

Evaluation Management Response Document

Region: ESAR

Office: Malawi

Evaluation Year: 2021

Evaluation Title: Evaluation of UNICEF work on cash transfer programming in emergencies. Country report Malawi

Person In Charge For Follow Up to Management Response: Mussarrat Youssuf

Overall response to evaluation

The overall recommendations of the evaluation are found relevant for the country. In the below matrix, specific actions were adapted for UNICEF Malawi in line with the context, ongoing activities and division of labour with sister agencies and other institutions. As the report suggests, UNICEF MCO will continue advocating for improved support to vulnerable households in Malawi, with a focus on children. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP II) is a nation-wide Government-led programme supported by different Ministries, donors and implementing partners. MCO cannot take full responsibility of actions that are a joint responsibility of many actors. Against this background, the proposed actions for UNICEF in the evaluation report have been slightly adapted to the context in which UNICEF currently operates while UNICEF's direct responsibilities toward recommended actions, advocacy or other support have been clearly laid out under each recommendation.

Planned Use of the Evaluation

The evaluation is already under use and will further be utilised in bringing improvements to MNSSP II related systems and its mechanisms for expansion require engagements and advocacy with a broad set of stakeholders across different sectors. UNICEF will continue to do so and shall use the indicated actions or areas of improvement as recommended by the evaluation for aligning its work in the current context in programming and also in upcoming evaluations.

Recommendations and Actions

No.	Recommendations/Actions	Responsible Section (Action)	Responsible Person Name (Action)	Expected Completion (Action)	Mgt Response / Implementation Stage	Reason/Action Taken
1	Ensure clear roles and responsibilities across UNICEF and its partner organizations in order to leverage each agency's comparative advantage and ensure appropriate inter-agency collaboration				Agree	
1.1	Document lessons learnt on Shock-Sensitive Social Protection in Malawi over the past +6 years, as well as during the COVID-19 response.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Terms of Reference for Evidence Compilation was completed and now work is undergoing.
1.2	Produce a strategic paper on UNICEF Malawi's approach to Shock-Sensitive Social Protection	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Second draft of the strategic paper being produced
1.3	Develop a UNICEF-WFP Joint Position Paper on SSSP	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Joint Position Paper on SSSP being finalized for endorsement
1.0	Establish an agreed-upon Annual Shock-Sensitive Social Protection Workplan with WFP.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	7/31/2021	Completed	First draft of the Annual Joint SSSP Workplan produced. The plan is regularly being monitored
2	Further adapt and develop the social protection system processes				Agree	
2.1	Advocate for the Government of Malawi to redesign the SCTP targeting mechanism to include a broader set of multi-sectoral criteria.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Lobby for child-sensitive social protection targeting. Related Concept Note produced jointly with Government – consultant on board to support programme redesign and testing.
2.2	Support the Government of Malawi with the testing of a harmonised e-payment mechanism and advocate for its adoption in other districts.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Ongoing work on e-payments. Testing agreed to take place in Thyolo district (the only government-funded district)

2.3	Exploring opportunities for improving timeliness of the provision of the vertical expansion to avoid households resorting to negative coping strategies, thereby amplifying the transfer's impact.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	UNICEF implements via Government, therefore, UNICEF cannot be responsible for reducing response time. Therefore, UNICEF commits to support the Government-led Operational Vision for SSSP, which clarifies roles and responsibilities across the SP and humanitarian sector, which in turn contributes to reduced response time. Kick off meeting of the SSSP Operational Vision held under government leadership. Timeline for completion is set by government (Q3 of 2022)
2.4	Support the Government in its efforts to identify effective mechanisms to implement policy and practice recommendations made by UNICEF. This includes accompanying the Government in its exploration of potential options for the establishment of a common fund for financing both regular and emergency cash transfer programmes	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Joining Social Support Fund Discussions Ongoing and planned PF4C work
3	Strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism and its function.				Agree	
3.1	Support the Government in providing clearer and more explicit communication to beneficiaries and the general population. This includes increasing the financial resources allocated to the mechanism, thereby allowing for the extension of scope and the additional hiring of human resources.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	4/1/2022	Completed	Additional communications support will be provided. This includes the preparation of communications documents as well as the deployment of a communications expert based at the MoGCDSW.
4	Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation framework and its activities.				Agree	
4.1	Follow-up on the implementation of the MNSSP II M&E plan, supporting Government in collaboration with other UN agencies (e.g. ILO) and advocate for Government to enhance monitoring activities across the vertical and horizontal expansion	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	Ensure following up on the implementation of the existing MNSSP II M&E Plan via meetings and consultations; Advocate for Government (MoGCDSW, EP&D, DoDMA) to harmonize monitoring activities across VE and HE. Advocated for mid-term review of the MNSSP II which will be carried out by GIZ.
5	Strengthen the simultaneous implementation of the vertical and horizontal expansions.				Agree	
5.1	Be cognisant of the additional workload placed on the system as a result of the simultaneous implementation of the vertical and horizontal expansion and advocate for additional resources to ensure that personnel, both within UNICEF and the contracted NGOs/financial service providers, are not overwhelmed.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	4/1/2022	Completed	UNICEF will actively engage in the Annual Lean Season Review Process to advocate for allocation of adequate resources for the LSR; Provide technical support to SSSP activities including advocacy on allocation of resources.

5.2	Consider the establishment of a joint/aligned communication strategy for the vertical and horizontal expansions in order to avoid confusion by beneficiaries and communities at the district level. This will require UNICEF, WFP and the Government of Malawi to agree on the content and modes of communication through which messages are to be sent in order to avoid contradictions. The underlying sensitization of staff to these messages at both the national and sub-national level will also be necessary.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	4/1/2022	Completed	Joint/aligned communication strategy has been developed; Joint Govt – UNICEF – WFP Lean Season Response Communications and messages are underway.
6	Promote national and sub-national coordination of the vertical expansion and shock-responsive social protection in general.				Agree	
6.1	In collaboration with partners, support the Government of Malawi to develop an Operational Vision for Shock-Sensitive Social Protection, accompanied by a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for shock responsive social protection and ensure that these are regularly updated. Place specific focus on outlining the actors in the sector, what they do, when they do it, and within what time frame as this will allow for better collaboration and ensure that a wide range of beneficiaries receive aid.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	4/1/2022	Completed	MNSSP II Review of Coordination Mechanisms Support the Government of Malawi in the development of an SSSP Operational Vision. The ongoing MNSSP II Review of Coordination Mechanisms is laying the foundations for the operational vision by providing a first snapshot on relevant SP and humanitarian sector actors and the existing coordination mechanisms. The Operational Vision process will place emphasis on all aspects.
6.2	Strengthen the capacity at local government level. The training and reinforcement required at local level to implement Ministerial directives may not trickle down from the top and UNICEF should consider offering direct assistance at local level or at least advocate for transfer of resources and provision of training by the Ministry.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	4/1/2022	Completed	Capacity building activities specifically targeting district-level (e.g. Could be roll-out of TRANSFORM SSSP Module to district staff in Balaka).
6.3	Support the Government of Malawi on the review and alignment of the MNSSP II coordination structures, and strengthen the linkages between social protection and the humanitarian sector for improved responses across the humanitarian-development nexus.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	12/30/2021	Completed	The completed MNSSP II Review of Coordination Mechanisms laid the foundations for the operational vision by providing a first snapshot on relevant SP and humanitarian sector actors and the existing coordination mechanisms. The Operational Vision process will place emphasis on all aspects and establish strong linkages between SP and humanitarian sectors.
6.4	Strengthen UNICEF's relationship to the Ministry of Local Government in relation to social protection implementation.	Social Policy	Beatrice Targa	4/1/2022	Completed	Raising awareness and sensitising the Ministry of Local Government (as it is not a direct counterpart) by introducing and elaborating various aspects of SP.