

Evaluation Management Response Document

Region: ECAR

Office: Romania

Evaluation Year: 2021

Evaluation Title: Romania, Summative evaluation of the Quality Inclusive Education component of the "Social inclusion through the provision of integrated social services at community level" modelling project, 2014-2018

Person In Charge For Follow Up to Management Response: Luminita Costache

Overall response to evaluation

The evaluation of a complex model required a complex process and complicated evaluation matrix that was rigorously followed, safeguarding quality standards in data collection and ethical principles. Since the evaluation has many recommendations structured in categories for UNICEF and others for national, county and local authorities, for the management response, the decision was to focus exclusively on the recommendations for UNICEF and try to cluster them by few major issues to be addressed. The management response follow-up actions will be included in the Country Office work plans and will be used as inputs in the development of the new CPD.

Planned Use of the Evaluation

Considering the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the use of the evaluation is manifold (extract from the evaluation report): - supporting the advocacy for scaling-up the QIE, using the lessons learned in modelling to design the best possible policy, ensuring that legislation and policies incorporate an adequate focus on quality and inclusiveness of the education system; - support the process of revising the education related strategies and the education legislative framework - providing evidences and data to plan and mobilize resources from the national and local budgets, as well as for leveraging funds from the EU Structural Funds, Recovery and Resilience Plan and from other sources (EEA & Norway grants or others) to ensure the sustainability at local level and replicability of the model developed at national level; - providing best practices and evidences on reliable results to the national, county and local public authorities with responsibilities in the field of education, aiming at the continuity/ replicability of the model; - informing partners from parliament and civil society that were involved during the implementation and that can learn about the benefits of QIE and promote it through their respective channels; - supporting the fundraising processes of UNICEF, since the evaluation will be shared with the donors that supported the project, institutional and private, to document what was the effect of investing in the modelling project; - representing a knowledge management tool, as well as a priority topic of interest within future horizontal cooperation initiatives in Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) region and beyond.

Recommendations and Actions

No.	Recommendations/Actions	Responsible Section (Action)	Responsible Person Name (Action)	Expected Completion (Action)	Mgt Response / Implementation Stage	Reason/Action Taken
1	When the implementation of the model is continued and rolled out, a number of additional activities and outputs should be also considered, particularly: leadership training for school headmasters; continuous support activities (mentoring / coaching) for kindergarden teachers; activities to ensure the continuity of parents' involvement in their children's long-term lives, customised / practical / applied to concrete situations; with examples relevant to the specific types of community needs.				Agree	
1.1	Develop and implement a scale-up strategy based on use of Recovery and Resilience Fund and EU structural funds)	Romania CO	Gabriel Vockel, Eduar Petrescu, Lurr Costache	12/30/2022	Completed	
1.2	Include in the modelling initiatives of UNICEF in the area of education a number of additional activities as recommended	Romania CO	Luminita Costache	12/30/2022	Completed	Additional activities included in the QIE transition modelling, such as: mentoring, coaching, carrier counselling, additional parenting themes Additional activities included in the Romania Grows with you model are addressing the recommendations focused on ECEC. Additional activities included in ECEC model are mentoring, coaching, peer support, sharing of good practices
1.3	Include additional activities in the new model of integrated response to reduce children's social exclusion and poverty, build upon evidence and lessons learned from QIE modelling project	Romania CO	Gabriel Vockel	4/29/2023	Completed	Additional activities in line with the recommendations were included in the education area based on the needs assessment of the schools involved in the project

2	QIE roll out should take into consideration different needs of schools involved, from the perspective of quality and motivation of human resources including school headmasters, of vulnerable categories presence/predominance in school, especially Roma children and, in the same vein, from the perspective of rural and urban dimension.				Agree	
2.1	School mapping initiative supported by UNICEF. Lack of disaggregated data and lack of key stakeholders willingness to cooperate in connecting various database.	Romania CO	Luminita Costache	12/30/2023	Cancelled	Build the capacity of the education system to further develop the EMIS in order to be able to have real time data on each school situation with regards to infrastructure, human resources, inclusion, quality.
2.2	Advocacy for implementing MICS in Romania	Romania CO	Viorica Stefanescu	12/30/2022	Completed	Presentations to stakeholders on the added value of MICS compared to currently data collection systems; Looking for funding options and opportunities to complement budget required for implementation of MICS (even partially).
2.3	Schools needs assessment in QIE transition modelling	Romania CO	Luminita Costache, Cristina Badea	12/30/2022	Completed	Assessment of the school needs and readjustment of the interventions
2.4	Schools needs assessment in UNICEF project for FRDS/Norway	Romania CO	Cristina Badea	12/30/2022	Completed	Assessment of the school needs
3	In planning and performing QIE's roll out, the integrated approach should be maintained, as one of the key strong points of the project. However, responsible actors need to include in any case, in the customised packages delivered at school level, comprehensive training for a majority of teachers in school (differentiated by levels of seniority/experience) as well as equipment and didactic materials, in complementarity with recent measures taken to ensure on-line schooling. In the same vein, activities targeting non-discrimination and tolerance should be continued and enhanced, for the aimed change to occur.				Agree	
3.1	Develop the integrated review of MPS and Quality Inclusive Education Package based on their independent evaluation	CO	Eduard Petrescu	12/30/2021	Cancelled	Due to the situation created by the COVID crisis and by the refugee crisis the capacity of the office to conduct this activity was reduced and the activity is no longer relevant
3.2	Integrated approach maintained in QIE transition modelling	UNICEF	Cristina Badea	12/30/2022	Completed	Customised packages by educational cycle delivered at school level, comprehensive training and equipment and didactic materials delivered in QIE transition. The current model is further developing actions targeting non-discrimination and promotion of diversity.
3.0	Integrated approach maintained in UNICEF project for FRDS/Norway	UNICEF	Cristina Badea	12/30/2023	Completed	The new model is targeting only schools from urban areas and is addressing recommendations focusing on: ensuring the integrated approach, facilitating on-line learning and fighting discrimination
4	In planning and performing QIE's roll out, the relevant actors need to take into consideration that more extensive parental education is needed, particularly for parents in vulnerable categories, for expected results to be achieved. At the same time, existing mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the quality and results of parental education activities should be strengthened (e.g., through random verification of participants).				Agree	

4.1	Advocacy for parenting strategy	UNICEF	Gabriel Vockel, Eduar Petrescu, Lurr Costache	12/30/2022	Completed	Advocacy actions based on QIE evaluation findings related to parenting education interventions. Parenting education strategy was launched by MoE on public debate.
4.2	Parental education strengthened in QIE transition modelling	UNICEF	Luminita Costache	12/30/2022	Completed	New parenting sessions developed and introduced in QIE transition modelling based on parents' needs. New features added to the qie.ro platform to improve monitoring dimension.
4.3	Parental education maintained in UNICEF project for FRDS/Norway	UNICEF	Luminita Costache	12/30/2023	Completed	ToR for parenting sessions developed and selection of the provider completed.
5	In future projects, UNICEF should develop a clear "sustainability plan" that contains measures to ensure continuous use of tools and approaches used at school level, not necessarily requiring further financial inputs. These measures should contain at least 1 yearly ex-post monitoring and coaching visit to school, to be carried out for at least two years.				Agree	
5.1	Sustainability plan included in QIE transition modelling	UNICEF	Luminita Costache	12/30/2021	Completed	Sustainability plan developed in consultation with partners considering the local context of each school.
5.2	Sustainability plan to be included in UNICEF project for FRDS/Norway	UNICEF	Cristina Badea	12/30/2022	Completed	Sustainability plan to be developed in consultation with partners considering the local context of each school
6	For replicability, the challenges faced in QIE implementation in the first year need to be overcome. Measures needed to overcome challenges identified by this evaluation include: Ensuring support by county inspectorates and headmasters for reforms by developing capacity building activities (trainings, technical assistance, coaching etc.); Using existing tools and methodologies at full potential, including open educational resources.				Agree	
6.1	Using existing tools and methodologies at full potential, including open educational resources	UNICEF	Luminita Costache	8/30/2021	Completed	The resources developed under QIE model were adapted and placed as open resources under MoE official platform
6.2	Capacity building activities included in QIE transition modelling	UNICEF	Cristina Badea	12/30/2022	Completed	Trainings and technical activities targeting county school inspectorate staff and headmasters were included and performed in QIE transition modelling All educational resources will be made accessible online on qie.ro platform
6.0	Extensive use of all educational resources developed in QIE in UNICEF project for FRDS/Norway	UNICEF	Cristina Badea	12/30/2023	Completed	The new model will make extensive use of the all the educational materials developed under QIE model.