategy described above.

4.4. Data Collection & Evaluation Team

Evaluation fieldwork will take place over a period between mid-December 2017 to mid-January 2018 and will adopt a mixed-methods approach described in detail above. All research outputs from surveys, KIIs and FGDs will remain confidential and anonymous while the identity of participants will not be printed or reported. Researchers will identify themselves as external researchers which have been contracted by UNICEF to conduct an independent evaluation of activities. At the start of each evaluation activity, evaluators will also explain the purpose of the evaluation, that information acquired will remain confidential and anonymous, and that the intention of the exercise is to improve humanitarian programming of UNICEF. The concept of resilience as defined in this protocol will also be explained when relevant.

The evaluation team will also conduct a total of five scoping visits to the governorates identified in the sampling strategy. The purpose of these visits is to assess or find tune the understanding of an assignment and create an initial understanding of nuances required as part of an evaluation/assessment framework and methodology in each location. The scoping visits will also be used to test the research tools and fine-tune the discussion guides. Scoping visits will also facilitate security and communications arrangements between UNICEF and the evaluation team. These visits should take place with identified local focal points of UNICEF and the evaluation team. An exchange of contact information between the research team and local UNICEF staff should be shared in advance of such visit.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the number of activities that will take place over the course of the evaluation.

Figure 6: Research Activity Breakdown

| Research Activity | Number of Research Activities |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Theory of Change Reconstruction Interviews | 2 |
| Key informant Interviews (Field) | 26 |
| Key informant Interviews (Staff) | 10 |
| Scoping Visits | 5 |
| Focus Group Discussions | 20 |
| Online Survey | 1 |

The field evaluation team will be comprised of up to six persons who have extensive experience working and collecting data for assessments and evaluations throughout Syria. Accordingly, each of the evaluation activities will be covered by a minimum two-person team split evenly into lead enumerators and assistant researchers in order to ensure that data can be collected in line with the security, logistical and technical constraints of this project, in addition to quality control procedures at Triangle.

Figure 7: Evaluation Team Composition

| Role | Name |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| International Evaluation Team Leader | Nizar Ghanem |
| International Evaluation Expert | Sami Halabi |
| National Evaluation Expert | Eyad Qatana |
| Enumerator | Mohamed Karabij |
| Enumerator | Omar Al-Senjar |
| Enumerator | Hossein kattan |
| Facilitator | Sarah Saleh |
| Facilitator | Ola Kattan |
| Facilitator | Reema Kaie |
| Facilitator | Mostafa Khdeir |

4.5. Security issues & considerations

The security situation in Syria has deteriorated significantly throughout 2017, creating additional risks for staff and research teams. The very nature of research and probing for answers invokes sensitivities across different segments of the Syrian population. Heavy weapons, shelling, and attacks by irregular militias in areas targeted by this evaluation may hinder the implementation of field research. Triangle will regularly assess security risks facing its field staff and beneficiaries in coordination with UNICEF so as to maintain operational integrity and its Do No Harm approach (See Section 5). Regular updates of security risks will be provided to evaluation teams in coordination with UNICEF's own security protocols.

According to the methodology outlined above, researchers will conduct field operations in a phased manner so as to ensure the security of all persons involved (beneficiaries, researchers, UNICEF staff) and the quality of data collected. To do so, researchers will first conduct scoping visits to UNICEF locations in sub-districts that are part of this evaluation in advance of data collection. The purpose of the scoping visits will be to:

1. **Ensure logistics and security:** Researchers will ensure that they understand the logistics and security related to traveling to and from locations, gain acceptance of UNICEF staff or relevant

authorities supervising areas. Part of this process will be understanding who to portray the role and assignment of the evaluation team in the field, especially with beneficiaries and external stakeholders. Local UNICEF teams should coordinate logistics and security jointly with the evaluation team leader (Nizar Ghanem) and the National Evaluation Expert (Eyad Qatana). During scoping visits, an introductory session and security briefing will be held with UNICEF.

2. **Ensure institutional arrangements:** UNICEF will ensure that team members have the correct institutional arrangements which can include introductory/facilitation letters and/or travel approvals from relevant authorities supervising areas. What is more, UNICEF will ensure the proper coordination with Education Directorate Level and relevant Ministry of Education Departments. Researchers will ensure that all relevant information requested by UNICEF is disclosed in time to ensure smooth field operations.
3. **Pre-Test of tools:** Researchers will pre-test the various tools that are being used during the evaluation to ensure that there are no major issues. If issues arise, researchers will relay this information back to their management, who can then make decisions on whether tools need to be amended.
4. **Plan evaluation activities:** Researchers will agree evaluation activity timelines with UNICEF staff in order to make certain all relevant parties are aware that these activities will take place, and make the necessary arrangements to ensure security and the smooth running of evaluation operations. Modes of transportation will be agreed upon between UNICEF staff and the evaluation teams to ensure security protocols are followed. Transportation costs will be covered and managed by the evaluation team.
5. **Establish communication protocols:** The evaluation team will use scoping visits in order to establish communication protocols with UNICEF. The team's National Evaluation Expert will agree practical elements of communication with UNICEF staff as well as particular issues related to communications with field staff and implementing partners. The National Evaluation Expert will manage all communications with third parties on the ground and be responsible for ensuring that the evaluation team has the ability to communicate through whatever medium is preferred by UNICEF. The National Evaluation Expert will also share daily security information related to any potential threats in and around field areas.

It should be noted, however, that UNICEF instructions/communication will be with the whole team experts, and directions to the team will go through and in agreement with the Evaluation team leader.

6. **Emergency protocols:** In cases where there is an emergency in the field, emergency protocols will be activated. The protocols entail that whenever an incident occurs, the field team in question will immediately inform the National Evaluation Expert who, in turn, informs UNICEF and the team leader of the issue. As a matter of principle, whenever a security issue occurs, all field teams will be withdrawn from the field to a safe location in a manner which is prompt but, in as much as possible, does not raise suspicion or concern amongst the local community. At the same time, UNICEF, the National Evaluation Expert and the team leader will consider the threat level, and then direct field teams to either return to the field, remain in place, or relocate to a safe location.

5. Analysis & Reporting

Data acquired during the desk review and key informant interviews process will be incorporated at several levels of the research in order to inform the findings and Final Evaluation Report (FER). The constant and adaptive desk review will serve to inform key informant interviews and focus group discussions which, in turn, will triangulate information from the literature. Primary and secondary data sourced from

the desk review and key informant interviews will also be referenced in the FER

Data acquired during the desk review and key informant interviews process will be incorporated at several levels of the research in order to inform the findings and final report. Information provided by the desk review and key informant interviews will first go towards the compilation and content of adaptable research tools employed during the evaluation. The desk review will serve to inform key informant interviews, which, in turn, will inform and verify focus group discussions throughout the research. Primary and secondary data sourced from the desk review and key informant interviews will also be referenced in the final report. The notes from the key informant interviews will be cleaned and emerging themes from each will be identified and synthesised for analysis.

Data from FGD will be employed in three interconnected manners: Responses during FGD will be qualified for each focus group question stemming from the discussion guide. Then, each qualification will seek to provide insight into how responses meet the objectives of the research.

The online survey will be treated and processed using research and data processing software (such as SPSS 20.0), and cross-tabulations will be run to form tables on which percentages will be compared, and graphs will be created accordingly. The analysis will delve into the results in search of further significance that could highlight particular findings, and build recommendations accordingly.

At the end of the field research phase, the evaluation team will prepare a presentation of emerging findings which will be presented to UNICEF and the broader technical committee (which includes UNICEF, MoE and members of the Evaluation Team) in order to garner comments. Comments should be documented in written format on one occasion and in one document. Once comments have been received, further analysis will take said comments into account.

The FSR will consist of a minimum of 25 pages plus Annexes. Depending on the content of the findings, the report will be structure either as themes and sub-themes or according to the evaluation criteria. If the report is constructed as thematic, then an analysis of relevant evaluation criteria will be included under each theme. The FSR will facilitate verbatim quotes and include them in the body text of the FER.

The evaluation team will also accommodate for UNICEF/MOE comments in the FER. Accordingly, the team will submit a draft copy of the FSR to UNICEF, which should compile all relevant comments in one document and on one occasion. Once comments have been addressed, researchers will undertake a final round of revisions to produce the final FER deliverable. The evaluation team will also present the findings and recommendations of the FSR to UNICEF and whomever UNICEF wishes to be present based on mutual agreement of time, place and format.

6. Ethical Protocol and Procedures

The principles outlined below underpin the scope and structure of proposed research. They draw on UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008), the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016), and UNICEF Ethical Research Guidelines involving children in humanitarian settings, in addition to Triangle's experience operating in refugee contexts and conflict zones.

- **Context and issue sensitivity / Do No Harm:** The protracted, polarised and complex nature of the conflict in Syria has significant implications for both the design and implementation of data collection activities. Each context has its own specificities that are broadly addressed by the objectives of this research. Thus, it is imperative that considerable attention be given to the formulation of research questions and survey instruments to prevent lines of inquiry that could potentially strain relations or jeopardise future UNICEF operations or outcomes. To this end, we will adopt a context- and issue-

sensitive approach to research, while mitigating against any potential deleterious effects that may increase tensions between the UNICEF and its beneficiaries, donors, or implementing partners. In doing so, we draw from a substantial track record of conducting research in conflict and post-conflict areas, including Do No Harm analysis/risk mitigation for humanitarian NGOs. As such, the Do No Harm principle will apply throughout the course of this research. To achieve this end, we advocate transparency in the research objectives; thus, ensuring that the intentions of the project are interpreted correctly.

- **Gender sensitivity and gender, age, and diversity mainstreaming:** Collecting gender-disaggregated data can be challenging and impacted by cultural norms and security concerns. Triangle will employ gender-sensitive research methods and data collection tools, which will aim to ensure inclusive participation and gather feedback from both men and women to present a holistic picture of how assistance is perceived amongst key demographics.
- **Coherence with frameworks and coordination with national/regional coordination bodies:** The proposed Evaluation Matrix and tools will avoid establishing parallel/redundant data collection mechanisms. Instead, the framework will utilise data in the target geographic and thematic areas, including proxy sources considered to be credible and reliable
- **Flexibility:** We seek to establish systems that are highly flexible and adaptable to the evolving context. To do so, we will institute frequent methodological revisions and redesign, and the development of robust and comprehensible mechanisms for measuring performance. This will involve frequent engagement with the UNICEF to ensure evaluation schedules align with critical events during project delivery.
- **Data protection and anonymity:** Triangle/Afkar commits to protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of survey, focus group and interview participants names and contact data. The research tools intentionally do not request participants' names or contact information. All data collected is also stored in encrypted servers, with limited access to personnel. Furthermore, all electronic data online (in case of online survey) is backed up and deleted from the server after finalization of field. Data is copied into hard-drives which are kept in secure locations.⁵⁷
- **Informed consent and confidentiality:** Prior to all engagements, including face-to-face interviews or similar methods of data collection, participants will be asked to provide informed consent in the primary language of the interviewee. Informed consent will include clear information regarding the attribution of the organization/individual; the objectives and how information will be collected, used, and shared; that participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time; and that no additional benefits or incentives will be provided. We will ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced back to its source in order to protect individuals from reprisals.⁵⁸

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5. ⁵⁷ Incompliance with UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis; Document Number: CF/PD/DRP/2015-001 Effective Date: 01 April 2015 Issued by: Director, Division of Data, Research, and Policy (DRP).

⁵⁸ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008.

- **Impartiality:** Triangle/Afkar commits to a comprehensive and balanced presentation of research findings. Hence, the evaluators commit to operate in an impartial and unbiased manner at all stages of the evaluation, collect diverse perspectives and guard against distortion in reporting caused by personal biases.⁵⁹
- **Respect for Dignity and Diversity:** Any individual involved in the exercise will be treated with the highest level of respect and objectivity irrespective of gender, age, religion, or any other demographic or ethnic affiliation.

7. Potential Limitations & Mitigation Measures

Given the sensitive nature of research and data collection in conflict zones, particularly in Syria. Some limitations could arise from certain areas of inquiry. In particular, where local government bodies or staff are involved in service provision, beneficiaries and other respondents would potentially be put at risk if overly critical commentary is shared outside of the two parties privy to the evaluation's findings, namely Triangle and AFKS/UNICEF. Hence, extra care will be taken when questioning such persons and all data will be transmitted outside of Syria will be done using secure means of transmission. In addition, the use of recording instruments is not always appropriate, and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The security situation itself creates several potential limitations, especially with regard to movement of beneficiaries and non-beneficiary respondents to and from evaluation locations. In order to mitigate these risks, the evaluation team will make as much effort as reasonably possible to reduce time and effort required by beneficiaries and non-beneficiary respondents.

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⁵⁹ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008.

END OF RESEARCH PROTOCOL & INCEPTION REPORT

9. Annexes

Annex A. Guidance Document for the Protection of Human Subjects' Identities and Research Data.

This field research protocol is based on the Guidance document for the protection of Human Subjects Identities set by UNICEF in the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.

Triangle/Afkar commits to maintaining confidentiality of information collected from research participants. Only enumerators or individual collecting/analysing data can identify the responses of individual subjects. What is more, researchers will make every effort to prevent anyone outside of the project from connecting individual subjects with their responses. Through this protocol Triangle/Afkar will ensure the protection and respect for human and child rights within all research evaluation, and data collection processes undertaken or commissioned by UNICEF.

1. Triangle/Afkar commits to using subject codes on data documents. Focus group discussions will use unique subject codes such as (F1, F2, etc.).
2. All sheets containing identifiers (e.g. names and/or addresses) will be removed from survey sheets, focus group discussion, and key informant interviews.
3. Triangle/Afkar commits to disposing and destroying all study data and documents in a time frame not more than one year since the finalization of the report.
4. Triangle/Afkar utilizes secure online survey tools which are encrypted. Raw data for analysis will be treated in office premises. Staff will be prohibited from accessing data from home.
5. Triangle/Afkar will ensure that post-analysis, all data is removed from online platforms and moved to a storage device (hard-drive) and deposited in secure location away from office. All hard-drives will be password protected.
6. All remaining computerized records will be assigned security codes.

Annex B. Guidance Document of the Protection of Human Subjects' Safety

This field research protocol is based on the Guidance document for the protection of Human Subjects Safety set by UNICEF in the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.

In all research operations, Triangle/Afkar considers the subject safety as a primary concern. Triangle/Afkar researchers will use all available resources to identify potential risks for subjects and establish means for minimizing those risks all through the conduct of the field research. If at any point, knowledge came to Triangle/Afkar's staff of potential risks that cannot be mitigated, the research team is instructed to stop the study immediately and refer back to management. To ensure that all subjects are protected and safe Triangle will implement:

1. Context and issue sensitivity: Triangle/Afkar will adopt a context and issue-sensitive approach to research, while mitigating against any potential deleterious effects that may increase tensions between the UNICEF and its beneficiaries, donors or implementing partners. All research questions and survey instruments are formulated in a manner that is neutral, objective and impartial so as not to endanger subjects.
2. Risk assessment/Minimization of risk: Triangle/Afkar commits to continuous assessment for risks to subjects and will ensure that those risks are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits.
3. Do No Harm: Triangle/Afkar commits to apply Do No Harm principal all through its research activities. All researchers will clearly state the objectives of the research study and inform subjects of their right to privacy, autonomy, confidentiality and anonymity.
4. Voluntary and informed consent: Researchers will clearly inform participants of their right to not participate in any research discussion or interview. Prior to commencing with research activities, participants will be asked for their verbal or written consent to participate.
5. Maintain confidentiality: Triangle/Afkar commits to protecting the confidentiality of data and the subjects contact information and research records (check guidance document for the protection of human subjects' identities).
6. Justice: Triangle/Afkar will ensure reasonable, non-exploitative and well-considered procedures are administered fairly. Costs and/or benefits to potential research participants will be shared equally and fairly among research participants without any discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, age or socio-economic profile.
7. Protection of the most vulnerable groups: All through research design and implementation, Triangle/Afkar commits to the protection of the most vulnerable groups. Research enumerators will be specifically trained on how to report gender based violence (especially for women and children) or any exploitation for vulnerable population. In cases of any reported violation of children rights, enumerators are instructed to directly report to the nearest UNICEF protection officer.

Annex 7 – Sampling Strategy

Sampling strategy – FGD:

The FGD sampling strategy devised by Afkar-Triangle intended to reflect UNICEF’s operations on the ground through a series of criteria (See Table 1):

Table 1: FGD Selection Criteria

| Criteria | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Coverage | Coverage of all of the hubs where the BTL is rolled out and accessible. |
| Concentration of assistance | The geographical concentration of assistance has also been considered (See map below) |
| Proportion / scale of distribution | Proportion of assistance that is provided under BTL supplies and School Rehabilitation. |
| Amount of support/beneficiaries | Within each of the four hubs, the largest and the two largest for Damascus hub given its size. |
| Beneficiary profile | Both IDP, vulnerable children from communities hosting IDPs, and non-displaced children in areas where schooling is disrupted by violence and insecurity has been covered proportionally to how UNICEF targets recipients |
| Facility type | Built up schools and prefabricated schools have been considered |
| Student Enrolment Rates | Student Enrolment Rates by Governorate have also been considered |
| Access and security for enumerators; Do-no-harm | Security of enumerators and UNICEF’s operations had highest priority in the site selection. Hence Qamishli Hub has been disqualified |
| Logistical considerations | Availability and access of enumerators has been considered |

Given that the BTL initiative is targeted at both IDP and non-IDP beneficiaries, the inception phase identified the need to consider this further elements of disaggregation. Hence, the number of proposed FGDs was increased from 10 to 20 FGDs. The profile of beneficiaries consisted of parents of children covered by the BTL initiative. UNICEF and its partners did work with Triangle to select a random sample of beneficiaries from a total of three to four schools in each governorate. Whether three of four schools are covered in each governorate depended on the feasibility of conducting FGDs with parents of non-enrolled and parents of dropouts, both of which constituted control groups against which to appraise treatment groups (i.e. beneficiaries of the BTL initiative). Table 2 shows the complete disaggregation of FGDs accordingly.

Table 2: FGD Disaggregation

| School No | Profile | Geography | Gender | Residency Status | Programme Component | No. of Participants |
|-----------|------------------|----------------|--------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Parent/caregiver | Rural Damascus | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies ⁶⁰ | |
| 2 | Parent/caregiver | Rural Damascus | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom | |

1.

⁶⁰ BTL Supplies refers to School bag kits (20 children per kit), School in a carton (40 children per carton), Recreation in a carton (90 children per carton), ECD in a carton (50 children per carton).

| | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----------------|--------|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | |
| 3 | Parent/ caregiver | Rural Damascus | Male | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation | |
| 4 | Parent/ caregiver | Rural Damascus | Male | Non-enrolled | N/A | |
| 5 | Parent/ caregiver | Homs | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies | |
| 6 | Parent/ caregiver | Homs | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom | |
| 7 | Parent/ caregiver | Homs | Male | Non-enrolled | N/A | |
| 8 | Parent/ caregiver | Homs | Female | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation | |
| 9 | Parent/ caregiver | Hama | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies | |
| 10 | Parent/ caregiver | Hama | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom | |
| 11 | Parent/ caregiver | Hama | Male | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation | |
| 12 | Parent/ caregiver | Hama | Female | Dropout | N/A | |
| 13 | Parent/ caregiver | Aleppo | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies | |
| 14 | Parent/ caregiver | Aleppo | Female | IDP | Prefabricated Classroom | |
| 15 | Parent/ caregiver | Aleppo | Male | Dropout | N/A | |
| 16 | Parent/ caregiver | Aleppo | Female | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation | |
| 17 | Parent/ caregiver | Tartous | Male | IDP | BTL Supplies | |
| 18 | Parent/ caregiver | Tartous | Female | Non-IDP | Prefabricated Classroom | |
| 19 | Parent/ caregiver | Tartous | Male | Non-IDP | School Rehabilitation | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------------|--|
| 20 | Parent/ caregiver | Tartous | Female | Non-IDP | BTL Supplies | |
|----|-------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------------|--|

Two evaluation staff have been present during FGDs in order to facilitate the discussion and to document focus group participant responses. FGD discussions consisted of a maximum of two 45-minute sessions separated by a 10-minute break; the sessions have not been recorded, with the aim to make the respondents more comfortable. At the outset of the discussions, researchers introduced themselves and the purpose of the discussion; then participants have been asked if they had any further inquiries and to verbally consent to partaking in the discussion. Participants have also been informed that the discussion was purely for research purposes and had no bearing on participants in terms of future assistance, and that the moderators cannot affect that process. A dedicated FGD assistant has been employed to take notes alongside the FGD facilitator. All participants have been informed that their identities will remain anonymous as well as that discussions will not be shared with anyone and are purely for UNICEF's research purposes.

UNICEF focal points did coordinate with the evaluation team to organize logistics surrounding the FGDs. In particular, UNICEF and partner organisations have been responsible for identifying beneficiaries with the appropriate profiles and a suitable location to conduct focus groups. FGDs did take place without the presence of UNICEF staff and in a reasonably comfortable location where participants could sit close enough to facilitators to be heard.

Notes from FGDs are available and translated in English.

Sampling strategy – Online survey:

A brief and voluntary survey has been designed and disseminated to a purposive sample of UNICEF Staff, implementing partners, focal points in the field and other relevant parties. The survey allowed researchers to record feedback against key evaluation questions in a manner that is timely and unobtrusive. The questionnaire has been developed according to basic humanitarian standards and BTL programme documents for each component.

The survey consisted of around 25 questions which cover various elements related to how the BTL initiative was designed and implemented as well as questions which correspond to the evaluation criteria above. The sample population consisted of potential respondents from across the BTL initiative including UNICEF staff (HQ and field level), MoE partners (Ministry-level and field-level) as well as C4D implementing partners (INGOs, Local NGOs).

The survey has been sent out to the entire population by UNICEF via email with a directive to fill and complete the surveys by a specified date. A response rate threshold of 40% has been set in order to establish significance; the actual response rate has been 64.2% (43 out of 67).

Sampling strategy – KIs:

Afkar-Triangle, between December 2017 and January 2018, also conducted key informant interviews (KIIs), using semi-structured questionnaires relevant to the respondent(s) being interviewed. In order to garner the most nuanced and useful information, KIIs covered both high-level and field-level stakeholders. The purpose of field KIIs was to identify dynamics, gaps and issues faced by respondents in the field, not least among UNICEF staff and implementing partners. CO Staff KIIs have been conducted as the last iteration of the field research phase in order to allow high-level staff to address dynamics, gaps and issues identified during previous evaluation activities (online survey, FGDs and field KIIs). Accordingly, field KIIs have been selected using a purposive sampling strategy based on conversations between UNICEF and the evaluation team.

Notes from (mainly) field level KIIs are available and translated in English, and are used as secondary sources for the finalization of this report. Another round of interviews has been carried out at the beginning of 2019 by another consultant. Although transcriptions nor notes of those interviews are available, they have been used for drafting a report, used as well as resource for this report.

During the July 2019 country visit, selected key informants have been (re)interviewed – see table 4 and Annex 2. Interviewees outside Damascus have been interviewed by skype/phone.

Table 3: KII (2018) Disaggregation

| Profile | Internal External | or Details | Number |
|---|----------------------|--|--------|
| UNICEF SCO Senior Management & Sector Technical Leads | Internal | UNICEF SCO & MENA RO management Staff | 6 |
| UNICEF Field Offices-level staff | Internal | UNICEF Education Officers (1 per Field Office) | 5 |
| MOE Governorate Managers | External | Directorate of Education Representatives | 5 |
| Education Response Field-level | Internal External | / School Principals (1 per school as per FGD disaggregation) | 16 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|---|----|
| C4D Implementation | External | NGOs, community outreach teams, and community leaders. (1 per governorate, or as relevant) | 5 |
| | | Total | 37 |

Table 4: KKIs conducted in July 2019

| | Field Offices | | | | | | | Tot |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| | RO | CO | Aleppo | Hama+Homs | Qamishli | R.Damascus | Tartous | |
| UNICEF Edu | 2 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 20 |
| UNICEF C4D | - | 3 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| UNICEF 'other' | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 10 |
| Government | NA | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Donor community | - | 2 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 2 |
| Implementing Partners | NA | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| Other | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Total | 2 | 29 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 43 |

Interviews lasted maximum one hour. The interviews, semi-structured, have been guided by the evaluation questions and adapted to the role of the respondent in the initiative; ample space has been given to the respondents to offer their point of view, and the original questions lead to different sub questions, depending on the responses and on the roads open to investigation by the conversation. The answers to the interviews have been used to inform the analysis and contributed to respond to the evaluation questions, thus to the findings.

Annex 8 – Data Collection Instrument

Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in the Syrian Arab Republic

- Conducting Focus Group Discussions with BTL Beneficiaries.
(Parents/Caregivers).

Purpose of evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The initiative is comprised of three components: School Supplies, Rehabilitation, and Communication for Development (community engagement). For this purpose, we will conduct interviews, surveys and focus groups.

Where do we conduct focus groups discussions with beneficiaries?

Focus group discussions (FGDs) should only be carried out in safe and secure place, in a location where respondents will not feel pressured to be biased or take a particular position. Facilitators should have assessed the location where FGDs are taking place against these criteria during scoping visits which take place before FGDs commence. If enumerators witness the presence of who could alter or intimidate respondents, they should contact their field coordinator and relevant UNICEF and Afkar staff to enquire about whether to hold the FGD. In turn, FGD facilitators should also ensure that there are neither school, DoE or UNICEF representatives, within earshot of the space during the time of the FGD.

How do we select beneficiaries for FGD?

In each location and depending on the circumstances, 6-10 parents of children who have children enroll cash under the HVAH programme and have not been involved in implementation or coordination of such services will be selected as respondents. UNICEF representatives will be responsible for bringing participants to the location where the FGDs will be held, as per pre-defined criteria. Approximately 6-10 participants will be part of each FGD conducted.

How to conduct focus group discussions?

The FGD will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete, depending on the depth of the responses provided; the participants will be informed of this in advance. During the FGD, please:

Ask each question (below) using identical language;

Do not express your own opinion, support or lack of support to any opinion;

Demonstrate the required flexibility during the dialogue paying attention not to divert too far from the specific talking points;

Let the respondent choose his/her own words – do not correct or paraphrase;

Encourage the respondent to offer more information by asking follow-up questions and probes.

Be aware of time constraints and feel free to politely interrupt the respondent and move on to the next question if the respondent is being overly-repetitive or not offering additional insight.

Beneficiaries often overly-emphasize on the fact that assistance provided is not sufficient and needs to be increased. While this is an important dynamic to be explored, do not let the magnitude of aid become the central element of the interview once/if such a dynamic takes place.

Presentation & Informed Consent

At the beginning of the FGD, please read the informed consent statement, explaining the purpose of your work and that you are conducting an evaluation of UNICEF's BTL initiative in order to provide an independent assessment of the quality of the services provided. Also, be sure to explain that the information obtained during the FGD will be treated as confidential and participants won't be quoted personally; rather, the information will be combined with the responses of other beneficiaries in order to contribute to improving UNICEF's operations across Syria. Facilitators must also clarify that beneficiaries will not receive any services or compensation from participating in the survey.

Once the above has been explained, enumerators must establish informed consent by asking respondents if they have understood and agree to the terms, purpose and intention of the survey. Only when respondents state that they have understood and agreed to the terms, purpose and intention of the survey, should facilitators commence with questions.

Accordingly, the following statement of consent should be read out loud before commencing activities:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am part of an independent research team conducting an evaluation on behalf of UNICEF on beneficiaries' perceptions of the work being carried out by UNICEF to provide school supplies, rehabilitate schools and engage communities to increase enrollment. You have been selected:

[IDP and non-IDP] because your children go to schools which benefit from UNICEF Syria's programme;

[Non-enrolled] because your children have not yet been enrolled in school; or

[Dropout] because your children have dropped out of school.

All participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you agree to participate, all your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential and UNICEF Syria will not see your individual responses. Results from this discussion will not be shared with your neighbors or any authority, and any results will not be reported in any way that could allow for your identification. Your names will not be used under any circumstances.

If you do agree to take part now, you can change your mind at any time during the focus group without any implications. This discussion poses no risks to you or your health. However, if a question causes any anxiety or discomfort you may also choose not to answer without giving a reason.

This discussion should take approximately 1 hour to complete. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask before we begin?

Ensure that the facilitator signs the form which indicates verbal consent has been obtained.

Questions

During FGDs the free flow of the discussion between participants and the facilitator is the most important facet of the focus group. However, all main question areas will need to be covered, so please do not skip any of the main questions or probes. For each question try to establish instance, degree and frequency, as instructed during training.

As guidance, the questions below should be covered during the FGD. Text in brackets are instructions to the facilitator, and not to be read out to the participants.

Questions

FGD guides are semi-structured, i.e. the free flow of the interview and discussion between the facilitator is more important than strictly following a list of pre-set questions.

Text in () are instructions and/or indicators to the interviewee. This text is intended to provide the interviewer with guidance as to how or why questions are being asked.

Text in [] are conditions for questions to be asked/not asked.

Bolded text is for emphasis.

As guidance, the following questions should be addressed during the interview:

Interview Questions

Ice Breaker

(Around the room, one participant at a time) Ask each participant to discuss with the person to their left about how they feel the state of education in your area. At the end of three minutes, we will ask each pair to identify the two or three obstacles to improving their education and increasing enrolment. (Document each response pair separately)

General

[IDP/Non-IDP] Are you familiar with what UNICEF's does in your school district or community? [If so,] can you please describe what UNICEF does?

[Non-enrolled] Have you ever been engaged by any member of the community or a local NGO who tried to encourage you to register your children in school? [If so], please describe what took place?

[Dropout] Can you describe the main reasons why you removed your children from school?

[Non-enrolled] Can you describe the main reasons why you are unable to enrol your children in school?

Relevance

In terms of keeping your [(or for non-enrolled and dropouts) enrolling your] children in school, how important is the provision of school supplies and school rehabilitation to you?

What else do you feel is important for keeping/[(or for non-enrolled and dropouts) enrolling your] children in school? (Probe for transportation, meals in school, etc.)

Are there any social barriers you feel are keeping /[(or for non-enrolled and dropouts) enrolling your] children in school?
 Has anyone ever approached you or someone you know in your community to ask about your children’s education needs?
 [If so], by whom and can you describe the interaction? [Probe: Principals, UNICEF employees, local NGOs, etc.]

Effectiveness

[IDP/Non-IDP] Has the provision of school supplies affected your household decision making around enrolling and keeping your children in school?

[If so], what were the decisions you made which were directly affected by the school supplies or the rehabilitation of school facilities in your community? (Please address supplies—bags, recreational kits,

Have you seen any of billboards, radio shows, fliers and/or printing on buses advertisements for BILT campaign? What do you think of it?

Does it encourage them to send their children to school? Why? Why not?

[Non-enrolled/dropouts] If you were to receive the school supplies or see the rehabilitation of school facilities in your community take place, how much would that encourage you to enrol your children in school?

Are there any other forms of assistance that would encourage you to enrol your children in school? [If so,] please describe.

[IDP/Non-IDP] What percentage of the total cost of schooling is covered by the supplies you have received from UNICEF/Schools in your community? (Ask participants to either agree on an average or, if estimates range, establish reasons why this is the case)

[IDP/Non-IDP] Are their differences in the effects of school supplies or rehabilitation on boys and girls? [If so,] what are these differences?

[Non-enrolled/dropouts] Do you consider the enrolment of boys and girls in your households differently? [If so,] Why?

(If yes, Probe for child marriage of girls, child labour for boys and girls)?

Efficiency

Have you become aware of the procedures or requirements for enrolling children in your community’s school through flyers, billboards, announcement or otherwise? [If so,]:

[IDP/Non-IDP] Does this affect your intention to keep your children in school?

[Non-enrolled/dropouts] Do you feel that you need more information about registration procedures or assistance your children could receive in order for your household to decide to enrol children in school? [If so,] what kind of information or assistance would help?

[IDP/Non-IDP] Can you describe the quality of the school supplies you have received from UNICEF/your school?

Are there any supplies you have received which are not useful or inappropriate? Please describe which items?

[If so] what do you do with the extra items (try to understand if they sell or discard them)?

Coverage

[IDP] Do you think the provision of school supplies, rehabilitation and community outreach has dealt effectively with issues of social exclusion of IDPs and marginalised segments of society?

What else do you think can be done to improve the inclusion of children from displaced communities in schools?

[Non-IDP] Do you think the provision of school supplies, rehabilitation and community outreach has been fairly distributed between IDP and non-IDP segments of society in your community? Please explain why/why not?

Are there specific geographical areas you feel UNICEF or the school system has not reached out to? If so, why? (Probe for besieged or hard to reach areas)

Have you or your neighbour ever visited by community outreach worker (name might be different according to the location) and received information and key messages about BTL?

Impact

[IDP/Non-IDP] Has the inclusion of your children in school affected them positively or negatively? Please describe how?

[IDP/Non-IDP] Have household dynamics changed at all because children are now able to access and receive assistance from UNICEF/Schools? (Probe for:

Household spending dynamics

Ability of women to seek employment

Stability of households

“

Children's wellbeing and happiness)

Do you know if any examples BTL campaign had a difference in the life of girl and/or boy you know of?

Have you seen advertisements of BTL campaign on radio, billboards, busses, and or fliers? Do you think these methods were successful in encouraging you or other parents to enrol their children? Why not?

Are there specific elements of the BTL campaign which you find specifically successful?

Sustainability

If the assistance you receive were to be reduced, how would this affect your decision to enrol or retain your children in school?

What about of the assistance were to be removed altogether?

Conclusion

Do you have any final recommendations on how enrolment and retention of students could be improved in your community?

If you had ten minutes with the Director of UNICEF in Syria, what would you say to them?

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in the Syrian Arab Republic

- Conducting Key Informant Interviews with Community Outreach Team members.

Purpose of evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The initiative is comprised of three components: School Supplies, Rehabilitation, and Communication for Development (community engagement). For this purpose, we will conduct interviews, surveys and focus groups.

Where do we conduct interviews with community outreach workers?

A total of 5 persons who conduct community outreach and are best-suited to respond to questions about the education programme in each governorate should be selected by the evaluation team. Enumerators should attempt to identify whether education officers are cognisant of UNICEF's BTL activities before conducting interviews.

How do we select persons for the interviews?

When selecting respondents, before commencing the survey please ensure that:

The respondent is not known, directly or indirectly, to the interviewer.

The respondent is above 25 years of age.

The respondent has provided informed consent to participate in the survey.

The respondent has not previously participated in any of this evaluations activities.

How to conduct the community outreach interviews

Each interview should be conducted in a secure public or private space. If enumerators witness the presence of persons who could alter or intimidate respondents, they should find another space to conduct the interview. Enumerators should also ensure that there are no UNICEF representatives present or within earshot of the space during the time of the interview. The interview should take approximately 30-50 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses provided; the respondent should be informed of this timeframe in advance. During the survey, please:

Ask each question (below) using identical language;

Refrain from expressing your own opinion, expressing support or lack of support to any opinion;

demonstrate the required flexibility during the dialogue paying attention not to divert too far from the specific talking points; let the KI choose his/her own vocabulary;

Encourage the respondent to offer more information by asking follow-up questions.

Be aware of time constraints and feel free to politely interrupt the respondent and move on to the next question if the respondent is being overly-repetitive or not offering additional insight.

Presentation & Informed Consent

At the beginning of the interview, please read the informed consent statement, explaining the purpose of your work and that you are conducting an evaluation of UNICEF's BTL initiative in order to provide an independent assessment of the quality of the services provided. Also, be sure to explain that the information obtained during the interview will be treated as confidential and participants won't be quoted personally; rather, the information will be combined with the responses of other beneficiaries in order to contribute to improving UNICEF's operations across Syria. Enumerators must also clarify that beneficiaries will not receive any services or compensation from participating in the survey. Accordingly, the following statement of consent should be read out loud before commencing activities:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am part of an independent research team conducting an evaluation on behalf of UNICEF on beneficiaries' perceptions of the work being carried out by UNICEF to provide school supplies, rehabilitate schools and engage communities to increase enrollment. You have been selected:

[IDP and non-IDP] because your children go to schools which benefit from UNICEF Syria's programme;

[Non-enrolled] because your children have not yet been enrolled in school; or

[Dropout] because your children have dropped out of school.

All participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you agree to participate, all your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential and UNICEF Syria will not see your individual responses. Results from this discussion will not be shared with your

neighbors or any authority, and any results will not be reported in any way that could allow for your identification. Your names will not be used under any circumstances.

If you do agree to take part now, you can change your mind at any time during the focus group without any implications. This discussion poses no risks to you or your health. However, if a question causes any anxiety or discomfort you may also choose not to answer without giving a reason.

This discussion should take approximately 1 hour to complete. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask before we begin?

Ensure that the facilitator signs the form which indicates verbal consent has been obtained.

Questions

Interviews with education officers are semi-structured interviews, i.e. the free flow of the interview and discussion between the interviewer is more important than strictly following a list of pre-set questions.

Text in () are instructions and/or indicators to the interviewee. This text is intended to provide the interviewer with guidance as to how or why questions are being asked.

Text in [] are conditions for questions to be asked/not asked.

Bolded text is for emphasis.

As guidance, the following questions should be addressed during the interview:

Interview Questions

General

Please describe your role and how long you have been involved in community outreach as part of the BTL campaign?

How do you feel community outreach has changed in the area you covered since you became involved?

How has the nature of the troubles (أحداث) changed the situation for community members which are unable to enrol their children in school?

Relevance

What are the main issues you feel prevent households from enrolling their children in schools?

How about households with dropouts, do they have different reasons for non-enrolment than persons who never registered their children in school?

Are there specific issues related to awareness? [probe specific issues that require awareness raising].

Are you aware of any needs assessments that were conducted to understand why some people were not able to enrol their children in schools? [If so,] what were their results?

Do you think the assistance provided under the BTL—school supplies, rehabilitation and outreach—are the most relevant to households who cannot enrol their children?

Are there other forms of support/assistance you feel may be more relevant?

Do you know of any mechanisms by which UNICEF ensures BTL interventions remain relevant to local needs?

How are needs different among/between non-enrolled households which are IDPs and those which are not?

How are needs different among/between households which are headed by females and those headed by males?

Effectiveness

What type of guidance or support do field teams receive from UNICEF (Please cover technical, logistical, and financial support)?

In your opinion which non-enrolled households has the BTL been most effective in reaching out to?

In your opinion, which of the three BTL components has had the greatest effect on enrolment and retention of students? Why do you feel this is the case?

What were the most effective methods of communication that increased awareness of local communities? [probe for billboards, fliers, radio, and printing on buses].

What were the most effective methods of communication with the local community that increased awareness? [probe for billboards, fliers, radio, and printing on buses].

Are there any further measures you think could be taken to increase enrolment and retention in your coverage area?

Efficiency

How do you feel community outreach could be conducted to reach a greater number of people?

How do you feel community outreach could be conducted to those who are most vulnerable?

Do you think the communication tools utilized in BILT with local communities achieved their intended results [probe: radio, fliers, billboards, and printing on buses]?

What are the mechanisms used to get feedback from beneficiaries and how is this shared with UNICEF?

How are enrolment and retention (dropouts) monitored and reported by your teams at the field level?

How are funds and staff allocated to community outreach the field level?

Are there specific areas in the field that require more focus and funding?

What types of training have been conducted with community outreach teams and what are the main skills gaps?

What are the mechanisms for monitoring the cost of operations, spending and in what manner? In what form are costs reported from field to HQ level?

Coordination

Can you describe how you coordinate your work with UNICEF in your coverage area?

How is data and information shared between your offices, schools and UNICEF?

How are the utilized communication tools to raise awareness of BILT campaigns decided upon? Which actors decide on messages and how does this change locally?

Coverage

Are there specific geographical areas or segments of society that you are not able to reach through community outreach? If so, why?

What efforts have been made to expand the geographical area community outreach covers in your area?

How are the utilized communication tools to raise awareness of BILT campaigns decided upon? Which actors decide on messages and how does this change locally?

How does community outreach deal with besieged and hard-to-reach areas? Are teams able to prioritize access, for instance through inter-agency convoys?

Can you speak to specific challenges related to access in besieged or hard to reach areas?

What measures are in place in your outreach area to ensure inclusion and counter gender and geographical bias? (Please cover gender and geographical bias separately)

How are the different needs of boys and girls assessed and responded to in order to increase outreach to each?

Impact

Have you witnessed an increase in enrolment and/or retention since the community outreach began in your area? Why is this so? (Try to understand if any increases are a direct result of community outreach)

[If there has been a positive effect] Can you describe how large this effect has been?

Have you seen any difference in the effects of community outreach on boys and girls? [If so], what are these effects?

What specific communication tools utilized in BILT achieved their intended results and which did not? [probe: radio, fliers, billboards, and printing on buses]?

Were there any surprising impacts of community outreach which were not originally planned or foreseen? (If the question is not understood, suggest that perhaps social cohesion increased, pressure on teachers from larger classrooms, etc.)

Are there specific methods that you think should be used in order to increase access to schooling in the future?

What specific communication tools utilized in BILT achieved their intended results and which did not? [probe: radio, fliers, billboards, and printing on buses]?

Sustainability

Do you feel that the community outreach is designed and implemented in a manner which ensures its effects will be long lasting? How so/why not?

If community outreach were to decrease, do you think the BTL initiative's effects could be sustained? How about if the programme were stopped altogether?

Do you think there can be role for the Ministry of Education or Social Affairs to take over from community outreach actors and run the BTL initiative itself? [If yes/no], please explain?

Conclusion

Do you have any final recommendations on how community outreach could be improved?

If you had ten minutes with the Director of UNICEF in Syria, what would you say to them?

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in the Syrian Arab Republic

- Conducting Key Informant Interviews with UNICEF staff.

(Education Officers)

Purpose of evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The initiative is comprised of three components: School Supplies, Rehabilitation, and Communication for Development (community engagement). For this purpose, we will conduct interviews, surveys and focus groups.

Where do we conduct interviews with education officers?

A total of 1 education officer which heads each school and is best-suited to respond to questions about the education programme in each governorate should be selected by the evaluation team. Enumerators should attempt to identify whether education officers are cognisant of UNICEF's BTL activities before conducting interviews.

How do we select staff for the interviews?

When selecting respondents, before commencing the survey please ensure that:

The respondent is not known, directly or indirectly, to the interviewer.

The respondent is above 25 years of age.

The respondent has provided informed consent to participate in the survey.

The respondent has not previously participated in any of this evaluation's activities.

How to conduct the staff interviews

Each interview should be conducted in a secure public or private space. If enumerators witness the presence of persons who could alter or intimidate respondents, they should find another space to conduct the interview. Enumerators should also ensure that there are no UNICEF representatives present or within earshot of the space during the time of the interview. The interview should take approximately 30-50 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses provided; the respondent should be informed of this timeframe in advance. During the survey, please:

Ask each question (below) using identical language;

Refrain from expressing your own opinion, expressing support or lack of support to any opinion;

demonstrate the required flexibility during the dialogue paying attention not to divert too far from the specific talking points;

let the KI choose his/her own vocabulary;

Encourage the respondent to offer more information by asking follow-up questions.

Be aware of time constraints and feel free to politely interrupt the respondent and move on to the next question if the respondent is being overly-repetitive or not offering additional insight.

Presentation & Informed Consent

At the beginning of the interview, please read the informed consent statement, explaining the purpose of your work and that you are conducting an evaluation of UNICEF's BTL initiative in order to provide an independent assessment of the quality of the services provided. Also, be sure to explain that the information obtained during the interview will be treated as confidential and participants won't be quoted personally; rather, the information will be combined with the responses of other beneficiaries in order to contribute to improving UNICEF's operations across Syria. Enumerators must also clarify that beneficiaries will not receive any services or compensation from participating in the survey.

Accordingly, the following statement of consent should be read out loud before commencing activities:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am part of an independent research team conducting an evaluation on behalf of UNICEF on beneficiaries' perceptions of the work being carried out by UNICEF to provide school supplies, rehabilitate schools and engage communities to increase enrollment. You have been selected:

[IDP and non-IDP] because your children go to schools which benefit from UNICEF Syria's programme;

[Non-enrolled] because your children have not yet been enrolled in school; or

[Dropout] because your children have dropped out of school.

All participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you agree to participate, all your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential and UNICEF Syria will not see your individual responses. Results from this discussion will not be shared with your neighbors or any authority, and any results will not be reported in any way that could allow for your identification. Your names will not be used under any circumstances.

If you do agree to take part now, you can change your mind at any time during the focus group without any implications. This discussion poses no risks to you or your health. However, if a question causes any anxiety or discomfort you may also choose not to answer without giving a reason.

This discussion should take approximately 1 hour to complete. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask before we begin?

Ensure that the facilitator signs the form which indicates verbal consent has been obtained.

Questions

Interviews with education officers are semi-structured interviews, i.e. the free flow of the interview and discussion between the interviewer is more important than strictly following a list of pre-set questions.

Text in () are instructions and/or indicators to the interviewee. This text is intended to provide the interviewer with guidance as to how or why questions are being asked.

Text in [] are conditions for questions to be asked/not asked.

Bolded text is for emphasis.

As guidance, the following questions should be addressed during the interview:

Interview Questions

General

Please describe your role and how long you have been involved in UNICEF's BTL campaign?

How do you feel that BTL has evolved in the area you covered since you became involved?

How has the nature of the troubles (أحداث) changed the situation for teachers, students and UNICEF's education administration? (Please cover each of students, teachers and administration separately)

Relevance

How were the needs of Syrian children understood by yourself and UNICEF?

Were there any needs assessments that were conducted to show that the interventions under the BTL initiative (school supplies, rehabilitation, community engagement) were the most appropriate? How often were they conducted?

How do you measure and appraise the relevance of the BTL initiative to the needs of schools and households needs in your coverage areas?

Were you or anyone else at the governorate level involved in the design of the BTL initiative? [If so,] how?

[If not,] do you have any mechanisms in place that allow you and your teams to implement interventions which are tailored to the areas you cover?

What are the mechanisms by which UNICEF ensures BTL interventions remain relevant to local needs?

How were issues surrounding children needs, their parents and families in different areas disaggregated and included in the process of design and implementation?

Were international conventions integrated in the design and implementation of the BTL initiative? [If so,] how?

How about national-level education priorities, how does the BTL initiative fits within this framework?

How does the work you do in your area fall in line with the overall annual work plan and education sector objectives of UNICEF in Syria?

How was gender and disability taken into account during the BTL initiative's design and implementation? (Ask officers to provide examples of ways the BTL design was sensitive to gender, disability and equity.)

Effectiveness

What type of guidance or support do field teams receive from HQ (Please cover technical, logistical, and financial support)?

To what extent have the objectives of each BTL initiative component been achieved? (Please respond to each BTL initiative component separately and ask the officer to explain any shortcomings)

In your opinion, which of the three BTL initiatives has had the greatest effect on enrolment and retention of students? Why do you feel this is the case?

..

Are there any further measures you think could be taken to increase enrolment and retention in your coverage area?

Efficiency

Do you have a knowledge of how results measured at HQ and field levels?

How is your team in the field supported by HQ to report indicators, outputs?

(Please ask officers to explain how specific, measurable and time bound these measures are)

How is data shared back from school level? What are the mechanisms used to get feedback from beneficiaries and how is this shared with UNICEF?

How are various regional field teams involved in the process of monitoring and reporting?

How are enrolment and retention (dropouts) monitored and reported by your teams at the field level?

How are funds and staff allocated at the field level?

What are the main areas of expenditure and how are these decided?

Are there specific areas in the field that require more funding?

How are staff capacities and skill mixes monitored at the distribution and school level?

Is UNICEF able to conduct regular human resources evaluations at the distribution and school levels

What are the main training sessions relevant to the BTL initiative that have been conducted for UNICEF staff and for school staff? Do these address the major skill gaps your staff have?

What types of training has been conducted with regional staff and what are the main gaps?

What are the mechanisms for monitoring the cost of operations, spending and in what manner? In what form are costs reported from field to HQ level?

How are risks assessed during implementation and what mechanisms are put in place for risk management in your areas?

Are there specific constraints in terms of funding components of the BTL initiative? Are their components that are not sufficiently funded?

Coordination

Can you describe how you work with schools and the DoE in your coverage area?

How is data and information shared between your offices, schools and the DoE in your coverage area?

Do you feel there could be a more efficient way of interacting with schools in your area?

How do you measure and track enrolment, retention and dropouts in your coverage area?

How are the capacity needs of schools and DoE representatives assessed and addressed in your coverage area?

[If so] where do you see the major capacity gaps for both the schools and the DoE?

In term of remedial education and informal learning, how do you coordinate with specific programmes implemented by other local actors (e.g. local NGOs) which are relevant to communities targeted BTL initiative?

Can you use these actors to engage communities effectively? How so/Why not?

Do you work to increase these actor's capacity to implement BTL initiatives in the programmes they cover? [If yes,] how so?

What system and agreements govern the partnership between UNICEF and local partners on the ground?

Coverage

Are there specific geographical areas or segments of society that BTL was not able to reach in your coverage areas? If so, why?

What efforts have been made to expand the BTL initiative's geographical coverage in your area (Please cover each BTL initiative component separately)?

How did BTL initiative deal with besieged and hard-to-reach areas? Were your teams able to prioritize access, for instance through inter-agency convoys?

(Please explain the specific challenges related to access in besieged or hard to reach areas?)

What measures are in place in your coverage area to ensure inclusion and counter gender and geographical bias? (Please cover gender and geographical bias separately)

How are the different needs of boys and girls assessed and respondent to in order to increase coverage to each?

Impact

Have you witnessed an increase in enrolment and/or retention since the BTL initiative began in your school? Why is this so? (Try to understand if any increases are a direct result of BTL assistance)

[If there has been a positive effect] Can you describe how large this effect has been (Please cover each component separately with the principal)

Have you seen any difference in the effects on the BTL initiative on boys and girls? [If so], what are these effects?

Where there any surprising impacts of the BTL initiative which were not originally planned or foreseen? (If the question is not understood, suggest that perhaps social cohesion increased, pressure on teachers from larger classrooms, etc.)

Are there specific methods that you think should be used in order to increase access to schooling in the future? (Please ask about alternative programming, advocacy, or forming partnerships).

Sustainability

Do you feel that the BTL initiative is designed and implemented in a manner which ensures its effects will be long lasting? How so/why not?

If funding were to decrease, do you think the BTL initiative's effects could be sustained? How about if the programme were stopped altogether?

To what extent do you feel that the BTL initiative built the long term capacity of relevant local actors and partners to increase enrolment and retention? (Please ask the officer to describe schools, local NGOs, and the DoE separately)

What are the possibilities of expanding the BTL campaigns through other education actors (such as local NGOs)? Do you think that would be appropriate?

Do you think there will be role for the ministry to take over from UNICEF and run the BTL initiative itself? [If yes/no], please explain?

Do you think there are sufficient financial resources to see this process through?

Conclusion

Do you have any final recommendations on how BTL could be improved?

If you had ten minutes with the Director of UNICEF in Syria, what would you say to them?

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in the Syrian Arab Republic

- Conducting Key Informant Interviews with Stakeholders

Purpose of evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The initiative is comprised of three components: School Supplies, Rehabilitation, and Communication for Development (community engagement). For this purpose, we will conduct interviews, surveys and focus groups.

Where do we conduct interviews with DoE representatives?

A total of 1 Directorate of Education Representative in each governorate which is best-suited to respond to questions about the BTL programme in each governorate should be selected by the evaluation team and UNICEF. Enumerators should attempt to identify whether representatives are cognisant of UNICEF's BTL activities before conducting interviews.

How do we select external staff for the interviews?

When selecting respondents, before commencing the survey please ensure that:

The respondent is not known, directly or indirectly, to the interviewer.

The respondent is above 25 years of age.

The respondent has provided informed consent to participate in the survey.

The respondent has not previously participated in any of this evaluation's activities.

How to conduct the external staff interviews

Each interview should be conducted in a secure public or private space. If enumerators witness the presence of persons who could alter or intimidate respondents, they should find another space to conduct the interview. Enumerators should also ensure that there are no UNICEF representatives present or within earshot of the space during the time of the interview. The interview should take approximately 30-50 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses provided; the respondent should be informed of this timeframe in advance. During the survey, please:

Ask each question (below) using identical language;

Refrain from expressing your own opinion, expressing support or lack of support to any opinion;

demonstrate the required flexibility during the dialogue paying attention not to divert too far from the specific talking points; let the KI choose his/her own vocabulary;

Encourage the respondent to offer more information by asking follow-up questions.

Be aware of time constraints and feel free to politely interrupt the respondent and move on to the next question if the respondent is being overly-repetitive or not offering additional insight.

Presentation & Informed Consent

At the beginning of the interview, please read the informed consent statement, explaining the purpose of your work and that you are conducting an evaluation of UNICEF's BTL initiative in order to provide an independent assessment of the quality of the services provided. Also, be sure to explain that the information obtained during the interview will be treated as confidential and participants won't be quoted personally; rather, the information will be combined with the responses of other beneficiaries in order to contribute to improving UNICEF's operations across Syria. Enumerators must also clarify that beneficiaries will not receive any services or compensation from participating in the survey.

Accordingly, the following statement of consent should be read out loud before commencing activities:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am part of an independent research team conducting an evaluation on behalf of UNICEF on beneficiaries' perceptions of the work being carried out by UNICEF to provide school supplies, rehabilitate schools and engage communities to increase enrollment. You have been selected:

[IDP and non-IDP] because your children go to schools which benefit from UNICEF Syria's programme;

[Non-enrolled] because your children have not yet been enrolled in school; or

[Dropout] because your children have dropped out of school.

All participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you agree to participate, all your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential and UNICEF Syria will not see your individual responses. Results from this discussion will not be shared with your

neighbors or any authority, and any results will not be reported in any way that could allow for your identification. Your names will not be used under any circumstances.

If you do agree to take part now, you can change your mind at any time during the focus group without any implications. This discussion poses no risks to you or your health. However, if a question causes any anxiety or discomfort you may also choose not to answer without giving a reason.

This discussion should take approximately 1 hour to complete. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask before we begin?

Ensure that the facilitator signs the form which indicates verbal consent has been obtained.

Questions

Interviews with education officers are semi-structured interviews, i.e. the free flow of the interview and discussion between the interviewer is more important than strictly following a list of pre-set questions.

Text in () are instructions and/or indicators to the interviewee. This text is intended to provide the interviewer with guidance as to how or why questions are being asked.

Text in [] are conditions for questions to be asked/not asked.

Bolded text is for emphasis.

As guidance, the following questions should be addressed during the interview:

Interview Questions

General

Please describe your role and how long you have been involved in UNICEF's BTL campaign?

How do you feel that BTL has evolved in the area you cover since you became involved?

How has the nature of the troubles (أحداث) changed the situation for teachers, students and the public education administration? (Please cover each of students, teachers and administration separately)

Relevance

How are the needs of Syrian children understood by yourself and UNICEF?

Were there any needs assessments that were conducted to show that the interventions under the BTL initiative (school supplies, rehabilitation, community engagement) were the most appropriate?

How do you measure and appraise the relevance of the BTL initiative to the needs of schools and households needs in your coverage areas?

[DoE representatives] What are the mechanisms by which the DoE ensures BTL interventions remain relevant to local needs?

How were international conventions integrated in the design and implementation of the BTL initiative? [If so,] how?

How about national-level education priorities, do you know how the BTL initiative fits within the government's national education priorities?

How was gender and disability taken into account during the BTL initiative's design and implementation? (Ask representatives to provide examples of ways the BTL design was sensitive to gender, disability and equity.)

Effectiveness

What type of guidance or support do field teams receive from UNICEF's HQ and also from MOE to facilitate field activities (Please cover technical, logistical, and financial support)?

In your opinion, which of the three BTL initiatives has had the greatest effect on enrolment and retention of students? Why do you feel this is the case?

Are there any further measures you think could be taken to increase enrolment and retention in your coverage area?

Efficiency

Can you describe the process of how school supplies are distributed to different schools?

How are the schools selected?

How is the reception of school supplies monitored by the DoE in each school?

How are your staff in the field supported by UNICEF SCO to report indicators, outputs?

(Please ask the DoE to explain how specific, measurable and time bound these measures are)

How is data shared back from school level? What are the mechanisms used to get feedback from beneficiaries and how is this shared with UNICEF?

How are enrolment and retention (dropouts) monitored and reported by your teams at the field level? Does this information then get sent to UNICEF?

How are funds and staff involved in the BTL allocated at the school level?

What are the main areas of expenditure and how are these decided?

Are there specific areas in the field that require more funding?

How are staff capacities and skill mixes monitored at the distribution and school level?

What are the main training sessions relevant to the BTL initiative that have been conducted by UNICEF for school staff? Do these address the major skill gaps your staff have?

How are lessons learned at the field level incorporated in amendments to the BTL initiative?

What are the mechanisms for monitoring the cost of operations and funds spent on the BTL? In what form are costs reported from schools to the DoE and then onto UNICEF?

How are risks assessed during implementation and what mechanisms are put in place for risk management in your areas?

Coordination

Can you describe how you coordinate your work with UNICEF in your coverage area?

How is data and information shared between your offices, schools and UNICEF?

How do you measure and track enrolment, retention and dropouts in your coverage area? How is this information then shared with UNICEF?

As part of BTL operations, how are the capacity needs of schools and the DoE assessed and addressed in your coverage area?

Where do you see the major capacity gaps for both the schools and the DoE?

In terms of remedial education and informal learning, how do you coordinate with specific programmes implemented by local actors other than UNICEF (e.g. local NGOs) which are relevant to communities targeted BTL initiative?

Can you use these actors to engage communities effectively? How so/Why not?

Coverage

Are there specific geographical areas or segments of society that BTL was not able to reach in your coverage areas? If so, why?

What efforts have been made to expand the BTL initiative's geographical coverage in your area (Please cover each BTL initiative component separately)?

What efforts have been made to ensure access to schooling for IDPs and other vulnerable non-IDP groups?

What measures are in place in your coverage area to ensure inclusion and counter gender and geographical bias? (Please cover gender and geographical bias separately)

How are the different needs of boys and girls assessed and responded to in order to increase coverage to each?

Impact

Have you witnessed an increase in enrolment and/or retention since the BTL initiative began in your coverage area? Why is this so? (Try to understand if any increases are a direct result of BTL assistance)

[If there has been a positive effect] Can you describe how large this effect has been (Please cover each BTL component separately with the representative)

Have you seen any difference in the effects on the BTL initiative on boys and girls? [If so], what are these effects?

Were there any surprising impacts of the BTL initiative which were not originally planned or foreseen? (If the question is not understood, suggest that perhaps social cohesion increased, pressure on teachers from larger classrooms, etc.)

Are there specific methods that you think should be employed in order to increase access to schooling in the future? (Please ask about alternative programming, advocacy, or forming partnerships).

Sustainability

Do you feel that the BTL initiative is designed and implemented in a manner which ensures its effects will be long lasting? How so/why not?

If funding were to decrease, do you think the BTL initiative's effects could be sustained? How about if the programme were stopped altogether?

To what extent do you feel that the BTL initiative built the long term capacity of the DoE and schools to increase enrolment and retention? (Please ask the officer to describe schools, local NGOs, and the DoE separately)

What are the possibilities of expanding the BTL campaigns through other education actors (such as local NGOs)? Do you think that would be appropriate?

Do you think there will be role for the ministry to take over from UNICEF and run the BTL initiative itself? [If yes/no], please explain?

Do you think there are sufficient financial resources to see this process through?

Conclusion

Do you have any final recommendations on how BTL could be improved?

If you had ten minutes with the Director of UNICEF in Syria, what would you say to them?

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluation of Back to Learning Initiative in the Syrian Arab Republic

- Conducting Key Informant Interviews with School Principals.

Purpose of evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coordination, sustainability and impact of the UNICEF SCO Back to Learning initiative in Syria. The initiative is comprised of three components: School Supplies, Rehabilitation, and Communication for Development (community engagement). For this purpose, we will conduct interviews, surveys and focus groups.

Where do we conduct interviews with principals?

A total of 1 principal which heads each school and is best-suited to respond to questions about the education programme in each location should be selected by the evaluation team. Enumerators should attempt to identify whether principals are cognisant of UNICEF's BTL activities before conducting interviews.

How do we select staff for the interviews?

When selecting respondents, before commencing the survey please ensure that:

The respondent is not known, directly or indirectly, to the interviewer.

The respondent is above 25 years of age.

The respondent has provided informed consent to participate in the survey.

The respondent has not previously participated in any of this evaluation's activities.

How to conduct the staff interviews

Each interview should be conducted in a secure public or private space. If enumerators witness the presence of persons who could alter or intimidate respondents, they should find another space to conduct the interview. Enumerators should also ensure that there are no UNICEF representatives present or within earshot of the space during the time of the interview. The interview should take approximately 30-50 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses provided; the respondent should be informed of this timeframe in advance. During the survey, please:

Ask each question (below) using identical language;

Refrain from expressing your own opinion, expressing support or lack of support to any opinion;

demonstrate the required flexibility during the dialogue paying attention not to divert too far from the specific talking points;

let the KI choose his/her own vocabulary;

Encourage the respondent to offer more information by asking follow-up questions.

Be aware of time constraints and feel free to politely interrupt the respondent and move on to the next question if the respondent is being overly-repetitive or not offering additional insight.

Presentation & Informed Consent

At the beginning of the interview, please read the informed consent statement, explaining the purpose of your work and that you are conducting an evaluation of UNICEF's BTL initiative in order to provide an independent assessment of the quality of the services provided. Also, be sure to explain that the information obtained during the interview will be treated as confidential and participants won't be quoted personally; rather, the information will be combined with the responses of other beneficiaries in order to contribute to improving UNICEF's operations across Syria. Enumerators must also clarify that beneficiaries will not receive any services or compensation from participating in the survey.

Accordingly, the following statement of consent should be read out loud before commencing activities:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am part of an independent research team conducting an evaluation on behalf of UNICEF on beneficiaries' perceptions of the work being carried out by UNICEF to provide school supplies, rehabilitate schools and engage communities to increase enrollment. You have been selected:

[IDP and non-IDP] because your children go to schools which benefit from UNICEF Syria's programme;

[Non-enrolled] because your children have not yet been enrolled in school; or

[Dropout] because your children have dropped out of school.

All participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you agree to participate, all your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential and UNICEF Syria will not see your individual responses. Results from this discussion will not be shared with your

neighbors or any authority, and any results will not be reported in any way that could allow for your identification. Your names will not be used under any circumstances.

If you do agree to take part now, you can change your mind at any time during the focus group without any implications. This discussion poses no risks to you or your health. However, if a question causes any anxiety or discomfort you may also choose not to answer without giving a reason.

This discussion should take approximately 1 hour to complete. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask before we begin?

Ensure that the facilitator signs the form which indicates verbal consent has been obtained.

Questions

Interviews with principals are semi-structured interviews, i.e. the free flow of the interview and discussion between the interviewer is more important than strictly following a list of pre-set questions.

Text in () are instructions and/or indicators to the interviewee. This text is intended to provide the interviewer with guidance as to how or why questions are being asked.

Text in [] are conditions for questions to be asked/not asked.

Bolded text is for emphasis.

As guidance, the following questions should be addressed during the interview:

Interview Questions

General

Please describe your role, and how long you and your school been involved in UNICEF's/Directorate of Education's (DoE) BTL initiative?

Which of the three components have taken place at your school and for how long? (In order to confirm selection criteria)

How do you feel that BTL initiative has evolved since your school has become involved?

How has the nature of the troubles (أحداث) changed the situation for teachers, students and UNICEF's education administration? (Please cover each of students, teachers and administration separately)

Relevance

Do you feel that there was sufficient assessment of schools' and students'/families' needs before the BTL initiative was implemented?

Did UNICEF or the DoE engage with your school in terms of incorporating your feedback into how the BTL initiative was implemented?

How appropriate is the structure of the BTL initiative (school supplies, rehabilitation and community engagement) to families' and schools' specific needs? (Please cover each component separately for families and schools with the principal, and check for the appropriateness of each)

Are there any other forms of assistance you feel would be more relevant to the needs of families and schools? (Please cover families and schools separately)

Have the various components of BTL continued to evolve in relation to the needs of families and schools as well as the external environment? (Please cover the needs of families, schools and external environment separately)

Effectiveness

Do you feel that the BTL initiative has a direct effect on increasing enrolment of students who were always out of school or have dropped out of school? (Try to understand whether or not the principal feels there is a direct effect)

Do you feel that the BTL initiative is having any indirect effects on increasing enrolment of students who were always out of school or have dropped out of school?

Which of the BTL initiatives components (school supplies, rehabilitation and community engagement) have been the most effective in bringing children to school and keeping children in school? (Please cover each component separately with the principal)

Do you feel that the amount of support offered is sufficient to meet the needs of families and schools? [If not], please explain?

Can you answer this question again with specific regard to families which have not enrolled their children in school or have taken their children out of school?

Do you feel that UNICEF being involved in the BTL has had any positives or negative effects on the programme and its implementation?

Efficiency

Can you explain the process of how your school was engaged by UNICEF/DoE to become part of the BTL's activities?

Do you feel the process by which you receive assistance under the BTL initiative is appropriate and timely? Are there any improvements that could be made?

(Understand 1- if there are any operational efficiency gaps and what the principal thinks could be done to fix them 2-if the timing of interventions is appropriate to the situation on the ground.)

Do you feel there are specific needs or parts of BTL initiative that require more funding or do not receive sufficient funding? [If yes], can you please explain?

How efficient do you think BTL management is in achieving its objectives?

Do you think there are more efficient ways to achieve the BTL initiative's objectives?

Coordination

What system and agreements govern the partnership between UNICEF/DoE and the schools on the ground?

What do you think of the coordination mechanisms in place to ensure your feedback is incorporated?

Are there any specific challenges to coordination between schools and the BTL management?

Do you feel that lessons learnt are incorporated in activities at the school level?

Do you feel there are aspects of BTL that are also being offered by other actors in your areas? [If so], can you please describe what these (Try to understand if this results in too much of a particular form of assistance)

Coverage

Are there specific geographical areas or segments of the local community of that BTL was not able to reach sufficiently? [If so], why?

Are there specific groups that are more vulnerable than others and are not being covered by BTL?

Do you think BTL was effective in reaching out to families who have not enrolled their children in schools or have taken their children out of schools?

Do you feel that the assistance provided under BTL reaches boys and girls equally, or are there specific needs for boys or girls that should be considered? [If so], what are these needs?

Impact

Have you witnessed an increase in enrolment and/or retention since the BTL initiative began in your school? Why is this so? (Try to understand if any increases are a direct result of BTL assistance)

[If there has been a positive effect] Can you describe how large this effect has been (Please cover each component separately with the principal)

Have you seen any difference in the effects on the BTL initiative on boys and girls? [If so], what are these effects?

Were there any surprising impacts of the BTL initiative which were not originally planned or foreseen? (If the question is not understood, suggest that perhaps social cohesion increased, pressure on teachers from larger classrooms, etc.)

Are there specific methods that you think should be used in order to increase access to schooling in the future? (Please ask about alternative programming, advocacy, or forming partnerships).

Sustainability

Do you think that the impacts of the BTL could be sustained if there was a decrease in funding?

How about if the programme stopped altogether, what do you think would be the result?

How did BTL improve the long term capacity of your school and local community to increase enrolment and retention?

What are the main lessons you learned from the BTL initiative which you think helped your school adapt to the challenges of enrolment and retention?

What are the possibilities of expanding the BTL campaigns through other education actors (such as local NGOs)? Do you think that would be appropriate?

Do you think there will be role for the ministry to take over from UNICEF and run the BTL initiative itself? [If yes/no], please explain?

Do you think there are sufficient financial resources to see this process through?

Conclusion

Do you have any final recommendations on how BTL could be improved?

If you had ten minutes with the Director of UNICEF in Syria, what would you say to them?

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Anonymous Staff Survey – BTL Evaluation

A. Informed Consent and Introduction Email

Dear Sir or Madam:

The UNICEF Syria Country Office is currently carrying out an evaluation of its Back to Learning Initiative which is comprised of efforts to increase enrollment and retention of students in schools across Syria. The aim of the evaluation is to highlight lessons learned and draw recommendations moving forward to inform the next phase of the Back to Learning initiative.

This evaluation is based on participatory consultation with UNICEF staff, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, which includes responses at the country- and field-level. The evaluation will consider both global strategies and field-level programmatic implementation in Syria. It is very important for us to hear from staff and implementing partners to identify ways to continue to strengthen UNICEF's approach to bringing children into school and keeping children in safe and productive learning environments.

Accordingly, this survey will assist the evaluation team to hearing feedback from a wide range of UNICEF staff, implementing partners and from different sub-delegations. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. All information provided in this survey will be kept confidential and anonymous.

We appreciate your candid participation, as it will help to strengthen the support provided to households and children across Syria.

Please click this link if you consent to participating in the survey: [Insert Link]

| B. Bio Data | | | |
|-------------|--|--|---|
| Number | Question | Answer Options | Instructions |
| | What is your gender? | Male Female Prefer not to answer | Ring one |
| | Please choose the descriptions that best describe your present occupation: | UNICEF Upper Management (Damascus HQ) UNICEF Middle Management (Damascus HQ) UNICEF Middle Management (Governorate Level) UNICEF Field Staff (Governorate Level) Ministry of Education Management (Damascus, Directorate of Education) Ministry of Education Staff (Governorate Level) Local NGO (UNICEF Partner) International NGO (UNICEF Partner) School Principal School Teacher School Administrator Private Company (Contracted under BTL) Other | Ring multiple |
| | If other, please describe your role in the BTL initiative: | [Enter Text] | Enter text Condition: If 10.Other is selected in Question 2. |
| | Which governorate of Syria do you normally work in/with? | Latakia Idlib Aleppo Al-Raqqah Al-Hasakah Tartus Hama Deir ez-Zor Homs Damascus Rif Dimashq Quneitra | Ring one |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | | Daraa Al-Suwayda | |
| | Which part of the BTL are you currently part of? | Provision of School Supplies School Rehabilitation Construction of Prefab Schools Communications for Development Other | Ring multiple |
| 4.1 | If other, please include your department here: | [Enter text] | Enter text Condition: If 4.Other is selected in Question 4. |
| | How long have you been in your current position? | Less than a year Between 1-2 years Between 2-4 years Between 5-10 years Over 10 years | Ring one |
| | Do you have a supervisory position or supervise staff which implements the BTL initiative? | Yes No | Ring one |
| B: Programme Questions | | | |
| | In your opinion, how relevant is the BTL initiative to your work? | Not at all relevant or important Low relevance Relevant High relevance Very high relevance | Ring one |
| | To what extent did you have the opportunity to participate or contribute to the design or monitoring of the BTL initiative? | None at all Limited opportunity Decent opportunity Large amount of opportunity Very large amount of opportunity | Ring one |
| | How well do you understand the current approach approach to how the BTL intends to enroll and retain children in school? | No understanding Low-level understanding Decent understanding High-level understanding Very high-level understanding | Ring one |
| | How much training or orientation sessions, if any, have you received on the BTL and its components? | None One session Two sessions Three sessions More than three sessions | Ring one |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | Overall, how would you rate the sufficiency of training or orientation sessions to facilitate your involvement in the BTL? | Not sufficient at all Not very sufficient Average Sufficient Very sufficient | Ring one |
| | To what extent do you believe that the school supplies (school bags, learning materials/school in a carton, recreation kits, ECD cartons, textbooks) that are being provided to children are effective in keeping children in school? | Not effective at all Effective to a small degree Effective to a medium-level degree Effective to a large degree Effective to a extremely large degree Do not know | Ring one |
| | Which types of school supplies offered by UNICEF do you feel are most effective at keeping children in school? | School bags Learning materials/School in a carton Recreation kits ECD cartons Foreign language textbooks Do not know Other | Ring multiple |
| | Please describe the other type of school supplies offered by UNICEF you feel is the most effective in keeping children in school: | [Enter text] | Enter text Condition: If 6.Other is selected in Question 13. |
| | To what extent do you believe that school rehabilitation enables children to enroll and continue attending school? | Not at all To a small degree To a medium-level degree To a large degree To an extremely large degree Do not know | Ring one |
| | To what extent do you believe that the construction of prefab schools enables children to enroll and continue attending school? | Not at all To a small degree To a medium-level degree To a large degree To an extremely large degree Do not know | Ring one |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | To what extent do you believe Communications for Development (community outreach) is effective in persuading households to enroll and keep children in school? | Not at all To a small degree To a medium-level degree To a large degree To an extremely large degree Do not know | Ring one |
| | To what extent do the the services and supplies provided under the BTL initiative fall in line with national priorities? | Not at all To a small degree To a medium-level degree To a large degree To an extremely large degree Do not know | Ring one |
| | In your opinion, how effective are is UNICEF and the BTL initiative in providing a holistic response to non-enrollment and retention of students across Syria ? | Not at all effective Not very effective Neither effective nor ineffective (average) Effective Highly effective Do not know | Ring one |
| | Why do you feel that the response is not holistic: | [Enter text] | Enter text Condition: If 1.Not at all effective or 2.Not very effective are selected in 18 |
| | Do you believe there is another form of assistance outside of what the BTL initiative offers that would be more effective in increasing enrollment and keeping children in school? | Yes No Do not know | Ring one |
| | Please describe the other form of assistance you believe would have a greater effect? | [Enter text] | Enter text Condition: If 1. Yes is selected in Question 19 |
| | In your opinion, how effective are UNICEF's coordination efforts in implementing the BTL initiative? | Not at all effective Not very effective Neither effective nor ineffective (average) Effective Highly effective Do not know | Ring one |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| | Why do you feel that coordination efforts are ineffective? | [Enter Text] | Enter text Condition: If 1. Not at all effective or 2. Not very effective are selected in 20 |
| | In order of priority, please select the top three challenges related to increasing enrollment and retaining students in your context? | Issues relating to to social norms/stigma Ability of households to afford sending children to school Child marriage Child labour to support household income Quality of education / curricula available to students Lack of sufficient and appropriate school supplies Lack of recreation Availability of remedial classes or informal learning Physical access to safe learning environments Lack of awareness over registration procedures Repair and rehabilitation of schools Lack of extracurricular activities Lack of interest in education Insufficiency of humanitarian aid Water, sanitation and health issues Discrimination against marginalized groups Other | Ranking Hint: Select the top three challenges. |
| | How effective do you feel that the BTL initiative targets IDPs in the areas where you work? | Not at all effective Not very effective Neither effective nor ineffective (average) Effective Highly effective Do not know | Ring one |
| | How effective do you feel that the BTL initiative targets vulnerable non-IDPs in the areas where you work? | Not at all effective Not very effective Neither effective nor ineffective (average) Effective Highly effective Do not know | Ring one |
| | Please provide any other feedback you feel is relevant to the evaluation: | Enter text | Enter text |

END OF SURVEY