

Evaluation Management Response Document

Region: MENAR

Office: Sudan

Evaluation Year: 2023

Evaluation Title: Country Programme Evaluation Sudan

Person In Charge For Follow Up to Management Response: Vu Manh Hong

Overall response to evaluation

The evaluation has achieved the overall purpose of providing an impartial and independent assessment of UNICEF contribution to the attainment of results, identification of opportunities and potential strategic shifts and the assessment of UNICEF strategic positioning in terms of implementation modalities and decentralized operations. This evaluation was conducted when the country was facing difficulties following the coup in October 2021, which gave rise to huge constraints and challenges in accessing data timely and in engaging all key stakeholders. Overall, UNICEF Sudan Country Office (SCO) concurs with the main findings identified by the evaluation in relation to its five main evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability) and most of recommendations given the complexity of the country programme and the challenges the country is facing. The SCO senior management appreciates the participatory process followed for this evaluation, the engagement between the evaluation team, Regional Office, SCO, government and other relevant partners. Recommendations have been firmly based on evaluative evidence and a process of validation including appropriate consultation with stakeholders. Situation and Context Update that affect the Evaluation Recommendations Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began on 15th April 2023 in Khartoum and swiftly expanded to neighboring cities and states, especially in Darfur, and some other parts of Sudan. The fighting has destroyed much of Khartoum and various settings in Darfur, including health care facilities, water infrastructure, and schools. Millions are caught in the crossfire, with almost no access to basic services. Up to 24.7 million individuals, including 13.6 million children now require humanitarian aid. An estimated 6.3 million people have fled their homes, taking refuge inside and outside the country, with children representing about half of the people displaced. Sudan is now the country with the largest number of displaced people in the world as prior to the fighting there were 3.7 million people internally displaced in Sudan. It is also now the country with the largest child displacement crisis in the world. The ongoing conflict has caused a significant adjustment to the UNICEF Sudan programme priorities and approach – 2023 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) was updated, and 2023 Sudan Crisis Response Plan was launched, followed by 100 days acceleration plan. The crisis response focuses on a three-pronged approach – hot spot states, safer states with large concentration of internally displaced people and support to preservation of systems and basic services across the country. As a result, some evaluation recommendations that were based on the pre-conflict context may no longer be relevant.

Planned Use of the Evaluation

Preliminary findings and recommendations of the evaluation were already used to inform and reinforce the development of the Interim Cooperation Framework in Sudan 2024-2026 during the CPD kick-off workshop, various consultation meetings at national and state level, and the Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR) in February 2023. Lessons learnt and recommendations of the evaluation were also utilized to ensure alignment and strategic shifts of the overall and sectoral Theories of Change (ToCs) which included but not limited to the increased focus on depth, grounding where most vulnerable children are in the 179 localities, adaptation of cross-cutting and change strategies as a set of transformative actions, pushing for international focus on gender, etc. Since the eruption of the crisis on 15 April 2023, selective evaluation recommendations are used by SCO to inform the development and implementation of UNICEF Sudan Crisis Response Plan, Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), and Annual Workplans (AWPs) on an on-going basis.

Recommendations and Actions

No.	Recommendations/Actions	Responsible Section (Action)	Responsible Person Name (Action)	Expected Completion (Action)	Mgt Response / Implementation Stage	Reason/Action Taken
1	1. Focus and depth: In line with its internal discussions currently underway, UNICEF needs to develop clear focus (both geographical and programmatic interventions) so as to ensure depth and quality in programmes. This should include: i) further increased internal integration of different sectors; ii) establishing/redefining partnerships with other agencies (NGOs/UN) to mobilize a minimum package of basic needs services that addresses interlinked vulnerabilities in selected target areas; iii) narrowing down target areas of interventions and/or a tighter focus within programmes, while keeping the current focus on vulnerable children; iv) moving away from construction while focusing on quality of service providers/strengthening capacities of service providers rather than be the service provider.				Agree	
1.0	Develop a geographical targeting approach for clear focus	Deputy Representative Programme Office	Mary Louise Eagleton	5/31/2023	Completed	Sudan Country Office developed the three-pronged geographical focus approach.

1.2	Sharpen and prioritize programme focus	Deputy Representative Programme Office	Mary Louise Eagleton	8/31/2023	Completed	1. SCO prioritized core lifesaving, life sustaining and resilience interventions along the CCCs as part of the crisis response 2. As part of 100 days acceleration plan SCO prioritized: Vaccination, Public health emergencies, Severe acute malnutrition (SAM), Back to Learning, Scale-up of Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (on grave violations against children)
1.3	Develop models for integrated programme response taking a whole child approach	Deputy Representative Programme	Mary Louise Eagleton	6/30/2024	Completed	The model is developed, SCO is rolling out and testing the Makana model, bringing together learning, child protection and WASH as well as referral to services. SCO is also scaling multi-sectoral community resilience, building on the Darfur Joint Programme, replicating a similar model in safer states (with World Bank and other donors)
1.0	Scale up flexible, agile multi-sectoral emergency lifesaving response with the minimum package of support in IDP gathering locations in line with UNICEF Core Commitment to Children in Humanitarian Action.	Deputy Representative Programme, and Programmes	Mary Louise Eagleton	6/30/2024	Completed	This is UNICEF's approach to IDP gathering sites- the Makanna model is the minimum: structured learning, PSS, WASH and health referral, with other elements included when there is sufficient funding. It is noted that scale up will be continuous as new funds come in to reach the maximum number of gathering sites.
2	2. Address deterioration in outcomes in critical areas of programming. In the new CPD, clearly articulate how UNICEF will deepen and expand partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders to continue to prioritize programming where the key national level outcomes are showing a declining or stagnating trend (namely measles vaccination coverage, live births attended by skilled personnel, malnutrition among children, FGM practices). It may be that UNICEF defines its intended outcomes at two levels: i) focus on particular geographical areas where it will demonstrate definite positive changes in trend over a period of time; ii) support government/other agencies in the rest of the country, where resources allow.				Agree	
2.0	Update evidence synthesis for Sudan, providing latest analysis on existing child vulnerability in the country.	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Anna Azaryeva Valente	3/31/2024	Completed	1. Evidence Synthesis updated in Feb 2023, reflecting latest available data. 2. Vulnerability analysis and mapping are updated on a regular basis 3. Crisis related – displacement and people in need data regularly incorporated in overall vulnerability analysis.
2.2	Continue targeting based on vulnerability, IDP case load and need – priority localities	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Anna Azaryeva Valente	3/31/2024	Completed	In 2024 Annual Work Plans (AWPs) clearly prioritize localities for interventions based on the above criteria.

3	3. Sustainability of interventions. More attention should be given to sustainability of results of interventions in the longer-term by: i) Ensuring quality control and maintenance of all infrastructure work where UNICEF decides that their involvement is critical (as elaborated above, the recommendation is that UNICEF should move away from engaging in construction as much as possible); for infrastructures like WASH and school constructions/rehabilitation, UNICEF needs to produce an inventory of facilities it has supported and ensure periodic monitoring of these through the local authorities; ii) In interventions for which results depend upon community capacity and their mobilization (e.g., WASH structures, school infrastructure), ensuring that adequate amount of time is given for community mobilization process and post-implementation (delivery) follow up to monitor how communities and local authorities are developing capacity, utilizing and maintaining the services; iii) When implemented through NGOs (short-term grants), making provision for continuing monitoring and follow up after an activity is implemented. In this regard, UNICEF may encourage implementing partners and communities to set up a 'pooled fund' that is available for providing small maintenance/monitoring support; ideally, this will require all partners involved in a particular area to coordinate such an initiative.				Partially Agree	
3.0	Prioritize community engagement for inclusion and feedback (in close collaboration with AAP efforts) in the Crisis Response Plans 2023 and 2024 with budget allocations.	Deputy Representative Programme Office	Mary Louise Eagleton	10/31/2023	Completed	The 2023 and 2024 UNICEF Sudan Crisis Response Plans have prioritized and allocated budget for community engagement for inclusion and feedback. UNICEF is leading the AAP WG and has integrated into all efforts, including expansion of our CFM to multi-agency.
3.0	Integrate strong focus on community engagement, including monitoring and maintenance of community-prioritized basic services facilities in the WB Somound proposal.	Deputy Representative Programme	Mary Louise Eagleton	2/29/2024	Completed	WB-WFP-UNICEF Somoud Resilience Project includes community engagement and community-led service delivery as a foundational approach.
4	5. Social protection: While continuing to implement the MCCT+ programme, UNICEF needs to ensure that this is integrated with other sectors (especially nutrition and WASH) as well as through an area-based integration (Recommendation 1 above) with other development actors targeting women and children. An impact study of the pilot cash transfer programme in the two states where this is being implemented will provide data and evidence which will be crucial for any expansion of the current programme or of any other social protection programme.				Agree	
4.0	Develop a framework for programme integration for MCCT+ with Health & Nutrition, Social and Behaviour Change, Child Protection, SLS/CFC and Social Protection	Social Policy	Kumiko Imai	10/31/2023	Completed	Sudan Country Office has developed a framework for programme integration for MCCT+ with H&N, SBC, CP, SLS/CFC and SP are now integrated in MCCT+
4.2	Develop a comprehensive M&E plan for MCCT+ which includes an impact evaluation	Social Policy	Kumiko Imai	10/31/2023	Completed	At the start of the programme, SCO developed a comprehensive M&E plan for MCCT+ which includes an impact evaluation. A baseline assessment was conducted in 2022 and a midline assessment is planned in December 2023
5	6. Advocacy regarding child protection. Given that implementation of crucial laws and policies geared to the protection of children remain in limbo, UNICEF needs to continue its evidence-based advocacy with the GoS focusing on prevention of child protection violations, particularly violence against children, through increased human, financial and infrastructure resources for social service workforce. In parallel, UNICEF needs to continue working with service providers (e.g., government, NGOs and CSOs) to strengthen and scale up child protection systems, and partner with UNITAMS and key stakeholders from civil society and UN agencies to prevent violence against children.				Partially Agree	

5.0	In coordination with RO/HQ, SRSG CAAC and RC Office, propose specific actions and resources for the functioning of MRM in light of UNITAMS mandate termination.	Child Protection (in coordination with UNICEF HQ and RO, SRSG CAAC office and RC office)	Fosca Giulidori	6/30/2024	Completed	In light of UNITAMS mandate termination, UNICEF has taken leadership and advocated RCO for specific actions and resources for the functioning of MRM. UNICEF co-chairs the CTFMR with the RC/HC, previously co-chaired by UNITAMS. Along with UN agencies and INGOs, UNICEF leads the verification of MRM incidents in the CTFMR Technical Working Group. UNICEF also supports the coordination of MRM data collection, ensures the timely reporting of violations, and advocates for the protection and rights of children affected by conflict. UNICEF provides technical assistance for the implementation of MRM, facilitates capacity-building efforts, and works with relevant stakeholders to strengthen the response mechanisms for child protection in Sudan. Additionally, UNICEF is increasing the capacity of MRM monitors by hiring 4 MRM monitors in different strategic locations to optimize reporting on grave violations and response services.
5.0	Include a strong focus on child right violations and grave violations against child rights in conflict situation in the humanitarian advocacy strategy for Sudan	Child Protection and IMPACT, Dep Representative Programme, Health, Nutrition, WASH, Education	Fosca Giulidori	6/30/2024	Completed	Child right violations and grave violations against child rights in conflict situation have been included a key priority within Sudan Humanitarian Advocacy Strategy and action plan. SCO has facilitated consistent speaking out on child right violations by UNICEF Global, RO and SCO accounts (corporate & leadership), both publicly through different Press Statements, social media, etc., as well as privately through briefings with donors, NGO partners, media, government, and others.
6	7. Partnerships with civil society: Partnerships with NGOs and CSOs should be further increased and diversified as engagement with the government remains substantially suspended, and this may help enhance quality of delivery due the former's closer engagement with communities. UNICEF needs to i) examine if there is room for further improvement in the workflow process involving NGOs to increase efficiency of delivery. Confrontation with UNICEF Headquarters or other Regional / Country Offices could be beneficial; ii) duly assess the existing capacities of the NGOs to further build on these.				Agree	

6.0	Map Sudan Country Office presence and capacity to deliver on updated 2023 HRP and UNICEF Crisis Response	Deputy Representative Programme, Implementing Partnership, Field Operation and Emergency	Mary Louise Eagleton	5/31/2023	Completed	From the onset of the crisis, UNICEF-led sectors began assessing newly arising humanitarian needs, mapping of partner capacities on the ground, including supplies and assets, as well as the status of basic service provision and humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable populations across the country. Sudan CO and sectors have undertaken mapping of operational partners, available supplies, needs and capacity to transport/utilize/warehouse supplies.
6.0	Expand partnerships with national NGOs and local CSOs	Deputy Representative Programme, Field Operations and Emergency	Mary Louise Eagleton	12/31/2023	Completed	1. Localization and expansion of partnerships with local CSOs and community groups is integrated into 2023 and 2024 UNICEF Crisis Response, 100 days Plan and strategies for hot spot states (Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofans) 2. New partnerships are developed as part of crisis response with local emergency rooms, soup kitchens and expanded to new local partners in areas where UNICEF previously did not have operational presence (River Nile, the Northern state).
7	8. Gender equality. More specific attention to the inclusion of boys and men in the gender dialogue (e.g., on GBV, FGM, child marriage, girls' education, management of menstrual hygiene, adolescents' health and nutrition, youth empowerment) as well as the development of gender-friendly indicators would be needed, together with the additional financial and human resources allocated to gender responsiveness and integration.				Agree	
7.0	Conduct a gender review to inform the new Country Programme development	Deputy Representative Programme; Gender and Adolescent Programme Manager	Kani Areef	3/31/2025	Completed	A Gender Programmatic Review has been carried out internally by the Sudan Country Office's Gender and Adolescent Programme Manager from February to August 2025. The results of this review have been used to inform the 2026-2028 Country Programme development.
7.2	Document gender-sensitive programming practice in annual review in a systematic way	Deputy Representative Programme; Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Mary Louise Eagleton	1/31/2024	Completed	The 2023 Annual Review has documented gender-sensitive programming practice from all programmes in a systematic way
7.0	Onboard dedicated resources and HR capacity for gender, specifically gender based violence as part of the 2024 PBR.	Deputy Representative Programme; Human Resource	Benjamin Omoluyi	6/30/2024	Completed	A Gender and Adolescent Programme Manager was onboard since last quarter of 2024

8	4. Programming for peacebuilding and focus on resilience: As part of the new CPD, UNICEF needs to further clarify the scope of its programming on peacebuilding and ensure that all its staff have a common understanding. In this regard, it may be worth reinforcing the premise that UNICEF programme addresses unmet basic needs in vulnerable communities through strengthening community resilience in a conflict-sensitive manner and foster social cohesion; programming is not driven by peacebuilding but contributes to it. Specific actions may include: i) A clear definition of parameters (result indicators) to measure resilience and social cohesion; ii) An assessment of UNICEF Sudan's specific expertise in peacebuilding – some field offices already have good experience in this regard; iii) Strengthen life and livelihood skills as well as citizenship education of children and adolescents.				Agree	
8.1	Prioritize, retain and mainstream a risk-informed humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach as a crosscutting and overarching principle in the 2024 Crisis Response Plan and AWP.	Deputy Representative Programme	Mary Louise Eagleton	3/31/2024	Completed	2024 AWP incorporate humanitarian response fully aligned to HAC 2024 and resilience focused interventions in hot spot areas, in safer more accessible areas, and for preservation of systems of basic services across the country.
8.0	Integrate conflict sensitivity indicators in the Sudan CO monitoring system	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Anna Azaryeva Valente	6/30/2024	Completed	Sudan CO was piloting basic indicators related to monitoring for conflict sensitivity of UNICEF programming in November 2023 and integrated into the updated Monitoring Guidance and Tools.
8.3	Integrate HDP nexus principle in Sudan CO programme planning	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Anna Azaryeva Valente	4/30/2023	Completed	Pre-crisis Sudan CO had articulated clear and structure approach to HDP nexus and UNICEF contribution to social cohesion in Sudan through inclusive basis services and community engagement, in particular engagement of young people in peacebuilding as part of the CPD development process. Sudan CO maintained HDP nexus as foundational principle in articulation of 2023 and 2024 crisis response plans.
8.0	Include adolescent engagement through (i) Learning and skills development; and (ii) FGM and Child Marriage, in UNICEF Crisis Response Plans, focusing on the adolescent girls, and emphasizing resilience and HDP focus.	Deputy Representative Programme	Mary Louise Eagleton	6/30/2024	Completed	Adolescent engagement [through (i) Learning and skills development; and (ii) FGM and Child Marriage] has been included in draft UNICEF Crisis Response Plans,