

GEROS Evaluation Quality Assurance Tool

Version: September 2021

Final Evaluation of the UNICEF Country Program-Lebanon (2017-2021)

REPORT RATING SUMMARY

Overall Rating	80%	Satisfactory
●●●●● Exceptional (96% - 100%)	5	
●●●●○ Highly Satisfactory (87.5% - 95.99%)	4	
●●●●- Satisfactory (62.5% - 87.49%)	3	Meets UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports and decision makers may use the evaluation with confidence
●●●-○ Fair (35% - 62.49%)	2	
●-○-○ Unsatisfactory (0% - 34.99%)	1	

REPORT DETAILS

Title of the evaluation report	Final Evaluation of the UNICEF Country Program-Lebanon (2017-2021)
Report sequence number	Lebanon/59/2021/16948
Region	MENA
Year of report	2021
Office	MENA Regional Office
Coverage (countries)	Lebanon
ToRs present	Yes
Date of review (dd/mm/yyyy)	December 21, 2021
Name of review firm	DeftEdge

CLASSIFICATION OF EVALUATION REPORT

Management of evaluation (Managerial control and oversight of evaluation)	UNICEF managed
Unicef goal areas (Alignment with strategic plan priorities)	
Every child survives and thrives	Yes
Every child learns	Yes
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation	No
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment	Yes
Every child has an equitable chance in life	No
Gender equality (cross-cutting)	Yes
Humanitarian action (cross-cutting)	Yes
Evaluation object	Country Programme
Evaluation type	Summative and formative
Evaluation strategy	Qualitative
Evaluation design (primary method used)	Non-experimental
Evaluation level	Output & Outcome
Geographic scope	National
Primary SDG(s) covered (number)	Not specified

EQA Summary:

The Country Programme (CP) Evaluation of UNICEF – Lebanon (2017-2021) seeks to examine a large and very complex program. It provides a detailed set of findings with Conclusions and Recommendations that appear useful for decision makers. The CP engages a wide range of implementing stakeholders and a notable strength of the evaluation is the inclusion of a thorough stakeholder mapping process. The analysis of gender and of disability inclusion is also strong. However, the report falls short in some key areas. This includes having a very lengthy Executive Summary, lack of clarity about the program logic used to assess effectiveness, and the probably inadvertent omission of the lessons learned section. A more detailed methodology section would also be useful.

Recommendations for Improvement:

There are several ways in which the report could align more fully with UNICEF standards. Firstly, the Executive Summary is much longer than preferred. It includes highly detailed findings without presenting the methodology. A maximum length of 5 pages is recommended, as concise Summaries are more likely to be read in full by the range of intended audiences. The report background section could be clearer about the CP content, design and logic. Without a Theory of Change (TOC) or clear programme logic, it is more difficult to assess the extent to which the intended results were achieved. It is important for the methodology section to include a fully articulated sampling frame and to clearly articulate how the evaluation aligns with the UNEG ethical principles and requirements, and how ethical considerations were addressed. In addition, good practice calls for evaluations to discuss programme linkages to the relevant SDGs and to include a standalone section on lessons learned. Although this report included some useful visual aids, several were not labeled and/or were blurry making them difficult to read.

SECTION RATINGS

SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)	50%	Comments on Rating
Question 1. Can the executive summary inform decision-making?		
i Is clearly presented, serves as a standalone document useful for informing decision making, and is of relevant conciseness and depth for key users (Maximum of 5 pages unless otherwise specified in ToR).	No	It is clearly presented and detailed, and can be used to guide decisions in another UNICEF country program cycle. However, the summary is 13 pages long and should be more concise.
ii Includes all necessary elements (overview of the intervention, evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience, evaluation methodology, key conclusions on findings, lessons learned if requested, key recommendations) as per the ToR.	Partially	The elements of the summary are presented as follows: presentation of the intervention, purpose and scope, key results, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. The methodology is not addressed.
iii Includes all significant information needed to understand the intervention and the evaluation AND does not introduce new information from what is presented in the rest of the report.	Yes	Necessary information is included to understand the CP and evaluation results.
SECTION B: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)	86%	Comments on Rating
Question 2. Is the object of the evaluation clearly described?		
i Clear and relevant description of the intervention, including: location(s), timelines, cost/budget, and implementation status.	Yes	The context of the intervention is described. The goal, objectives, and scope, as well as the costs associated with each priority, are detailed in table 1.1.

	ii Clear and relevant description of intended rightsholders (beneficiaries) and duty bearers (state and non-state actors with responsibilities regarding the intervention) by type (i.e., institutions/organizations; communities; individuals...), by geographic location(s) (i.e., urban, rural, particular neighbourhoods, town/cities, sub-regions...) and in terms of numbers reached, with disaggregation by gender, age, disability... (as appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation).	Yes	The target beneficiaries are indicated in the intervention context, as well as the percentage of children and vulnerable people. The many implementing partners are identified by geographic area in the stakeholder mapping tables.
Question 3.	Is the context of the intervention clearly described?		
	i Clear and relevant description of the context of the intervention (i.e. relevant policy, socio-economic, political, cultural, power/privilege, institutional, international factors) and how context relates to the implementation of the intervention.	Yes	In the subsection dedicated to the intervention context, the author offers a brief overview of the socio-economic, political, institutional and international factors that led to the implementation of the large-scale intervention.
	ii Linkages drawn to the SDGs and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated.	No	The CP's alignment with the SDGs is not clearly discussed in the report.
	iii Clear and relevant description (where appropriate) of the status and needs of the rightsholders/beneficiaries of the intervention.	Yes	The needs of the beneficiaries in the context of the crisis that has been ongoing in Lebanon since 2011 are numerous and diversified and explained briefly in the intervention context. See section 2 and 5.
Question 4.	Are key stakeholders, their relationships and contributions clearly identified?		
	i Identification of implementing agency(ies), development partners, right holders, and additional duty bearers and other stakeholders; and of linkages between them (e.g., stakeholder map) (if relevant).	Yes	The stakeholder mapping in Annexes 5 and 6 covers these issues.
	ii Identification of the specific contributions and roles of key stakeholders (financial or otherwise), including UNICEF.	Yes	The mapping covers the programme areas and target populations for each of the many implementing partners. Donors are also identified in the mapping. Although amounts are not given by donor, the total funding needed by priority area is identified, as is the available funding and funding gap in section 5.4.2.
SECTION C:	EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)	90%	Comments on Rating
Question 5.	Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly described?		
	i Purpose of evaluation is clearly defined, including why it was needed at that point in time, its intended use, and key intended users.	Yes	This section clearly describes the purpose of the evaluation in accordance with the ToR and key users that are targeted.
Question 6.	Are the objectives and scope of the evaluation clear and realistic?		
	i Clear and complete description of what the evaluation seeks to achieve by the end of the process with reference to any changes made to the objectives included in the ToR (if applicable).	Yes	The same section describes the objectives of the evaluation, and the changes made as a result of the pandemic and the Beirut port explosion are noted.
	ii Clear and relevant description of the scope of the evaluation: what will and will not be covered (thematically, chronologically, geographically with key terms defined), as well as, if applicable, the reasons for this scope (e.g., specifications by the ToRs, lack of access to particular geographic areas for political or safety reasons at the time of the evaluation, lack of data/evidence on particular elements of the intervention).	Yes	The report presents the scope of the evaluation including the temporal and thematic nature, noting that all activities from 2017-2020 are covered.
Question 7.	Is the theory of change, results chain or logic well articulated?		
	i Clear description of the intervention's intended results, or of the parts of the results chain that are applicable to, or are being tested by, the evaluation.	Partially	The focus for each priority area is identified but there could be more detail on intended results.
	ii Causal relationship between outputs and outcomes is presented in narrative and/or graphic form (e.g., results chain, logic model, theory of change, evaluation matrix).	Yes	The evaluation matrix in Annex II shows the expected causal relationships that are explored by the evaluation.
	iii For theory-based evaluations, the theory of change or results framework is assessed, and if requested in the ToR, it is reformulated/improved by the evaluators.	Not Rated	This is not a theory-based evaluation.
SECTION D:	EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY (weight 20%)	68%	Comments on Rating
Question 8.	Does the evaluation use questions and the relevant evaluation criteria that are explicitly justified as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation? <i>UNICEF evaluation standards refer to the OECD/DAC criteria - Relevance; Coherence; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Sustainability; Impact (not all are necessarily relevant for all evaluations). Evaluations should also consider equity and leaving no-one behind, gender and human rights based approach (these can be mainstreamed into other criteria). Humanitarian evaluations should also consider Coverage; Connectedness; Coordination; Protection; Security.</i>		
	i Evaluation questions and sub-questions are appropriate for meeting the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. The relevant criteria are specified and are aligned with the questions.	Yes	The report used the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability) to develop evaluation questions and sub-questions appropriate to the achievement of the expected evaluation objectives.
	ii In addition to the questions and sub-questions, the evaluation matrix includes indicators, benchmarks, assumptions and/or other processes from which the analysis can be based and conclusions drawn.	Yes	The evaluation framework provides a very clear overview of the methodology and approach used for the evaluation and is fully consistent with UNICEF guidelines.
Question 9.	Does the report specify adequate methods for data collection, analysis, and sampling?		

	i Evaluation design and set of methods are relevant and adequately robust for the evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope; and are fully and clearly described.	Yes	The methodology appears relevant and adequately robust. The data collection methods used are 3: a document review, remote interviews with key stakeholders, and face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders. They are clearly defined.
	ii Data sources are appropriate - these would normally include qualitative and quantitative sources (unless otherwise specified in the ToR) - and are all clearly described.	Yes	The evaluation is led by a principally qualitative approach. Data sources include the diversity of stakeholders.
	iii Sampling strategy is provided - it should include a description of how diverse perspectives are captured (or, if not, provide reasons for this).	No	The sampling strategy is not described in the report; the author just highlights those individuals that were consulted with no explanation of how they were selected.
	iv Clear and complete description of the methods of analysis.	Yes	A descriptive and quantitative analysis and a qualitative content analysis are the main methods used and are described in the methodology section of the report.
	v Methodology allows for drawing causal connections between outputs and expected outcomes.	Partially	The report body does not give very much detail regarding the logic underpinning the evaluation methodology. For more clarity, the reader must look to the evaluation matrix in the annex.
	vi Clear and complete description of limitations and constraints faced by the evaluation, including gaps in the evidence that was generated and mitigation of bias, and how these were addressed by the evaluators (as feasible).	Yes	The limitations and constraints encountered in the implementation are clearly described in the methodology section and listed in table 1.1.
Question 10.	Are ethical issues and considerations described? The evaluation should be guided by the UNEG ethical standards for evaluation. As such, the evaluation report should include:		
	i Explicit and contextualized reference to the UNEG obligations of evaluators (independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability) and/or the principles in the 2020 revised UNEG Ethical Guidelines (integrity, accountability, respect, beneficence).	No	The report mentions the UNEG standards but not the ethical principles and how they were respected in the conduct of the evaluation.
	ii Description of ethical safeguards for participants appropriate for the issues relevant to methodology and how they are applied (respect for dignity and diversity, right to self-determination, fair representation, compliance with codes for vulnerable groups, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm). For those cases where the evaluation involves interviewing children, explicit reference is made to the UNICEF procedures for Ethical Research Involving Children.	No	The report does not highlight how ethical safeguards were honored.
Question 11.	Does the evaluation incorporate innovative practice that adds value to the evaluation process?		
	i Innovation practice is used to improve the quality of evaluation process. This could be evident in several ways such as the design of the methodology (i.e. use of technology for data gathering, extensive participatory processes, systematic analysis processes such as collaborative outcomes reporting and incorporation of big data, specific strategies to address complexity such as outcome harvesting, strong child rights focus), or ways of sharing of evaluation results.	Yes	The detailed stakeholder mapping process goes beyond what is done for most CP evaluations, and as such is innovative.
SECTION E:	EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 25%)	83%	Comments on Rating
Question 12.	Do the findings clearly address all evaluation objectives and scope?		
	i Findings marshal sufficient levels of evidence to systematically address all of the evaluation's questions, sub-questions and criteria.	Yes	The report uses quantitative data and document review to address the evaluation questions and sub questions, with some direct quotes or citations from interviews or focus groups to support the findings.
	ii Explicit use of the intervention's results framework/ToC in the formulation of the findings.	No	The pre-established results, benchmarks and targets are not highlighted in the effectiveness section to guide the assessment of project performance.
Question 13.	Are evaluation findings derived from the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence?		
	i Evaluation uses credible forms of qualitative and quantitative data. It presents both output and outcome-level data as relevant to the evaluation framework. Triangulation is evident through the use of multiple data sources.	Yes	The data is credible, and of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. Triangulation is evident.
	ii Findings are clearly supported by, and respond to, the evidence presented, including both positive and negative. Findings are based on clear performance indicators, standards, benchmarks, or other means of comparison as relevant for each question.	Yes	The report assesses the program's performance using evidence from the evaluation exercise, which is unbiased and highlights both negative and positive program performance.
	iii Causal factors (contextual, organizational, managerial, etc.) leading to achievement or non-achievement of results are clearly identified. For theory-based evaluations, findings also analyse the logical chain (progression -or not- from implementation to results).	Yes	The report highlights the political, financial, and other factors that affected the program's performance. This includes the Beirut Port explosion and the COVID 19 pandemic, which extended the duration of the program by one year and impacted the interviews and work of the implementing partners.
Question 14.	Does the evaluation assess and use the intervention's Results Based Management elements?		
	i Assessment of the adequacy of the intervention's monitoring system (including completeness and appropriateness of results/performance framework - including vertical and horizontal logic, M&E tools and their usage) to support decision-making.	Yes	The report explores programmatic monitoring and oversight of the project and provides lessons learned for future country programs of the UNICEF office and learning for other organizations working in the same sector in Lebanon.
SECTION F:	EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 10%)	63%	Comments on Rating

Question 15.	Do the conclusions clearly present an objective overall assessment of the intervention?		
	i Conclusions are clearly formulated and reflect the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. They are sufficiently forward looking (if a formative evaluation or if the implementation is expected to continue or have additional phase).	Yes	The conclusions are clearly written and constitute guidelines for future country programs of the UNICEF office in Lebanon.
	ii Conclusions are derived appropriately from findings, and present a picture of the strengths and limitations of the intervention that adds insight and analysis beyond the findings.	Yes	They are derived from the results and are organized by component, highlighting program successes and weaknesses
Question 16.	Are logical and informative lessons learned identified? [N/A if lessons are not presented and not requested in ToR]		
	i Identified lessons stem logically from the findings, have wider applicability and relevance beyond the object of the evaluation.	Partially	Lessons learned are deduced from the results and presented in the executive summary after the recommendations. Most have wider applicability. However, these are highlighted in a section within the Executive Summary - there is not a dedicated section in the main report even though the Introduction suggests that one was intended.
	ii Lessons are clearly and concisely presented, yet have sufficient detail to be useful for intended audience.	No	Good practice calls for a stand alone section within the main report.
SECTION G:	RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)	100%	Comments on Rating
Question 17.	Are recommendations well grounded in the evaluation?		
	i Recommendations align with the evaluation purpose, are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions.	Yes	The recommendations are clear, logical and stem from the Findings.
	ii Recommendations are useful and actionable for primary intended users and uses (relevant to the intervention); guidance is given for implementation, as appropriate.	Yes	They are useful and can be put into practice by the main intended user, namely UNICEF Lebanon.
	iii Process for developing the recommendations is described, and includes the Involvement of duty-bearers, as well as rights holders when feasible (or explanation given for why they were not involved).	Yes	The process of developing the draft recommendations was done in a virtual workshop where feedback from UNICEF and its partners was collected.
Question 18.	Are recommendations clearly presented?		
	i Clear identification of groups or duty-bearers responsible for action for each recommendation (or clearly clustered group of recommendations). Clear prioritization and/or classification of recommendations to support use.	Yes	The recommendations are grouped by theme to facilitate their implementation. They are appropriately directed to the UNICEF CO.
SECTION H:	REPORT STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION (weight 5%)	93%	Comments on Rating
Question 19.	Does the evaluation report include all relevant information?		
	i Opening pages include: Name of evaluated object, timeframe of the evaluation, date of report, location of evaluated object, names and/or organization(s) of the evaluator(s), name of organization commissioning the evaluation, table of contents -including, as relevant, tables, graphs, figures, annexes; list of acronyms/abbreviations, page numbers.	Yes	The required information is provided.
	ii Annexes include: terms of reference, evaluation matrix, list of interviewees, results chain/ToC/logical framework (unless included in report body), list of site visits, data collection instruments (such as survey or interview questionnaires), list of documentary evidence. Other appropriate annexes could include: additional details on methodology, information about the evaluator(s), etc.	Yes	The annexes include the terms of reference, the evaluation matrix, the list of stakeholders consulted, the list of documents consulted, the UNICEF Lebanon intervention map, the UNICEF Lebanon stakeholder map, and finally the methodological annexes which include additional details on the methodology.
Question 20.	Is the report logically structured?		
	i Structure is easy to identify and navigate (for instance, with numbered sections, clear titles and sub-titles, well formatted).	Yes	The report is well structured with sections and sub-sections numbered, headings are well highlighted and the layout is well done.
	ii Structure accords to UNICEF guidelines for evaluation reports: context, purpose and methodology would normally precede findings, which would normally be followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.	Yes	Yes, the structure is in accordance with the guidelines and follows the logic of context, objectives, and methodology, which are followed by results and conclusions.
Question 21.	Is the report well presented?		
	i Report is of reasonable length; it does not exceed number of pages that may be specified in ToR.	Yes	The length is a reasonable at just over 60 pages without the appendices.
	ii Report is easy to understand (written in accessible way for intended audience) and generally free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.	Yes	The writing style of the report is easy to understand and free of errors overall.
	iii Frequent use of visual aids (such as infographics, maps, tables, figures, photos) to convey key information. These are clearly presented, labeled, and referenced in text.	Partially	Visual representations such as tables, maps, figures are present in the document; most are clearly named and indexed, although some under Relevance and Sustainability are not. Some, such as Figure 4.2, are too blurry to be easily read.
SECTION I:	EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 10%)	83%	Comments on Rating
Question 22.	Did the evaluation design and style consider incorporation of the UN and UNICEF's commitment to a human rights-based approach to programming, to gender equality, and to equity?		
	i Reference and use of rights-based framework, and/or CRC, CCC, CEDAW and/or other rights related benchmarks in the design of the evaluation.	Yes	The report makes reference to several key international human rights frameworks that guide the evaluation and the work of UNICEF.
	ii Clear description of the level of participation of key rights holders and duty bearers in the conduct of the evaluation (for example, a reference group is established, stakeholders are involved as informants or in data gathering).	Yes	A range of stakeholders participated in the evaluation. The involvement of the reference group is clear.
	iii Language is empowering and inclusive, avoiding gender, heterosexual, age, cultural and religious bias, among others; use terminology of rights holders and duty bearers; data is disaggregated by marginalized group; differential results are assessed (distribution of results across different groups).	Partially	The writing style used is inclusive and avoids all forms of bias, however right-based language is not used. The data is broken down by program components which shows results for different groups to some extent.

	iv Evaluation assesses the extent to which the implementation of the intervention addresses child rights and Leave No-one Behind (gender and other excluded and marginalized groups). It is disability inclusive.	Yes	The evaluation takes into account the rights of children and the vulnerable (including those with disabilities).
Question 23.	Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators? (Note: this question will be rated according to UN SWAP standards with detail provided below)	7	
	i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.	Fully integrated	The assessment of gender is noted in the objectives of the evaluation. Gender and human rights are not standalone criteria but are considered under Relevance and Effectiveness. Related data is collected.
	ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.	Partially integrated	The author mentions taking into account the UNEG guidance on integrating HRGE in evaluations. However there is minimal explanation for how this was done beyond disaggregating the number of women vs men that were interviewed. As noted above, ethical considerations in data collection were not discussed.
	iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.	Fully integrated	The analysis is solid. Gender is raised throughout the report in the findings, conclusions and in 3 of the 7 recommendations.
SWAP Rating Guidance			
i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.			
a. Does the evaluation assess whether sufficient information was collected during the implementation period on specific result indicators to measure progress on human rights and gender equality results?			
b. Does the evaluation include an objective specific to assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives?			
c. Was a standalone criterion on gender and/or human rights included in the evaluation framework or mainstreamed into other evaluation criteria?			
d. Is there a dedicated evaluation question or sub-question regarding how GEEW was integrated into the subject of the evaluation?			
ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.			
a. Does the evaluation specify how gender issues are addressed in the methodology, including: how data collection and analysis methods integrate gender considerations and ensure data collected is disaggregated by sex?			
b. Does the evaluation methodology employ a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating GEWE considerations?			
c. Are a diverse range of data sources and processes employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility?			
d. Does the evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate?			
e. Were ethical standards considered throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality?			
iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.			
a. Does the evaluation have a background section that includes an intersectional analysis of the specific social groups affected by the issue or spell out the relevant normative instruments or policies related to human rights and gender equality?			
b. Do the findings include data analysis that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data, where applicable?			
c. Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights and gender equality described?			
d. Does the evaluation report provide specific recommendations addressing GEWE issues, and priorities for action to improve GEWE or the intervention or future initiatives in this area?			