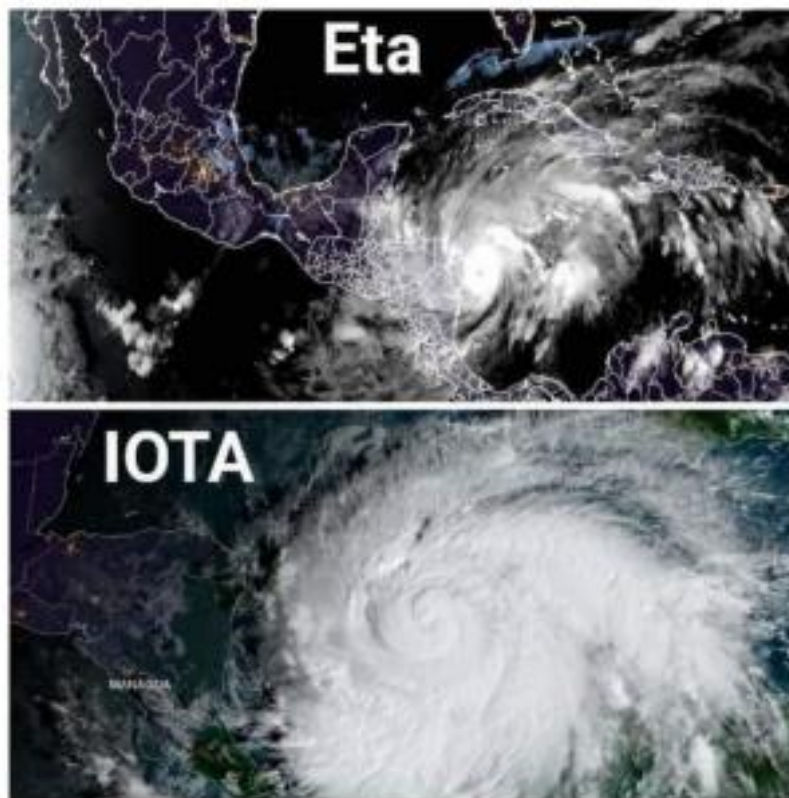


MULTI-COUNTRY EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S RESPONSE TO HURRICANES ETA & IOTA IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Regional Synthesis



Groupe URD

Version 2 – 9 December 2022

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PART TWO - Honduras Country Office Evaluation Report

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ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
C4D	Communication for Development
CCCs	Core Commitments for Children
CERF	UN Central Emergency Response Fund
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CO	UNICEF Country Office
CONRED	Guatemala's national disaster reduction coordination agency ¹
COPECO	Honduras' national disaster management agency ²
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EPP	Emergency Preparedness Platform
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBViE	Gender Based Violence in Emergency Programming
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HAC	UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children appeal
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDI	Human Development Index
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPD	Humanitarian Programme Document
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACRO	UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
LHD	Linking Humanitarian and Development programming
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MUAC	Mid-upper arm circumference measure
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PCA	Programme Cooperation Agreement
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RD	Regional Director (UNICEF)
SICA	Central American Integration System ³
SINAPRED	Nicaragua's national disaster prevention, mitigation & management agency ⁴
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
WB	World Bank
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

¹*Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres*

²*Comisión Permanente de Contingencias Honduras*

³*Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*

⁴*Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres*

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Background and context

Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, all countries that are ranked by the INFORM risk ranking as at medium or high risk of experiencing a humanitarian crisis or disaster⁵, all present contradictory sets of indicators regarding economic growth, levels of poverty, developmental progress and levels of disparity between rich and poor. **Guatemala**, while ranked as an upper-middle-country by the World Bank (WB)⁶, presents a situation for children that has barely changed over the past two decades⁷. Considered to be the Latin American country most vulnerable to climate hazards, approximately 40% of the population is vulnerable to three or more types of natural hazards⁸. While **Honduras** registered the second highest economic growth rates in Central America between 2017-2019⁹, the country was simultaneously facing high levels of poverty and inequality with an estimated 14.8% of the population living on less than US\$1.90 per day. High rates of violence and public sector corruption added to the challenges experienced¹⁰. **Nicaragua**, as Honduras, ranked as a lower-middle-income country by the WB¹¹ but achieved average sustained growth annually of 5.1%¹² between 2010-2017, followed by an 8.8% contraction in GDP between 2017 and 2020. In 2020, Nicaragua had an average human development index of 0.660 (128th globally).

Prior to Eta/Iota, the three UNICEF country offices (CO) had small teams (22 to 30 staff), annual budgets of between USD \$3m to \$9m and active Country Programme Documents (CPDs) focusing primarily on core development themes including early child development, access to quality education and protection from violence. No CO had an emergency specialist and there were some critical gaps in staffing.

Hitting Central America within two weeks of each other in November 2020, the 28th and 29th category storms of the season on the Saffir-Simpson wind scale, heavily impacted Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala as category 4/5 hurricanes, causing flooding and landslides and impacting 9.2 million people (including 3.5 million children¹³). At least 3.4 million people were estimated¹⁴ in need of urgent support, including 1.3 million children.

UNICEF's response prioritised its actions following the guidelines of the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs), appealing for US\$42.6 million to respond to humanitarian priorities between mid-November 2020 and mid-May 2021 (extended to December in some instances). The existence of multiple emergencies across the region – migration, violence and particularly COVID 19 – impacted heavily on UNICEF's response.

1.2. Purpose, objectives, methodology and limitations

The evaluation of UNICEF's response to the two hurricanes in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua aimed at accountability and contributing to institutional learning by compiling lessons learned and generating practical and applicable recommendations (Terms of Reference, annex 1), with UNICEF management and technical staff as the main target audience.

The objectives focus on: determining institutional progress in implementing the CCCs in emergencies; assessing the quality of the response; determining the relevance of emergency preparedness and response strategies; and determining how UNICEF can better its comparative advantage by specific

⁵ <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index> Both Guatemala and Honduras are ranked as high risk (8.2 and 8.1 out of 10 respectively, in the top five countries in the index that measures the risk of humanitarian crisis and disasters across LAC) and Nicaragua is ranked as medium risk (6.1).

⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guatemala/overview#1>

⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/documents/guatemala-draft-country-programme-document>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras>

¹⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/hnd>

¹¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

¹² <https://www.pndh.gob.ni/index.shtml>

¹³ <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/hurricanes-eta-and-iota>

¹⁴ Ibid

recommendations to improve its response to future hydrometeorological and other emergencies in Central America.

The methodology, built on international standards, adopted a hybrid formative and summative purpose (see inception report and evaluation matrix, annex 2) and a mixed methodological approach was taken. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected during field visits (itinerary, annex 3), individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted - 84 semi-structured interviews (with 42 women and 42 men) and 25 focus groups (with 98 women and 43 men participating in total), with another 20 interviews carried out with staff from LACRO¹⁵ (annexes 4-6). The evaluation experienced some limitations, the most relevant being the time lag between the event and the evaluation itself (18 months after the event and between three and nine months after the closure of the activities) resulting in interlocutors experiencing memory bias, together with a number of the key staff of stakeholder organisations no longer working for the organisations. In Guatemala it was only possible to research two sectors in detail (WASH and education), which should be borne in mind when reading the findings of this synthesis report.

This report synthesises the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations from the full country reports for Nicaragua and Honduras and the aide memoire for Guatemala.

1.3. Main findings

1.3.1. Relevance and appropriateness

In a complex context of multi-risk vulnerabilities, compounded by the pandemic situation, the emergency response by UNICEF set relevant objectives that were generally in line with local needs and priorities. The **assessment processes**, under the overall coordination of the national disaster management authorities, used collectively-developed tools and future UNICEF implementing partners participated in gathering data, with UNICEF staff not deploying as part of the initial assessments, although a multidisciplinary team in Nicaragua was deployed two weeks after the second hurricane, an approach that contributed to the development of an integrated response.

Evidence was found of a level of active involvement in decision-making at the community level. Effort was taken to focus on the most affected municipalities and communities that were often isolated, geographically difficult to reach and prone to specific **access** issues. While interventions were generally disaggregated by sex and age and the interventions took into account specific access barriers of certain vulnerable groups (particularly indigenous communities), the identification of the needs of specific groups (eg people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people) is an area that requires improvement. Feedback from interviews and focus groups was positive, confirming that UNICEF-funded activities generally responded to the most pressing needs of affected people and that the needs assessment process had accurately identified the key vulnerabilities (although donor earmarking in some cases meant that some sectoral activities did not necessarily receive the level of funding required to deliver an integrated response as had been planned).

1.3.2. Effectiveness

Looking across the three countries, the UNICEF response is considered to have effectively achieved its objectives in terms of responding to the priority needs of the most affected populations in alignment with the CCCs, despite being hampered by a number of short-term elements (specifically the lack of some key human resources and the coexistence of COVID 19 that unavoidably affected not only the COs but also the level of support from LACRO)¹⁶.

It is important to recognise that two category 4/5 hurricanes within two weeks would have exceeded the capacity of any relatively small CO, especially within a context of an ongoing L3 emergency response to COVID 19 and with the categorisation of the Eta/Iota disaster as an L1 emergency. While the three

¹⁵ The inception phase included another 18 orientation interviews.

¹⁶ This issue is explored at length in the [real-time evaluation of UNICEF's response to COVID 19](#).

countries complied with the **emergency preparedness** protocols of UNICEF, there was a limited level of appropriation and leadership in this preparation, primarily due to the absence of emergency specialists or officials in the CO teams and a number of elements were missing from the emergency preparedness plans (EPPs), including no detailed operational plans in response to the most probable risk scenarios and no mapping of potential humanitarian implementing partners. Some emergency pre-positioned stock had not been replenished having been used in the COVID 19 response.

The response by sectors in the three countries was seen to be adequate or good, aligned with the CCCs, **responding to the priority needs** of affected people and with some examples of innovative programming (such as encouraging the creation of community water management committees for small communities in Nicaragua and training community members to clean wells in Guatemala). One constraint in both Honduras and Guatemala was compressing the initial response into a period of six months; in Honduras the addition of a second phase of six months in which entirely new activities in health and nutrition were introduced (in response to additional funds received) put into question the extent to which these activities (implemented between July and December 2021) responded to the urgent needs of the population related to the impact of Eta/Iota.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) was the most significant element in each country in terms of budget allocation, with child protection/PSEA/GBV, education and nutrition as core elements, together with a number of cross-cutting activities (such as accountability to affected populations, AAP). **WASH** activities centred on the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure (water systems, wells and latrines both in communities and in schools), together with initial distribution of emergency WASH items. In both Guatemala and Nicaragua these interventions not only reinstated access to water, sanitation and hygiene but in a number of cases improved on the pre-existing water provision, resulting in the reduction of cases of faecal-oral diseases in the community. In both Nicaragua and Guatemala, the approach to WASH activities encouraged community ownership and sustainability, although there were concerns that more use had not been made of Build Back Better/Build Back Safer reconstruction techniques¹⁷.

Different approaches were taken to responding to the **educational needs** of the affected population. UNICEF provided support with educational supplies (in Nicaragua and Honduras) and developed appropriate remote education materials (Honduras), while in Guatemala, the Ministry of Education (MoE) was supported to repair damage to school buildings, as well as water and sanitation systems in collaboration with parents' organisations and the community. An additional strategy was the provision of 14 temporary classrooms; relatively expensive (at US\$26,000 per unit) compared to the cost of community-delivered rehabilitation, given the limitation overall funding received for the educational sector, the efficacy and sustainability of the strategy was unclear (the argument for the approach was related to timely delivery, but in the case of the school visited, the temporary module was installed at the same time as the school was renovated).

Child protection, PSEA and GBViE interventions were delivered through the provision of child- and adolescent-friendly spaces (following the *Retorno a la Alegría* methodology¹⁸), linked with community-based surveillance and referral services. The COs' implementing partners, which included women's movements, local/international organisations, worked with local authorities and through community leaders, families, adolescents and young people, in order to adapt the service to respond to the local context, including to make appropriate language and cultural adaptations. Informants (and especially teachers and organisations specialising in the sector) confirmed the appropriateness of these interventions.

The UNICEF interventions are generally seen to have been **timely**, although COs had some initial difficulties in using the accelerated emergency procedures for finance, human resources, procurement, etc., given their relative lack of experience in emergency response, although they received support from LACRO before the arrival of the emergency specialists. The allocation of the LACRO pre-financing loan of USD \$400,000 to Honduras in mid-November, followed by the approval of the CERF allocation (activated

¹⁷ GFDRR, Building back better in post-disaster recovery, Guidance note; and UNISDR, Build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, Consultative version, 2017.

¹⁸ Return to happiness.

on 20 November) contributed to scaled-up implementation. It was the view of some informants that COs should have had immediate access to their own contingency funding to enable a swift *no-regrets* response. The short time limits of some funding grants (three or six months) were constraints to timeliness.

Planning and monitoring processes were appropriate, with unavoidable adjustments made in response to the COVID 19 quarantine conditions, where required. The development of humanitarian data collection tools by individual COs at the same time as implementation was complicated but the end results were judged to be effective. Sectoral monitoring visits accompanied by an emergency monitoring specialist in Nicaragua proved an effective way of ensuring that reports maintained a holistic view of the integrated response.

Although Eta/Iota was designated an L1 emergency, **LACRO** took a lead role in supporting the development of the regional HAC and offered support to COs in technical areas such as WASH, nutrition, protection, gender, fundraising, monitoring and reporting, although in some cases (eg nutrition in Honduras) this was not taken up. Support was primarily provided through virtual deployments. COs were also supported through surge positions and in the case of Honduras, with the recruitment of a P4 emergency specialist, a role that helped the CO build its humanitarian preparedness and response capacity. In both Honduras and Guatemala, the core team has now been augmented with an additional role focusing on emergency preparedness and response (and there is a proposal to take a similar course in Nicaragua).

1.3.3. Connectedness

Although short-term emergency response activities were not explicitly planned to transition from humanitarian interventions to longer-term development (**Nexus**), there were a number of examples in all three countries where interventions contributed to system strengthening (for example the introduction of the use of the mid-upper arm circumference [MUAC] measure to volunteer community health brigades in both Honduras and Nicaragua or building community capacity in safe and effective well-cleaning in Guatemala). UNICEF's interventions in all three countries have found strength in **working with implementing partners** that have experience on both sides of the Nexus (and in a number of cases were long-established within the affected communities). Implementing partners included a proportion of national NGOs, although the majority were international NGOs (many of which onward granted to local NGOs); there are opportunities to increase national humanitarian capacity and respond to the commitments of the Grand Bargain by making choices to work with national and local humanitarian organisations and supporting their institutional strengthening. Across the three countries, UNICEF's response to Eta and Iota was **well-connected with national authorities**, especially at the municipal level.

1.3.4. Coherence

UNICEF's response to Eta/Iota was generally coherent both internally and externally, applying relevant and appropriate policies and approaches (particularly in terms of being aligned to the CCCs), as shown in the previous sections, as well as drawing on the experience and expertise of UNICEF and its partners in the region. While the development of the new CPD in Honduras shows that the CO has incorporated several **lessons** from the experience of the Eta/Iota response and a similar process is currently underway in Nicaragua, there is a need to focus on systematically capitalising on and managing knowledge throughout the course of the response and, in particular, to place greater emphasis on ensuring stronger, more consistent **accountability mechanisms for affected populations**.

1.3.5. Coordination

UNICEF played its role in coordination, at different levels, with varying degrees of success. Internally, some COs were more successful than others at **achieving coordination between sectors** for a more integrated approach at the community level; the role of emergency coordinator was important in this regard. **Coordination with authorities** was generally effective, particularly at regional and local levels. UNICEF's designated role as part of the **cluster coordination system**, leading the WASH, nutrition and education clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (or sectoral coordination in Nicaragua) had mixed results. There was limited evidence to suggest that **synergies between UN agencies** had been achieved throughout the course of the operation.

1.4. Conclusions

Within the context of an L3 response to COVID 19, the impact of two severe and extensive hurricanes in the space of two weeks tested the capacity of small COs with limited emergency response expertise. The emergency response plans set **relevant and appropriate** objectives in line with the needs and priorities identified through the assessment processes led by national and regional government and there was a level of consultation and involvement of the affected population in key decision-making and some access barriers were considered in the development of interventions. The response was seen to be **effective**, with some improvements identified related to the level of preparedness of the COs, but the sectoral activities delivered were aligned with the CCCs and there were examples of innovative programming. The response overall was seen to be timely, with the provision of pre-financing by LACRO to the CO in Honduras identified as a key contribution for scaling up. The short timeframe for some interventions was a constraint, together with the limited experience in managing L1 emergencies.

UNICEF's response was well aligned with government (at national and especially regional and/or municipal levels) and although the ERPs did not expressly include Nexus transition activities, there were examples of humanitarian interventions contributed to system strengthening and, in some cases, transitioning to longer-term activities as part of regular programming. Working with NGO partners with experience on both sides of the Nexus helped in that regard. The interventions were **coherent**, although improvements in ensuring continual learning and improving approaches to AAP were identified. Internal **coordination** in some COs was constrained due to COVID quarantine requirements, but there were some examples of good coordination leading to an integrated approach to implementation in some cases. There were mixed experiences of sectoral/cluster coordination, in part depending upon the level of technical coordination prior to the emergency. UNICEF was not able to fulfil its function as cluster lead in all cases.

In conclusion (and in response to the second overall evaluation question), this evaluation finds that UNICEF's humanitarian response efforts achieved the intended results (in terms of scale and quality), despite facing some internal challenges. The scale of the response was adequate given the level of funding achieved and the quality of interventions was in line with CCC benchmarks and considered appropriate to the main needs identified.

A number of lessons were learned through this experience (identified below and are the focus of the first overall global evaluation question) that have already led the COs to either make or propose adjustments to the CPD and/or the composition of the core team.

1.5. Lessons learned

A number of good practices and lessons learned were identified through this evaluation. These include:

- Good practices that can help improve the quality and accuracy of damage assessment processes (e.g., the use of satellite imagery, the deployment of key human resources before a hurricane hits or multisectoral teams to undertake damage and needs assessment);
- Identifying opportunities to build back better and safer as part of WASH rehabilitation activities;
- Opportunities to strengthen Nexus approaches (the positive experience of choosing partners that have experience on both sides of the Nexus; how maintaining effective and continuous collaboration and dialogue with government at all levels before an emergency lays the foundations for achieving good outcomes during emergency response; similarly how sectors that coordinate and work together in 'peacetime' will be better prepared to respond during an emergency; the positive outcomes of working with women's movements).
- How the inclusion of long-term policy objectives as part of a short-term humanitarian response plans can provide a bridge to regular programming and thus contribute to long-term outcomes;
- The importance of replenishing pre-positioned stocks on a regular basis as they are used;
- The need to avoid developing data collection tools at the same time as implementing activities;
- The usefulness of contracting external monitors when UNICEF staff are unable (for whatever reason) to visit the field;

- not establishing an explicit learning objective in the ERP related to learning can mean that learning activities may be missed;
- The importance of defining common approaches to APP with implementing partners to ensure coherence;
- The potential funding impacts that may result from failing to activate a cluster at the start of an emergency.

1.6. Recommendations

Five recommendations were identified by the evaluation team. These were considered, developed and validated during a regional workshop at the end of November 2022. These are:

1. Use the experience of Eta/Iota to develop/improve policies and procedures related to multi-country L1 emergencies. This includes:
 - Ensuring that the ERP implementation period must be de-coupled from the timeframe of both the HAC and/or funding proposals;
 - Developing specific SOPs for COs and RO for a multi-country L1 emergency (given the expanded role a regional office generally takes in this scenario);
 - The consideration of options for COs in emergency-prone countries to either: i) have their own contingency loan facility linked to a “no regrets” contingency strategy as part of the EPP; or ii) have *rapid access* to a regional/global contingency facility; and
 - Leading advocacy efforts with donors to support to: i) flexible funding allocation; ii) sectorial funding for all UNICEF-lead sectors, recognising the value of supporting an integrated humanitarian response.¹⁹
2. Introduce improved standby agreements with humanitarian partners:
 - Revise the existing common humanitarian partnership standby agreement template;
 - Consider the feasibility of developing regional standby agreements with international humanitarian organisations.
3. Improve UNICEF’s performance monitoring mechanisms:
 - Facilitate a review of the different primary data collection platforms developed during Eta/Iota operation, to consider whether the most effective elements of these could be brought together into a common platform to be made available across the region;
 - Review the different monitoring practices employed during Eta/Iota including AAP monitoring practices.
4. To better manage human resources during the emergency response, including by using preparedness planning:
 - Raise CO awareness and application of the Minimum Preparedness Standards checklist;
 - Develop and disseminate a standard ToR for the emergency focal point role²⁰ (in countries without dedicated emergency staff); and
 - Review and document the experience of virtual deployments in the past two years in order to build a body of knowledge around the opportunities and constraints of this form of deployment.
5. Support knowledge management, systematic organisational learning and improvement:
 - Develop an after action review methodology to be systematically carried out at the end of each L1 emergency;
 - Actively encourage and facilitate opportunities for experience exchange and collective lesson learning in emergency preparedness and response between the different COs involved in an L1 multi-country emergency.

¹⁹ This is in line with the benchmarks for resource mobilisation within the CCCs (3.6 Operational Commitments).

²⁰ This role is allocated to an existing staff member; in Nicaragua it was taken by the education specialist, in Honduras by the WASH specialist.

Recommendations for Country Offices were shared during CO workshops and further developed by the teams, as well as prioritised. These focus on a number of areas where UNICEF can use the experience of Eta/Iota to strengthen its leadership role in humanitarian contexts. These recommendations include actions focused on: strengthening its preparedness and response capacity at the country level by making adjustments to the EPP, mapping humanitarian partners and establishing standby agreements for eventual deployment; doing more to strengthen the link between humanitarian and longer-term programming (Nexus); actions to encourage institutional strengthening, both with government and the United Nations system, and actions to increase learning. LACRO has a support role to play in the implementation of all these recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. Context of Central America

Although **Guatemala** is ranked as an economically stable upper-middle-income country by the World Bank²¹ (WB), this has not translated into a significant reduction in poverty and inequality. The UNICEF country programme document presented to the Executive Board in September 2021²² makes the point that the situation for Guatemalan children has improved only slightly over the past two decades, due to very low public investment, continuing governance challenges and recurrent exposure to natural and man-made hazards. Gender disparities remain a critical issue in Guatemala, with most social and economic indicators significantly worse for girls and women than for boys and men, and children and adolescents making up 38% of the country's 17.1 million inhabitants (according to the 2018 census²³), there are 1.9 million children under age 5. With 44% of the population being indigenous peoples and persons of African descent, it is notable that indigenous children face substantially worse indicators than their peers. The WB observes that Guatemala trails behind the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in terms of development progress and there is a high level of disparity between the richest and poorest²⁴. Guatemala has the fourth highest rate of chronic malnutrition in the world and the highest in LAC, with Indigenous and rural populations disproportionately affected (nearly half of the population are rurally located, often in high and inaccessible locations). Guatemala is considered to be the Latin American country that is most vulnerable to climate hazards, and among the top 10 most-vulnerable countries in the world. Approximately 40% of the population is vulnerable to three or more types of natural hazards²⁵. The INFORM risk ranking²⁶ considers Guatemala to be at high risk (34th in the risk ranking).

The WB ranks **Honduras** and noted that while Honduras registered the second highest economic growth rates in Central America between 2017-2019, the country was also facing high levels of poverty and inequality before the double impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and hurricanes Eta and Iota, estimating that 14.8% of the population were living on less than US\$1.90 per day and almost half of the population (4.8 million people) living on less than US\$5.50 per day, the second highest poverty rate in LAC after Haiti. Another third of the population was near-poor and vulnerable to falling back into poverty, while the size of Honduras' middle class (18%) was among the smallest in the region (compared to an average middle class of 41%). As the 2022 UNICEF country programme document noted²⁷, multidimensional child poverty affects nearly 80% of all children and adolescents, High rates of violence add to the challenges experienced. Adding to this is the perceived high level of public sector corruption, one of the highest in the world (157/180)²⁸, although this has been slightly reducing in the last years. INFORM's 2022 risk rating

²¹<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guatemala/overview#1>

²²<https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/documents/guatemala-draft-country-programme-document>

²³<https://www.censopoblacion.gt/>

²⁴See The World Population Review's [Wealth Inequality ranking 2022](#), which ranks all three countries as in the top 25 countries experiencing greatest wealth inequality.

²⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/8886/file/2022-PL10-Honduras-CPD-EN-ODS.pdf>

²⁶<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index>

²⁷<https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/8886/file/2022-PL10-Honduras-CPD-EN-ODS.pdf>

²⁸<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/hnd>

places Honduras as a high-risk country at 30th place in the ranking, 4 points higher than the previous risk rating (2020) and with a three-year trend analysis indicating that this risk is increasing.

Nicaragua is also ranked as a lower-middle-income country by the WB²⁹. Despite a sustained growth in the period 2010-2017, with an annual average of 5.1%³⁰, following a two-year recession brought on by the socio-political crisis of 2018, the country suffered further declines in economic activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic and two major hurricanes in 2020³¹. Compared to regional peers, the economic impact of the pandemic was limited due to mild containment measures. Nonetheless, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined 1.8% in 2020 and it had an average human development index of 0.660, ranking 128th globally³².

Central America continues to be a sub-region that is highly vulnerable to a range of different emergencies, as the 2023 Global Humanitarian Needs Overview makes clear³³, with countries annually hit by tropical storms and hurricanes, the most devastating in the past in the last 25 years being Hurricane Mitch (October 1998), the deadliest hurricane on record³⁴, killing over 11,000 people and prompting a regional investment in institutional disaster preparedness and response capacity.

2.2. UNICEF in Central America

Part of the LACRO region, prior to Eta/Iota, the three country offices had active Country Programme Documents (CPDs) focusing primarily on core development themes, as identified below.

At the moment that Eta/Iota hit the region, there were a number of critical human resource gaps in the region. None of the three offices had an emergency specialist, Honduras was without a deputy representative or a nutrition specialist and Nicaragua was about to experience a renewal of members of its senior membership team. Additionally, the hurricanes hit when Central America was experiencing high levels of COVID 19 infection and were in various levels of quarantine (see below). In all three countries a member of the technical team was designated as an emergency focal point on top of their regular responsibilities, a role whose main role was to ensure internal coherence around emergency issues.

	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
<i>CPD timeframe</i>	2015-2021	2017-2021	2019-2023
<i>CPD budget</i>	USD45.7M ^[1]	USD 41M	USD14.9M
<i>Focus areas of CPD</i>	Social inclusion, child and adolescent protection, education, and nutrition supported by health and water, sanitation and hygiene interventions	Early childhood development, inclusive, quality education (including WASH in schools), child protection from violence and social inclusion	Child survival and development, quality and equitable education and the protection of children from violence.
<i>National coverage</i>	National, with focus on disadvantaged areas	Central level CPD Implementation in 9 departments prioritized	National, with focus on disadvantaged areas
<i>Staff numbers (in 2022)</i>	27	25 (not including consultants or UNVs)	22

Figure 1: Overview of CPDs at the time of Eta/Iota, November 2020

²⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

³⁰ <https://www.pndh.gob.ni/index.shtml>

³¹ Ibid

³² PNUD, Informe de desarrollo humano 2020.

³³ <https://humanitarianaction.info/gho2023>

³⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Mitch

[1] Covering the period 2015 to 2019.

2.3. The impact of the hurricanes

Hurricanes Eta and Iota hit Central America in November 2020 within two weeks of each other. Both made landfall on the east coast of Nicaragua but then followed slightly differing trajectories with differing levels of wind speed and rainfall, crossing Nicaragua and then moved up to impact different parts of Honduras, Guatemala and other countries in the region.

The 28th storm of the season, Eta was initially categorised by US National Hurricane Center as a category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson wind scale, with estimated rainfall of 635mm and wind speeds of 275 km/h. The storm moved slowly across Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala over the following days, progressively being downgraded to first a tropical storm and then to a tropical depression, although it continued to drench much of Honduras and caused rising river levels, flooding and landslides across the affected countries.

As figure 2 shows, less than two weeks after being battered by Tropical Storm Eta and before flooding had substantially subsided, Central America was hit by Hurricane Iota. The category 5 hurricane made landfall on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, causing flooding and landslides as it moved up towards the northern part of Honduras following a similar trajectory initially, but also impacted all countries in Central America, as well as parts of Mexico and Colombia. An estimated 9.2 million people (including 3.5 million children³⁵) across the region were affected by heavy rainfall, flash flooding and landslides caused by Hurricanes Eta and Iota with over 160,000 people displaced to shelters, including 64,000 children³⁶. The UN estimated³⁷ that at least 3.4 million people needed urgent support due to losing homes and livelihoods, including 1.3 million children in the most affected communities in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, with needs identified as including protection, food, health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and basic services.

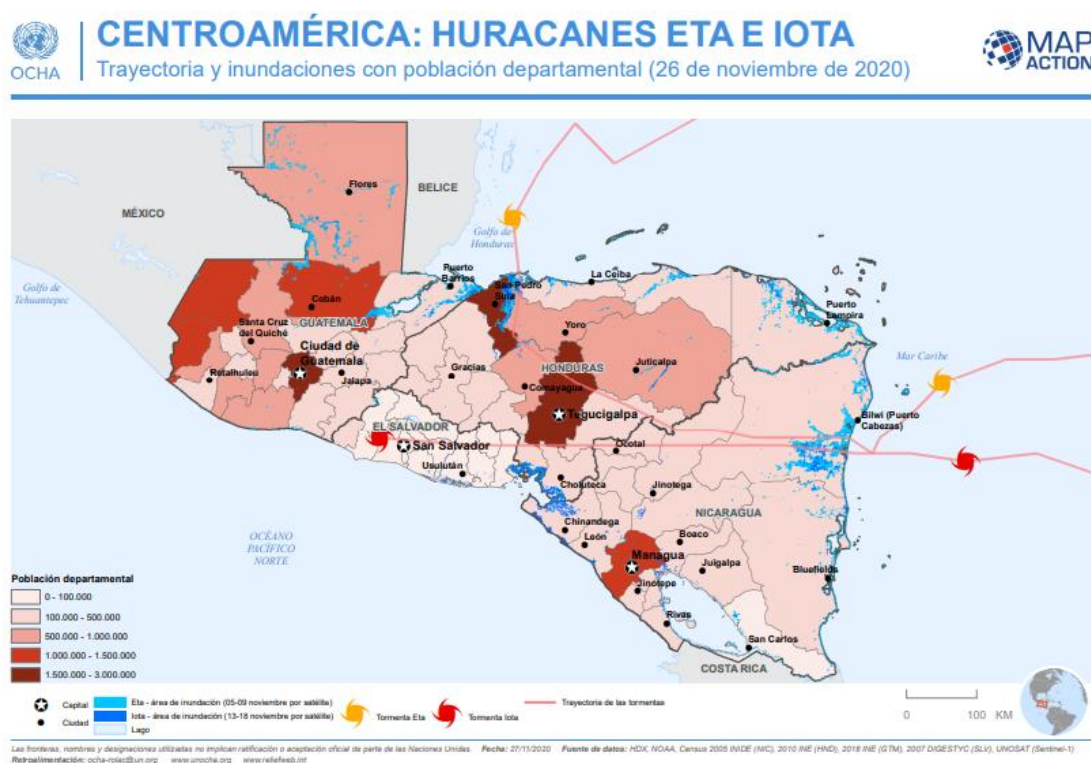


Figure 2: Map showing affected regions and trajectories of hurricanes Eta & Iota

³⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/hurricanes-eta-and-iota>

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

In Honduras the storms worsened the situation of a country already experiencing a multi-dimensional crisis, further exacerbating the exclusion and inequality that coexisted due to increasing violence (particularly against women and children), limitations in coverage and access to essential basic services (including access to health and nutrition services), high levels of internal and cross-border displacement, increasing mixed migration flows, and increasing poverty and food insecurity. The storms caused a high level of destruction in across many departments of the country, affecting more than 4.5 million people. According to data from the ECLAC-IDB report³⁸, the economic damage estimates Honduras reached a figure of more than USD \$2,105, with figures for Guatemala and Nicaragua estimated at USD \$780 and USD \$ 738M respectively³⁹.

2.4. Summary of UNICEF’s response (the evaluation object)

Sector	Requirements	Funds available against appeal as of 31 December 2021*		Funding gap	
		Funds received in 2021	Carry-over	USD	%
Nutrition	2,711,209	1,752,236	100,000	858,973	32%
Health	1,388,523	970,048	970,048		0%
WASH	30,854,673	3,435,000	3,435,000	23,984,673	78%
Education / ECD	2,296,800	1,689,189	255,688	351,923	15%
Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA	3,572,200	2,092,716	2,092,716		
Social protection and cash transfers	1,263,000	0	0	1,263,000	100%
Multi-sector		150,000	4,044,987		
Regional office technical capacity	500,000	121,359	0	378,641	76%
TOTAL	42,586,405	10,210,548	10,898,439	21,477,417	50%

*Funds available include funds received against current appeal and carry-forward from previous year.

Figure 3: 2021 Funding status against the appeal by sector (Revenue in USD)⁴⁰

Following the hurricanes, UNICEF initially prioritised its action in the four most affected countries in Central America: Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize⁴¹. UNICEF appealed for US\$42.6 million to respond to humanitarian priorities between mid-November 2020 and mid-May 2021. As the table above⁴² shows, the appeal was 50% funded; by the end of 2021, UNICEF had received USD 21.1 million with main contributors being the US (BHA/OFDA), Japan, Spain, the European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and UN OCHA. A number of sectors had significant funding gaps; WASH was 78% underfunded and social protection activities were entirely underfunded, while the funding required for technical support capacity from LACRO had a 76% funding gap.

Each country office (CO) put together an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) in the weeks following the passage of the two storms, supported by the Latin America and Caribbean regional office (LACRO). All three countries, developed their plans within the framework of the Core Commitments For Children (CCC) with some contextual differences both in focus and approach (for example Guatemala did not include any health activities with its plans, Nicaragua did not include either social protection or cluster coordination, the latter as clusters had not been activated). The UNICEF response strategy in all three countries, as described in the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal (HAC), focused on ensuring that children and families in shelters and affected communities had access to basic services including child protection, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, education and early childhood development within a safe and protective environment, supporting the prevention, mitigation and response to gender-based violence (GBV) as well as the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). See figure 4 below for more details of the various activities planned in each country as per the Emergency Response Plans.

The majority of activities were implemented (as will be explored later in this report), although the lack of funding for social protection activities meant that only technical assistance was provided in Honduras and the extent of activities planned had to be prioritised in line with the funding limitations.

³⁸ <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/46853-evaluacion-efectos-impactos-causados-la-tormenta-tropical-eta-huracan-iota>

³⁹ Data taken from respective Governments.

⁴⁰ Taken from the 2021 consolidated final report for Eta/Iota.

⁴¹ The decision was later taken not to continue in Belize as the impact was less than initially assessed.

⁴² Taken from <https://www.unicef.org/media/89546/file/2020-HAC-Response-to-Hurricanes-Eta-and-Iota.pdf>

Overview of Emergency Response Plan activities in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua

Sector	Activities	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
Nutrition	Cluster coordination	x	x	
	Support monitoring and information systems	x	x	x
	Nutrition counselling & distribution of micronutrients (under 5/pregnant)	x	x	x
	Capacity strengthening of health workers	x	x	x
	SAM screening treatment and training	x	x	x
	Advocacy			x
Child protection	Cluster coordination	x	x	
	Mapping resources	x		x
	Activities to reinforce resilience	x		
	Capacity building of health workers	x	x	x
	Provision of safe spaces		x	x
	Provision of mental health and psychosocial support		x	x
Education	Cluster coordination	x	x	
	Distribution of materials	x	x	x
	Rehabilitation and WASH	x	x	
	Identification/referral of vulnerable children	x	x	x
	Teacher training (ICT, psychosocial support)	x	x (only ICT)	x
	Awareness-raising and prevention of GBV	x		
WASH	Cluster coordination	x	x	
	Rehabilitation	x	x	x
	Distribution of household water treatment solutions	x	x	x
	Installation of handwashing stations	x	x	x
	Hygiene promotion	x	x	x
Social protection	Technical assistance for cash transfer	x	x	
	Support and advocacy for cash transfer		x	
Gender	Recruit a specialist			x
Health	Vaccination support		x	
	Health centre support (supplies)		x	x
	Obstetrics/neonatal supplies and training			x
	Capacity building			x

Figure 4: Key activities in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, taken from the Emergency Response Plans

2.5. Multiple emergencies across the region: COVID 19, migration, violence

When evaluating all aspects of the response to Eta/Iota, the broader context of the region has to be taken into account. The countries of the region were in the midst of the second wave of COVID 19 and under various levels of severity of lockdown and quarantine, with the region as a whole experiencing an on-going migration crisis and increasing levels of violence⁴³. Delicate political situations existed in all three countries.

COVID 19 had a double impact on UNICEF. On the one hand, all three COs and LACRO were working under quarantine conditions (with different levels of restriction in place, in some cases resulting in very limited movement within the region, for example Honduras), while on the other hand all were already on an emergency footing given their response to COVID 19, with positive and negative consequences (emergency coordination approaches were underway in some countries, but pre-positioned stocks were

⁴³ See UNICEF's [multi-country evaluation of violence against children and gender-based violence](#) and the [multi-country evaluation on migration in Mexico and Central America](#).

already depleted). LACRO was supporting all LAC countries in their COVID 19 response, which meant that it was already stretched when Central America was hit by Eta and Iota.⁴⁴

3. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

3.1. Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation reviews UNICEF's response to Hurricanes Eta and Iota in three Central American countries (see Terms of Reference in Annex 1), has a dual objective of accountability (externally to host governments, donors, partners, and internally among the various UNICEF structures at country and regional levels), and to contribute to institutional learning (both for UNICEF and other stakeholders in emergency response - government, civil society, UN agencies, etc). The evaluation compiles good practices and lessons learned and generates practical and actionable recommendations that can be incorporated into UNICEF's future responses to hydro-meteorological events in the Caribbean Basin, as well as future strategies and plans, including the formulation of a new UNICEF regional preparedness strategy contributing to strengthening the "response capacity" of national and local systems.

3.2. Objectives of the evaluation

As indicated in the terms of reference (ToR) the objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Determine UNICEF's institutional progress in implementing the CCCs in emergencies, including access to the most vulnerable population, and identify the most effective strategies and partnerships for future response (relevance, coverage, timeliness, sustainability and quality).
- Assess the quality of the response in terms of rapid assessment, response design and structure, partner mapping, workflows, financial arrangements and monitoring system.
- Determine the relevance of existing or developing emergency preparedness and response strategies, ensuring UNICEF's positioning as a key humanitarian actor in the sub-region.
- Determine how UNICEF can better position itself, leverage its comparative advantage and provide specific recommendations to improve its response to future hydrometeorological and other emergencies in Central America.

In addition, the ToR underlines that the evaluation will analyse the extent to which the regular programme was informed by risks and the extent to which UNICEF was prepared to respond by identifying and examining specific internal and external obstacles that may have arisen during the response.

3.3. Audience and use of the evaluation

The primary audience for this evaluation report is UNICEF LACRO management and technical staff, who will use the lessons learned to improve preparedness and response to future emergencies, through regular country programme documents and annual plans that will have better integrated and risk-informed programming, as well as a more coherent approach to nexus issues.

The secondary audience includes LACRO, COs, key stakeholders in emergency response, such as the governments in the three countries, implementing partners, inter-agency coordination actors and international donors.

⁴⁴ A deep analysis of the impact and response to COVID 19 can be found in the [Real Time Evaluation](#).

3.4. Ownership of the evaluation

The evaluation has been commissioned by LACRO's evaluation and emergency sections, and co-funded with the UNICEF Nicaragua Country Office. The ToR were developed jointly by LACRO and the country offices, all of which are therefore stakeholders.

In order to maximise the ownership of the recommendations coming out of the evaluation, a standalone evaluation report was produced for each of the three countries being evaluated. Each country office also organised and participated in a validation workshop to review the findings and conclusions and to develop, adjust and prioritise a draft set of recommendations proposed by the evaluation team.

3.5. Scope of the evaluation

As specified in the ToR, the evaluation covered UNICEF's humanitarian preparedness and response in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, from October 2020 to June 2022, related to the impacts of hurricanes Eta and Iota. It covers the period between the pre-emergency phase (including the preparation of the emergency preparedness plans) and the closure of the responses. The evaluation assessed the full scope of UNICEF's humanitarian action, with primary data collection prioritising the most affected areas of the countries (and efforts made to visit hard-to-reach areas - the criteria to identify specific locations can be found in section 4.1 below and the itineraries in annex 3):

- Guatemala: departments of Izabal and Alta Verapaz;
- Honduras: departments of Cortes and Atlántida; and
- Nicaragua: Northern Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN) and the department of Jinotega.

Programmatically, the evaluation reviews UNICEF's multi-sectoral interventions across the CCCs: WASH, nutrition, education and child protection, PSEA and GBV in all countries (plus health in Honduras), as well as transversal issues such as accountability to affected populations (AAP), learning and partnerships. The evaluation also assesses the response from an operational standpoint (including planning, monitoring and evaluation; the availability and management of supplies and human resources; the application of emergency procedures, surge and deployment; procurement and contracting, etc). Advocacy, communications and fundraising is also reviewed, to the extent to which they were factors that facilitated or hampered the response. The evaluation also reviews UNICEF's role as cluster/sector lead (as relevant) and UNICEF's protagonism in relation to inter-agency and institutional coordination. In line with the ToRs, the evaluation does not consider the efficiency of UNICEF's response⁴⁵. Related to PSEA, the evaluation reviews to what extent UNICEF considered PSEA within its programming in the context of the Eta and Iota response but does not systematically assess results of such programming.

4. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

4.1. Methodological design

4.1.1. The frame for the evaluation

The two overarching questions in the ToR guiding this evaluation are:

- What are the main lessons learned from this sub-regional rapid onset disasters in terms of emergency preparedness and emergency response in the countries and the specific local places of intervention [Relevance/Appropriateness]
- To what extent has UNICEF humanitarian response and recovery efforts achieved their intended results (in terms of timeliness, scale, and quality, considering the HAC, response plans, monitoring and adherence to CCCs) ? [Effectiveness]

⁴⁵ Efficiency defined in the ToR as "whether the least costly resources possible were used to achieve results".

Given the dual purpose of evaluation (learning and accountability), the methodology developed has adopted a hybrid formative and summative approach. The formative orientation of the evaluation has sought to put learning at the heart of the evaluation process and to actively engage stakeholders in reflecting on their role and experience in the response. The summative dynamic aimed to gather evidence to assess the relevance/appropriateness, timeliness, effectiveness, coherence and connectedness of UNICEF's response and results. The evaluation also assessed the extent to which the response followed the action plans developed in November/December 2020. The evaluation matrix is in Annex 2.

As specified by the ToR, the evaluation took a non-experimental approach and adopted a utilisation focus that was built around the priority key issues identified both in the ToR and through inception interviews and document review.

4.1.2. Data collection strategy

In order to determine the itineraries for the field visits (Annex 3), the evaluation team elaborated a series of criteria that were shared with the country offices. These included:

- Areas most affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota;
- Areas with a concentration of emergency interventions in different sectors;
- Feasibility of access (taking into account the limited time available);
- Presence of marginalised groups (eg Miskito/Garifuna/Mayan populations, etc).

Qualitative data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key informants (Annexes 4 to 6). Quantitative data was gathered through a review of documentation provided by COs and LACRO, as well as additional documents explicitly requested from both internal and external sources (Annex 7). Finally, direct observation was also a source of information, albeit a more limited one, given that UNICEF's activities had been fully completed at the time of the field visits and only those activities that generated changes in infrastructure could be observed.

During the data collection phase, 84 semi-structured interviews (with 42 women and 42 men) and 25 focus groups were conducted (with 98 women and 43 men in total) across Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Another 20 interviews were carried out with staff from LACRO.⁴⁶

The data and information collected from the various sources was triangulated where possible (and where not possible it has been reflected as such in the report), as well as reflecting divergences in opinions or analysis where these divergences have occurred.

4.1.3. Evaluation standards and ethical considerations

The evaluation approach has been constructed informed by international standards to ensure that the evaluation is impartial and independent and that it is conducted through a transparent, consultative and quality process following ethical standards and guidelines identified by the evaluation team and UNICEF. Details in the inception report.

This evaluation, as specified in the inception report, did not collect direct data from children and adolescents under the age of 18, given that the time for data collection was limited, activities targeting children had come to an end and the hurricanes took place 18 months previously, which meant that there was a considerable possibility of recall bias being more relevant at younger ages.

4.1.4. Quality assurance

The quality and rigour of the evaluation process has been one of the main objectives of the evaluation team with the support and close supervision of the management structure established by UNICEF, including the participation of monitoring and evaluation and emergency officers from the regional and

⁴⁶ The inception phase included another 18 orientation interviews.

country offices in the organisation of the itinerary and identification of potential interviewees, the review of report drafts and the provision of exhaustive feedback.

The field visits were carried out by a team of three experienced international evaluators, with the support of a national consultant in Honduras. The team leader participated in all three country visits and the remaining team members split responsibilities between the different countries, with the drafting of the country reports led by the allocated team member. All report drafts were reviewed by the team leader before being forwarded to the UNICEF evaluation contact point, with the team leader writing the regional synthesis.

All key informants were informed, prior to interview and focus groups, that their participation was voluntary and that the confidentiality of the conversations would be respected. The evaluation team recognises that in certain cases, the specific subject matter of the evaluation in certain respects may be traceable to a likely source. Both key informant and focus group interviews were notated (and sometimes recorded upon request) so that the consolidation phase and data analysis were based on accurately recorded elements.

4.1.5. The evaluation questions

The evaluation questions below were drawn from the ToR and supplemented/adjusted in light of feedback received through the inception interviews and the document review. The questions were expanded within the framework of the OECD-DAC criteria⁴⁷ and a second dimension was added through the cross-referencing with the Core Humanitarian Standards⁴⁸ (CHS) commitments to develop an evaluation matrix. The evaluation team used the CHS standards and performance indicators to ensure that the focus of the evaluation remained, at all times, on the situation of the affected populations. Annex 2 includes both the OECD-DAC criteria and the CHS standards.

Each question was broken down into a series of sub-questions as can be seen in annex 2. This set of evaluation questions is directly related to both the objectives of the evaluation and the criteria against which the response will be assessed. Key informant interview/focus group scripts grouped together appropriate questions for particular stakeholder groups.

1. **Assessment:** To what extent were the interventions based on adequate/specific assessments?
2. **Access:** Did the intervention design take into account specific barriers linked to gender and societal expectations, challenges faced by minorities (i.e., indigenous communities), vulnerable groups (e.g., unaccompanied children or children with disabilities, women and pregnant women, etc)?
3. **Achieving objectives:** To what extent did the UNICEF response appropriately achieve its objectives? How did these results impact different groups of affected people?
4. **Preparedness:** What preparedness and contingency measures were in place before November 2020 at the CO and LACRO levels (risk & capacity assessments [UNICEF COs, implementing partners, government, interagency, etc])
5. **Meeting needs:** To what extent has the strategy carried out by UNICEF (in terms of supplies, logistics, communication, implementing partners etc) been effective in meeting the needs of the affected population? To what extent have these been aligned with the CCCs?
6. **Timeliness:** To what extent was there correct usage of the accelerated processes to ensure a timely response: PCA/HPD, Human Resources, Procurement, Finances, etc?

⁴⁷ Taken from "[Evaluating Humanitarian Action Using the OECD-DAC Criteria: An ALNAP Guide For Humanitarian Agencies](#)".

⁴⁸ <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard/language-versions>

7. **Planning and monitoring:** How effective is UNICEF in terms of planning and monitoring? To what extent are there adequate planning and monitoring tools for emergency response (including monitoring tools used by implementing partners)? To what extent have they been adequately used to allow for appropriate adjustment of strategies?
8. **LACRO and COs - role, responsibilities and relationships:** What were the main roles/responsibilities of COs and LACRO related to Eta/Iota (including leadership and decision-making)? Was the role of LACRO adequate (in terms of support and accompaniment) to respond to the needs of the COs related to Eta/Iota? To what extent has the relationship between LACRO and CO been a two-way relationship? To what extent has it contributed to developing a regional approach?
9. **Human resources:** Were the available human resources adequate for emergency response, both in terms of numbers and specific experience/training?
10. **Links between humanitarian action and development (NEXUS):** To what extent were UNICEF short-term emergency activities carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account?
11. **Governments, Institutions, Counterparts:** What can UNICEF learn from existing partnerships in the countries which can inform its humanitarian response? How can UNICEF establish stronger partnerships with the private sector, central governments, subnational authorities, civil society organizations, academia, among others, to better prepare for and respond to future emergencies in Central America?
12. **Learning:** What processes has UNICEF put in place to systematically gather good practices and learning? How does this get disseminated and acted upon?
13. **Accountability to affected populations:** To what extent were UNICEF's plans and actions informed by the results of active participation processes where the affected population had the voice and capacity to impact key decisions? Did UNICEF put in place accessible complaints mechanisms? What efforts were made to ensure that affected people knew about and used these mechanisms?
14. **Coordination:** To what extent has coordination both internally within UNICEF and externally increased effectiveness? To what extent was UNICEF able to achieve an integrated approach?
15. **Clusters:** What was UNICEF's role/impact in coordinating the clusters/sectors?
16. **Inter-Agency:** How has UNICEF coordinated and collaborated with other UN agencies?

4.1.6. Main adjustments made to the evaluation questions

The inception report (section 5.6) describes the changes and additions that were made to the initial set of questions included in the ToR. These were in order to either break down compound questions each containing sub-questions, for clarification or to bring together issues that would sit more naturally together. A limited number of additional questions were also added as a result of issues raised during the inception interviews. These issues included: strengthening the focus on the LACRO-CO relationship in terms of decision-making and leadership in relation to sudden-onset disaster response; exploring experience of applying a “no-regrets” approach; including consideration of both the communications-fundraising and communications-advocacy dimensions (the latter in relation to national disaster management agencies, donors etc).

The application of the evaluation questions during the data collection phase went smoothly and the questions proved appropriate. However, during the analysis and preparation of the country reports it became clear that while asking stakeholders about their views, evidence and observations regarding the extent to which the UNICEF response had met objectives (question 3 above), the answers overlapped considerably with other evaluation questions, depending upon the role/perspective of the interlocutor and thus fed more naturally into the overall conclusions of the evaluation rather than reporting on it as part of the key findings section. This adjustment was discussed and agreed with LACRO commissioners.

4.2. Limitations and mitigation measures

A number of potential limitations and constraints had been identified during the inception phase, together with potential mitigation strategies. In most cases, the negative impact of these constraints was limited due to the actions taken beforehand by both the UNICEF country office staff and the evaluation team. This section focuses on limitations that remained despite mitigation efforts.

The main constraint that impacted upon this evaluation was the passage of time; UNICEF Eta/Iota-related activities had come to an end many months before the field visit, in some cases up to ten months before the field visit (eg in Guatemala and Honduras). Not only was it clear that interviewees and focus group attendees found it difficult to remember details of implementation and therefore tended sometimes to give generalised answers which demonstrated a certain level of recall bias but, in some cases, the relevant informants (whether that was an employee of an implementing partner, a government official or a member of the community) were no longer present in the area. This was particularly evident in Honduras in relation to government interlocutors, as elections in November 2021 had resulted in a change of administration which meant that no government staff incumbents at the time of the Eta/Iota response were still in place.

While the limited time available for the data collection phase in the field meant that, as with any evaluation, only a relatively small number of sites were visited, efforts were made as described in 4.1.2 above to apply a set of criteria to ensure that representative sites were chosen which offered the possibility to review all sectoral activities within the UNICEF response programme, in two different regions, delivered (where relevant) by different implementing partners. This included visits to hard-to-reach communities and communities coming from specific vulnerable groups, such as indigenous communities. In Guatemala it was only possible to research two sectors in any detail (WASH and education), with a very limited number of implementing partners. It proved not possible to include in the itinerary any visits or interviews related to the nutrition sector and only limited opportunity to collect data regarding the child protection/PSEA/GBV activities. The evaluation team was able to augment the initial itinerary with additional visits to communities and schools organised while in the field, which proved valuable.

Documentation proved a limitation in this evaluation with the evaluation team experiencing feast and famine related to the number and relevance of the documents. 383 documents were uploaded to an online repository and shared with the evaluation team (19 documents related to the Guatemala CO, 255 documents from the Honduras CO, 73 documents from the Nicaragua CO and 36 regional documents). Many of these documents proved not to be relevant (speeches, photos, etc) and some key basic documentation was initially missing (for example the final reports of the HAC). The excess of documents in the case of Honduras and the lack of documents in the case of Guatemala proved problematic⁴⁹. The evaluation team needed to undertake a triage process (which involved reviewing all the documents) that was extremely time-consuming.

In Nicaragua, the accompaniment throughout the entire visit of 4 state security staff (and police on one day in Jinotega) may have constrained some informants from participating freely in interviews or focus groups, although it was noted that these state employees did not intervene in confidential conversations and for the most part kept a respectful distance.

The phasing of the production of multiple versions of multiple reports proved complicated, particularly over the European summer months when evaluation team members and UNICEF staff were taking leave.

⁴⁹ It is suggested that UNICEF develops a standard (and limited) list of key basic documents that should be provided during the inception phase; additional documentation should then be requested and collected by the evaluation team as required.

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1. Relevance and appropriateness

In a complex context of multi-risk vulnerabilities, compounded by the pandemic situation, the emergency response by UNICEF and its partners set relevant objectives that were generally in line with local needs and priorities. Evidence was found of a level of consultation and involvement in decision-making at the community level. Effort was taken in all three countries to reach the most affected municipalities and communities that were often isolated and geographically difficult to reach. While interventions were generally disaggregated by sex and age, the identification of the needs of specific groups such as people with disabilities or LGBTIQ+ people) has been identified as an area that requires improvement.

Feedback from both individual interviews and community focus groups across the three countries was positive, confirming that UNICEF-funded activities generally responded to the most pressing needs of affected people and the needs assessment processes had accurately identified the key vulnerabilities (although as will be explored later in the evaluation, donor earmarking in some cases meant that some priority activities did not necessarily receive the level of funding required).

5.1.1. Damage and need assessment

Different approaches were taken to the emergency damage and needs assessment processes (the EDAN⁵⁰) in each country, generally under the overall coordination of the national disaster management authority using tools developed through collective coordination mechanisms.

In Honduras, non-governmental organisations (NGOs, a number of which became UNICEF partners subsequently) mobilised as part of the national disaster management system SINAGER⁵¹, deploying to the field hours after the first hurricane. Honduras was also the only country where an UNDAC⁵² team was deployed (between 22 November and 3 December 2020).

In Nicaragua, the EDAN undertaken by the *Movimiento Mundial de Infancia* (MMI⁵³) and involving a number of NGOs that subsequently became UNICEF implementing partners, aimed at augmenting the official governmental EDAN (that centred on infrastructure damage) with data focusing on the impact of the hurricanes on the lives of vulnerable people and particularly children, including highlighting the child protection needs, gender based violence, etc. The use of satellite imagery (provided by LACRO) built up a more accurate estimation of the population most affected. The CO in Nicaragua also contracted a communications company to document the impact of hurricane Iota in RACCN, which provided useful additional information (and also proved impactful for fundraising purposes).

In Guatemala, it was the WASH cluster under the coordination of CONRED (Guatemala's national disaster reduction coordination agency⁵⁴) and with the accompaniment of UNICEF, which defined both the EDAN approach and its own data collection tool for WASH-related data collection. The prioritisation of affected communities was carried out by the municipalities, together with the Ministry of Health.⁵⁵

In the initial phases, UNICEF staff did not deploy as part of the rapid assessment process (due to UNICEF's movement restrictions related to the pandemic), although in the case of Nicaragua, a multidisciplinary team (including technical experts across all sectors) was deployed to the RACCN (*Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Norte*) two weeks after the passage of hurricane Iota, an approach which was instrumental

⁵⁰ *Evaluaciones de daños y análisis de necesidades*

⁵¹ *Sistema nacional de gestión de riesgos*

⁵² UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination

⁵³ The [Global Movement for Children](#)

⁵⁴ *Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres*

⁵⁵ From the other sectors, no information on the EDAN process could be obtained, except in the case of the education sector where the needs were provided directly by the Ministry of Education.

in helping build an integrated emergency response plan. In all countries, the assessment processes were delayed in some locations due to inaccessibility caused by flood waters not receding, sometimes for several weeks after the hurricanes. Initial EDANs were undertaken following Eta and these were then built on and extended after the passage of hurricane Iota and augmented as additional information became available.

It is impossible for the evaluation team to take a definitive position as to whether UNICEF-funded interventions were based on adequate and specific assessments, due to the considerable lapse of time (18 months) and the closure of activities prior to field visits. However, focus groups and interviews across the three countries in the affected communities and with key stakeholders (such as government officials at regional and municipal levels, school directors, staff from partner organisations) as well as a review of those EDAN documents that were made available, confirmed that the interventions of the response were relevant to the key needs. As will be reflected on later in this report, some of the decisions taken by donors to earmark funding to particular sectors left some sectors underfunded in relation to the level of needs.

5.1.2. Access

The evaluation matrix focuses on access in terms of the extent to which UNICEF's interventions took into account specific barriers linked to gender, vulnerability, ethnicity etc, rather than physical access barriers to affected communities (which in some cases were considerable due to isolated locations being cut off by flooding).

UNICEF's focus across the three countries was on responding to specific issues related to children and adolescents and women (particularly pregnant and lactating women), together with a clear focus on targeting indigenous communities (primarily through the decisions on geographic focus, which saw all three COs concentrate their interventions in areas with a high indigenous populations and/or Afro-descendent people). Data was generally disaggregated by sex and age (albeit with varying levels of compliance) as well as generally identifying numbers of pregnant women, however identification of other groups with possible access barriers (for example people with disabilities or LGBTIQ+ people) was not routinely included in the data disaggregation.

There was evidence that the interventions did take into account specific vulnerabilities of some groups, for example in the provision of tailored basic needs kits in Honduras for pregnant women, the inclusion of ramps for wheelchair users in the temporary classrooms provided to some schools in Guatemala or the provision of materials in local languages (in Guatemala and Nicaragua). In all three countries, the strategy of working through implementing partners (both local and international) with long experience of working in particular communities, with staff members coming from these communities, who speak local languages and understand their cultural characteristics, helped ensure an appropriate level of access. In Nicaragua and Guatemala, this strategy helped UNICEF reach extremely isolated and remote communities in RACCN and Alta Verapaz and in both countries, WASH programmes looked to the practices of the communities to define appropriate access approaches. In Guatemala, community water committees determined how households would participate in the work to rehabilitate water systems (either through financial contributions or through contributions of labour), while in Nicaragua the community water committee also determined the level of monthly financial contribution to the maintenance of water systems, taking into account the means of households.

The focus in all three countries on protection activities focusing on women and children and also supporting systems that aimed at preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence also responded to particular vulnerabilities.

5.2. Effectiveness

The evaluation reviewed the responses in detail across the three countries, considering not only their efficacy but also the extent to which they were aligned to the CCCs. It is clear from this analysis that the UNICEF response achieved its purpose effectively in terms of responding to the priority needs of the most affected populations, in alignment with the CCCs, despite being hampered by a number of short-term

elements (specifically the lack of some key human resources and the coexistence of COVID 19 - with its mobility constraints - that affected not only the country offices but also the level of support from LACRO). While the three countries had complied with the emergency preparedness protocols of UNICEF, overall there was a limited level of appropriation and leadership in this preparation, primarily due to the absence of emergency expertise in the staffing structures and the timeliness of UNICEF's response was uneven. Even so, the response by sectors in the three countries was seen to be adequate or good, with some examples of innovative programming. Planning and monitoring processes were similarly seen to be appropriate.

5.2.1. Emergency preparedness

It is important to frame this section by recognising that the arrival of two category 4 or 5 hurricanes in the space of two weeks would have exceeded the capacity of any relatively small country office with a primarily development portfolio such as those in Central America, especially within a context of an ongoing L3 emergency response to COVID 19 and with the categorisation of the Eta/Iota disaster as an L1 emergency (the issues of L1 designation is taken up later in this report).

All three COs had completed or reviewed their preparedness plans through the Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP) prior to November 2020. As none of the offices had emergencies specialists in place, these revision processes were completed either (in the case of Nicaragua) by an external consultant who knew the country well and had been contracted by LACRO to support this process, or in Honduras in what was described as a procedural manner (to ensure that the minimum preparedness standards for the office were met), with little evident in-depth reflection on the contents, how to implement the plans or what actions might be necessary to accompany this process.

Central America is a region traditionally hit by natural disasters of all kinds and due to climate change, weather-related emergencies are predicted to increase in both frequency and intensity. Despite this, preparedness measures had not taken place (either within UNICEF or more broadly) to the extent that might be expected and there appeared to be limited consideration of how the region would respond to an extensive disaster event that would impact across several countries in the region (similar in dimension to hurricane Mitch in 1998⁵⁶). Within UNICEF, neither Guatemala and Honduras had maintained emergency response as part of their regular programming; the CO in Nicaragua in 2020 had identified the need to strengthen its capacities to respond to emergencies given the overall context of the country but was in the process of determining its approach when hit by the hurricanes. Overall it appeared that there had been a measure of institutional memory loss of the severe impact that disasters can have in Central America, perhaps linked to the passage of time (since hurricane Mitch [October 1998] had wreaked destruction across the region and promoted a considerable investment in building response and preparedness capacities in the following years) and a certain level of generational change, which resulted in what could be called an general lack of a "disaster readiness mindset" across the sub-region.

Several elements were lacking from the EPPs. COs had not developed detailed operational plans in response to the most probable risk scenarios that could affect each country (tropical storms/hurricanes or earthquakes for example); having such an outline response plan in place would have allowed each CO to quickly adapt the outline to the specificities of the particular emergency. EPPs did not include a mapping exercise to identify potential humanitarian implementing partners and none of the COs had therefore developed standby agreements or, in the case of Honduras and Guatemala⁵⁷, built provisions into their regular PCAs (programme cooperation agreements) with existing implementing partners (or donors) so that the focus could quickly pivot to humanitarian response should events require it. The EPPs also, critically, lacked a staff member tasked with its leadership.

As part of general emergency preparedness measures (although not necessarily part of the EPPs in all cases), COs had prepositioned emergency supplies in place. In Honduras, these stocks had been used as part of the response to COVID 19 and had not been replenished at the time that the country was impacted by Eta and Iota. In Nicaragua, some stocks had been prepositioned in the warehouses of the national

⁵⁶ Hurricane Mitch prompted a considerable investment of time, energy and funding by national governments and donors in the strengthening of response, mitigation and recovery systems at national, regional and local levels.

⁵⁷ UNICEF Nicaragua did not have any implementing partners prior to Eta/Iota.

disaster management agency SINAPRED⁵⁸ in coordination with World Food Programme (WFP). Due to SINAPRED's distribution challenges given the extent of the emergency, these stocks remained in the warehouses for more than a month, although prepositioned WASH items stored in World Vision warehouses were distributed more rapidly.

It is notable that as a result of their experiences during Eta and Iota, the COs in Honduras and Nicaragua are now placing significantly more emphasis on augmenting their emergency preparedness. Ensuring that all regular programmes are "risk-informed" and with funding lines focused on preparedness actions will help in this regard. At the same time, it appears that there continues to be reduced availability of funding from the major donors in the region for emergency preparedness and response, which impacts not only on UNICEF but on the work of national response agencies and other humanitarian actors.

5.2.2. Responding to needs

As can be seen in figure 4 in section 2.4, there were substantial similarities in the focus of the response across the three countries, as all framed their plans around the CCCs. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) was the most significant element in each country both in terms of budget allocation and also the fact that so many water sources had been contaminated, damaged or destroyed, with child protection/PSEA/GBV, education and nutrition as core elements, together with a number of cross-cutting activities (eg accountability to affected populations).

Both in Honduras and Guatemala the response was compressed into a six-month period, responding to critical needs of the affected population. Honduras added a second phase of six months as additional funds were received. This second phase continued child protection interventions that had been started in phase one, but was primarily focused on health and nutrition activities (the first phase had focused only on WASH and child protection). The phasing of activities in this way does put into question the extent to which the activities in phase two (July to December 2021) responded to the urgent needs of the population following the impact of the two hurricanes over nine months before (an issue taken up later in this section [5.2.2] of the report). In Nicaragua, the response was planned to be delivered over one year.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

In all the three countries visited, the WASH activities centred on the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure (community water systems and household wells and the repair or rehabilitation of household latrines in some cases), as well as repairing and reinstating latrines, drinking water and handwashing facilities in schools, with initial distributions of emergency WASH items (filters, soap, cleaning materials, menstrual hygiene kits, etc). These activities aligned with the CCCs and met the urgent needs of communities (confirmed through interviews with health personnel working within the government structures and community focus group meetings) and across all three countries not only ensured that the provision of clean drinking water was re-established following the contamination or damage of infrastructure by the storms, but in many cases improved the pre-existing water provision in the communities. This was particularly the case in both Nicaragua and Guatemala, where focus groups reported that the water systems were degraded or in some cases not functioning and the quality of the available drinking water was poor before the hurricanes. Health personnel working in local clinics interviewed confirmed that as a result of the interventions, the previously high levels of faecal-oral diseases presenting had been reduced.

In both Nicaragua and Guatemala, innovative approaches to the WASH activities were taken, well-aligned and coordinated with the relevant water authorities. Nicaragua encouraged the creation of community water management committees⁵⁹ in small communities of less than 100 inhabitants⁶⁰ and involved them in key decisions such as the choice of water pump to be installed. Many communities were provided with simple, mechanical pumps, while one visited by the evaluation team in Jinotega opted for a diesel-

⁵⁸ *Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres.*

⁵⁹ CAPS (*Comités de Agua Potable y Saneamiento*) are a standard approach in communities of over 100 residents; UNICEF's support to the water authorities to encourage the creation of CAPS in smaller communities is a valuable contribution to ensuring sustainability, although an increased focus on the management of community financial assets is recommended in the country report.

⁶⁰ Prior to this, water committees had been created only for communities with more than 100 residents.

operated pump, to be funded through monthly contributions from all households (it is not known how sustainable this type of pump is, particularly with the recent increases in the cost of diesel)⁶¹. In Nicaragua, it was reported that over 1,000 domestic and community rainwater harvesting systems were also installed.⁶²

The example of Oneida in Izabal (Guatemala) demonstrates the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach adopted, with funds from UNICEF supporting its partner Helvetas to rehabilitate a water system feeding three communities that was severely damaged by Eta/Iota. 350,000 quetzals (USD \$44,000) was contributed by UNICEF/Helvetas, the community agreed to contribute 250,000 quetzals and the municipality 150,000 quetzals. When the municipality was unable to raise the funds, the community obtained support from the private sector. The community also made decisions on how to ensure that all households could participate, regardless of their income.

A concern was identified regarding the sustainability (and in some cases the safety) of some of the constructions. While in Guatemala the reconstruction of handwashing facilities focused on rehabilitation of permanent facilities, in a number of schools in Nicaragua the implementing partner installed temporary facilities constructed in plastic⁶³. These were observed during the field visit to have been damaged, due to the harsh environmental conditions in RACCN and the high level of use, suggesting that it would have been expedient to have built more sustainable solutions. There was also concern that implementing partners in Nicaragua had not used standard hurricane-proof techniques (such as hurricane strapping on roofs, the use of screws rather than nails to attached zinc roofing) in reconstructing latrine structures in order to comply with Build Back Better/Build Back Safer protocols⁶⁴.

Due to the short implementation period of six months in Guatemala and Honduras, some quality issues were not picked up. In Oneida, the focus group informed the evaluation team that the wrong dimension of valves had been installed⁶⁵, while in one of the schools visited in Honduras, the bathroom hand basins had not been installed.⁶⁶

Health

Honduras was the only country to fund health interventions as part of its Eta/Iota response. Support was provided to the community health centres in the second six-month phase of the response, starting in July 2021, with interventions supporting the routine activities provided by the health centres to the surrounding community (for example vaccinations of children, pre- and post-natal consultations, etc). This short-term support provided was undoubtedly welcomed by the directors interviewed given that the centres were reported to have many shortcomings even before the hurricanes and made a short-term contribution to ongoing health outcomes. However, the link with needs caused by Eta and Iota was more tenuous, given that the activities started over nine months after the country was impacted by the storms.⁶⁷

Nutrition

All three COs were able to contribute to improving nutrition surveillance capacity at the local level (and beyond) through the introduction of the use of Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes used by community volunteers to detect and refer possible cases of acute malnutrition, together with the provision of nutritional support and micronutrients to under-fives and pregnant mothers. The LACRO

⁶¹ There is also an evident environmental impact of this sort of pump that should be considered by UNICEF in the future.

⁶² The data collection visits did not provide an opportunity to see one of these systems.

⁶³ These type of systems generally have a life-span of maximum two years.

⁶⁴ GFDRR, Building back better in post-disaster recovery, Guidance note; and UNISDR, Build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, Consultative version, 2017.

⁶⁵ The implementing partner was unaware of this, suggesting that there had been insufficient technical monitoring/sign-off to enable the issue to be discovered and rectified and/or that insufficient time was available for AAP processes to capture community feedback before the activity came to an end.

⁶⁶ Due to staffing changes within the WASH section at UNICEF, it was not possible to discover why these incidents had happened, but as mentioned in footnote 59, it suggests that there was insufficient time available to undertake the technical sign-off and/or the complaints and feedback mechanisms were not in place.

⁶⁷ Health activities were not part of the Guatemala or Nicaragua responses.

nutrition team promoted this approach and supported the three COs in its introduction. In both Guatemala and Nicaragua, nutrition was part of the immediate response post Iota (a six-month intervention in the case of Guatemala, one year in Nicaragua), while in Honduras, nutrition was part of the second phase of activities, starting nine months after the hurricanes and implemented over a six-month period.

The approach in Nicaragua to work through the community health volunteers (or *brigadistas*) was seen to be a relevant one that responded to a major concern of the community and helped to strengthen the local level of the health system. The brigade members interviewed were clearly committed to their communities and in all cases reported that the additional support was relevant and appropriate to the situation in the communities (and had also encouraged new recruits to come forward).

In Honduras, despite the lack of a nutrition expert in post at the time of the emergency, the CO was augmented by LACRO technical expertise in nutrition and the global nutrition cluster so that UNICEF was able to support the implementation of this activity with two experienced implementing partners (SCF and Childfund) and also to work with the Ministry of Health to develop a simplified acute malnutrition management protocol for future emergencies⁶⁸. However, as with the health component, the fact that the nutrition activity was only activated nine months after the hurricanes and continued only for six months does call into question the extent of the impact of this intervention. Although interviews confirmed that the decision to develop a nutrition screening intervention was identified during the WASH interventions during the first six-month phase of the response, it was not clear what kind of baseline assessment informed this decision.

Overall, the sector activities were in line with the CCC commitments on nutrition and enabled early detection of possible cases of malnutrition, albeit over a limited period of time (and nine months after Eta/Iota in the case of Honduras). As UNICEF has a mandated lead role in nutrition as part of the cluster system nutrition is a core responsibility under the CCCs, it is important to ensure that the capacities are in place within the region to respond. This was not the case in Honduras, as will be reflected later in this report (5.5.2 interagency coordination).

Education

Education in emergencies is also an inherent part of UNICEF's mandate and the CCCs. Differing approaches were taken in the three COs, partially in response to the fact that in Honduras schools were closed at the time of the emergencies due to the pandemic and remained closed throughout the entire response period, while schools re-opened in Nicaragua at the start of the new school year in 2021. In all countries, training support to teaching staff was provided in issues such as psychosocial support and in some cases emergency education preparedness and response. A more systematic approach to supporting schools to develop school emergency preparedness plans together with the relevant disaster management agency would have been an appropriate (and low-cost) additional contribution.

In both Nicaragua and Honduras, UNICEF provided support with materials, both directly to children (in Nicaragua through the provision of backpacks with individual school materials) and to schools (including in Honduras support to the development and provision of remote education materials, given continuing lockdowns) and in Nicaragua some limited provision of replacement furniture to schools.

In Guatemala, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to repair damage to school buildings, as well as water and sanitation systems, in collaboration with parents' organisations and the community. There were challenges in relation to the selection of schools to be repaired related to MoE's low financial ceiling limits to reparations that can be carried out directly by this ministry which meant that the most damaged schools (or schools that are constructed on community land) could not be supported by UNICEF (an issue out of the control of UNICEF, but one where UNICEF might have an advocacy role to bring about changes). With the agreement of MoE, UNICEF also funded the purchase and installation of 14 temporary classrooms (seen as a strategy to avoid these bureaucratic obstacles). Relatively expensive (at US\$26,000

⁶⁸ Unfortunately the decision not to activate the nutrition cluster (but include a technical working sub-group as part of the food security cluster) resulted in only limited funds being raised for nutrition activities. This is reflected on in section 5.3.3.

per unit) compared to the cost of community-delivered rehabilitation (at a reported USD\$8,000, a third of the cost), the decision was influenced by the fact that these could be rapidly installed (although in the case of the school visited, the temporary module was installed at the same time as the school was renovated) and could, theoretically be moved to another site in the future.⁶⁹

The extent of the response in education was limited due to the relatively low funding levels achieved in this sector, however the activities that were implemented were in line with the CCCs.

Child protection, PSEA and GBV

Across the three countries, the need for interventions that responded to the trauma caused by the hurricanes themselves, together with chronic and high level protection concerns and psychosocial support needs across the region was strongly expressed in community focus groups and interviews with educators and health professionals, etc. Child- and adolescent-friendly spaces (following the *Retorno a la Alegría* methodology⁷⁰) were provided across affected communities in the three countries (including in shelters when the timing allowed), linked with community-based surveillance and referral services. The COs' implementing partners, which included women's movements and local/international organisations, worked with local authorities and through community leaders, families, adolescents and young people, in order to adapt the service to respond to the local context, including to make appropriate language and cultural adaptations.

For the Honduras CO, the Eta/Iota emergency provided the opportunity to ensure that protection activities were included within the HRP (this had not been the case in previous recent HRPs). The Honduras ERP had contemplated the provision of services within shelters however, as the government closed the shelters unexpectedly in December, activities were relocated to communities and methodology had to be adapted in response. In Guatemala, violence prevention messages were disseminated in the departments of Alta Verapaz and Izabal in local languages through local radio stations and printed materials.

It was difficult to gather more than generic evidence related to most of the a in child protection, PSEA and GBV activities at the community level, given the passage of time. However, teachers, who in some cases had been exposed to training related to the provision of psychosocial support and the prevention of gender-based violence, highly appreciated these inputs, which responded to many of their concerns at the community level (above and beyond the impact of the hurricanes, particularly related to increasing understanding of rights and how to reduce gender-based violence and violence against children and addressing gender inequality). In Nicaragua particularly, focus groups unanimously expressed the view that these interventions should have been extended so they could have made a more significant impact on the mental health of the population.

The final Eta/Iota HAC report 2021 did not present the full results against the five indicators used by COs for child protection, PSEA and GBV activities, aggregating the results under only two indicators (numbers of children/caregivers access mental health and psychosocial support and numbers of women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions). This type of simplification and aggregation should be avoided.

Social protection

Only limited activities related to social protection through the provision of multipurpose cash transfers were proposed under the response plan, with the Guatemala CO providing some technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food to develop a mobile phone application that collected information related to agricultural workers in affected municipalities in Izabal.⁷¹ In Honduras, the CO also provided technical support activities to the municipalities within UNICEF's regular programme related to social protection measures. Given that in the first weeks after the hurricanes, many of the communities were effectively cut off from markets on the one hand and that the UNICEF interventions were generally

⁶⁹ This evaluation has recommended, as part of the Guatemala report, that the CO reviews the use of temporary classrooms by the MoE in order to inform future inclusion of these modules in response strategies.

⁷⁰ Return to happiness.

⁷¹ The workers subsequently benefitted from a monetary transfer of 1,000 GTQ (approximately USD 130) from MAGA according to interviews and the final report.

short-term, together with the limited levels of funding received, the decision not to pursue cash-based solutions was expedient, although the education sector could have explored options for providing families with a cash contribution to support children's return to schools.⁷²

In conclusion, the emergency response plans of all three countries contained sectoral priorities that were aligned with the CCCs and responded to the priority needs of affected communities in the view of these communities, their leaders and the local authorities and in some cases contributed to longer-term sustainability (as will be further reflected on later in this report).

5.2.3. Timeliness

As mentioned above, the COVID 19 pandemic had an impact on UNICEF's ability to respond to needs insofar as both Guatemala and Honduran authorities imposed mobility constraints, reinforced by security measures instituted by the UNICEF offices⁷³. In the case of Honduras, this resulted in the strict imposition of teleworking over most of the period of implementation, which brought about quite radical changes in the posture of UNICEF in relation to planning, monitoring and supervision of its response. Unable for the most part to travel, UNICEF staff primarily undertook distance monitoring and supervision, delegated monitoring to the implementing partners and engaged an external consultant to undertake monitoring on its behalf in some cases. This was in contrast to the mobility of UNICEF's eventual partner organisations, many of which went straight to the affected areas in the first days of the emergency. Similarly, mobility restrictions and quarantine measures in Panama constrained the possibility of LACRO providing in-person technical surge support to the three COs⁷⁴, none of which had the level of emergency expertise and capacities required to handle an emergency operation of the magnitude of Eta/Iota.

The COs had some initial difficulties in using the accelerated emergency procedures for finance, human resources, procurement, etc., given their relative lack of experience in emergency response. However, before the arrival of the emergency specialists (the P4 emergency specialist in Honduras and the emergency coordinator for Nicaragua), they received support from LACRO with the procurement of response items, the identification of surge positions, etc. The fact that pre-positioned humanitarian supplies in Honduras had been used during COVID 19 and were not replenished before the hurricane season was also a limiting factor, exacerbated by some supplies being in short supply globally due to the ongoing global emergency.

The main influencing factor regarding the timeliness of the response was linked to the promptness of the arrival of funding and the tight limitations in their use (many grants had time limits of either three or six months). The allocation of the LACRO pre-financing loan of USD \$400,000 to Honduras in mid-November, followed by the approval of the CERF grant for WASH activities (activated on 20 November, two weeks after the passage of hurricane Eta) was the main influence in this CO over the start of scaled-up implementation. The WASH funds to respond to urgent needs were disbursed to two partners at the end of December, with a third only at the end of January (meaning that in this case, significant activities did not start until three months after the hurricanes).

For WASH activities in Guatemala, the strict timeline for the use of funding (six months) was challenging for the implementing partner; evidence from several focus groups suggests that there was not always adequate time to undertake the technical follow-up required, as mentioned in 5.2.2 above related to the WASH activities).

While the loan from LACRO was an important factor for the start-up of Honduras activities, it was the view of some UNICEF informants that COs should have had immediate access to their own contingency funding,

⁷² Social protection was not part of the Nicaragua emergency response plan.

⁷³ The Nicaraguan authorities did not institute a national lockdown, although protection measures were applied throughout the period of implementation.

⁷⁴ One interviewee suggested that had this level of emergency occurred before the pandemic, an emergency response expert would have been pre-deployed as soon as the trajectory and predictions of the severity of the first storm had been published.

that could be allocated by the CO on a *no-regrets* basis, allowing a swift response⁷⁵ (and which, in the view of one senior management interviewee, would have helped UNICEF to gain fundraising traction with the major donors).

5.2.4. Planning, monitoring, reporting

A review of the three **response plans** provided to the evaluation team shows that all three COs developed their initial response plans in mid-November and used the appropriate template, with expected results linked to the CCCs. Response plans were not updated in line with contextual changes, but adjustments were made within each sector or with each partner directly, in response to changing circumstances (for example in Honduras, when the government unexpectedly closed the temporary shelters early, meaning that proposed WASH and child protection activities had to be re-focused). It is notable that these plans do not identify which unit within UNICEF would take the lead in ensuring the implementation of each element (including identifying the possible involvement of technical inputs from LACRO, or the division of labour between the CO and LACRO).

The COs did not have pre-designed tools adapted to humanitarian **data collection** in emergencies in place before Eta/Iota. The COs in Honduras and Nicaragua each developed their own data collection tools in the first few months of the implementation period⁷⁶ and both put in place online data collection dashboards that implementing partners could use to upload results on a real-time basis. In Nicaragua, the tool developed allowed all evaluation data to be included with geo-referenced points, which further facilitated the process (and functioned without internet connection, practical given that much of the RACCN has poor internet reception). The process of providing real time data through these simple-to-use platforms was welcomed by the partners, although they recognised that their introduction involved some teething problems given that they were new systems. However, before these platforms were developed, monthly reporting on activities was very labour intensive for both partners and UNICEF staff alike.

The timing of the introduction of the EMOPs (UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes) global indicators for emergency response in November 2020 was unfortunate for Central America, coinciding with Eta/Iota, which meant that these were largely unknown in the region. The process of subsequently adjusting response plans with implementing partners to be coherent with these indicators in Nicaragua was described as messy, but the evaluators found that informants interviewed were satisfied with the end results, with all UNICEF Nicaragua's partners reporting against the same 25 indicators, enabling more effective monitoring and reporting. In Honduras, there were also initial difficulties in developing indicators with its partners that aligned with the CCCs.

Although there are specific UNICEF **narrative and financial reporting formats** for implementing partners for humanitarian programming (both in terms of structure, content and frequency of delivery), these were not always well-known in the COs at the start of the implementation period. In Honduras, for example, there was confusion as to what formats to use, different sectors introduced different formats and required different regularity of reporting and partners did not receive any training. This initially increased workload for everyone (for some of the smaller national/regional organisations with limited administrative capacity, this may have contributed to the poor quality of reports in some cases), although the problems were generally satisfactorily addressed over the following months.

Supervision and monitoring visits were affected by the quarantine measures in place, particularly in Honduras where UNICEF staff were generally unable to travel in order to monitor activities. UNICEF staff and partners therefore met regularly online to review progress, together with regular monitoring reports being submitted. To ensure technical monitoring of the WASH activities in Honduras, UNICEF contracted an external supervisor. It also undertook some later field monitoring visits for WASH and health combined with visits from donors (which would limit the extent of detailed monitoring activities). In Guatemala and Honduras, much of the technical monitoring was undertaken by the partners themselves, with monthly

⁷⁵ Some UNICEF interlocutors were not clear about the extent to which UNICEF promotes and supports a no-regrets approach.

⁷⁶ It is understood that UNICEF New York has been developing global monitoring tools for humanitarian response but these have not yet been rolled out in LAC. This would seem to be an unnecessary multiplication of effort (and cost).

monitoring activities built into the plans and budgets of their activities and reported on in regular monitoring reports. UNICEF Guatemala also accompanied the WASH implementation process with regular visits to the sites of intervention. Given the considerable constraints imposed due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the level of support and follow-up provided by UNICEF was appropriate under the circumstances and partners interviewed were satisfied with UNICEF's engagement.

UNICEF Nicaragua hired an emergency monitoring specialist to oversee the implementation of the emergency plan, spending extended periods of time on the ground visiting intervention sites. This helped to develop strong relationships with both local authorities and implementing partners alike and enabled solutions to emerging problems to be quickly found when required. Sectoral field visits were accompanied by the monitoring specialist, which proved an effective way of ensuring that reports maintained a holistic view.

The public-facing **final report** (November 2021) for the Eta and Iota response across the three countries aims to provide a clear overview of the results for general reading. However, an in-depth review of the report reveals a number of inaccuracies: there are statistics cited in the results table that are different to those used in the narrative text (this has been highlighted in the Honduras report); the statistics that are included from Nicaragua are not, in fact, the final results (implementation continued for several months after the final report was produced); and in the section on social protection interventions in Honduras, there is confusion between statistics that present numbers of households and individual beneficiaries⁷⁷. The previously mentioned (5.2.2 above) conflation of indicators within the child protection statistics from five to two obscures the results related to PSEA and GBV.

5.2.5. LACRO and CO: roles, responsibilities, relationship

In November 2020, UNICEF across the region was deeply involved in responding to the ongoing L3 COVID 19 crisis, with a wave of infection across Latin America impacting upon the COs. Not only were COs supporting governments across the region in their mitigation and response activities to the pandemic, but were having to adapt their response approaches due to strict quarantine measures in place in some countries, the need to ensure staff/partner safety, as well as staff and their families falling ill from COVID and therefore being unavailable for periods of time. These limitations also impacted on LACRO, so assistance was initially (and primarily) offered in the form of 'virtual deployments' of technical staff for periods of four to six weeks⁷⁸, with some in-person deployments (for example a WASH specialist from LACRO travelled to Honduras and Nicaragua in December 2020 and January 2021 and a LACRO monitoring and evaluation specialist was also deployed to Nicaragua in September 2021). Some offers of support (for example the offer of a nutrition expert to Honduras⁷⁹) were not accepted by the CO. The virtual support was seen to be relatively effective and expedient, given the limitations, although it was noted that staff in the COs were less enthusiastic about this form of support in comparison to staff in LACRO overall.

The visit of the regional director to Honduras and Guatemala in February 2021 helped to draw attention to the high level of vulnerability and need across the affected countries, supported by the production of broadcast quality multimedia materials that were made available to global media outlets.

A critical role of LACRO was the loan of USD \$400,000 to support the scale up of activities while funding was being negotiated with key donors (and the USD \$100,000 provided to the CO Honduras to support nutrition activities). These, together with the CERF provision, were critical injections of resources in the first weeks following the emergency. LACRO also provided support to accelerate procurement processes, for example for the WASH sector in Honduras and coordinated the work with the COs to develop the regional HAC appeal document. It assisted COs in the development of funding proposals for donors, later having oversight of progress against the humanitarian performance indicators and providing technical and reporting support also. A minority of staff interviewed (particularly in Honduras) expressed their view that

⁷⁷ There is also text referring to cash transfers that a reader would infer were funded by UNICEF, which is not in fact the case.

⁷⁸ In the case of Honduras this was described as problematic as there had been no visit from a LACRO team member to Honduras since 2018.

⁷⁹ Senior management took the decision that the CO did not have the capacity to sustain a nutrition activity given the lack of nutrition expert in the structure.

the support from LACRO was insufficient during the first months after the hurricanes and they found the regular requests for information from LACRO time-consuming and added to the already high workload generated by the emergency.

A key strategic issue for the COs was the decision to designate the Eta/Iota disaster as an L1 emergency to be led from the country level and with a standalone (regional) HAC. While a number of informants understood the rationale for this decision given the global context at the time (regarding both the L3 global emergency and the high number of L2 emergencies ongoing), this meant that what in other times would, in their opinion, have been designated an L2 emergency (given not only the widespread impact of the emergency and the high numbers of affected people, but that it had hit countries with relatively small COs, none of which had institutional emergency expertise capacity in-house). L2 designation provides the CO with additional support from other parts of the organisation (be it from headquarters, the regional office or other COs) to scale up and respond to the crisis and with the Regional Director providing leadership and LACRO providing enhanced support.

Given that this was a regional emergency (with a regional HAC), the reality was that LACRO, de facto, took a leadership role, not only with offers of support to COs in areas where additional support was deemed to be required, but in terms of developing the HAC document (determining the relative weight of allocation of budget between the three countries and harmonising the regional approaches of the response, supporting negotiations with potential donors, monitoring, reporting, etc) and thus framing the focus of the Emergency Response Plans. Reviewing the latter, it is clear that the CCC framework was fundamental in developing a regional response, but LACRO technical specialists also influenced the focus of some of the interventions, and where expertise was lacking in the CO, took an active role in supporting the sector, as well as advocating for particular technical approaches to be taken (for example to increase the visibility of nutrition interventions and to include the introduction of the MUAC). During implementation, the various LACRO technical units had a role in monitoring the response as well as inputting into the production of consolidated reports.

As well as developing the regional HAC, LACRO had a role in managing relationships with some donors related to regional proposals, while COs were directly responsible for country-level relations with donors. It might have been advantageous for the overall coordination of relations with all donors to be carried out by LACRO, to ensure a coherent approach by UNICEF and to avoid the possibility of perceived competition for donor funds between country offices⁸⁰. The EPPs/ERPs did not identify this division of responsibilities between LACRO and CO.

The question of LACRO's role in facilitating lesson learning with the COs will be taken up in 5.4.1.

5.2.6. Human resources

Prior to the emergency, none of the CO structures included a staff position focusing on emergency preparedness and response and while an emergency focal point was nominated from the technical staff in each CO, this role (additional to the main responsibilities of each incumbent) primarily focused on internal coordination, with a limited amount of (largely online) training received. It was noted that there was no terms of reference to define the focus, scope and limitations of the focal point's actions, during and between emergencies.

Additionally, a number of other key roles were absent at the time; Honduras CO was without a deputy representative and a nutrition expert, Nicaragua was awaiting the arrival of a new representative and with a deputy representative due to be leaving by the end of the year. The impact of COVID on the deployment of human resources has already been discussed.

Support to the COs was provided either through surge positions (as in Nicaragua, which was initially distance-supported by a consultant contracted by LACRO and then by three emergency coordinators over the course of one year) or in the case of Honduras, a P4 specialist in emergencies was recruited. The arrival of this role in January 2021 was critical, not only managing the development and implementation of the

⁸⁰ This is particularly relevant in a sub-region like Central America, where the donor contact point for the different countries is generally the same person.

humanitarian programme, but also helping the CO to become familiar with the appropriate behaviours, procedures, etc, for humanitarian programmes (the P4 role in Honduras continued in post for 18 months). This position also relieved the pressure that was placed on both the emergency focal point and other colleagues working on the emergency response. The short-term surge placements and regular change in personnel in Nicaragua were destabilising for the CO in Nicaragua.

In concluding that none of the three COs had sufficient emergency preparedness and response capacities in place at the time of Eta/Iota, this evaluation does not intend to devalue in any way the considerable efforts made by the existing staff to step up to the challenges caused by Eta/Iota and their evident commitment and hard work (and as previously mentioned, no relatively small CO would have been prepared for the impact of two large and destructive hurricanes in the space of two weeks) . However, humanitarian preparedness and response is a specific discipline and, as experience shows, having a staff member as part of the team bringing the appropriate competences and skills can ensure the effectiveness of the response. The fact that in both Honduras and Guatemala, subsequent to the Eta/Iota operation the core team has been augmented with an additional role focusing on preparedness and response (and with a proposal to take a similar course in Nicaragua) demonstrates that this is the learned experience of the three COs.

5.3. Connectedness

Across the three countries, UNICEF's response to Eta and Iota was coordinated with national authorities, especially at the municipal level. Although short-term emergency response activities were not explicitly planned to transition from humanitarian interventions to longer-term development, there were a number of examples in all three countries where interventions contributed to system strengthening (for example the introduction of the use of the MUAC to volunteer community health brigades in both Honduras and Nicaragua or building community capacity in safe and effective well-cleaning in Guatemala). UNICEF's interventions in all three countries have found strength in working with partners that have experience on both sides of the Nexus (and in a number of cases were long-established within the affected communities). Implementing partners included a proportion of national NGOs, although the majority were international NGOs (many of which onward granted to local NGOs). There are opportunities to increase national humanitarian capacity by increasingly partnering and supporting national organisations, thereby responding to the commitments of the Grand Bargain.

5.3.1. NEXUS: Links between humanitarian action and development

Within the framework of a short term emergency response, it can be difficult to establish a direct link with longer-term development due to the very nature of humanitarian action, which responds to the acute and immediate needs of affected and often highly vulnerable people. In both Honduras and Guatemala, the ERP timeframe of an initial six months (with a second period of six months in Honduras) meant that the intervention focused mainly on immediate response actions to address the priority needs identified in the EDANs without necessarily taking into direct consideration long-term problems. The Country Programme Documents (CPD) of the three COs at the time of Eta and Iota did not contain elements focusing on emergency preparedness (the new Honduras CPD now includes preparedness and response as a key focus area and it is understood that Nicaragua's new CPD will also include a focus on preparedness and response).

However, the fact that UNICEF is well-established in each of the three countries and engaged in long-term development interventions informed a number of the activities that were included in the ERP. The choice of implementing partners, many of which similarly have a long history of implementing development as well as humanitarian programmes in Central America, meant that a number of the shorter-term activities were informed by this experience and in some cases contributed to a level of sustainability being achieved. In all three countries there were examples of nascent or fully established Nexus transitioning:

- in Honduras, Childfund and UNICEF were, at the time of the evaluation visit, implementing a pilot outreach project to continue supporting work first funded under Eta/Iota with volunteer

health workers associated with public health centres, while the development, together with the Ministry of Health, of a simplified protocol for the management of acute malnutrition aimed at strengthening the Ministry's capacities will have long-term outcomes.

- Nicaragua's focus on supporting the creation of community water and sanitation committees (CAPS) in communities with small water systems or rehabilitated community wells could ensure their long-term sustainability (albeit with more focus required on strengthening the governance processes of the CAPS). Another good example from Nicaragua was the involvement of "*brigadistas*" in the identification, referral and treatment of malnutrition cases in the communities, as these volunteers are from the communities they serve, are integrated into the national health system and have recognised and valued roles within the communities.
- The Guatemala CO's decision to partner with Helvetas and link emergency response with methodologies based on community diagnosis and implementation⁸¹ (with close coordination with the municipality and the Ministry of Health) is an example of good practice of how to link emergency response with development. As an example, delivering clean wells by training clean-up brigades made up of community members demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that capacities remain in the community⁸². Helvetas' collaboration with the authorities and the certification of more than 40 communities as "open defecation free" was similarly an important contribution to long-term development goals. The rehabilitation of the water system in Oneida, Izabal (described in section 5.2.2 above) is a third example of how a humanitarian response intervention can be delivered in a way that builds on community participation and maximises the effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention.
- In the education sector in Guatemala, some of the schools that were included in the Eta/Iota response plan had been incorporated into the CO's regular education programmes to support comprehensive child development for children aged 0-4 years and provision of education for out-of-school adolescents.
- The approach taken, across all three countries, in the nutrition sector contributed to improving nutrition surveillance capacity at the local level (potentially with national impact) is another example.

The fact that, across the three countries, focus group meetings with affected communities consistently revealed that their key vulnerabilities and lack of access to services were exacerbated by Eta/Iota but were pre-existing, highlights the need to link emergency interventions to longer term development efforts.

The ERP template does not currently include guidelines to help COs identify and articulate explicit transition strategies from emergency to regular programming. It is a welcome development that the new CPD for Honduras⁸³ has incorporated a Nexus axis, for example, identifying WASH, climate change, risk management and resilience as one of the five focus areas for the country office. The work getting underway in Nicaragua on developing its new CPD is likely to see a similar bolstering of consideration of how best to strengthen links between humanitarian and longer-term development programming. This demonstrates the extent to which the COs have internalised lessons learned from their response to Eta/Iota. In a context such as Central America, a region vulnerable to recurrent natural hazards, fragility and violence, set to be aggravated by climate change, it is vital that UNICEF regularly and routinely undertakes risk analyses of ongoing programmes to ensure that they are appropriately positioned, resilient and prepared.

⁸¹ SAHTOSO (Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene - *Saneamiento e Higiene Total y Sostenible*) and SANTOLIC (Community-Led Total Sanitation).

⁸² Other partners were reported to have sent in their own teams to decontaminate wells.

⁸³ Covering the period March 2022 to December 2026.

5.3.2. Institutions (government, partners, donors)

Government authorities

The scale and magnitude of Eta and Iota's impact across Central America clearly overwhelmed government authorities. Although the responses at the municipal and local level demonstrated a level of organisation and retention of capacities that had been reinforced in the years after hurricane Mitch⁸⁴, the fact that huge swathes of the countries were affected unsurprisingly surpassed the national capacities.

UNICEF in all three countries had established relationships at most levels of government that facilitated its humanitarian interventions. In Honduras the municipal focus of the previous CPD proved particularly useful post Eta/Iota as many of the municipalities that were most affected by the hurricanes were part of the 18 where UNICEF had focused its interventions. In Nicaragua, despite the delicate relationship between the government and civil society, UNICEF was able to work with a number of implementing partners, both local and international, with the national and regional governments' authorisation and approval and gained the agreement of the national government to administer funds granted by USAID. Constant and transparent engagement with local authorities (particularly in RACCN) ensured that activities were not only accepted but supported by the latter. UNICEF Guatemala's relations at various levels of government (ministerial and local) were also valued by all parties interviewed as fluid and constructive.

Implementing partners

None of the three EPPs that were in force at the time of Eta/Iota included either an up-to-date mapping of humanitarian actors or standby agreements with potential humanitarian implementing partners. Similarly, programme cooperation agreements (PCAs) for regular programming with current partners did not include pre-agreement clauses to ensure their rapid reorientation to humanitarian activities should the context require it. It was noted that there were a number of common partners across the three territories (for example, the national Red Cross Society, Save the Children Fund [SCF], Plan International, etc) and others that are present across Central America (eg ADRA, HELVETAS), offering scope to develop sub-regional standby agreements.

Notwithstanding this limitation, in all three countries there are successful examples where agreements were developed in the weeks following the hurricanes, including in Honduras and Guatemala with existing partners who were working in different sectors or different parts of the country; Helvetas in Guatemala (partnering in other departments with UNICEF) or SCF and ADRA in Honduras for example (both of which implemented activities which were not previously part of their work with UNICEF support⁸⁵). In Nicaragua UNICEF was not working with NGOs prior to Eta/Iota although was in communications with some of the child-focused organisations through the MMI.

Validation processes for new implementing partners were generally carried out relatively swiftly, but in some instances (eg in Honduras) the CO used standard procedures, unaware that there are other emergency procedures that can be followed. The first PCAs were signed before the end of November 2020 (with Plan International in Honduras on the 24 November and ADRA in Nicaragua on 30 November) and the bulk of the others signed before the end of February in both countries.

Some of UNICEF's partners in both Honduras and Guatemala worked through local partner organisations. While this approach might raise efficiency issues (duplication of indirect costs, etc.), it can be explicitly recognised as the best way of reaching the most isolated communities, but also as a way to support and build the capacity of smaller actors and contribute to the Grand Bargain's localisation agenda (some of these organisations may not have been able to access UNICEF funds directly as they may not have the

⁸⁴ It is estimated that over 11,000 people lost their lives during hurricane Mitch (7,000 in Honduras, 3,800 and 268 in Guatemala (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Mitch 10/11/2022); in Eta/Iota the figures were 87 in Honduras, 55 in Guatemala and 41 in Nicaragua (see inception report). This is a testament to the effective evacuation/rescue processes in place in all three countries. At the same time, it is notable that the level of investment in preparedness had reduced significantly in the last years, leaving national disaster management agencies overstretched when tested by a largescale emergency.

⁸⁵ Protection in the case of SCF, WASH in emergencies in the case of ADRA.

capacity to meet the administrative requirements). It is these types of smaller, local organisations that key to accessing certain communities (eg indigenous communities, LGBTQI+ people or people with disabilities). The ERPs did not seem to include capacity strengthening elements for these small, but vital organisations, which could have helped them to become better prepared to assist in future emergencies (and perhaps be in a position to receive direct support).

Donors

UNICEF maintained open and collaborative relationships with the key donors and, in particular, with its main donor, the US Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). In the case of Honduras, as well as a regional coordination role taken by LACRO, initial contacts between UNICEF and the BHA regional office were managed by the Representative who quickly took the initiative to ensure that the country office was registered as a potential BHA/USAID partner. The relationship between UNICEF Nicaragua and BHA was similarly open and constructive.

As the table below shows, by the end of 2021 UNICEF had received USD 21.1 million available against the US\$42.6 million Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal.

Donor Name/Type of funding	Programme Budget Allotment reference	Overall Amount*
I. Humanitarian funds received in 2021		
a) Thematic humanitarian funds		
See details in Table 3	SM189910	265,580
b) Non-thematic humanitarian funds		
Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance	SM200831	4,629,630
Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance	SM200818	3,009,259
Spain	SM210971	1,564,064
Total non-thematic humanitarian funds		9,202,953
c) Pooled Funding		
NA		
d) Other types of humanitarian funds		
NA		
Total other types of humanitarian funds		
Total humanitarian funds received in 2020 (a+b+c+d)		9,468,533
II. Carry-over of humanitarian funds available in 2021		
e) Carry over thematic humanitarian funds		
Thematic Humanitarian Funds	SM189910	558,608
Thematic Humanitarian Funds	SM209910	25,913
f) Carry-over of non-thematic humanitarian funds		
Japan	SM200864	1,111,111
European Commission / ECHO	SM200859	1,083,653
USA (USAID) OFDA	SM200831	1,020,466
Japan	SM200862	740,741
UNOCHA	SM200857	467,290
UNOCHA	SM200842	413,848
Canadian UNICEF Committee	SM200707	316,554
Spain	SM210006	276,561
Japan	SM200863	185,185
USA (USAID) OFDA	SM200818	50,849
UNOCHA	SM200837	1,668
USA USAID	SM200785	201
Total carry-over non-thematic humanitarian funds		5,668,128
Total carry-over humanitarian funds (e + f)		6,252,649

* Programmable amounts of donor contributions, excluding recovery cost.

Figure 5: Funding received and available by 31 December 2021, by donor and funding type (in USD)⁸⁶

Figure 5 also shows that the donor pool for Eta and Iota was small, with five main donors: the US (BHA/OFDA) contributed 40% of funding received (\$8,710,405); Japan 9% (\$2,037,037); Spain 8% (\$1,840,625), and the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) 5% (\$1,083,653). Given the low level of funding received, the CERF allocation early in the operation of

⁸⁶ Taken from consolidated final report 2021. In addition, thematic humanitarian contributions amounting to US \$271,359 was also received from the Luxembourg Committee for UNICEF (US \$ 121,359), together with an allocation of US \$ 150,000 from global thematic humanitarian pooled funds administered by EMOPS.

\$882,806 (4.1% of the total received) was an important initial contribution that allowed UNICEF to get up and running while negotiating with other donors, together with the loan provided by LACRO.

As is often the case in emergency operations, donors earmarked the use of funds for specific sectors. In both Honduras and Nicaragua this led to funding shortfalls in certain sectors (particularly nutrition and education) which meant that the integrated approach envisaged in the ERP could not be realised.

5.4. Coherence

UNICEF's response to Eta/Iota was generally coherent both internally and externally, with analysis of the response plans in all three countries demonstrating that the COs applied relevant and appropriate policies and approaches (particularly in terms of being aligned to the CCCs), as shown in the previous sections, as well as drawing on the experience and expertise of UNICEF and its partners in the region. While the development of the new CPD in Honduras shows that the CO has incorporated a number of lessons from the experience of the Eta/Iota response and a similar process is currently underway in Nicaragua, there is a need to focus on systematically capitalising on and managing knowledge throughout the course of the response and, in particular, to place greater emphasis on ensuring stronger, more consistent accountability mechanisms for affected populations.

5.4.1. Learning

It was noted that explicit lessons learned activities were not generally included in the ERPs, but were incorporated in an ad hoc manner within other processes, such as during coordination meeting with implementing partners or considered within the frame of preparing the annual report, but in neither case were these lessons learned processes systematically documented. While ad hoc approaches can be useful, they do not provide a holistic, cross-sectoral way of ensuring learning and if not included in plans, can tend to be dropped when staff are under pressure to deliver the plans (and may not have any budget associated with them).

The different sectors of the Nicaragua CO occasionally used their individual monthly coordination meetings with all implementing partners as an opportunity to focus on a particular issue (eg in child protection, it was reported that in one meeting partners shared approaches and challenges experienced in setting up child-friendly spaces, while on another occasion they focused on sharing the different methodologies used in setting up PSEA complaints mechanisms), but these were not systematically documented. None of the COs organised a lessons learned workshop (or after action review) shortly before the end of overall implementation involving technical staff from across the range of partners. This can be a valuable way for both UNICEF and its partners and stakeholders to take stock of progress, identify adjustments that need to be taken institutionally and, critically, prepare for the future. Documenting these processes is key. A number of informants suggested that they were relying on this present evaluation to gather the lessons learned, a sub-optimal strategy given the timing, months after the activities had come to an end, and with many of the actors (particularly field-based staff of implementing partners) no longer available.

At the same time, it is clear that the COs have generally absorbed a number of lessons learned and introduced a series of changes that make them more prepared to face an emergency (for example in Guatemala and Honduras bringing in an emergency preparedness and response post, pre-positioning supplies in key locations due to their vulnerability, etc). As mentioned above, these lessons learned have also been incorporated into the new Honduras CPD.

Finally, a clear message from UNICEF CO staff was the missed opportunity that technical staff in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala did not have more opportunities to regularly learn and share strategy and experiences with each other throughout the course of the operation, a function that could have been facilitated by LACRO's different technical departments.

5.4.2. Accountability to affected populations

Although implementing partners had good levels of acceptance in the communities covered across all three countries and all included some basic accountability mechanisms to affected populations (AAP) such

as the provision of telephone numbers of the staff working in that community or suggestions boxes (sometimes permanent, sometimes only in place during a community event such as a consultation meeting), other approaches were not available (for example there were generally no confidential telephone numbers which community members could use to report concerns anonymously and partners did not generally undertake exit satisfaction surveys after particular activities). Although communities were consulted at the start of activities, there appeared to be limited systematic processes to enable community participation in decision-making during implementation, partially due to the short timeframes for many of the activities.

One exception to this was found across the water and sanitation activities in all three countries. In Nicaragua, community members were consulted through the CAPS regarding the type of water pump to be installed in each location and how they would be maintained through community participation, while in Guatemala, the methodology used by Helvetas was a developmental one where community members were involved throughout the whole process. In Honduras, some changes to proposed approaches to WASH activities were introduced following the analysis of a monthly AAP questionnaire collected from implementing partners. An example shared was the installation of community storage tanks in some locations instead of increasing the frequency of water truck trips as had originally been envisaged.

Focus groups held months after the activities had finished did not manage to gather much evidence regarding the various accountability mechanisms employed. To assess the quality and impact of accountability mechanisms, real-time evaluations should have been conducted, as affected people tend not to remember what processes were in place to canvas their opinions or give recourse to complaints once the operation is over.

5.5. Coordination

UNICEF has played its role in coordination, at different levels, with varying degrees of success. Internally, some COs were more successful than others at achieving coordination between sectors for a more integrated approach at the community level; the role of emergency coordinator was important in this regard. Coordination with authorities was generally effective, particularly at regional and local levels. UNICEF's role as part of the cluster coordination system (or sectoral coordination in Nicaragua) had mixed results. There was limited evidence to suggest that synergies between agencies had been achieved throughout the course of the operation.

5.5.1. Internal and external coordination

It would seem that the differing levels of restrictions imposed in the different countries may have had an impact on the level of internal coordination achieved. At the time of the Eta/Iota emergency, Honduras was in the midst of a COVID wave and there were strict quarantine measures, meaning that staff were required to work from home over a long period. Additionally, the post of deputy representative (the role generally tasked with leading staff coordination internally) had been vacant for some months at the time of Eta/Iota. These conditions may have contributed to a tendency for the different sectors to work with limited coordination between them initially, although the level of coordination reportedly increased after the arrival of the emergency coordinator and the visit of the regional director.

In Nicaragua (with fewer home-working restrictions), a key event that helped set a more internally coordinated approach was the organisation of a joint, multidisciplinary field visit to the RACCN two weeks after hurricane Iota had passed. This increased level of coordination was evident when different components of the response were implemented in the same geographical area and with the same target groups and it was notable that the UNICEF programme often included several different sectoral interventions in one community. The practice of organising programme visits accompanied by the monitoring specialist helped to ensure a holistic view was reflected in the reports.

As mentioned in section 5.3.2, coordination with partners and with governments at all levels was generally seen to be adequate or good.

5.5.2. Cluster coordination

Honduras was the only country of the three in which the full cluster system was formally activated. One weakness of the Eta/Iota emergency response in Nicaragua was the fact that the national government did not declare a state of emergency, so there was no activation of the cluster system which resulted in limited sectoral coordination.

Across the three countries, UNICEF's role in leading or supporting coordination in the WASH sector was relatively strong. In Honduras this seemed to have been at least in part because of the good pre-emergency dynamics between organisations working in WASH as members of the sectoral working group, including the government water authority. The support from LACRO for the recruitment of a WASH cluster coordinator at sub-national level at the end of December and a national coordinator at the end of January 2021 was also instrumental in strengthening the cluster leadership (and alleviating the workload of the WASH coordinator in UNICEF). In Nicaragua UNICEF similarly played an instrumental role in the water sector roundtable that existed prior to Eta/Iota. While these structures did not focus explicitly on WASH in emergencies, they created space for actors to get to know each other, collaborate and in some cases worked as a platform for policy advocacy with government.

There was less success in other sectors/clusters; again, this seemed to be linked to the level of coordination and collaboration there had been pre-emergency in that sector (eg in Honduras, the education sector coordination was virtually inactive prior to Eta/Iota due to the suspension of school activities as a result of COVID and despite the attempts of UNICEF and SCF as cluster co-leaders, it proved difficult to resuscitate).

The non-activation of the nutrition cluster in Honduras despite the recommendation to do so by the LACRO technical team (which also proposed to virtually deploy a nutrition specialist, given the lack of nutrition specialist in the CO, an opportunity not taken up by the CO) led to the CO management deciding that the nutrition sector should become a Technical Group within the food security cluster under the leadership of WFP. One of the consequences of not activating the nutrition cluster was that the nutrition component gained little visibility and consequently received relatively little funding.

It is concerning that despite UNICEF being the defined global cluster (or area of responsibility) lead agency for several clusters (nutrition, WASH, education and child protection), the experience of Eta/Iota demonstrated that it did not always have the capacity to take up these leadership roles, as was the case in Honduras.

5.5.3. Interagency

While there appeared to be mutual respect among UN agencies working in response to Eta and Iota and in both Guatemala and Honduras UNICEF participated in UN coordination structures, neither the document review nor interviews provided specific information to suggest that coordination resulted in notable synergies that contributed to increased effectiveness of the response. A number of observations in interviews suggested that there had been a loss of humanitarian coordination capacities in recent years in the region, including a reduced role and level of capacity of OCHA across the region that may have contributed to this.

In Nicaragua, Inter-agency coordination was identified as a weakness at the beginning of the response although there was a progressive improvement during the implementation period as the coordination system developed by UN agencies, in collaboration with the government, was put in place. As mentioned above, the lack of declaration of an emergency by the authorities possibly contributed to this weakness along with the lack of convening power given the absence of a resident coordinator.

There were few examples where different agencies cooperated to generate economies of scale. The exception was the example of the recent establishment of the base in RACCN, with offices and warehouses of a number of UN agencies (including UNICEF at the time of the evaluation team's visit), managed by WFP. It was not clear to what extent the creation of this centre also facilitated better coordination between the different agencies.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Hurricanes Eta and Iota hit Central America, wreaking the sort of sub-regional havoc not seen since Hurricane Mitch and impacting heavily on already vulnerable communities across the region. This hurricane, which devastated the region in 1998, had been a turning point in disaster preparedness as Central American states, supported by donors, invested heavily at both the institutional and community levels in disaster preparedness and risk reduction. However, as time passed, the memory of the destructive impact of category 4/5 hurricanes faded and government authorities, donors and agencies, including UNICEF, reduced their preparedness efforts in the face of reducing funding for these activities.

It is important to underline that whatever the levels of preparedness, the extent and severity of these two hurricanes, coming within two weeks of each other would have surpassed the capacity of most country offices and also tested the capacities of a regional office which needed to support all COs affected by these hurricanes. And this, coming in the midst of an L3 response to COVID 19, in which UNICEF was already involved in supporting national governments across the LAC region and at least two other L2 emergencies in the LAC region (the ongoing Venezuela outflow and the Haiti earthquake). The fact that all offices, without the pre-existing internal support of an emergency preparedness and response specialist in place, developed and implemented a multisectoral response over six to twelve months through a large number of implementing partners in hard-to-reach locations and in a complex environment heavily constrained in terms of movement between and within countries due to COVID 19, is much to their credit.

Relevance and appropriateness

The emergency response plans developed by UNICEF and implemented together with its large number of implementing partners across the three countries set relevant objectives that were in line with local needs and priorities. Each country office took a different approach **to assessing needs**, responding to the approaches developed by the national disaster management structures of each national or regional government and national and international NGOs (many of which subsequently became UNICEF implementing partners) were generally actively involved in these EDAN processes. Feedback from both individual interviews with key stakeholders (such as government officials at municipal and regional levels, staff in health centres etc) and community focus groups across the three countries confirmed that UNICEF-funded activities generally responded to the most pressing needs of affected people and that the needs assessment process had accurately identified the key vulnerabilities. Evidence was found of a level of consultation and involvement in decision-making at the community level.

Effort was taken in all three countries to reach the most affected municipalities and communities that were often isolated and geographically difficult to reach. UNICEF's primary **access** focus was to ensure that their responses reached children, adolescents and women but there was also a clear decision to focus support on departments/regions with high indigenous populations. There was evidence that some interventions were tailored to meet specific access barriers and the strategy of working through implementing partners with long experience of working in particular communities, with staff members coming from these communities helped ensure an appropriate level of access. While interventions were generally disaggregated by sex and age, the identification of the needs of specific groups such as people with disabilities or LGBTIQ+ people has been identified as an area that requires improvement.

The evaluation concludes that overall the UNICEF response appropriately **achieved its objectives** as set out in the HAC and the individual response plans, the response strategy was adapted to the needs in each country and particularly focused on the most vulnerable children and families in affected communities. Although initially planned to focus specifically on families living in shelters, the strategy was able to appropriately adapt as shelters closed and community members moved back to their homes.

Effectiveness

The UNICEF response is considered to have been effective in responding to the priority needs of the most affected populations, despite being hampered by a number of short-term elements (including the lack of some key human resources and the coexistence of COVID 19 that affected not only the country offices but also the level of support from LACRO).

While the three countries had reviewed their respective **emergency preparedness** plans, overall there was a limited level of appropriation of these plans, primarily due to the absence of emergency coordinators to guide this process. EPPs did not include detailed operational response plan templates in response to the most probable risk scenarios that could affect each country, did not include a partner mapping and none of the COs had developed standby agreements with potential humanitarian partners. While some COs had prepositioned emergency stocks in place, some stocks had been used to respond to COVID 19 and not been replenished and distribution delays were also experienced.

The sectoral activities in the three countries in general **responded to the priority needs** of affected communities and were aligned with the CCCs, with some examples of innovative programming, particularly in the WASH sector, where in both Guatemala and Nicaragua communities were involved in key decision-making and efforts were made to encourage continuing community participation. In all three countries, the focus on nutrition provided space for a strategy to introduce a simple and new technology at the community level (the use of MUAC tapes) and in all three cases previously undetected cases of malnutrition were identified, although both the nutrition and education sectors were impacted by the low levels of funding achieved. Child protection, PSEA and GBV activities, while difficult to evaluate due to the passage of time, were seen to respond to needs and were adapted to the local context, including materials being translated into local languages.

Overall the response was seen to be **timely**, with some initial delays experienced given COs' lack of familiarity with some accelerated emergency procedures. The provision of a loan from LACRO to the Honduras CO was an important contribution to enable activities to get underway while funds were being negotiated; some informants regretted that COs did not have direct access to their own contingency funds to enable an immediate no-regrets response. The short, six month implementation periods in both Guatemala and Honduras were challenging, particularly for ensuring the technical monitoring and sign-off processes for the WASH activities.

Planning, monitoring and reporting processes were effective, despite the COs needing to adopt new practices due to COVID 19 restrictions, such as undertaking distance monitoring or contracting additional monitoring staff or external consultants. The development of new humanitarian real-time data collection tools at the same time as implementing activities was challenging but the end results are seen to be effective - and crucially - simple for partners to use.

Despite significant restrictions and the designation of the emergency as an L1, **LACRO** was able to offer COs (and respond to requests for) support, albeit mainly through virtual deployments and distance technical support. It also took an instrumental role supporting the development of funding proposals, leading the construction of the HAC and providing on-going technical and reporting support. COs did not have the level of institutional capacity in emergency preparedness and response that was required given the magnitude of the disasters, so additional **human resource** capacity was provided through either surge deployments (actual or virtual) or, in the case of Honduras, the recruitment of a P4 emergency specialist, an approach that would have been useful in Nicaragua also to avoid a series of short term surge deployments.

Connectedness

UNICEF's response to Eta and Iota was generally well-coordinated with **national governments**, especially at the municipal level and implementing partners maintained close articulation with local and municipal disaster preparedness structures and relevant line ministries. Although ERPs did not expressly include **Nexus transition** activities to longer-term development activities, there were a number of examples in all three countries where interventions contributed to system strengthening and in some cases, the CO has subsequently started implementing longer-term activities as part of its regular programming (for example work supporting the role of health brigades in Honduras, and in Guatemala the initial work in some schools impacted by Eta/Iota has resulted in these schools being included in programmes to support early childhood development or out-of-school youth). The work to develop new CPDs (recently finalised in Honduras and currently underway in Nicaragua) shows the extent to which the COs have internalised the lessons learned from this humanitarian response in this regard.

UNICEF's interventions in all three countries have found strength in working with **implementing partners** that have experience on both sides of the Nexus (and in a number of cases were long-established within the affected communities). Implementing partners included a proportion of national NGOs, although the majority were international NGOs (many of which onward granted to local NGOs). There are opportunities to invest in increasing national humanitarian capacity through UNICEF's humanitarian response and demonstrate commitment to the Grand Bargain. Strengthening the EPP as a tool for identifying potential humanitarian partners would allow for a more timely response and there is scope to develop standby agreements with potential partners both nationally and regionally.

Coherence

While explicit **learning** objectives were not included in the ERPs, reflection and sharing experiences was included in regular meetings with UNICEF's partners, although these were generally not documented and tended to be sectoral rather integrated in nature. COs did not organise lessons learned workshops with partners and other stakeholders as implementation came to an end, a process that can be a valuable way of gathering learning from different levels within both UNICEF, its partners and stakeholders to take stock of progress and make adjustments for the future. Although partners applied basic mechanisms to ensure **accountability to affected populations**, greater emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring stronger, more consistent and confidential means for communities to raise issues and concerns and provide feedback.

Coordination

Although there were some limitations regarding internal coordination between sectors in the COs, related to the human resourcing shortages previously referred to and the impact of quarantine measures in some cases, the organisation of a joint, multidisciplinary field visit in Nicaragua was instrumental in encouraging the development of an integrated approach at the community level. Maintaining this level of coordination throughout implementation, as well as organising joint monitoring visits involving technical and monitoring specialists was an effective strategy. Implementing partners were generally content with the level and quality of **external coordination** with UNICEF.

Sectoral or cluster coordination in WASH was seen to be effective due to the fact that in all three countries there was a measure of technical coordination ongoing prior to the emergency, led or supported by UNICEF. Providing support (both for a national and sub-national WASH cluster coordinator) in Honduras helped maintain strong cluster leadership. Other sectors/clusters where UNICEF takes a leadership role were not necessarily as effective. The lack of capacity in nutrition in Honduras resulted in the nutrition sector becoming a technical group within the food security cluster and meant that nutrition received less visibility as an issue (and consequently less funding). Finally, regarding **interagency coordination**, the evaluation was unable to find evidence of agencies obtaining notable synergies in their work in response to Eta/Iota.

In conclusion (and in response to the second overall evaluation question), this evaluation finds that UNICEF's humanitarian response efforts achieved the intended results (in terms of scale and quality), despite facing a number of internal challenges and some delays at the outset. The scale of the response was adequate given the level of funding achieved and the quality of interventions was in line with CCC standards and considered appropriate to the main needs identified.

A number of lessons were learned through this experience (identified below and are the focus of the first overall global evaluation question) that have already led the COs to either make significant adjustments; Honduras now has a new CPD that includes focus on climate change, preparedness and resilience and a new emergency specialist has recently joined the core team, while Nicaragua is considering options for including increased focus on emergency preparedness and response as it starts to develop its CPD.

7. LESSONS LEARNED

Relevance and appropriateness

- The use of satellite imagery during the preparation of the EDAN helps to build up a more accurate estimation of the most affected populations in difficult-to-reach communities and therefore improves the quality and usefulness of the EDAN. [Nicaragua]

- The post-disaster deployment of a multisectoral team (including technical experts across all sectors), contributes to building an integrated emergency response approach. [Nicaragua]
- Deployment of key human resources to affected areas *before* a hurricane can ensure that information is rapidly forthcoming once the hurricane has passed. The pre-deployment of a communications company to document the impact of hurricane Iota in RACCN provided useful additional information (which also proved impactful for fundraising purposes). [Nicaragua]
- Having standby agreements with experienced humanitarian organisations in place would allow for rapid deployment in anticipation of an emergency (or shortly thereafter) and would strengthen UNICEF's ability to engage quickly and actively, including in EDAN processes. [All]
- Working with local organisations as implementing partners helps to ensure that UNICEF's work is tailored to the needs of specific vulnerable groups. These organisations often have a history of working in the community and therefore know the specific local needs and capacities and, because their staff come from these communities, they already have established relationships with community leaders and local authorities and speak the local languages. [All]

Effectiveness

- Having an up-to-date written preparedness document is not sufficient on its own to ensure that an organisation is prepared to respond to an emergency. A plan must be accompanied by actions to ensure that staff have taken ownership of the plan, know the procedures and behaviours associated with it. An EPP must have an "institutional owner" who takes responsibility for the plan and its socialisation and appropriation. [Honduras, Nicaragua]
- Developing an emergency response plan with the same six month time limit as the HAC is limiting when additional funds are raised subsequently. Developing a longer-term response plan (minimum one year) gives space to plan for a transition to regular programmes where appropriate (Nexus) and can help raise and secure additional funds. As contexts, available information and available funding can change rapidly and regularly in the first weeks and months after an emergency, response planning processes need to be agile and flexible, adjusting as necessary as the situation changes. [Honduras]
- When infrastructure (such as latrines, hand-washing stations in schools, etc.) is replaced, there is an opportunity to build back better (including to ensure that constructions are hurricane-prepared), to ensure the longevity and safety of the facilities. [Guatemala, Nicaragua]
- The example of the introduction of the use of a simple to administer community surveillance technique to detect possible cases of malnutrition serves as a useful model of how to integrate a long-term policy objective into a short-term humanitarian response and thus contribute to long-lasting outcomes. [All]
- As pre-positioned supplies are used as part of an emergency response, replacement stocks must be immediately procured to ensure replenishment. [Honduras]
- The immediate allocation of pre-financing loans to COs by LACRO (or the provision of access to contingency funding) can help COs to respond rapidly following an emergency, while funding is being discussed and agreed with potential donors. [Honduras]
- The development of a humanitarian data collection platform at the same time as implementation is complicated, both for UNICEF and for the implementing partners and should be avoided. The existence of two different platforms post Eta/Iota gives UNICEF options to combine the strengths of each so that a new tool is available for the region. [Honduras, Nicaragua]
- Similarly, introducing the use of a new global tool during the onset of an emergency (as was the case of the EMOPS indicators, introduced in November 2020), is complicated and it is unrealistic to expect COs to adopt it immediately. A realistic timeframe for its understanding and integration into emergency planning processes must be agreed before its application. [All]

- The need for continuous field-based monitoring capacities can be assured by contracting an external monitor to conduct field monitoring activities in situations where UNICEF staff are unable (for whatever reason) to visit the field. [Honduras]
- The practice of organising programme visits accompanied by the monitoring specialist helps to ensure a holistic view is reflected in the reports. [Nicaragua]
- Not having permanent emergency preparedness and response capacity within the sub-region can be detrimental during the first weeks following the hurricanes, putting additional pressures on already small CO staff teams. (This was particularly the case in Honduras, given that the deputy representative role was vacant at the time.) [All]

Connectedness

- Choosing implementing partners for regular programming that also have proven capacities in humanitarian response can ensure that UNICEF's emergency response capacity is enhanced and that its response activities can be shifted to development approaches as appropriate. [All]
- The positive outcomes of working with women's movements. [Nicaragua]
- Articulating explicit transition strategies within the ERP would help maximise opportunities to build long-term connectivity between humanitarian and development approaches and would make these efforts more visible. [All]
- Maintaining effective and continuous collaboration and dialogue with all levels of government (and particularly at regional and municipal levels) before an emergency lays the foundations for achieving good outcomes during emergency response. [All]

Coherence

- Ensuring opportunities for technical staff from Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala (potentially also including those from partners) to learn and share strategies and experiences during the implementation period helps ensure that lessons are learned and corrective action taken. [All]
- Not establishing an explicit learning objective as a transversal part of the ERP can result in some learning activities being deprioritised due to pressure to deliver activities within the ERP and all learning must be systematically documented so that it is not lost. A learning objective should include the methodologies to be used, the specific audiences to be reached and, crucially, the distribution mechanisms for the outputs of these processes. Being explicit in this way demonstrates commitment to learning and holds partners accountable for participation in these processes. It can also build on partners' own learning processes. [All]
- The final external evaluation process (and in particular the field data collection) should be planned to take place before the closure of response activities, when experiences for affected populations are still fresh and when staff involved in the response, both from implementing partners and government authorities, are still in place (and could include the organisation of a lessons learned workshop involving all stakeholders). [All]
- It is important for UNICEF to work with all implementing partners to define common approaches to AAP, given that different organisations may have different institutional practices. This is especially important when partners work in the same or adjacent communities. [All]

Coordination

- Sectors that are used to coordinating, sharing information and working together in 'peacetime' are better prepared to work in response to an emergency. The example of the WASH sector in all three countries, with organisations regularly coordinating on policy and other technical aspects of WASH programming demonstrates how this contributed to a more articulated and coordinated humanitarian response. [All]
- Ensuring that UNICEF has the human resource capacity (either within the CO or accessible via surge processes) to assume its cluster leadership responsibilities for nutrition, WASH, education and child protection. The fact that UNICEF was unable to provide cluster leadership

for nutrition due to a lack of human resource capacity meant that this responsibility could not be provided. [Honduras]

- If clusters are not activated at the start of an emergency (eg nutrition, education), the ability to attract donor funding can be negatively affected. [Honduras, Guatemala]

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Recommendations for LACRO/HQ

These recommendations were initially drafted by the evaluation team. They were presented and validated during a regional validation workshop involving staff from the CO and LACRO at the end of November, when participants validated, adjusted and refined these recommendations, prioritising each action, identifying the timeline and allocating responsibilities for implementation.

1. Use the experience of Eta/Iota to develop/improve policies and procedures related to multi-country L1 emergencies.
 - a. The HAC is a tool for fundraising, accompanied by an emergency response implementation plan that covers not only early response but also the Nexus transition phase. The ERP implementation period should not be limited by the timeframe of either the HAC or funding proposals, but be appropriate to achieving its objectives and could be aligned with interagency emergency planning (eg HRP, if existing). Raising the level of awareness and understanding of COs regarding how to plan an appropriate timeframe for emergency response is vital.

Priority: High

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Emergency Unit

- b. Develop specific SOPs for COs and RO for a multi-country L1 emergency, given the expanded role a regional office generally takes in this scenario (coordinating negotiation and development of the HAC, coordination between COs regarding resource allocation, etc). This will include specifying the role LACRO plays in leading internal coordination between the affected COs in order to avoid the perception of competition for donor funds (in contexts where there is a limited donor pool and the donor contact point covers all affected countries).

Priority: High

Timeframe: 6 months

Responsible: Emergency Unit & CO Deputy Reps

- c. As part of ensuring COs have adequate standing capacity to immediately respond to L1 emergencies, consider the options for COs in emergency-prone countries either: i) having their own contingency loan facility linked to a “no regrets” contingency strategy as part of the EPP; or ii) having *rapid access* to a regional/global contingency facility. Either option would require developing accompanying SOPs.

Priority: High

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Emergency Unit & concerned COs

- d. LACRO to lead advocacy efforts with donors to support to: i) flexible funding allocation; ii) sectorial funding for all UNICEF-lead sectors, recognising the value of supporting an integrated humanitarian response.⁸⁷

Priority: High

⁸⁷ This is in line with the benchmarks for resource mobilisation within the CCCs (3.6 Operational Commitments).

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Emergency Unit & Public Partnership Programme Unit

2. Introduce improved standby agreements with humanitarian partners.
 - a. LACRO to lead a revision of the existing common humanitarian partnership standby agreement template developed by HQ and share with COs.

Priority: Medium
Timeframe: 12 months
Responsible: Emergency Unit
 - b. Consider the feasibility of developing regional standby agreements with international humanitarian organisations (eg Save the Children, Plan International, IFRC, Helvetas, ADRA, etc) that COs can draw upon at the country level to ensure an effective national response in the event of an emergency. This could help build common agreements to approaches (eg in terms of what methodologies to use, indicators, objectives, supply items including pre-positioning, etc).

Priority: Medium
Timeframe: 12 months
Responsible: Emergency Unit, Operations & CO emergency specialists
3. Improve UNICEF's performance monitoring mechanisms.
 - a. Facilitate a review of the different primary data collection platforms developed during Eta/Iota operation, to consider whether the most effective elements of these could be brought together into a common platform to be made available across the region. The platform should be able to be tailored to the individual needs of each CO. This review will need to include a revision of the data collection platforms used by implementing partners.

Priority: High
Timeframe: 12 months
Responsible: HPM / Planning & Emergency Unit
 - b. Review the different monitoring practices employed during Eta/Iota (in person, third party monitoring, virtual monitoring, delegated monitoring to implementing partners, etc). This will also need to include AAP monitoring practices.

Priority: Medium
Timeframe: 12 months
Responsible: HPM / Planning & Emergency Unit
4. Better manage human resources during the emergency response, including by using preparedness planning..
 - a. The Minimum Preparedness Standards checklist includes definitions of the roles and responsibilities of LACRO and COs during different phases of an emergency. However, this tool is not well-known, understood or applied. Ensure that each CO actively reviews this as part of the annual EPP review process and prepares its own business contingency plan (which re-organises the key roles and responsibilities of its staff in the first 2-3 weeks after a largescale emergency so that additional workload is shared across the entire team).

Priority: High
Timeframe: 12 months
Responsible: Emergency Unit & CO Deputy Reps

- b. Develop and disseminate a standard ToR for the emergency focal point role⁸⁸ (in countries without dedicated emergency staff) . This ToR should include: the focus and responsibilities of this role, how much time needs to be allocated to the role, appropriate profiles and experience, the training and support required and the backup available should the country be impacted by a largescale emergency

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: 6 months

Responsible: Emergency Unit & HR

- c. While virtual deployments were an expedient innovation developed in response to the COVID 19 pandemic and the inability to travel, given that the rising urgency of climate change requiring humanitarian organisations to justify their contribution to carbon emissions (and potential budgetary pressures to reduce travel-related costs), it is strongly recommended that LACRO reviews and documents the experience of virtual deployments in the past 2 years. This review should aim to gather the range of experiences of virtual deployments; to what extent they met the specific ToRs, what conditions are required to ensure they are successful (and what conditions are not conducive to a virtual deployment), what were the limitations and how could these be overcome (including the experience of undertaking these deployments and the views and opinions of the COs receiving them), for what roles and ToRs would they be appropriate, what roles are they not, etc.

Priority: Low

Timeframe: 6 months

Responsible: HR & Emergency Unit

5. Support knowledge management, systematic organisational learning and improvement..

- a. LACRO should develop and apply a methodology to ensure that after action reviews are systematically carried out at the end of each L1 emergency. This will need to involve CO, relevant LACRO staff and implementing partners and will focus on reflecting on good practices, lessons learned and immediate adjustments to be made in readiness for the next emergency.

Priority: Low

Timeframe: 6 months

Responsible: Emergency & Evaluation Units

- b. LACRO has an important role to actively encourage and facilitate opportunities for experience exchange and collective lesson learning in emergency preparedness and response between the different COs involved in an L1 multi-country emergency, both online and in person across the sub-region.

Priority: Low

Timeframe: 12 months

Responsible: Emergency & Evaluation Units

⁸⁸ This role is allocated to an existing staff member; in Nicaragua it was taken by the education specialist, in Honduras by the WASH specialist.

8.2. Recommendations for Country Offices

These recommendations were initially drafted by the evaluation team as part of the individual country reports by the evaluation team and presented at CO validation workshops involving staff from the CO and LACRO in October/early November 2022. In each case, participants validated, adjusted, refined and in some cases re-worded these recommendations during the workshops and each CO identified the level of priority for each recommendation and allocated responsibility for follow up. A number of these recommendations are shared across two or three COs but each has re-worded to fit its context and has grouped the recommended actions differently. See annex 10 for an overview of these recommendations.

Recommendations focus on a number of areas where UNICEF can use the experience of Eta/Iota to strengthen its leadership role in disaster preparedness and response at the country level. These include:

- Actions focused on **strengthening UNICEF's disaster management and preparedness capacity** at the CO level. This includes making adjustments and additions to the EPP, undertaking and maintaining up to date mapping of humanitarian actors, establishing standby agreements with (actual and potential) humanitarian partners, actions to strengthen accountability mechanisms and for both Nicaragua and Guatemala, developing a contingency direct response strategy in the event that there are few humanitarian partners available to collaborate. LACRO's EMERGENCY SECTION has a role to support the COs in taking forward these recommendations.
- All three COs identified the importance of facilitating a dialogue and strengthening the link between humanitarian and longer-term programming (**Nexus**). LACRO's EMERGENCY SECTION has a role to support the COs in taking forward this recommendation as part of its work to promote the triple Nexus.
- Actions aimed at **institutional strengthening**, both with national, regional and/or municipal governments or with the United Nations system. Related to the cluster system, LACRO's EMERGENCY SECTION has a role to support the COs in taking forward this recommendation.
- Actions focused on **increasing learning**, together with key stakeholders, during the course of implementing response operations. LACRO's MONITORING and EVALUATION SECTIONS has a role to support the COs in taking forward this recommendation.
- A series of other actions specific to each CO; the table on the following page shows the country level recommendations per theme.

8.3. Overview of Country Office recommendations

NOTE: Individual COs grouped the various sub-recommendations in accordance with their own priorities and concerns. This table provides a synthesis of recommendations only; the country reports should be consulted to understand the individual CO approach, priorities and timeframe.

Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
Actions focused on strengthening UNICEF's disaster management and preparedness capacity at the CO level		
	Develop (as part of the EPP) detailed response plans around the most likely emergency scenarios. These plans should be practical and operational, including partner mapping, pre-positioned supplies, a transportation strategy, etc. and aligned with the in-country humanitarian analysis.	Develop (as part of the EPP) detailed response plans around the most likely emergency scenarios. These plans should be practical and operational, including partner mapping, pre-positioned supplies, a transportation strategy, etc. and aligned with the in-country humanitarian analysis.
	<p>Increase the CO's capacity to lead and coordinate emergency preparedness and response. The long term objective should be to include a national emergency specialist position within the permanent structure/CPD. In the short/medium term, a sub-regional emergency coordinator could be considered.</p> <p>At least one if not both members of the senior management team should have a humanitarian background. Competencies that respond to coordination and leadership of humanitarian preparedness and response should be integrated into the job descriptions of these two positions.</p>	As part of the planning process for the new CPD, conduct appropriate analysis and seek opportunities to include a human resource to support emergency preparedness and response processes within the CO with responsibility for organisational readiness.
<p>Prepare and maintain updated mapping of humanitarian actors and develop pre-agreements with both current and potential partners to further include them in the EPP.</p> <p>Establish and maintain standby pre-agreements with partners (current and potential) that have strong expertise in emergency management.</p>	<p>Improve humanitarian actor mapping tools and keep them up to date, with clear and relevant criteria.</p> <p>Develop pre-agreements with current partners and include in the EPP to ensure that they can be rapidly re-deployed for humanitarian activities as required.</p> <p>Establish standby pre-agreements with partners (current and potential) that have strong emergency experience and include in the EPP (build on recent</p>	<p>Include and maintain an up to date mapping of humanitarian actors as part of the EPP.</p> <p>Establish standby agreements with (actual and potential) humanitarian partners that have strong experience and include these in the EPP.</p> <p>Develop an ongoing training plan for key staff of partner organisations in specific aspects of emergency response, including: the CCCs; emergency indicators,</p>

Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
<p>Provide training to key staff of these organisations in specific aspects of emergency management (CCCs, emergency indicators, manuals, etc.).</p>	<p>WASH experiences with the Humanitarian Programme Document [HPD] contingency arrangement with ADRA and GOAL for replication in other sectors).</p> <p>Conduct specific training on the use of HA planning and monitoring tools. These are generally lighter than development tools and therefore more operational during the emergency (particularly for smaller organisations with very limited staffing). These trainings (including alignment of indicators with CCCs) could be offered to partners with whom UNICEF signs pre-agreements as part of preparedness and contingency activities.</p> <p>Establish standardised feedback mechanisms on partner reports, define timelines for providing and responding to feedback, review meetings, etc. At the time of closing this report, the partner reporting platform has been started which consolidates reports and demands greater attention and review of reports in a multi-sectoral manner.</p>	<p>policies and manuals; strengthening accountability mechanisms and community participation in decision making.</p>
<p>Work with partners to strengthen accountability mechanisms and participation in decision-making at the community level. To assess the quality and impact of accountability mechanisms, it is necessary to carry out real-time evaluations, as affected people tend not to remember them once the operation has ended.</p>		<p>Include real-time evaluations within EPP response protocols to assess the quality and impact of accountability mechanisms.</p>
<p>Consider within CPE a direct response strategy scenario, in the event that there are few implementing partners available, territorially and/or sectorally.</p>		<p>Include in the EPP a direct response strategy contingency in the event that there are few humanitarian partners available to collaborate.</p>
	<p>Draft EMT roles need to be regularly updated, including the definition of LACRO-led and CO roles.</p>	

Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
	In future response operations, it is important that there is more consistency between the Emergency Response Plan and the HRP in terms of timeframe.	
	Ensure that there is a regular update of the risk analysis within the CPD, that all regular programming is risk-informed and that it incorporates the ability to respond to emergencies within the Annual Management Plan (AMP) definition process. It is also important to ensure that there is a regular update of the business continuity plan that would ensure that the office has the capacity to continue to operate during a period of emergency. Even if there is no HRP in place, the ability to respond to the emergency should be considered in the regular programme.	
Actions focused on strengthening the link between humanitarian and longer-term programming (Nexus)		
Continue to focus on strengthening the transition between humanitarian action and longer-term programmes (Nexus).	Continue to focus on strengthening the transition between humanitarian action and longer-term programmes (Nexus). In future humanitarian programming, always include an exit strategy or transition plan towards longer-term actions and include in all regular programmes nexus actions for resilience.	Encourage debate on what the Nexus means in Nicaragua and establish better links between humanitarian and development programming. This will include developing a protocol for response programming (including actions within the exit strategy focused on the nexus transition) and holding a workshop on the subject in coordination with the other UN agencies.
Actions focused on institutional strengthening		
Continue to advocate with government institutions for greater flexibility in emergency procedures , for example, the fact that there is a spending ceiling for rehabilitation (Q.75,000) regardless of whether it is an emergency or a development situation.	As part of the cluster transition plan (2021), UNICEF should lead these processes in the relevant clusters/sub-clusters (nutrition, WASH, education and child protection).	When the documentation process of the child-focused EDAN is finalised with SINAPRED, this tool should be validated and shared.
	At the municipal level, support institutional strengthening measures to ensure future preparedness . This will include undertaking	Strengthening UNICEF's participation in the UNETE thematic groups .

Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
	vulnerability and capacity analysis (VCA) which will allow municipal and local emergency plans to be developed.	
		Systematise and document the communication and coordination steps taken with the Nicaraguan government at all levels in this emergency in order to inform future emergency response actions.
Actions focused on strengthen UNICEF relationship with humanitarian implementing partners		
	UNICEF is recommended to consult with its main implementing partners on the experience and feasibility of proposing that partners work in consortium in humanitarian response . (At the time of writing this report, the PRMP implementation exercise is underway, although the effectiveness of this type of mechanism remains to be assessed.)	
Actions focused in increasing learning		
	Establish, as part of the EPP and contingency planning process, a space in which to share lessons learned with implementing partners , especially those working with specific vulnerable groups, in order to analyse whether a more holistic approach could have been taken. Use this reflection to establish verification (and accountability) mechanisms for prioritisation of vulnerable groups as part of response planning.	
	In future humanitarian operations, organise, together with implementing partners, an in-depth reflection on lessons learned in each sector , from the planning phase through to implementation/monitoring. It is important to conduct this reflection during or shortly after the implementation period, to facilitate the identification of good practices, causes of	

Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
	shortcomings, challenges to realistic target setting, etc. Similarly, better use of partner capitalisation processes could be explored. It is important to allocate sufficient funds, human resources and time to support effective learning exercises. Identify how to include feedback from beneficiaries of specific vulnerable groups (tools that can be used, mechanisms) in these processes.	
Actions focused on donors		
UNICEF's good understanding with donors during the Eta/Iota should be used to advocate for greater flexibility, in terms of reallocation of funds.		
Continue to advocate for the importance of an element of flexibility in donor agreements with regular programme donors to allow for the reallocation of funds to respond to urgent humanitarian needs.		
Advocate for regular programme donors to agree to extend the implementation period of complex activities such as rehabilitation of water systems to 8 months to ensure better monitoring as well as quality assurance of facilities.		
Other actions		
Review the provision of temporary classrooms as a response strategy, including a post-disaster monitoring of their use, as well as the views of the community and school principals as to their usefulness and sustainability.		Incorporate automated scenario forecasting and response process monitoring management in the EPP with partners and different levels of government, as these have proven to be efficient and effective.

Figure 6: Overview of Country Office recommendations organised by theme (to enable comparison)

8.4. Recommendations for Guatemala

Given the limitations mentioned in section 4.2 above, it was not possible to evaluate the entire Guatemala response to hurricanes Eta/Iota. However, a number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team based on the elements of the response that were evaluated. These were shared in a validation meeting attended by the deputy representative and the emergency officer of the Guatemala country office and staff of the LACRO evaluation unit on 4 November 2022. During the meeting, the recommendations were discussed and after the meeting the country office participants validated, adjusted, refined and prioritised these recommendations.

High priority recommendations

1. Strengthen UNICEF's disaster management and preparedness capacity in Guatemala.
 - a. Establish and maintain standby pre-agreements with partners (current and potential) that have strong emergency management expertise.
 - b. Make and maintain updated mapping of humanitarian actors and develop pre-agreements with current and potential partners to further include them in the EPP.
 - c. Provide training to key staff of these humanitarian organisations in specific aspects of emergency management (CCC, emergency indicators, manuals, etc.).
 - d. Work with humanitarian partners to strengthen accountability mechanisms and participation in decision-making at the community level. (To assess the quality and impact of accountability mechanisms, it is necessary to carry out real-time evaluations, as affected people tend not to remember them once the operation is over).
 - e. Consider in the CPE a scenario in which a direct response strategy is necessary in case there are few implementing partners available, territorially and sectorally.

Timeframe: 6 months

Responsible: Deputy Representative with Emergency Preparedness Officer

2. Building on UNICEF's work to date with the Guatemalan government (at municipal and central level), strengthen the focus on humanitarian capacity building of Guatemalan partners. Continue to advocate with government institutions for greater flexibility of procedures when it comes to emergencies, for example, the fact that there is a spending ceiling for rehabilitation (Q.75,000) regardless of whether it is an emergency or a development situation.

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Deputy Representative with Emergency Preparedness Officer

3. Review the use of temporary modules as a response strategy, including a post-disaster monitoring of their use, as well as the views of the community and school principals as to their usefulness and sustainability.

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Deputy Representative with Education Specialist

Medium priority recommendations

4. UNICEF's good understanding with donors during Eta/Iota should be used to advocate for greater flexibility in the reallocation of funds.
 - a. Continue to advocate for the importance of an element of flexibility in donor agreements with regular programme donors to allow for the reallocation of funds to respond to urgent humanitarian needs.

- b. Advocate for regular programme donors to agree to extend the implementation period of complex activities such as rehabilitation of water systems to 8 months to ensure better monitoring and quality assurance of facilities.

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Deputy Representative with Emergency Preparedness Officer

- 5. Continue to focus on strengthening the transition between humanitarian action and longer-term programmes (Nexus).

Timeframe: 6-12 months

Responsible: Deputy Representative with Emergency Preparedness Officer

Annex 1: Terms of Reference



TERMS OF REFERENCE

TITLE/PURPOSE	<i>Multi-country evaluation of UNICEF's response to hurricanes ETA & IOTA in Central America.</i>
RECRUITING OFFICER	<i>Regional Emergency and Evaluation Advisers, UNICEF LACRO</i>
CONTRACT MODALITY	<i>Corporate Contract (consultancy)</i>
LOCATION OF ASSIGNMENT	<i>Home based with travel to Central America Will report to UNICEF LACRO</i>
LANGUAGE(S) REQUIRED	<i>Spanish and English</i>
DURATION OF CONTRACT	<i>Estimated 4 months</i>

A. Background

Impact and damages of major hurricanes ETA & IOTA in Central America (November 2020)

ETA, the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season's record-tying 28th storm, began affecting northern Honduras as a Category 4 hurricane approaching the north-eastern shores of neighbouring Nicaragua on 3 November, bringing torrential rains that the United States' National Hurricane Center (NHC) forecast expected to leave as much as 635mm of rain and cause wind speeds as high as 275 km/h.

During its slow three-day journey over Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, ETA downgraded to a tropical storm and then to a tropical depression, drenching much of Honduras and causing rising river levels, flooding, and landslides across the country. These impacts collectively created a host of overlapping humanitarian needs for hundreds of thousands of people in vulnerable communities now facing the grim reality of recovering from Honduras' worst natural hazard in more than 20 years.

Less than two weeks after being battered by Tropical Storm ETA, Honduras was hit by Hurricane IOTA, a category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale. With a slightly different trajectory than ETA, Hurricane Iota caused flooding and landslides in the northern part of the country, exacerbating an already difficult situation. The two storms have caused severe damage only comparable to Hurricane Mitch in 1998, resulting in humanitarian needs for millions of people in Honduras.

An estimated 9.2 million people (including 3.5 million children) was affected by heavy rainfall, lifethreatening flash flooding and landslides caused by Hurricanes ETA and IOTA in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. Other areas in Mexico and Colombia have been also impacted. Over 160,000 people have been displaced and hosted in shelters, including 64,000 children, and need access to protection, food, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and basic services. In some affected communities, access to basic services was already limited and is now worsened by the effects of the Hurricanes; restoration of basic services in such places is now urgent.

Thousands of families have lost their homes and livelihoods, many already been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. At least 3.4 million people need urgent support, including 1.3 million children in the most affected communities in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Eta and Iota affected children and families already devastated by the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic: school closures, loss of jobs, declining migrant remittances, rising violence

against children and women, and disruptions in access to water and sanitation and to key health services, including vaccinations for young children.

Prior to COVID-19, at least 5.2 million people in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were already facing significant humanitarian needs related to migration flows, violence, internal displacement, food insecurity and poverty. Among affected areas, there are remote indigenous communities where access and language barriers challenge relief efforts. A potential surge in population movements, including internal displacement and cross-border migration, could further compound the situation.

UNICEF's response

UNICEF prioritised its action in the four most affected countries in Central America: Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize. UNICEF response strategy was adapted to the needs in country and focused on ensuring that children and families in shelters and affected communities had access to basic services including protection, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services – including Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) – health, education and early childhood development. UNICEF ensured and reinforced service provision in a safe and protective environment, supporting the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) as well as the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for children and women.

During the first year of ETA & IOTA emergency response, UNICEF achieved that about 250,000 caregivers of children under 2 years, received **nutritional** counselling and some 50,000 children under 5 years directly received nutritional screening and opportune therapeutical referral as required. Similarly, UNICEF ensured that more than 6,200 children received their minimum set of **vaccines** despite a concerning Covid-19 pandemic and the need to ensure personal protective equipment to more than 300,000 health workers.

UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (**WASH**) humanitarian response ensured that some 75,000 people could be reached by critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services, and 15,000 people had access to sufficient and safe water. Moreover, about 4,500 children benefitted from improved wash and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces.

The **Protection** need of children and women were addressed by UNICEF under different perspectives. Thanks to UNICEF intervention, almost 25,000 children and caregivers had access to mental health and psychosocial support; about 35,000 women and adolescents accessed to GBV prevention, mitigation, and response interventions. Similarly, some 2,600 unaccompanied or separated children could access to family-based care or suitable alternative, while almost 15,000 children could be referred to specialized services such as health, social welfare, or justice services.

As a strong component of the UNICE response to ETA & IOTA emergency, access to formal or non-formal **education** (including early education) was ensured to 1.8M of children in the subregion, and about 165,000 children received individual learning materials. In Guatemala, thanks to the opening of schools, more than 3,500 schools could implement safe school protocols for Covid-19 infection prevention and control (IPC).

UNICEF remains a key humanitarian and development partner in the affected countries, leading and facilitating coordination efforts among clusters and sectoral groups - particularly in WASH, education, nutrition, and Child Protection. UNICEF will link its humanitarian action and development programming to strengthen policies and systems and enhance resilience of affected populations.

UNICEF is part of interagency mechanisms and its response plans are aligned with interagency priorities. UNICEF efforts will complement actions of authorities and other partners working in providing food assistance and overall support in shelters. Few days after the impact of ETA & IOTA in Honduras (19 November 2020), the Humanitarian Country team issued a joint Flash Appeal to request international support to families affected by the storms. On early February 2021, Nicaragua also launched a Plan of Action for the Humanitarian response in support of the impacted population. Later in the year, a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and corresponding national Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) were prepared in support of the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to assist highly vulnerable population; UNICEF requirements in the HACs have been aligned with these inter-agency appeals and plans.

UNICEF worked in collaboration and coordination with local and national governments, whose capacities have been surpassed and with its existing partners, developing new partnerships where needed, to deliver urgent support and restore access to basic services for children, women and families in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Belize, that have been left in an extremely vulnerable situation after the impact of Hurricanes ETA and IOTA.

B. Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

UNICEF's LACRO is proposing a multi-country evaluation of UNICEF's response to ETA & IOTA major hurricanes of late 2020 that affected Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, to generate opportune feedback and learning key elements of its response. The multi-country evaluation, is expected to generate actionable recommendations on how to formulate the new UNICEF sub-regional preparedness strategy and contribute to strengthen "shock responsiveness" of national and local level NDMA systems, using the CCCs as framework of benchmarks and Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP) as improvement platform.

Purpose

The purpose of the multi-country evaluation of the UNICEF's ETA & IOTA response is dual, both for learning and accountability. Firstly, it is needed to **account for performance** and results achieved, externally (both to donors and host governments), internally (at the regional office and country office level). Secondly, it is needed to draw **lessons learned** from recent humanitarian response for future responses to hydrometeorological events in the Caribbean basin⁸⁹.

At the end of the process a regional synthesis and country office evaluation reports on relevance, coherence, effectiveness and connectedness of UNICEF's response to Eta/Iota hurricanes in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua will be produced. The reports will feed into the design and implementation of the new Nicaragua CPD and a regional preparedness strategy.

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- To determine the institutional progress UNICEF made towards the **accomplishment of UNICEF's CCCs** in emergencies, including reaching the most vulnerable population and identify the **most effective** implementation strategies and partnerships for future responses (relevance, coverage, timeliness⁹⁰, connectedness⁹¹ and quality).⁹²
- **To assess the quality of the response planning** in terms of rapid assessment, design and structure of the response, mapping of partners, workflow, financial arrangements, and monitoring system.
- To determine the **relevance** of existing or developing **emergency preparedness and response strategies**, ensuring UNICEF positioning as key humanitarian actor in the subregion.
- To determine how UNICEF can better position itself, build on its **comparative advantage**, and provide specific recommendations to improve its response to future hydrometeorological and other emergencies in Central America.

C. Expected Users and uses

The expected *primary audience* of this multi-country evaluation includes COs (i.e., both management and technical staff) and LACRO (Management, Emergency Unit and Preparedness group).

The evaluation results will be used by this audience to draw **lessons learned for future emergency response** in the region and better embed risk informed programming and nexus in regular country program documents and annual plans. Moreover, the evaluation will generate real-world **evidence on emergency preparedness** in terms of response effectiveness (i.e., timeliness, scale and quality), using the CCCs as framework of benchmarks and EPP as

⁸⁹From here on, the Caribbean basin is defined as the geographical area between Central America and the Caribbean islands characterized by the seasonal genesis of extreme hydrometeorological events such as hurricanes.

⁹⁰The timeliness of UNICEF's action will be looked at as part of the 'effectiveness' criterion.

⁹¹Connectedness can be conceived as the equivalent of the 'sustainability' criterion applied to humanitarian action.

⁹²Reference to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria is made, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revision-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

improvement platform, so to contribute to strengthen national and local level shock responsiveness to future disasters.

Secondary audiences include key stakeholders of emergency response such as: interagency coordination actors (OCHA, clusters leads); Humanitarian Network in each country (HCT); local governments and international donors (ECHO, USAID, PRM, BHA, among others) For this audience, evidence will be used as a basis for **reporting to account** on results achieved and consolidate partnerships.

D. Special Considerations

Additionally, the evaluation will review the extent to which the regular program was **risk informed**. In this sense it will specifically look into whether UNICEF was ready to address the the necessary programmatic and operational risks looking into specific internal and external barriers which may have emerged when responding to humanitarian needs of the affected populations.

E. Evaluation Scope

The multi-country evaluation will cover UNICEF's humanitarian response in Nicaragua, Salvador and Guatemala and Honduras, following the November 2020 ETA and IOTA hurricanes on. Specifically, the evaluation will consider key elements of the pre-emergency phase associated to the development and impact of both Cat4 hurricane ETA (2-6 Nov.) and Cat5 hurricane IOTA (16-18 Nov.) so to evaluate contingency planning and preparedness capabilities and the extent to which they influenced (enhancing or restraining) UNICEF's response to the emergency.

Additionally, the period reviewed will cover the UNICEF's humanitarian response from November 2020 to December 2021. The multi-country evaluation review the specific **time span of the response**: i) Standing Capacity: 3-4w (contingency planning, reprogramming of resources, pre-positioning of supplies, etc.); ii) First Response: 1-3m (Need assessment, CERF, FA, cluster activation); iii) Consolidated Response: (3-6m) Emergency Response Plan consolidation and operationalization; iv) Exit strategy: 6-12m (LHD, connection with CPD).

The evaluation will assess UNICEF's humanitarian action across urban and rural locations affected by the events, including areas of displacement (temporary shelters), relocation and resettlement, where present, and hard-to-reach areas, wherever possible. Along these lines, primary data collection from key informants will be prioritized in the most affected areas of the countries including, but not limited to the following territories.

- Nicaragua: Northern Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN), and Departments of Jinotega and Nueva Segovia.
- Honduras: departments of Cortes, Atlántida, and Yoro.
- Guatemala: departments of Izabal and Alta Verapaz.

Programmatically, the evaluation will cover UNICEF's multi-sectoral interventions across the CCCs, specifically in the areas of: WASH, health, nutrition, education, health, C4D, child protection and social protection as well as the cross-sectorial Monitoring and Evaluation. The evaluation will also assess, from an operational standpoint, the availability and management of supplies, human and financial resources and partnerships, opportune use of the emergency procedures (e.g., HPD, surge & deployment, procurement & contracting, finance) which feed into the response. Advocacy, communications and fundraising will also be assessed to the extent to which they were factors that affected (facilitated/hampered) the response.

The evaluation will cover UNICEF's role as cluster lead, as relevant, and provide an analysis of **UNICEF's coordination/cluster responsibilities** and how well it balanced with a more operational role. Effectiveness of the emergency response will be assessed from the standpoint of achieved **synergies** with national priorities and other development partners' programmes: inter/cross-sectorial capacity to integrate the delivery of different services of the response (e.g., WASH-Nutrition, WASH-education, Education-Protection, Nutrition & Health); inter-agency and institutional coordination (e.g., CONRED, COPECO, SINAPRED and local governments)-

Due to time limitations, the evaluation will *not* address the efficiency of UNICEF's response⁹³, which would imply a lengthy costing exercise and comparisons with alternative implementation approaches, yet the timeliness of UNICEF's action will be addressed under the effectiveness criterion. The evaluation will only gauge whether or not UNICEF has taken into consideration the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in its programming in the context of the ETA & IOTA response; however, it will not assess systematically the results of such programming, given that this would require additional time and different sets of competencies.

F. Indicative Evaluation Questions

In line with the objectives outlined above, the following two tables list a set of general overarching questions and a more specific set of queries/sub-questions, respectively, that will drive the evaluation. They will be fine-tuned, revised and reduced, as deemed appropriate, to ensure relevance and utilization of the exercise once the evaluation team is onboard and the Evaluation Reference Group established.

Overarching Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Criteria
1. What are the main Lessons Learned from this sub-regional rapid onset disasters in terms of emergency preparedness and emergency response in the countries and the specific local places of intervention	Relevance/ Appropriateness
2. To what extent has UNICEF humanitarian response and recovery efforts achieved their intended results (in terms of timeliness, scale, and quality, considering the HAC, response plans, monitoring and adherence to CCCs)?	Effectiveness

Evaluation Sub-questions	Evaluation Criteria
1. To what extent did UNICEF's regional and country offices humanitarian response objectives (including ERPs, HPDs and required adjustments), strategic approaches, and implementation modalities in the region and COs remain appropriate and relevant to the changing circumstances (including the Covid19 outbreak)? 2. When and where was UNICEF's COs response most adapted to the local needs of those most vulnerable populations whilst responding to national partners priorities (as per rapid and needs assessments)? To what extent were UNICEF's plans and actions informed by the results of active participation process where the affected population had the voice and capacity to impact key decisions? 3. Did the intervention design take into account specific barriers linked to gender and societal expectations, challenges faced by minorities (i.e., indigenous communities), vulnerable groups (for example unaccompanied children or children with disabilities, women and pregnant women, etc.)?	Relevance/ Appropriateness

⁹³Or, in other words whether the least costly resources possible were/are used to achieve results.

<p>4 How effective was UNICEF's response in terms of planning, needs assessments, mapping of partners, structure of the response, workflow, financial arrangements, coordination, and monitoring. Correct use of the accelerated processes for the response: PCA/HPD, Human Resources, Procurement, Finance etc.</p> <p>5 To what extent did UNICEF response appropriately achieved its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?</p> <p>· What are the most and less effective national and subnational strategic approaches at regional and country level for achievement of results?</p> <p>6 What improvements can be made to improve the effectiveness of UNICEFs humanitarian preparedness and response (in terms of Supplies, Logistics, Staff, Surge, Implementing Partners and HCT)To what extent UNICEF was ready to address the necessary programmatic and operational risks looking into specific internal and external barriers which may have emerged when responding to humanitarian needs of the affected populations?</p> <p>7 Did the effectiveness of the Emergency Response increase because of achieved internal and external synergies and coordination? Intersectorial (UNICEF) Interagency and Interinstitutional: Integration of the different components of the</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>
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<p>response, for an integrated delivery; WASH-Nutrition, WASH-education; education protection; nutrition-health; ...</p>	
<p>9. What is UNICEF's added value in the ETA/IOTA response – particularly in comparison to other UN agencies responding to the crisis?</p> <p>10. What are the major factors which have influenced or led to internal and external coherence of UNICEF's response, or its lack?</p> <p>11. What can UNICEF learn from existing partnerships in the countries? How can UNICEF establish stronger partnerships with private sector, central governments, subnational authorities, civil society organizations, academia, among others, to better prepare for and respond to future emergencies in Central America?</p>	<p>Coherence</p>
<p>12. To what extent UNICEF short-term emergency activities were carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account (i.e., nexus)?</p> <p>13. How successfully have recovery considerations been incorporated into planning and relief interventions?</p> <p>14. How the emergency response was managed to link effectively with ongoing and future CPD (partners, geographical areas, sectors of interventions, etc.)?</p>	<p>Connectedness</p>

G. Approach and Methods

Overall design and approach

The methodology described in this section is indicative and participating evaluators are expected to adapt and integrate the approach and propose adjustments needed to undertake the assignment. These can include additions to the evaluation design; approaches to be adopted; appropriate sampling strategy; data collection and analysis methods; and an evaluation framework. The proposals should also refer to methodological limitations and mitigation measures.

The design of the evaluation will be non-experimental and adopt a utilisation focused in assessing the effectiveness of the UNICEF response to Eta and Iota. During the process the evaluation team will assess regional and country strategies for each intervention component, validate their appropriateness and effectiveness, and help stimulate reflection to inform the next phase of UNICEF's response to this regional crisis throughout the organization.

With a strong focus on utilisation, the approach of the evaluation will concentrate on engaging with the principle users of the evaluation process and report focusing on likely utilization and use of the findings and recommendation by all key stakeholders. UNICEF

country and regional offices, key stakeholders and focal points in national government ministries and departments, representatives at sub-regional and national level as far as possible, and UN partner organisations in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Mixed data collection methods will be used as far as possible. Discussions with stakeholders from regional and countries will largely provide qualitative evidence. The evaluation team will draw from the available quantitative data from recent evaluations, progress reports and other sources, including a desk review of existing secondary data and documentation (e.g. relevant findings from parallel inter-agency evaluations/ reviews; SitReps; HAC; needs assessments; monitoring indicators and reports; funding information; HR data; supply data; COs preparedness and contingency plans reflected in the Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP); focus group discussions and key informant interviews with a purposive sample of stakeholders (i.e. affected community members and leaders; UNICEF staff at country/regional/HQ levels; Government representatives; implementing partners; development and humanitarian partners and other UN agencies); and observation.

To guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility of the evaluation's findings, primary data collection and subsequent analysis will be sex and age-disaggregated, to the extent possible. Data collection should further attempt to gather the views of the diverse universe of stakeholders/social groups affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable (e.g. people with disabilities; hard-to reach communities; populations who have not moved from places of origin despite loss but have encountered significant destruction of assets and livelihoods; unaccompanied/separated children; returnees; resettled communities etc.). Data and information collected will be triangulated to ensure soundness and cross-validated at key points in time, as deemed relevant by the evaluation team, through in-country briefings with stakeholders.

With a strong focus on utilisation, the approach of the evaluation will concentrate on engaging with the principle users of the evaluation process and report – even if totally remote, it should also be as participatory as possible to be able to engage key stakeholders and trigger ownership both at the country, regional and headquarter level. The methodology is expected to be innovative, gender responsive and enable rigorous and systematic data collection and rigorous analysis, to allow for comparisons between countries and possible replications to other countries in the region.

The evaluators will assess the options and describe in detail the suitable methods to meet the purpose, scope and objectives of this evaluation. The methodology will be further refined in the inception phase, based on the findings of the Evaluability Assessment and consideration of constraints posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and measures out in place by Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Participatory approaches will be adopted as far as possible, but given the potential access constrains, these will be expected to be make use primarily of virtual means

Overall, the evaluation requires an analysis at the national and regional levels. Considering the strategic level focus, it is expected that evidence will be collected primarily through an extensive/comprehensive desk review, complemented by virtual key informant interviews and focus group discussions, online surveys, and other data or information, which deemed to be necessary to answer evaluation questions, can also be gathered from a review of secondary sources, such as: program documents, annual and quarterly progress reports, or records available with UNICEF/LACRO.

Triangulation

Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations are to be used for organizational learning, informed decision-making and accountability, and should be based on triangulated evidence. Multiple sources should be used to ensure that the findings can be generalized to the response and were not the results of bias or the views of a single agency or type of actor. Three types of triangulation methods are envisaged: 1) cross reference of different data sources (interviews and documentation), 2) triangulation through the different M&E regional focal point evaluators, and 3) review by UNICEF Staff and participants through the respondents' validation meeting and consultation with UNICEF and government key respondents during the report drafting process. Triangulation should allow the team to determine how much weight to put on different sources of information. The triangulation efforts will be tested for consistency of results, noting the inconsistencies do not necessarily weaken the credibility of results, but may reflect the sensitivity of different types of data collection methods. This is to ensure validity, establish common threads and trends, and identify divergent views.

H. Limitations and anticipated Challenges

At the time of writing this TOR the main limitation posed to the evaluation of UNICEF's response to hurricanes ETA & IOTA relates to the COVID19, which is affecting the Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua along with the rest of the world. To contain the spread of the virus some of these countries have closed their borders, schools and non-essential businesses, and established restrictions of movements and social distancing measures. Currently it is impossible to predict how the emergency will unfold in the coming months and whether constraints will ease, continue, or become more restrictive. This has an implication for the evaluation methodology and/ or timeframe. Together with the evaluability assessment during the inception phase, participating evaluators should identify methodological limitations in the proposal and how these could be overcome with alternatives. The timeframe proposed in this TOR is indicative and subject to review. Below are evaluation Guidelines, adapting UNICEF's Response Evaluation Planning and Implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

This evaluation should take into consideration the current methodological challenges that are affecting programmatic evaluation work during the COVID-19 pandemic and their likely impact on evaluation activities. The conduct of the different evaluation activities should be realistic in implementation expectations not only for the short-term but also for the remaining year and should strongly consider the use of remote and virtual methodologies for the implementation of ongoing and future evaluation activities from November 2021 through February 2022 to assess the possibility of implementation considering the current situation in each country, and should take into consideration the following guidance:

- a) Carry-out evaluability assessments for the different supported interventions to support reprioritization, rescheduling and preparing for forthcoming evaluation activities.
- b) Identify and plan for the implementation of data collection methods remotely (virtually) if necessary and possible, depending on the situation in-country, through remote data collection and the remote interviewing of stakeholders. Guidance is provided below.
- c) Implement evaluation activities in consultation with the UNICEF/LACRO evaluation team
- d) Do not place any consultant, stakeholders or beneficiary in harm's way and evaluation methodologies proposed should limit the exposure of stakeholders to the pandemic.
- e) Changes to evaluation plans should follow normal procedures with UNICEF/LACRO being informed of evaluation plan changes.
- f) Changes should be approved by UNICEF/LACRO Regional Evaluation Adviser and each UNICEF country offices and continue to be verified and approved basis by M&E regional focal point.
- g) Ongoing UNICEF response and country offices' evaluation activities should be completed virtually where possible.

Depending on the Covid-19 pandemic situation on the ground, relevant key informants, participants, and field sites may be unavailable/unreachable. In this regard, data collection methodology, sampling framework and approach may be compromised during the process.

Due to the fact that this evaluation may be all, or part carried out virtually, then consideration is given to the availability, capacity or willingness of stakeholders to be interviewed remotely. In addition, access to the internet or to a computer can be a problem as many countries and its government and national interlocutors may work from their homes. These limitations will be reflected in the evaluation progress reports from each country. If data collection / field mission is not possible, then interviews will be done remotely by phone or online (Skype, Zoom, Google Meetings, etc.). UNICEF Staff and partners can work remotely with on-site support from UNICEF/LACRO evaluation team. Safety comes first and no stakeholder, consultant or UNICEF staff can be put at risk.

Furthermore, key limitations may include the typical time constraints similar to those affecting other humanitarian response evaluations, access and availability of data in emergency contexts and the need to balance timeliness with depth of information and well-substantiated findings. Further challenges that can be anticipated relate to UNICEF's humanitarian response in Haiti which does not only focus on the earthquake response.

I. Norms and Standards

The evaluation needs to follow the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations (2016), as well as, UNICEF Ethical Guidelines. It also needs to respect UNEG Guidance on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation and the UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicators.

Guidance documents mentioned below are those that the Evaluation Team is expected to comply with:

- United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System 2016;⁹⁴ (including impartiality, independence, quality, transparency, consultative process);
- Ethical Guidelines for UN Evaluations;⁹⁵
- UNICEF Ethical Guidelines and standards for research and evaluation;⁹⁶
- UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality and UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality;⁹⁷
- Relevant ALNAP guidance for evaluation and humanitarian action evaluations of humanitarian action;⁹⁸ Results Based Management principles

J. Management and governance arrangements

LAC Regional Office

The Evaluation will be managed by UNICEF's LACRO Regional Evaluation and Emergency Advisors together with the three concerned country offices.

Evaluation Reference Group

An Evaluation Reference Group will be established to ensure ownership from relevant stakeholder groups of the evaluation process, provide expert advice, inputs and technical support as the evaluation unfolds. The Evaluation Reference Group should include representatives from Regional Office and Country Offices. The reference group will have the following responsibilities:

- a. Provide inputs in the inception phase to influence the approach of the evaluation, and, where necessary, provide information and institutional knowledge as key informants.
- b. Support the work of the evaluation team by facilitating connections with key informants and ensuring the team has relevant reference documents.
- c. Review selected evaluation products (e.g., inception report and draft / final report) and providing written comments to the evaluation team through the evaluation manager; and,
- d. Where feasible, contribute to the post-evaluation management response, action plan and dissemination strategy.

Country Offices

The Country Offices will be responsible for hosting the evaluation team and providing a workspace, and providing documentation, data and materials that is not readily available within the Regional Office. The COs will appoint a focal point for this evaluation who, in liaison and strong coordination with the LACRO, will provide logistical support and act as resource staff for the exercise, including helping to arrange for interviews with key stakeholders.

⁹⁴ UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016. Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

⁹⁵ UNEG Ethical Guidelines, 2008. Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

⁹⁶ UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, 2015. https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

⁹⁷ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>

⁹⁸ <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/alnap-evaluation-humanitarian-action-2016.pdf>

K. Evaluation Team composition, responsibilities and required qualifications

Team Composition and responsibilities

The evaluation will be conducted by a 3-person team including 2 international consultants (one team leader, one WASH and one other subject matter expert) and 1 national consultant⁹⁹. One member from UNICEF's LACRO will be 'embedded' in the team and will provide logistical support and assist with data collection and report writing. **Individual contracts will be issued to each team member.**

The evaluation team is expected to execute the following tasks:

- a) Develop a realistic work plan for the evaluation.
- b) Execute the evaluation to respond to the questions stipulated in the terms of reference (or subsequent revisions of the evaluation questions);
- c) Generate evaluation products and deliverables as shown in the table below, and in accordance with contractual requirements.
- d) Provide written responses to comments from the reference group, and update report; accordingly, and,
- e) Provide regular updates to the Evaluation Managers.

Required Qualifications

Team Leader

- i) extensive experience in emergency response, preferably with a UN agency
- ii) experience in conducting and managing multi-disciplinary evaluations, including evaluating rapid onset emergencies for UNICEF, other UN agencies or other international partners at the global, regional or country levels.
- iii) knowledge of latest methods and approaches in humanitarian evaluation, especially participatory methods and accountability to affected populations, and RTEs
- iv) familiarity with UNICEF's emergency response, including the Core Commitments to Children preferred
- v) excellent oral and written communication skills (in English)
- vi) knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods
- vii) experience managing a team
- viii) experience with the ethics of evidence generation; experience collecting data from vulnerable groups; familiarity with ethical safeguards

Senior Evaluator

- i) extensive knowledge of UNICEF's programmes in emergency contexts highly desirable, and of UNICEF's corporate emergency procedures preferred.
- ii) WASH/cholera or other technical expertise relevant to UNICEF's emergency operations
- iii) extensive experience in emergency response, preferably with a UN agency,
- iv) a minimum of five years' experience evaluating humanitarian action
- v) familiarity with UNICEF's emergency response, including the Core Commitments to Children
- vi) knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods
- vii) experience with the ethics of evidence generation; experience collecting data from vulnerable groups; familiarity with ethical safeguards
- viii) excellent ability to communicate and write in English

Three National consultants (one per country).

⁹⁹The primary responsibility of analysis and drafting the national reports should not fall under the national consultant.

- i) experience working on research, studies or evaluations
- ii) experience in primary data collection in affected communities; including leading focus group discussion and participatory methods
- iii) qualitative data analysis skills
- iv) experience in programme monitoring
 - v) experience with the ethics of evidence generation; experience collecting data from vulnerable groups; familiarity with ethical safeguards
- vi) good ability to communicate and write in English and French and local languages (Creole for National Consultants)

L. Timeframe and deliverables

Tentative timeframe and deliverables

Task/Deliverable	Expected date
Inception report, detailed methodology and working plan	Week 1 upon signature of contract
Evaluation tools (presentation for approval)	Week 2
Data collection and interviews (start)	Week 3
First draft of evaluation report (presentation for approval)	Week 6
Validation workshop	Week 9
Final reports (maximum 40 pages per CO and regional synthesis)	Week 10
Evaluation policy brief	Week 12

The Evaluation is expected to produce the following outputs:

1. Brief Inception Report (including detailed methodology, working plan / draft timeline summarizing key events and response)
2. Evaluation tools for data collection (surveys' questionnaires, interviews / observations guidelines);
3. Short interim reports (to be submitted prior to the consolidated report)
4. Concise and fully edited report in English, with country-specific sections and one consolidated section, including detailed timeline summarizing events and response¹⁰⁰
5. Oral briefings/PPT/workshop for different audiences at different points in time of the evaluation cycle, containing preliminary findings and emerging conclusions/recommendations.

M. Workplan

The final workplan will be determined in the inception phase, this provides an estimate of the envisioned workload (evaluation timeline). A workplan table should be developed by the evaluation team including the details and proposed milestones and dates to conduct the different evaluation activities and planned data collection.

TOTAL EFFORT EXPECTED 80 WORKING DAYS IN TOTAL FOR ALL THE TEAM

N. Assessment and scoring of technical proposals

Technical Proposal

Technical proposals will be assessed using the assessment grids maximum of 70; technical proposals scoring less than 50 points will be considered non-responsive; therefore, will be rejected. Content of the bidders' technical proposal to include:

- A. Table of content
- B. Presentation of the bidding institution or institutions in a consortium including:

¹⁰⁰The timeline will include both internal (UNICEF) milestones and external events.

- Name of the institution
- Date and country of registration/incorporation
- Summary of corporate structure (organogram) and business areas
- business areas and experience
- past two years' annual turnover (in USD)
- location of office or agents
- number of full-time employees and type (technical experts, technical, admirative, logistic and support staffs, financial staffs, etc.).
- in case of a consortium, the above listed elements shall be provided for each consortium members in addition to the signed consortium agreement.
- in case of a consortium, one only must be identified as the organization lead in dealing with UNICEF.

C- Narrative description of the bidding institution's experience and capacity in the following areas:

- Humanitarian evaluations
- Multi-country evaluations, studies, and research
- Evaluations done for UNICEF and any other major UN agency

D. List of similar/relevant past and on-going assignments carried out by the bidder in the past 7 years. UNICEF may contact reference persons for feedback on services by the bidders.

E. Fully reports or preferably links to full reports listed as examples of relevant past and ongoing assignments of the bidder (at least 3) on which the proposed key personnel directly and actively contributed or authored.

F. Methodology. It should minimize repeating what is stated in the ToR. There is no minimum length. If in doubt, ensure sufficient detail. Required content is as follows:

- Understanding of and comments on the context and rationale for the evaluation, and on UNICEF's response in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, on the evaluation scope, criteria, and questions.
- Understanding of, comments on, and in-depth analysis of the aspects of complexity, potential challenges, risks and ethical issues related to this evaluation exercise.
- Proposed evaluation design and methodology, with a sufficient level of detail on each phase and activity of the evaluation process, including on data to be collected to answer the detailed evaluation questions, envisaged data collection and analysis methods, the proposed sampling methodology and criteria to select the areas to be visited or remotely consulted, as well as the duration of the country visits and the number of evaluation team members participating. Attention should be paid to the issue of stakeholder participation; mix of qualitative and quantitative data and methods; data accuracy and triangulation.
- Comments and additional details details/suggestions on deliverables and management arrangements described in the ToR, if any
- Internal management and quality assurance procedures
- The presence of any local researchers or others not formally full-time members of the bidding institution should be indicated, with a description of how they will be engaged, trained, supported, and supervised.

G. Workplan, which will include as a minimum requirement the following:

- Detailed work plan based on the one proposed in the ToR, with comments and proposed adjustments, if any. It must be consistent with the general work plan and the financial proposal.

H. Evaluation team:

- Summary presentation of proposed experts

- Description of support staff if any (number and profile of research and administrative assistants · Level of effort of proposed experts by activity. It must be consistent with the financial proposal.
- CV of each expert proposed to carry out the evaluation.

The technical proposal will be assessed with the following criteria:

Maximum Points	Description
5	Company reliability and relevant experience (years of experience undertaking this type of assignment; thematic and geographic relevant previous experience.) If available hyperlinks and references should be provided. The organization profile and capacity (aptitude, availability, previous experience (2-3 samples of work in last 3 years), references, multi-country presence or proposed partnership, administrative and logistic support) will be reviewed.
30	Proposed methodology, evaluation framework, work plan and limitations (with alternatives) for meeting the deliverables in the ToR. Key consideration will be given to the comprehensiveness, clarity, relevance, logic, rigor, realism, practicality creativity and level of effort)
35	Team profile and capacity (experience, qualifications, references, mix and complementarity of expertise, availability, time allocation) Key consideration will be given to the team leader and team members experience: relevance in terms of geographic and thematic experience and experience in conducting evaluations in humanitarian settings and of multi-sector programs for children. CVs should include links to relevant evaluations as well as references (3) for each team member and if available for the company.

Financial Proposal

The total amount of points allocated for the financial component is **30 points**. The proposal should include a detailed budget:

- Consultant fees and number of days per team member
- Travel costs (as per UN guidelines) with explanation of budget assumptions with regard to planning, team composition, field work, etc.
- Any other expenses (including insurance, etc.)

For the final selection the maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price, e.g.:

Score for price proposal X = (Max. score for price proposal (**100 Points**) * Price of lowest priced proposal) / Price of proposal X Total obtainable Technical (70% of score) and Price score (30%): 100

The Proposer(s) achieving the highest combined technical and price score will (subject to any negotiations and the various other rights of UNICEF detailed in this LRPS) be awarded the contract(s).

The Financial Proposal must be organised in such a manner that it reflects the inputs shown in the technical proposal and distinguishes between Fixed Costs and estimate Reimbursable Costs against approved expenses. The following level of detail is requested as per example below:

A) Fixed Costs.

Provide details and subtotals for each of the following headings:

- Professional fees - Course Development. Give number of people, person days and rate.

- Professional fees - Course Delivery. Give number of people, person days and rate for all courses.
- Professional Fees - Final report and course resource pack. Give number of people, person days and rate.
- Others

B) Reimbursable costs

Provide well defined and itemized details for all estimate costs that the Bidders consider being reimbursable.

Add grand sub-total for above reimbursable estimate cost items.

Travel, if applicable –

- Please note, for travel to countries - it will be decided based on need and mutual agreements with UNICEF country offices.
- For capacity building and the regional workshops – please only include estimated cost for consultant, workshop materials and travel. The cost for the participants and venue will be covered by UNICEF regional/country offices.
- The selected organization will be responsible for all travel costs - flights, daily subsistence allowance etc. Any travel involved should be budgeted according to UN Travel Standards as a ceiling.

The Financial Proposal shall include a cost breakdown for the work phases as per the ToR, detailing the types of roles proposed and person days required, and related expenses and any other cost elements deemed relevant.

The proposal shall include a payment schedule linked to clearly defined milestones.

All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization.

The format shown below is suggested for use as a guide in preparing the Financial Proposal. The format includes specific expenditures, which may or may not be required or applicable but are indicated to serve as examples. Travel and per diems will not be noted, as this will later be determined and finalized by UNICEF and the chosen bidder.

Description of Activity/Item	Proposed Person (Job title/ function)	All-inclusive rate (Personnel)	No. of days proposed	Total Cost in US\$
1. Item 1:				
1.1 Personnel				
1.2 Other				
Subtotal Expenses:				
2. Item 2:				
2.1 Personnel				
2.2 Other				
Subtotal Expenses:				
3. Item 3:				
3.1 Personnel				
3.2 Other				
Subtotal Expenses:				

3.3 Reimbursable Travel Cost*				
Subtotal Expenses:				
Subtotal fixed cost:				
Subtotal reimbursable cost:				
Grand Total**				

***Travel.** Please note, for travel to countries - it will be decided based on agreements with UNICEF and contractor. For agreed country visits, the contractor will be responsible in administering its own travel. UNICEF will reimburse travel related expenses based on actual costs or on the below criteria whichever is lower and upon presentation of receipts.

Any travel involved should be budgeted according to UN Travel Standards as a ceiling.

-Travel: Please note that all travel will follow UN Circular:

https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/handbook/AI%202013%20%20%203%20%20%5BOfficial%20Travel%5D_1.doc

-Accommodation (Daily Subsistence Allowance, DSA): <http://icsc.un.org/> (all countries and destinations can be found by navigating on the map)

Endorsements and Approval			
Prepared by:			
Name:	Michele Messina	Date:	
Title:	Regional Adviser Emergency	Signature:	
Revised by:			
Name:	Riccardo Polastro	Date:	
Title:	Regional Evaluation Adviser	Signature:	
Head of Office Approval			
Name:	Jean Gough	Date:	
Title:	Regional Director	Signature:	

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

OECD-DAC Criteria	Core Humanitarian Standard	Questions	Exploratory in-depth questions (where required)	Data Collection Methods
<p>OVER-ARCHING QUESTION ONE: What are the main lessons learned from this sub-regional rapid onset disaster in terms of emergency preparedness and emergency response in the countries and the specific local places of intervention?</p>				
<p>OVER-ARCHING QUESTION TWO: To what extent has UNICEF humanitarian response and recovery efforts achieved their intended results (in terms of timeliness, scale, and quality, considering the HAC, response plans, monitoring and adherence to CCCs)?</p>				
<p>'Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy).' 'Appropriateness is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness accordingly.' 'Coverage is the need to reach major population groups facing life-threatening risk wherever they are.'</p>	<p>1. Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant.</p>	<p>1. Assessment To what extent were the interventions based on adequate/specific assessments? Were they appropriate and relevant to changing circumstances?</p> <p>2. Access Did the intervention design take into account specific barriers linked to gender and societal expectations, challenges faced by minorities (ie indigenous communities), vulnerable groups (eg unaccompanied children or children with disabilities, women and pregnant women, etc)?</p>	<p>1.2 Are there specific standardised tools for rapid needs assessment? Were these used either by UNICEF or by partners? Did they capture all the needs?</p> <p>2.1 Is there evidence in the EDANs and the planning processes of a focus on identifying the needs of highly vulnerable groups? What specific activities and approaches were developed to respond to these? How appropriate were they?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p> <p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p>

<p>'Effectiveness measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs. Implicit within the criterion of effectiveness is timeliness.'</p> <p>'Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output, to see whether the most efficient approach has been used.'</p>	<p>2. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Humanitarian Response is effective and timely.</p>	<p>3. Achieving objectives To what extent did the UNICEF response appropriately achieve its objectives? How did these results impact different groups of affected people?</p> <p>4. Preparedness What preparedness and contingency measures were in place before November 2020 at the CO and LACRO levels (risk assessments, capacity assessments [UNICEF COs, implementing partners, govt, interagency, etc])</p>	<p>2.2 What elements does UNICEF have at its disposal to ensure the inclusion of different groups of beneficiaries, overcoming difficulties of access, minorities and vulnerabilities? Are monitoring tools available and were they used?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p>
			<p>2.3 Given the logistical and geographical barriers of certain areas was the coverage adequate?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview, FGD Observation</p>
			<p>4.1 When did each CO last complete/review its preparedness planning through the Emergency Preparedness Platform (EPP)? What actions were put in place following this exercise?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>4.2. Were the Minimum Preparedness Standards (MPS) for COs/ROs met during the response to hurricanes Eta & Iota?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>4.3 To what extent is preparedness mainstreamed as a priority? To what extent is the need to invest in</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>

			preparedness clear to donors? What can be done to increase investment in preparedness?	
		<p>5. Meeting needs To what extent has the strategy carried out by UNICEF (in terms of supplies, logistics, communication, implementing partners) been effective in meeting the needs of the population? And to what extent have these been aligned with the CCCs?</p>	4.4 Were there stand-by agreements with the implementing partners? What did these cover (including distribution strategies)?	Document review, stakeholder interview
			5.1 Looking at the different supply models,(cash vs diferent types of in-kind) what have been the strengths/weaknesses of each, what informed each choice and what were the repercussions in terms of effectiveness?	Document review, stakeholder interview FGD
			5.2 What was the role of cash transfer as a supply model? What have been the sustainability implications of using/not using cash transfers?	Document review, stakeholder interview FGD
			5.3 To what extent do the COs have communications-advocacy incorporated as a priority in emergency response? What specific comms actions were taken in each of the COs?	Document review, stakeholder interview

		<p>6. Timeliness To what extent was there correct usage of the accelerated processes to ensure a timely response: PCA/HPD, Human Resources, Procurement, Finances, etc?</p>	<p>5.4 What role did the no-regrets approach play in the effectiveness of the response and to what extent was it shared by all offices?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p>
			<p>6.1 Impact of COVID-19 To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact upon UNICEF's abilities to respond in a timely fashion to the needs of the most affected women, girls, boys, men? What modifications had to be made to the MPS?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p>
		<p>7. Planning and monitoring How effective is UNICEF in terms of planning & monitoring? To what extent are there adequate planning and monitoring tools for emergency response (including monitoring tools used by implementing partners)? To what extent have they been adequately used to allow for appropriate adjustment of strategies?</p>	<p>7.1 Do COs and implementing partners have pre-designed tools adapted to data collection in emergencies? How were they used? Are they simple to use, relevant and flexible to the contexts?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>7.2 Is there a clear approach to data collection for programmatic fine-tuning purposes versus aggregated data for comms/fundraising purposes?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>7.3 Is disaggregated and regular data collection</p>	<p>Document review,</p>

	<p>8. Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Staff are supported to do their job effectively and are treated fairly and equitably.</p> <p>9. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.</p>	<p>8. LACRO and COs: role, responsibilities and relationships What were the main roles/responsibilities of COs and LACRO related to Eta/Iota (including leadership and decision-making)? Was the role of LACRO adequate (in terms of support and accompaniment) to respond to the needs of the COs related to Eta/Iota? To what extent has the relationship between LACRO and CO been a two-way relationship? To what extent has it contributed to developing a regional approach?</p>	<p>part of partner agreements?</p>	<p>stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>8.1 What elements informed the decision regarding the designation (L1-3) of the emergency? What were the operational consequences of this decision?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>8.2 Was LACRO able to adequately play its role related to the definition of response plan? How could this be strengthened?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>8.3 What lessons can be learned regarding decision-making and leadership in relationship to sudden onset disaster response?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>8.4 What is LACRO's position regarding the no-regrets approach? To what extent does it reach the approach of the COs? Is there a common view on this?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>8.5 Taking into account the common problems of the region, is there a platform for COs to share lessons learned from regional interventions or strategies (both from</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>

<p>'Connectedness refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account.'</p>	<p>3. Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.</p>	<p>9. Human resources Were the available human resources adequate for emergency response, both in terms of numbers and specific experience and training preparedness related to it, including MPS 1,2 and 3 (staff & surge related): ie emergency management team members and responsibilities, existing or additional HR for coordination, additional or extra HR for sectorial response (at scale)?</p>	present and past interventions?		
			8.6 To what extent has remote working due to the COVID-19 pandemic affected the LACRO support received by the COs?	Document review, stakeholder interview	
			9.1 Have staff received any specific training related to emergency response?	Document review, stakeholder interview	
			9.2 Was there any increase in human resources to deal with the emergency? Was it sufficient (in terms of quantity and competences)?	Document review, stakeholder interview	
			9.3 To what extent has remote working due to the COVID-19 pandemic affected UNICEF's ability to respond at the country level?	Document review, stakeholder interview	
			<p>10. Links between humanitarian action and development (NEXUS) To what extent were UNICEF short-term emergency activities carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account?</p>	10.1 How successfully have recovery considerations been incorporated into planning and relief interventions?	Document review, stakeholder interview FGD Observation
				10.2. Has the emergency response managed to link effectively with ongoing and future CPD (partners, geographical	Document review, stakeholder interview

<p>Coherence is 'the need to assess (relevant) ... policies to ensure that there is consistency and, in particular, that all policies take into account humanitarian and human-rights considerations.'</p>	<p>7. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.</p>	<p>11. Governments, Institutions, Counterparts What can UNICEF learn from existing partnerships in the countries which can inform its humanitarian response? How can UNICEF establish stronger partnerships with private sector, central governments, subnational authorities, civil society organizations, academia, among others, to better prepare for and respond to future emergencies in Central America?</p>	<p>areas, sectors of interventions, etc)?</p>		
		<p>11.1 What role did differences in the political contexts play in the reactivity of the response? To what extent could this have been foreseen and prepared for?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>		
	<p>4. Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.</p> <p>5. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle</p>	<p>12. Learning What processes has UNICEF put in place to systematically gather good practices and learning? How does this get disseminated and acted upon?</p>		<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>	
			<p>13. Accountability to affected populations To what extent were UNICEF's plans and actions informed by the results of active participation processes where the affected population had the voice and capacity to impact key decisions? Did UNICEF put in place accessible complaints mechanisms? What efforts were made to ensure that affected people knew about and used these mechanisms?</p>	<p>13.1 How were affected people involved in the development and implementation of UNICEF's response programmes?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p>
				<p>13.2 Were particular participation processes put in place to influence key decisions?</p> <p>13.3 What accountability and feedback measures were used? Are there concrete examples where activities were changed</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview FGD</p>

<p>'Coordination is the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilising resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labour, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership.'</p>	<p>complaints.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.</p>		<p>as a result of the views and opinions of the affected population?</p>	
	<p>6. Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.</p> <p>Quality criterion: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.</p>	<p>14. Coordination To what extent has coordination both internally within UNICEF (eg between sectors, COs, LACRO etc) and externally increased effectiveness?</p>	<p>14.1 How effectively has UNICEF coordinated its response both internally and externally (including with CSOs, partners, national and local governments)?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
		<p>15. Clusters/Sectors What was UNICEF's role/impact in coordinating the clusters/sectors?</p>	<p>15.1 Was there adequate coordination between the clusters/sectors and the governmental coordination platforms?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>15.2 Has UNICEF's role related to the coordination of clusters helped build capacity? Has it left behind elements that improve the country's capacity to respond to new disasters?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
			<p>15.3 Were there differences in impact between regionally activated clusters and nationally activated sectors?</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>
		<p>15.4 To what extent was the activation of clusters respond to capacities</p>	<p>Document review, stakeholder interview</p>	

		16. Inter-Agency How has UNICEF coordinated and collaborated with other UN agencies?	(capacity driven) or needs (needs driven)?	
			16.1 Are there examples of synergies and coordination between agencies? To what extent have these contributed to increasing or reducing the effectiveness of the response?	Document review, stakeholder interview
			16.2 Given the competition for funds within the UN, to what extent is UNICEF making the most of its added value? What more could be done?	Document review, stakeholder interview

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Annex 3: Itinerary of data collection visits

Date	Destination	Sector
22/05/2022	Travel from Europe to San Pedro Sula, Honduras	
23/05	San Pedro Sula / Las Palmas	Health
	Choloma / Los Bajos de Choloma	Child protection
24/05	Villanueva / CEB José Cecilio del Valle	Education
	Villanueva / Guaruma 2	Protection
25/05	San Manuel/ Escuela Centro América, Barrio el centro	WASH
	San Manuel/ CIS Guadalupe	Nutrition
	Travel to la Ceiba	
26/05	La Ceiba / Corazál, Centro de Alcance	Child protection
	La Ceiba / Estabecimiento de Salud Pizati	Health/WASH
	La Ceiba / Colonia Las Delicias	WASH
27/05	Travel to Puerto Cortés	
	Puerto Cortés / Baracoa, Centro de Salud La Fraternidad “Hernán Galeano”	Health/nutrition
28/05	Travel to Puerto Barrios, Izabal, Guatemala	
29/05	Analysis of initial findings (Honduras)	
30/05	Izabal / Oneida de Morales	WASH
	Izabal / Puerto Barrios	Protection
31/05	Izabal / Cacao Frontera	WASH
	Izabal / Jimeritos en Puerto Barrios	WASH
	Izabal / Puerto Barrios	Education
	Travel to Cobán, Alta Verapaz	
01/06	Alta Verapaz / Cobán – Centro Educativo Cooperativa Samac	Education
	Alta Verapaz / Cobán – Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta, Comunidad Sacanilla	Education
	Alta Verapaz / Cobán Secretaria de Bienestar Social (SBSA) de la Presidencia	Protection
	Alta Verapaz / Cobán (Helvetas)	WASH
02/06	Caserío Sesalo Quixal	WASH
	Travel to Guatemala City	
	Ministry of Education	Education
03/06	UNICEF Guatemala (interviews)	Protection, Education, WASH
04/06	Analysis of initial findings (Guatemala) Departure of consultant	
05/06	Travel from El Salvador/Guatemala to Nicaragua	
06/06	Travel to Jinotega	
	Comunidad Valle Los Garcias	Nutrition
	Comunidad Frank Tijerino	Nutrition
07/06	Comunidad la Brellera municipio de Pantasma	WASH
	Comunidad de Jiquelite municipio de Pantasma	
	Travel to Managua	
08/06	Travel to Puerto Cabezas	
	GRACCN (interviews)	
09/06	Wawa Bar	WASH
	Karata	
	GRACCN (interviews)	
10/06	Sisin	Education, WASH, Protection

	Auyaphini	
	Santa Martha	
11/06	Bismuna	Nutrition, WASH
	Wasla	
12/06	Travel from Waspam to Bilwi	
13/06	Krukira	Protection, WASH
	GRACCN (interviews)	
14/06	Travel to Managua	
	UNICEF office	Feedback meeting
15/06	UNICEF office (Interviews)	
	Departure of consultant	
16/06	Departure of second consultant	

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Annex 4: Interviews

Honduras

Nombre/Apellido	Cargo	Organización	
Terreno			
Ana Acosta	Responsable M&E	Child Fund	Las Palmas SPS
Isis Zabala	Responsable M&E, proyecto Las Palmas	Child Fund	Las Palmas SPS
Dra Bessie Garmendia	Médico General y Directora del Centro	Centro Integral de Salud (CIS)	Las Palmas SPS
Lic Heidi J. Trejo	Jefe de Enfermería	Centro Integral de Salud	Las Palmas SPS
Marisela Manteilh	Doctora	CIS (contratadas por Childfund)	Las Palmas SPS
Elena Rodriguez	Promotora de salud	CIS (contratadas por Childfund)	Las Palmas SPS
Rafael Feliú	Coordinador	COMVIDA	Villanueva
Karen Cruz	Técnica	CODEM/Comité de emergencia, alcalde	Villanueva
Edwin Mejía	Coordinador	ADRA	San Manuel, Cortés / Kinder de colonia Loma Linda, La Ceiba
Magda Pérez	Coordinadora	Fundación Pestalozzi	Villanueva, Centro Básico José Cecilio del Valle.
Leonela Membreño	Técnica	Comisión de Acción Menonita CASM / Fundación Pestalozzi	Villanueva, Centro Básico José Cecilio del Valle.
Dra Diana Gisela Espinel Méndez	Médico General y Directora del Centro	Centro Integral de Salud	Fraternidad
Glenda Amaya	Coordinadora del Centro	Centro de Alcance	La Ceiba, Corazál
Katya Reyes	Psicóloga	Centro de Alcance	La Ceiba, Corazál
Ligia Mencía	Especialista en Protección	Save The Children	Choloma, Cortés
Norma Mejía	Coordinadora en Respuesta Humanitaria para Protección	Save The Children	Choloma, Cortés
Ana Membreño	Emergencias	CODEM	San Manuel, Cortés
Carlos Andrade	Emergencias	CODEM	San Manuel, Cortés
Jesús Manueles	Técnico	ADRA	San Manuel, Cortés
Julio Amaya	Técnico	Ministerio de Educación, Dirección Distrital	San Manuel, Cortés
Edgardo Amaya	Técnico / Apoyo proyecto WASH Goal	CODEM	La Ceiba, Atlántida

Fabiola Ramírez	Jefe de Enfermería / Apoyo de proyecto WASH de ADRA y Proyecto Salud Childfund	Ministerio de Salud, Centro de Salud Pizzati	La Ceiba, Atlántida
Eugenio Zelaya	Técnico	ADRA	La Ceiba, Atlántida
Gabriela Ramos	Técnica	Save the Children	Puerto Cortés, Cortés
Entrevistas virtuales			
Edith Rivera	Subdirectora Honduras, Especialista en Emergencias	Save The Children	Entrevista virtual, Teg - Teg
Pablo Rodrigo Bustos Gallardo	Director Honduras - Guatemala	Childfund	Entrevista virtual Teg - Guatemala
Luis Thundle	Director Honduras	ADRA	Entrevista virtual Teg -Teg
Entrevistas con UNICEF HONDURAS			
Mark Connolly	Representante	UNICEF	Entrevista virtual
Christine Guinot	Especialista de Emergencias	UNICEF	San Pedro Sula
Roberto Rivero	Especialista en Política Social	UNICEF	Entrevista virtual
José Velez	Especialista en M&E	UNICEF	San Pedro Sula
César Villar	Representante adjunto	UNICEF	Entrevista virtual
Hernán Torres	Oficial de Educación	UNICEF	Sin respuesta
Carolina Carias	Oficial de WASH	UNICEF	Sin respuesta
Leonardo Mier	Especialista en Protección de la Niñez	UNICEF	Sin respuesta

Nicaragua

Nombre/Apellido	Cargo	Organización	Lugar
Carlos Jarquín	Especialista técnico de campo	Save the Children	Valle los Garcías
Marling Isamar Picado Chavarria	Enfermera	MINSA	Pls El Golfo
Urania Mejia Pozo	Responsable (y miembro de CAP)	Centro Educativo	Jiquelite #2
Senelia Garcia	Brigadista	MINSA	Valles Los Garcias
Eunice Raquel Garcia	Brigadista	MINSA	Valle Los Garcias
Juana Lidia Hernandez	Brigadista	MINSA	El Galope
Mario Alexander Lopez	Brigadista	MINSA	El Galope
Erich Jimenez	Especialista técnico de campo	Save the Children	La Breyera

Aminta de Mendez	Presidenta	CAP	La Breyera
Greta Picado Gutierrez	Tesorera	CAP	La Breyera
Ceferino Wilson	Gerente de planificación	GRACN	Bilwi
Jerónimo José Leman	Director	Centro Educativo	Wawa Bar
Johana Morales	Docente	Centro Educativo	Sisín
Maila Angélica Rodríguez Sarál	Docente	Centro Educativo	Sisín
María Esther Curthberth-Tucker	Directora	Escuela	Trimbach- Krukira
Carlos Lewis	Wista	Comunidad de Karata	Karata
Kent Joseph	Presidente	CAP	Karata
Jorge Canales	Director de Seguimiento y evaluación	GRACN	Bilwi
Eleanor Woods	Promotor de higiene	ACH	Waspam
Yaneli Castro	Promotor de salud y nutrición	ACH	Waspam
Ivania Lopez	Coordinadora	CODEPRED	Bilwi
Julio Cesar Choy	Coordinador	UTRASH	Bilwi
Dr. Desler Romero	Coordinador	Salud	Bilwi
Xiomara Castro	Coordinadora regional	UNICEF	Bilwi
Jorge Hernandez	Especialista en educación	UNICEF	Managua
Gretchen Robleto	Especialista en comunicaciones	UNICEF	Managua
Eduardo Gallargo	Representante adjunto	UNICEF	Managua/en linea
Fernando Jambrina	Especialista en Monitoreo y Evaluación	UNICEF	Managua/en linea
Maria Delia Espinoza	Especialista Supervivencia y Desarrollo Infantil y punto focal WASH	UNICEF	Managua.
Indiana Garcia	Consultora WASH	UNICEF	Managua

Guatemala

Nombre/Apellido	Cargo	Organización	Lugar
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Johana Mejía	Asesora de proyecto SAHTOSO	HELVETAS	Izabal
Juan Berrera	Técnico Salud Rural,	Centre de Salud	Morales
Anyin Lindsay Castañeda	Psicologa	Oficina Refugio de la Niñez	Puerto Barrios
Jacqueline Tatiana Morales	Trabajadora Social	Oficina Refugio de la Niñez	Puerto Barrios
Germán Díaz	Coordinador, saneamiento ambiental	Área de salud, Izabal	Izabal
Verónica Mendoza	Coordinadora enlace institucional	Municipalidad, Puerto Barrios	Izabal
Marina Izabel Novales Figueroa	Psicologa	Secretaria de Bienestar Social	Alta Verapaz
Francisco Moreno	Coordinador de Programa	IsraAID	Alta Verapaz
Edgar Antonio Chen Bac	Director	Departamento de Educación	Alta Verapaz
Marco Tulio Gonzalez Yalibat	Arquitecto	Departamento de Educación, Infraestructura Escolar	Alta Verapaz
Donald Orlando Macz Xol	Director	Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta, Aldea Samac	Cobán, Alta Verapaz
Gregorio Herrarte Herrera	Director	Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta, Comunidad Sacanilla	Cobán, Alta Verapaz
Wilbert Velásquez y Velásquez	Coordinador de Proyecto, asesor en WASH	HELVETAS	Cobán, Alta Verapaz
Angel Ba	Oficial de WASH	Asociación para el Desarrollo Rural Integral (ADRI)	Cobán, Alta Verapaz
Timoteo Tiul Pana	Director	Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta, Caserío Sesalo Quixal	Cobán, Alta Verapaz
Maira Ninet Ico San José	Miembro	Comité Santolic, Caserío Sesalo Quixal	Cobán, Alta Verapaz
Dora Alicia Muñoz	Oficial de Protección	UNICEF Guatemala	
Ileana Cofiño	Especialista de Educación	UNICEF Guatemala	
Edgar Fajardo	Oficial de WASH	UNICEF Guatemala	

Annex 5: Regional Interviews (LACRO)

Sebastian Carrasco	Planning
Maaïke Arts	Survive & Thrive Regional Adviser
Yvette Fautsch	Nutrition
Ana Catalina Fernandez Rojas	Child Protection
Sunny Guidotti	WASH specialist
Gerardo Escaroz	Social Protection
Maria Florencia Alejandre	Social Protection
Liza Gonzales	Human Resources
Alfonso Fernandez	Communications and Advocacy
Leon Casares	Operations
Pablo Llopis	S&L (procurement)
Ana Catalina Fernandez Rojas	PSEA
Debla Lopez	Gender & GBV
Yannig Dussart	ECD
Maria Paula Reinbold	ECD
Cynthia Brizuela	Disabilities
Maria Emilia Numer	Adolescents
Iñigo Cristobal	Emergency Preparedness (consultant)
Mjрко Rennola	Emergencies
Riccardo Polastro	Evaluation

Unavailable

Alban Nouvellon	WASH specialist
Jose Luis Chung	Partnerships (HACT)
Ruth Custode	Education specialist
Maryvonne Christ	Regional Operations Adviser

Annex 6: Focus groups

Honduras

Where	Partner	Participants	Role
Las Palmas	Ministry of Health, Child Fund	2 women	Volunteers
Centro Educativo San Manuel	CODEM	2 women, 3 men	Directora Unidad CODEM y Gestión de riesgo, Regidora Municipal, Director Municipal, Miembro de la comisión de comunicaciones de CODEM, Voluntario y miembro del CODEM y maestro educativo
	ADRA	3 men	Oficial de Emergencia y Programa, Especialista WASH, Capacitador (técnico WASH)
Choloma, Cortés	Save The Children	5 women	Beneficiarias y Voluntarias, comunidad de Los Bajos, Choloma
Villanueva Cortés, Centro Básico José Cecilio del Valle	Fundación Pestalozzi a través de CASM	3 women, 1 man	Maestr@s de Centro Escolar; Beneficiarios
Villanueva, Cortés, Guaruma 2	ADRA	5 women, 1 man	Beneficiarias de la comunidad de Guaruma 2
San Manuel, Cortés	ADRA	5 women, 2 men	Voluntari@s, Beneficiarios comunidades El Poole,
Corozal, La Ceiba, Atlántida	Goal	2 women	Trabajan en el Centro Integrado
Corozal, La Ceiba, Atlántida	Goal	1 woman	Beneficiaria (entrevista domiciliaria)
Oficinas de ADRA en La Ceiba	ADRA	5 women	Beneficiarias, vecinas de Colonia Las Delicias (entrevista en ADRA por razones de seguridad)
Centro de Salud, La Fraternidad, Cortés	Childfund	1 woman	Voluntaria, Beneficiaria
Oficinas Municipales en Estadio Excelsior de Puerto Cortés	Save The Children	3 women	Voluntarias, Beneficiarias de las comunidades de Puerto Cortés: Baracoa; Sector Campana, Colonia 6 de mayo y Chameleconcito, respectivamente

Guatemala

Place	Partner/Project	Number of participants	Role
Oneida, Morales	HELVETAS - Sistema de agua	3 women, 2 men	Members of the water committee
Cacao Frontera	HELVETAS Sistema de agua	2 women, 3 men	Members of the water committee

Jimeritos	HELVETAS limpieza de pozos	<i>2 mujeres, 2 hombres</i>	COCODE & community members
Caserío Sesalo Quixal	HELVETAS/ADRI - SAHTOSI	<i>6 mujeres, 4 hombres activos (20+ en total)</i>	Community members (Translator, Angel Ba, from ADRI)

Nicaragua

Place	Project/sector	Participants	Role
Valle los Garcías	Save the Children, nutrition	9 women (with under-5 children)	Community members
Jiquilite 2	Save the Children, WASH	8 women, 1 man	Community members & members of CAP
Wawa bar	WaterAid	6 women, 5 men	Community members & members of CAP
Sisin	Plan International	6 women, 5 men	Community members & members of CAP
Auhya Pihni	Plan International	3 women, 3 men	Community members & members of CAP
Santa Marta	Plan International	4 women, 1 man	Community members, school director & members of CAP
Bismuna	ACH	9 women, 3 men	Community members & members of CAP
Wasla	ACH	1 woman 1 man	Community members
Krukira	ACH	10 women, 4 men	Community members & members of CAP

Annex 7: Documents revised

También se revisó un gran número de documentos regionales (véase el informe inicial)

HONDURAS

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Nicaragua

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Annex 8: Guide for semi-structured interviews

Evaluación Eta/Iota

Entrevista semiestructurada - Cuestionario de base

Gracias por aceptar ser entrevistado como parte de la evaluación de la respuesta de UNICEF a los huracanes Eta e Iota.

Como en todas las evaluaciones, esta es una entrevista confidencial. Todas las contribuciones son estrictamente confidenciales y las citas utilizadas en el informe serán anónimas. La participación es totalmente voluntaria y si no desea responder a una pregunta, no hay problema. La entrevista debería durar unos 45 – 60 minutos.

Estas preguntas se han extraído de los Términos de Referencia, pero también se han complementado y ajustado a la luz de los comentarios recibidos a través de las entrevistas iniciales y la revisión de documentos.

El objetivo de la evaluación es aprender de la respuesta a esta emergencia para mejorar la respuesta en futuros desastres y valorar hasta qué punto la respuesta humanitaria de UNICEF logró los resultados previstos (en términos de relevancia, oportunidad, escala y calidad).

¿Tiene alguna pregunta antes de empezar?

Nombre:

Rol actual:

¿Que fue su rol antes, durante y después de Eta e Iota?

Cuéntenos un poco sobre esa experiencia

Pertinencia

- 1. Evaluación inicial** ¿En qué medida las intervenciones se basaron en evaluaciones adecuadas/específicas?
¿Existen herramientas estandarizadas específicas para la evaluación rápida de las necesidades? ¿Se han utilizado? ¿En qué medida utilizaron las herramientas los socios?
- 2. Acceso** ¿Se han tenido en cuenta en el diseño de la intervención las barreras específicas relacionadas con el género, minorías (comunidades indígenas) y grupos vulnerables (por ejemplo, los niños no acompañados o con discapacidades, las mujeres y las embarazadas, etc.)?
¿Existen pruebas en las EDAN y en los procesos de planificación de que se ha prestado atención a la identificación de las necesidades de los grupos altamente vulnerables? ¿Qué actividades y enfoques específicos se desarrollaron para responder a ellas? ¿En qué medida fueron adecuados? ¿De qué elementos dispone UNICEF para garantizar la inclusión de los diferentes grupos de beneficiarios, teniendo en cuenta los problemas de acceso, las minorías y las vulnerabilidades? ¿Se dispone de herramientas de seguimiento y se han utilizado?
- 3. Logro de los objetivos** ¿En qué medida la respuesta de UNICEF alcanzó adecuadamente sus objetivos?
¿Cómo repercutieron estos resultados en los diferentes grupos de personas afectadas?

Efectividad

4. **Preparación** ¿Qué medidas de preparación y de contingencia se pusieron en marcha antes de noviembre de 2020 a nivel de las oficinas país y de LACRO (evaluaciones de riesgo, análisis de capacidad (oficinas país, socios, gobierno, otras agencias UN etc.)?)

¿Cuándo fue la última vez que cada OC completó/revisó su planificación de la preparación a través de la Plataforma de Preparación para Emergencias (PPE)? ¿Qué acciones se pusieron en marcha tras este ejercicio? ¿Se cumplieron las normas mínimas de preparación (MPS) para las OC / OR durante la respuesta a los huracanes Eta e Iota?

5. **Respuesta a las necesidades** ¿En qué medida la estrategia llevada a cabo por UNICEF (en términos de suministros, logística, comunicación, socios ejecutores) ha sido eficaz para satisfacer las necesidades de la población? ¿Y en qué medida éstas se han alineado con los CCC?

Si examinamos los diferentes modelos de suministro, ¿cuáles han sido los puntos fuertes y débiles de cada uno de ellos, en qué se basó cada elección y cuáles fueron las repercusiones en términos de eficacia? ¿Cuál ha sido el papel de la transferencia de efectivo como modelo de suministro? ¿Cuáles han sido las implicaciones para la sostenibilidad de utilizar o no utilizar las transferencias de efectivo? ¿Existen pre acuerdos (standby agreements) con los socios de ejecución? ¿Qué cubren (incluidas las estrategias de distribución)? ¿En qué medida las OC tienen la comunicación incorporada como una prioridad en la respuesta a la emergencia? ¿Qué acciones específicas de comunicación se han llevado a cabo en cada una de las OC? ¿Qué papel desempeñó el no-regret approach en la eficacia de la respuesta y hasta qué punto fue compartido por todas las oficinas?

6. **Timeliness** ¿En qué medida se utilizaron correctamente los procesos acelerados de respuesta para garantizar una respuesta a tiempo? PCA/HPD, Recursos Humanos, Adquisiciones, Finanzas, etc.?

Impacto de COVID-19 ¿En qué medida la pandemia de COVID-19 repercutió en la capacidad de UNICEF para responder oportunamente a las necesidades de las personas más afectadas? ¿Qué modificaciones hubo que introducir en el MPS?

7. **Planificación y monitoreo** ¿Qué grado de eficacia tiene UNICEF en materia de planificación y monitoreo? ¿En qué medida existen herramientas de monitoreo adecuadas para la respuesta de emergencia (incluidas las herramientas de monitoreo utilizadas por los socios de ejecución)? ¿En qué medida se han utilizado adecuadamente para permitir un ajuste apropiado de las estrategias?

¿Disponen las OC y los socios ejecutores de herramientas prediseñadas y adaptadas a la recogida de datos en situaciones de emergencia? ¿Cómo se han utilizado? ¿Son fáciles de usar, pertinentes y adaptadas a los contextos? ¿Existe un enfoque claro para la recopilación de datos con fines de ajuste de las operaciones más allá de los datos agregados recogidos con finalidades de comunicación y recaudación de fondos? ¿Forma parte de los acuerdos con los socios la recopilación de datos periódicos y desglosados?

8. **LACRO y OC: papel, responsabilidades y relaciones** ¿Cuáles fueron las principales funciones/responsabilidades de las OC y de LACRO en relación con Eta/Iota? ¿Fue adecuado el papel de LACRO (en términos de apoyo y acompañamiento) para responder a las necesidades de las CO relacionadas con Eta/Iota? ¿En qué medida la relación entre el LACRO y la OC ha sido una relación bidireccional? ¿En qué medida ha contribuido a desarrollar un enfoque regional?

¿En qué elementos se basó la decisión relativa a la designación (L1-3) de la emergencia? ¿Cuáles fueron las consecuencias operativas de esta decisión? ¿Pudo LACRO desempeñar un papel en la definición de estrategias? ¿Cómo podría reforzarse? ¿Cuál es la posición de LACRO con respecto al enfoque de no regret? ¿En qué medida coincide con el planteamiento de las OC? ¿Existe una opinión común al respecto? Teniendo en cuenta los problemas habituales de la región, ¿existe una plataforma para que las OC compartan las intervenciones o estrategias regionales, tanto las actuales como las pasadas? ¿En qué medida el trabajo a distancia debido a la pandemia de COVID-19 ha afectado al apoyo de LACRO recibido por las OC?

9. **Recursos humanos** ¿Eran adecuados los recursos humanos disponibles para la respuesta a la emergencia, tanto en términos de número como de experiencia/formación específica?

¿Ha recibido el personal alguna formación específica? ¿Se incrementaron los recursos humanos para hacer frente a la emergencia? ¿Fue suficiente (en términos de cantidad y competencias)? ¿En qué medida el trabajo a distancia debido a la pandemia de COVID-19 ha afectado a la capacidad de respuesta de UNICEF?

Connectedness

10. **Vínculos entre la acción humanitaria y el desarrollo (NEXUS)** ¿En qué medida las actividades de emergencia a corto plazo de UNICEF se llevaron a cabo teniendo en cuenta problemas a más largo plazo?

¿En qué medida se ha tenido en cuenta en la planificación de la respuesta los aspectos relativos a la recuperación? ¿Ha conseguido la respuesta de emergencia vincularse eficazmente con el CPD actual y futuro (socios, áreas geográficas, sectores de intervención, etc.)?

11. **Gobiernos, instituciones, socios** ¿Qué puede aprender UNICEF de las alianzas existentes en los países? ¿Cómo puede UNICEF establecer asociaciones más sólidas con el sector privado, los gobiernos centrales, las autoridades subnacionales, las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y el mundo académico, entre otros, para prepararse y responder mejor a futuras emergencias en Centroamérica?

¿Qué papel desempeña el contexto político en la respuesta? ¿En qué medida se podía haber previsto y preparado?

Coherencia

12. **Aprendizaje** ¿Qué procesos ha puesto en marcha UNICEF para recoger sistemáticamente las buenas prácticas y el aprendizaje? ¿Cómo se difunden y se ponen en práctica?

13. **Rendición de cuentas a las poblaciones afectadas (AAP)** ¿En qué medida los planes y acciones de UNICEF se basaron en los resultados de un proceso participativo en el que la población afectada tuvo voz y capacidad para influir en las decisiones clave? ¿Puso UNICEF en marcha mecanismos de reclamación accesibles? ¿Qué esfuerzos se hicieron para garantizar que los afectados conocieran y utilizaran estos mecanismos?

¿Cómo participaron las personas afectadas en el desarrollo y la aplicación de los programas de respuesta de UNICEF? ¿Se establecieron procesos particulares de participación para influir en las decisiones clave? ¿Qué medidas de responsabilidad y retroalimentación se utilizaron? ¿Existen ejemplos concretos en los que se hayan modificado las actividades como resultado de los puntos de vista y las opiniones de la población afectada?

Coordinación

14. **Coordinación** ¿En qué medida la coordinación tanto a nivel interno de UNICEF como a nivel externo ha aumentado la efectividad?

15. **Clústeres/Sectores** ¿Cuál fue el papel/impacto de UNICEF en la coordinación de los clústeres/sectores?

Ha sido adecuada la coordinación entre los clústeres y las plataformas de coordinación gubernamentales? ¿El papel de UNICEF relacionado con la coordinación de los clústeres ha contribuido a mejorar las capacidades de respuesta? ¿Ha dejado elementos que mejoren la capacidad del país para responder a nuevos desastres? ¿Hubo diferencias de impacto entre la activación global y la sectorial de los clústeres? ¿En qué medida la activación de los clústeres respondió a las capacidades (capacity driven) o a las necesidades (needs driven)?

16. **Interagencias** ¿Cómo se ha coordinado y colaborado UNICEF con las otros agencias de UN ?

¿Existen ejemplos de sinergias y coordinación entre agencias UN ? ¿En qué medida han contribuido a aumentar la eficacia de la respuesta? Dada la competencia por los fondos en el seno de las Naciones Unidas, ¿en qué medida aprovecha UNICEF su valor añadido? ¿Qué más se podría hacer?

¿Hay algo más que quiera decirnos sobre la respuesta de UNICEF a Eta e Iota antes de que terminemos esta entrevista?

Muchas gracias de nuevo por su tiempo

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Annex 9: Guide for focus groups (communities, affected people)

La reunión inicia con la intervención del representante local del socio implementador, quien explica brevemente el objetivo de la reunión y presenta al equipo evaluador. Posteriormente, dicha persona se retira para evitar sesgos en la discusión.

Un miembro del equipo evaluador asume entonces la dirección de la reunión, y procede a una presentación de todos y todas las presentes, explicitando nombre y función. Posteriormente, procede a introducir la discusión, haciendo énfasis en los siguientes puntos:

El agradecimiento por parte del equipo evaluador por la disponibilidad de todos y todas los y las presentes;
Los objetivos de la evaluación, la cual pretende brindar elementos para mejorar las capacidades de respuesta de los socios implementadores y de UNICEF;
La confidencialidad de los aportes hechos durante la discusión;
La independencia del equipo evaluador, el cual no tiene ninguna relación contractual ni con el socio implementador ni con UNICEF;
La importancia de que todo el mundo participe y que cualquier aporte tiene valor;
La finalidad de la reunión en cuanto a que no se trata de señalar las fallas sino más bien de buscar la forma de mejorar para futuras emergencias.

Finalmente, se pide a la audiencia que haga preguntas si tienen alguna duda sobre el funcionamiento del grupo focal. Posteriormente, se procede a la discusión, y para contextualizarla, se pide a los y las participantes que se presenten y que relaten que fue lo que ocurrió cuando los huracanes Eta e Iota afectaron sus comunidades. Se les pide que comparen los efectos de ambos eventos, y si hay personas mayores, que hagan lo mismo con el huracán Mitch.

Posteriormente, se procede a tratar las preguntas de los 16 temas definidos en la matriz de evaluación (con referencia al guion en anexo 8), tratando, en la medida de lo posible, de seguir el orden establecido en la misma. Asimismo, se descartan preguntas en función de las audiencias (por ejemplo, en las comunidades, el equipo evaluador se abstiene de hacer las preguntas concernientes a la coordinación con otras agencias de Naciones Unidas). El equipo evaluador trata de profundizar cuando surgen temas de interés que no están necesariamente reflejados en la matriz de evaluación (como, por ejemplo, cuando surgen casos donde el liderazgo de las mujeres en la comunidad es muy marcado).

Al agotar los temas de la matriz de evaluación, se da por terminado el grupo focal. Se agradece nuevamente a los y las participantes por su disponibilidad y se les pide que expongan sus preguntas, en caso de que las haya.

Annex 10.1: Country report for Honduras

See part two (separate file)

Annex 10.2: Country report for Nicaragua

See part three (separate file)

Annex 10.3: Country aide memoire for Guatemala

See part four (separate file)

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