



**PARTICIPATORY REVIEW (EVALUATION) OF THE
UNICEF RESPONSE TO THE
REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CRISIS IN EUROPE
2015-2017**

Executive Summary

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Introduction

In 2015, over one million refugees and migrants, entered the European continent by sea, predominantly from Africa and the Middle East. By the end of 2017 over 1.8 million people had arrived in Europe including an estimated 432,000 children, representing 23 per cent of the total. In the face of the gravity and complexity of the situation, UNICEF launched a crisis response for affected children, building upon the ongoing work of UNICEF national committees (Natcoms) and the UNICEF EU office in Brussels. Two years into the response, and recognising that migration will be a continuing issue for Europe, UNICEF decided to take stock of its experience to learn how it might adapt its approach for future engagement on these issues.

Purpose: This participatory review was undertaken by Vine Management Consulting between November 2017 and April 2018, with the following purposes: To inform the future engagement of Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) on migration issues in Europe, as a whole and in differing country contexts; to inform the future role of Natcoms on these issues, and to contribute relevant experience to UNICEF's global engagement on these issues. The review covered the two-year period from September 2015 to September 2017.

Focus: The review focused primarily on five high-income countries (HICs) with a combined UNICEF and Natcom 'One-UNICEF' crisis response, namely; Austria, Italy, Germany, Greece and Slovenia and has analysed the progress made in delivering against the three pillars that formed the basis of the response, namely: technical assistance, advocacy and communication, and service delivery.

Audience: The primary audience for the Review was the Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia region (ECARO), in her role as Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant response. Other key stakeholders were the Reference Group, ECARO, Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP), other UNICEF regional offices and HQ divisions, plus the Natcoms. The review was overseen by an interdivisional Reference Group, chaired by the Special Coordinator.

Methodology

The methodology comprised: Document review of more than 150 documents were reviewed; 50 key informant interviews with stakeholders at HQ and regional level, and a further 100 interviews conducted during country visits, with UNICEF, Natcoms, Government, UN, INGOs and civil society organizations; two online surveys, one for partners and a second for UNICEF and Natcom staff, with 59 and 83 responses, respectively; an 'Options' workshop held in Geneva before the draft report was compiled to validate the review's preliminary findings and to begin an internal debate on future options.

Refugee and Migrant Response

In response to the rapid increase in the flow of refugees and migrants entering Europe during 2015, on 16 September the UNICEF Executive Director issued a Global Broadcast appointing the Regional Director for CEE/CIS as the Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe. The UNICEF Global Management Team (GMT) approved an Action Plan, and the crisis was designated a status similar to a Level 3 emergency (L3), giving the Special Coordinator access to the UNICEF tools for an L3 response.

Results for Children

Using data from UNICEF Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) reports, the following results for children were achieved by UNICEF over the two-year period of the refugee and migrant response under

review.¹ (HPM results, which focus mainly on service delivery, are detailed in section 5, while achievements under technical support and advocacy and communication are discussed in Section 6).

2015 only

# of children reached in child-friendly spaces	64,200
# of babies reached in mother and baby corners	26,800
# of children reached with winter clothes and other non-food items	49,100

2016 and 2017 to September, cumulative

# of children (boys and girls) who received psychosocial and other community-based child protection support in family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corners	103,980
# of frontline workers trained on child protection standards/child protection in emergencies	5,633
# of at-risk children (including UASC) identified through screening by outreach teams and child protection support centres	16,320
# of children aged 6-17 including adolescents participating in structured education activities	13,968
# of children receiving school materials	5,826
# of children (3-5 years old) benefitting from early childhood activities	886
# of infants (under 2) who accessed mother and baby care centre services, including health services and nutrition services	10,696
# of mothers benefitting from infant and young child feeding counselling at family support hubs, child friendly spaces and mother-baby corners	8,571
# of children receiving culturally appropriate non-food items	9,490
# of children vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases (e.g. measles, diphtheria and polio)	12,000
# of children who received basic supplies (including clothing and baby hygiene items) to protect them from weather conditions and keep good personal hygiene	64,239
# of children and women reached with hygiene promotion and awareness activities	6,101
# of children including adolescents who participated in life-skills education	2,289

Innovations and good practices

The One-UNICEF response has demonstrated innovation and good practices in all three strategies employed.

Good practices in technical support:

- The process of developing the minimum standards for reception and accommodation centres² (Germany)

¹ Note that data presented for 2015 and 2016 does not account for double counting and counts number of times services were accessed as opposed to individual children who received support over time and across countries. Another limitation to this data is that indicators were set by individual countries thus making compiling the data challenging. The methodology for 2017 was adjusted to avoid double counting and reflects the number of children accessing services.

² Terminology for reception and accommodation centres varied by country from asylum centres, refugee centres, reception centres and accommodation centres. In this report, the use of “accommodation centres” refers to all centres where refugees and asylum seekers were received and/or housed.

- The placement of well qualified consultants within government bodies (Greece, Italy)
- Mapping of Child Protection Systems (Slovenia, Greece)

Country level good practices in advocacy and communications:

- The joint report of the UK Natcom and French Natcom 'Neither Safe nor Sound' helped to influence their governments to speed up the Dublin procedures, helping 750 children to reach the UK from France
- For International Migrants Day, in Greece, UNICEF arranged for 20 unaccompanied children from safe zones to meet to the President of the Hellenic Republic
- In France, Natcom volunteers helped to monitor the condition of children dispersed from the Calais 'jungle' to centres around France

And good practices in service delivery:

- 'Blue Dot' Child and Family Support hubs, a joint initiative of UNICEF, ICRC and UNHCR, provided combined services in one location, including; psychosocial support, legal support, care for mothers and infants, recreational activities and referrals
- The U-Report system in Italy provided real time feedback from 500 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and data is shared with the Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents in Palermo
- In Slovenia, cultural mediators, often refugees themselves, work to ensure that services are culturally appropriate and that the needs of children are highlighted
- In Skaramagas camp in Greece, the British Council offers innovative non-formal education for several refugee nationalities and prepares children to enter the formal school system
- Also in Greece, UNICEF has supported a Lebanese NGO to provide balanced-literacy approach mother-tongue training to teachers and field coordinators, in a multicultural, multilingual environment
- In Croatia and Serbia, UNICEF prioritised infant and young child feeding support to women on the move, who were not breastfeeding due to of lack of privacy, exhaustion and misinformation.

Key Messages from the Review

❖ *Migration into Europe continues*

While Europe may not see the volume and speed of inward migration witnessed in 2015 again, inward migration continues, mainly into Italy and Greece. Long-term trends are hard to predict and there may be further spikes in migration.

❖ *The crisis exposed gaps in national capacities and systems in HICs in Europe*

The refugee and migrant crisis exposed weaknesses in child protection systems in some high-income countries in Europe. Some authorities have contravened children's rights through administrative detention, refoulement, and drawn-out asylum procedures. While differing between countries, gaps in child protection capacity, policy and systems remain substantial. With the increasingly negative public attitudes to inward migration across Europe, governments may not be motivated to improve their approach without pressure from child rights organisations and from the European Union.

❖ *UNICEF mounted a minimal response in HICs during the emergency phase*

UNICEF mounted a quick crisis response in some programme countries but not in non-programme countries, where, aside from the strong advocacy and communications by UNICEF and the Natcoms, there was very little direct support provided to children by UNICEF in the nine months after the UNICEF Executive Director's emergency declaration. UNICEF was held back by a series of organisational and bureaucratic challenges. As a result, UNICEF and the Natcoms lost public profile and position with the

authorities, but subsequently recovered their reputation. UNICEF will not be able to respond quickly to future crises using the same processes employed for this response.

❖ *UNICEF put children's rights 'on the map' in HICs*

During the response, UNICEF and the Natcoms succeeded in “putting children on the map,” highlighting the unique needs and rights of refugee and migrant children in this crisis and making this group a policy priority, both for governments and for human rights bodies in the countries reviewed. This represents the single most important achievement of the One-UNICEF response.

❖ *UNICEF's role was relevant and has added value*

Given the limited scale of UNICEF's response, it was appropriate that UNICEF focused on child protection, a niche it filled successfully. By the time of the review, UNICEF's counterpart government ministries and bodies were highly appreciative of UNICEF's work as an independent, expert, standard-setting international organisation, able to analyse children's rights issues and make constructive policy and practical contributions to the improvement of national and local systems. In most cases, this complemented the already strong relationship that the Natcom had with government partners. Partners were also appreciative of UNICEF's ability to convene international and national actors to drive change and push a child rights agenda.

❖ *The One-UNICEF response model was partially successful*

The One-UNICEF model, and its accompanying Framework for Collaboration, was an innovative approach to bringing Natcoms and UNICEF together to contribute to a combined UNICEF response to the refugee and migrant crisis. There were important joint achievements, especially in advocacy and communications. UNICEF and Natcoms gained a much better understanding and appreciation of each other's work as a result of their experience of implementing the 'One-UNICEF' approach. Both UNICEF and Natcoms have been committed to making collaboration work but there have also been tensions. Important issues of leadership and accountability are still to be resolved.

❖ *UNICEF has strengthened its policy and capacity on migration*

UNICEF regions, including ECARO, were addressing refugee and migrant rights before the 2015 crisis but migration has only recently become an organizational priority for UNICEF, and the issue was previously neglected at the corporate level. UNICEF has now made up ground. It has developed policy and advocacy positions around migrant and refugee children, and increased its human resources working on the issue, though probably not sufficiently to play a leading role in this area. UNICEF has undertaken important research and generated high quality publications on the challenges faced by refugee and migrant children in Europe.

❖ *Equity gaps were not well monitored*

Neither the governments nor UNICEF have the situation analysis or collective response tracking processes to determine the gaps in the realisation of refugee and migrant children's rights gaps in the countries reviewed. Some positive initiatives in child rights monitoring (CRM) are highlighted in the report, yet CRM remains a challenge. There are gaps in information regarding the risks to, and abuse of, refugee and migrant children's rights including the extent to which the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) have been met for them. The review team did not find evidence of UNICEF monitoring equity gaps and, apart from the early months of the response.

❖ *Senior UNICEF and Natcom staff managed ambiguity*

The two Special Coordinators and other senior staff managers have shown flexibility and skill in navigating a response for which there was no precedent or pre-set procedures. Senior staff have shown capacity to

manage ambiguity and find solutions in a context where many actors need to be engaged to achieve a result and where accountability was not always clear.

❖ *There is a demand for some elements of the response to continue*

UNICEF response teams, ECARO, PFP, Natcoms and the majority of government and other partners consulted agree that aspects of the work started under the refugee and migrant response should continue, especially capacity development, standard-setting, policy development, advocacy and communications, and child rights monitoring.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Assure the short-term future of One-UNICEF responses that are closing

❖ UNICEF should determine how those initiatives started during the refugee and migrant response that the governments want to see continuing can be assured.

Recommendation 2: Complete the development of the One-UNICEF response model

❖ UNICEF should resolve outstanding challenges within the One-UNICEF response model, using Italy as the case study.

Recommendation 3: Determine the future role of UNICEF in HICs Europe

❖ UNICEF should determine whether it intends to increase its attention to child rights issues in European HICs.

Recommendation 4: Determine future UNICEF and Natcom response to crises HICs in Europe

❖ UNICEF should determine whether and how UNICEF and/or the Natcom should respond to future crises, large or small, in HICs in Europe, in a way that ensures rapid deployment, working through the Options in 10.4. UNICEF must clarify the process required for a formal agreement with governments of non-programme HICs should another crisis response be required.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen UNICEF cross-regional programming on migration

❖ UNICEF should strengthen its cross-regional programming on migration, tapping into resources that donors appear keen to provide for such initiatives, and task the Directors Group on Migration to develop route-based cross regional programming on migration.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen UNICEF collaboration with UNHCR and IOM

❖ UNICEF should maximise the potential benefits to refugee and migrant children by strengthening its work with UNHCR and IOM at regional and country levels, building on the good regional cooperation during this crisis and taking advantage of the new global refugee and migration compacts due to be agreed in 2018.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen UNICEF advocacy on EU funding instruments for migration

❖ UNICEF should strengthen its influence at Brussels level over the regulations covering the country level application and oversight of the very substantial European funds going to migration initiatives within and beyond the EU to improve outcomes for refugee and migrant children.

Recommendation 8: Explain UNICEF's role to HIC governments in Europe

❖ Some HIC governments in Europe do not understand UNICEF's role well, but they need to, including the different roles played by UNICEF and Natcom. UNICEF should explain their respective roles to individual governments.

Recommendation 9: Present key elements of the review findings to the Global Management Team

- ❖ The Regional Director should present key elements of the review that have organisation-wide implications to the Global Management Team, and UNICEF may wish to include aspects of review findings in the background paper for the Executive Board's next discussion on UNICEF's role in HICs.

