

## UNICEF Evaluation Management Response.

**Evaluation Title:** After-Action Review for Response to the Vanuatu Earthquake of 2024

**Region:** EAPRO

**Office:** Fiji Multi country -Office (MCO) & Vanuatu Field Office (VFO)

**Evaluation Year:** 2025

**Person-In-Charge for Follow-up to Management Response:** Diego López (Emergency Specialist) & Eric Durpaire (Chief of the Field Office – Vanuatu)

**Overall Response to the Evaluation:** MCO and VFO welcome the After-Action Review (AAR) of the Response to the Vanuatu Earthquake, and particularly its four recommendations, for which management responses have been outlined in the subsequent sections of this document.

The AAR methodology was primarily based on questionnaires and interviews circulated among a wide range of stakeholders, including UNICEF staff, Government of Vanuatu partners, implementing partners, and donors. To ensure strategic focus, the key recommendations are at a macro level and encompass both programme and operational aspects. In addition, these address critical systemic issues such as the humanitarian–development nexus, weak intersectoral coordination among line ministries and clusters, and the level of preparedness within Government of Vanuatu ministries. These are undeniably relevant areas for improvement, yet they extend well beyond the scope, objectives, and intended impact of UNICEF’s emergency response as defined in the Emergency Response Plan for the December 2024 earthquake.

<b>Allowed Editor:</b> <i>MCO Evaluation Team to add</i>						
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>						
<p><b>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1:</b> <i>PMCO should amend and/or update the terms of reference for the Pacific Emergency Management Team (PEMT) to include additional provisions and protocols to strengthen communication and coordination, and to devolve decision-making on technical choices to the field office level in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of UNICEF when implementing an emergency response.</i></p>						
<b>Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree):</b>						
<b>If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:</b>						
<b>Actions planned</b>	<b>Responsible Office</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Expected completion date</b>	<b>Implementation stage: Not started / Underway / Completed / Cancelled</b>	<b>Actions taken</b>	<b>Supporting documents</b>
<i>PHT 2023 / PEMT 2023: Draft and circulate proposed amendments to the PEMT Terms of Reference (ToR) to incorporate strengthened communication protocols and a framework for delegated technical decision-making to field offices, based on inputs from the September Emergency Technical Working Group meeting.</i>	<i>MCO</i>	<i>Diego Lopez</i>	<i>March 2026</i>	<i>Underway</i>	<i>Working group meeting with technical emergency focal points to identify the areas for improvement.</i>	<i>ToRs updated</i>
<i>Include in the Next CPD specific role for emergency preparedness and response at the field office level, including information management roles.</i>	<i>MCO</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>February 2028</i>	<i>Not Started</i>		<i>CPD</i>

**RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:**

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: *PMCO Programmes and Operations teams, in collaboration with field offices, should review standard operation procedures (SOPs) for activities that are most critical during an emergency response and develop simplified workflow diagrams to be incorporated into emergency preparedness and other capacity building activities, as well as provide a clear strategy and directive for sourcing surge personnel and for making necessary pre-arrangements with national governments to enable their timely deployment during emergencies.*

**Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree):**
**If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:**

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started / Underway / Completed / Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
<p><b><u>Education Contingency Plan:</u></b> Support Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in finalizing and operationalizing the Education Contingency Plan and continue collaboration with MoET and NDMO to ensure implementation of the contingency plan at the national, provincial and school level, launched in August 2025, including capacity-building activities and integration into emergency preparedness systems.</p>	VFO	Ana Azevedo	December 2025	Completed	VFO supported MoET (Mar to Sep 2025) the development of the Education Contingency Plan. This was developed in coordination with NDMO and launched by the MoET in Aug 2025.	MoET Contingency Plans (Nat and Prov)
<p><b><u>WASH, Education, Nutrition, and Child Protection (sub)Clusters:</u></b> Continue co-leading WASH, Education, Nutrition, and Child Protection clusters and sub-clusters with the Government of Vanuatu to strengthen and reinforce support to line ministries to address preparedness challenges, including coordination, capacity-building, and integration of contingency measures into sectoral plans, including the lessons learned from the cluster feeding into cluster response plans.</p>	VFO	Sectors' lead	June 2026	Underway	UNICEF VFO directly co-leads (with GoV) on the mentioned clusters and sub-clusters. To continue, there is need for strengthened and reinforced support to partners to address the preparedness challenges within line ministries. WASH has assisted with the lessons learned process and updating the SOP for WASH cluster.	<p><b>Nutrition:</b> NHEOC ToR and Nutrition Sub-Cluster SOP</p> <p>Updated WASH cluster and lessons learned workshop report.</p>

					<i>CP supported development of CPiE TOR, SOPs, and rapid assessment tool, and more recently providing input into the restructuring of the Gender and Protection Cluster to ensure CP focus is still prominent</i>	<i>CPiE TOR, SOPs and rapid assessment tool.</i>
<b><u>Pacific Emergency Roster:</u></b> Develop a Pacific Emergency Roster for rapid activation during emergencies Design and implement a regional roster system to ensure timely deployment of qualified personnel in response to emergencies across Pacific Island countries.	<i>MCO/PC</i>	<i>P&amp;C</i>	<i>September 2026</i>	<i>Not Started</i>		
<b><u>National Operations Officer:</u></b> Create and recruit for a new NoA Operations Officer position	<i>MCO/VFO</i>	<i>P&amp;C</i>	<i>April 2026</i>	<i>Underway</i>	<i>To address the issues mentioned within UNICEF Operations, MCO/VFO have agreed to create a new position as NoA Operations Officer. Position was created during Sep 2025 PBR. Recruitment to be initiated.</i>	

**RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:**

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: *Recommendation 3: Vanuatu Field Office should explore opportunities to further enhance multi-sectorality in its programming, beginning with internal coordination across UNICEF sector teams to identify areas for integrated service delivery, and then extend to collaboration with government partners to strengthen multi-sectoral programme convergence.*

**Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree):**

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started / Underway / Completed / Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
<p><b>MHPSS:</b> Advance the MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) initiative in collaboration with MoH, MoET, and MoJCS to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination between Health, Child Protection, and Education sectors within UNICEF to ensure integrated MHPSS services following emergencies</p>	VFO	Susan Andrew	April 2026	Underway	<p>Following the earthquake and the high level of demand, UNICEF has initiated the MHPSS initiative, bringing together MoH, MoET and MoJCS as well as Health, Child Protection and Education sectors for technical discussions. In addition, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health's MHPSS working group to review progress against the national MHPSS policy &amp; plan of action and initiate a prioritisation exercise to guide future programming investments. UNICEF is also supporting a range of capacity building activities that ensure the integration of MHPSS elements (e.g. ECE training) and dedicated initiatives (e.g. I Support My Friends). Furthermore, UNICEF is working across justice, health and education ministries on minimum standards and accreditation for counsellors.</p>	

<p><b>Early Childhood Development:</b> Implement ECD activities in coordination with Education, WASH, Child Protection, Social Policy, and Education.</p>	<p>VFO</p>	<p>Ana Azevedo</p>	<p>December 2026</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<p>Distribution of ECD kits to schools. Training of 130 ECCE teachers and 8 directors from earthquake affected areas in Shefa. The integrated training package includes sessions on disability, child protection, and MHPSS.</p>	
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**RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:**

**Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4:** *Given the importance of maintaining a strong and agile programme in Vanuatu, UNICEF would benefit from undertaking further reflection on how its programmes can be better led at the field level during emergencies, and on how to strengthen the application of the humanitarian-development nexus approach in the context of Vanuatu.*

**Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree):**
**If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:**

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started / Underway / Completed / Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
<p><u><b>NDC / NAP / CCRI: Ensure integration of child rights and social services within national climate change policy frameworks (NDC, NAP) and CCRI</b></u>            Continue active engagement in Vanuatu's climate change policy processes to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and continue updating and upgrading the CCRI for better understanding of geographical differences in the impact of climate change to children.</p>	VFO	Kenta Sayama	December 2026	Completed (NDC/CCRI) In Progress (NAP)	In the context of Vanuatu, the issue of humanitarian-development nexus is highly addressed through the climate change windows. In this regard, VFO is highly involved in ensuring the inclusion of children and social services issues within the national climate change policy documents such as the NDC and NAP. In addition, CCRI enables better understanding of geographical vulnerabilities	