PROGRAMME CYCLE MANAGEMENT TECHNICAL BRIEF

Evaluation

Evaluations are impartial, systematic assessments of the performance of activities, operations, strategies and policies. As well as providing lessons for immediate use, they allow organizations to capture and preserve institutional knowledge, creating an evidence base of successes and challenges in diverse settings/countries from which to learn and improve.

UNHCR

Operations are encouraged to consider initiating an evaluation if there is an opportunity to:

- **Inform strategy and programme adjustment** and changes – to make changes to an ongoing intervention, re-focus a strategy and approach to improve results for refugees;

- **Boost legitimacy** vis-a-vis internal and external stakeholders – evaluation results can be used to give "legitimacy" to a decision that has already been taken, and to produce an analysis of results achieved amidst the unique set of challenges and opportunities each UNHCR operation faces;

- Provide more **independent and objective analysis** that can be used to contribute to advocacy, and to justify subsequent actions and changes in strategies and approaches taken.

- Support **individual/team learning** – engagement and participation in the evaluation process itself can foster individual/team learning and contribute to changes in awareness and reflective behaviours that strengthen their effectiveness, efficiency, etc.

- As per the Evaluation Policy, UNHCR commissions evaluations at both the **decentralized** (managed or co-managed outside the Evaluation Service) level, and **centralized** (managed by the Evaluation Service) level.

WFP

There are two categories of evaluations at WFP[1]:

Centralized evaluations: commissioned and managed by Office of Evaluation (OEV) at Headquarters and presented to the WFP Executive Board. They focus on:

- Strategic evaluations assess global or corporate themes, programmes and initiatives, selected for their relevance to WFP's strategic direction and management.

- Policy evaluations assess the quality, implementation and results of institutional policies. Selection is based on analysis of WFP's Policy Compendium and information on intended future policy development.

- Country portfolio and country strategic plan evaluations assess the strategic positioning, performance and results of all of WFP's work in a country or region. Selection considers relevant timing for strategic and operational planning vis-à-vis the Strategic Plan, UN coordination processes, resource profile and overall regional balance.

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[1] https://www.wfp.org/independent-evaluation

- Evaluations of corporate emergency responses focus on the humanitarian context and principles, and the coverage, coherence and connectedness of the emergency response. In 2013 the Interagency Standing Committee's (IASC) Transformative Agenda Humanitarian Programme Cycle agreed that all system-wide Level 3 emergency responses should trigger an inter-agency evaluation within the first year.

- Impact evaluations of core activities assess the positive and negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended changes in the lives of the people WFP serves.

Decentralized evaluations: commissioned and managed by country offices, regional bureaux or Headquarters-based divisions other than OEV. They are not presented to the Board. They cover operations, activities, pilots, themes, transfer modalities or any other area of action at the sub-national, national or multi-country level. They follow centralized evaluation guidance – including impartiality safeguards – and quality assurance system.

Tools and Resources

- **UNHCR Evaluation Reports:**
https://www.unhcr.org/search?comid=4a1d3b346&cid=49aea93a6a&scid=49aea93a39&tags=evaluation%20report
- **UNHCR Evaluation Policy (2016):** https://www.unhcr.org/uk/research/eval/3d99a0f74/unhcrs-evaluation-policy.html
- **UNHCR Evaluation Strategy (2018-22):** https://www.unhcr.org/5a93c8637.pdf
- **WFP Evaluation Policy 2016-21:** https://www.wfp.org/publications/wfp-evaluation-policy-2016-2021