

# EVALUATION REPORT

## 1. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation was a joint endeavour between UNICEF and DFID, led by an independent consultant. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation will be integrated into a wider learning process within UNICEF, into the DFID-funded UNICEF emergency preparedness and response capacity-building programme and the DFID-UNICEF Institutional Strategy Paper.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to draw lessons from UNICEF's response to the Darfur crisis and to make recommendations in order to strengthen UNICEF's support to the Darfur operation. The evaluation aims to carry out a systematic assessment of UNICEF's experience and performance in planning, organising and managing the early response. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Examine the relevance and timeliness of preparedness planning, early intervention and the 90-Day Plan, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the management and operational support;
- Extract lessons to help UNICEF enhance its preparedness and its ability to respond in a meaningful and effective way to emergencies.

Although in many respects this mission resembles a 'real time' evaluation, it is not labelled as such because it was not designed according to the UNICEF pilot RTE methodology.

The Terms of Reference are presented in the Appendix 1.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Presentation of the method

The team was composed of two consultants from Groupe URD (a French-based research and evaluation institute, [www.urd.org](http://www.urd.org)), a senior staff member from UNICEF NYHQ and a highly experienced member of the DFID-CHAD team. The team members represent a variety of institutional and cultural views and a wealth of experience, which proved to be a great asset in the evaluation process. Additionally, the team comprised two women and two men and this attention to gender balance enabled the Evaluation Team to assimilate gender issues at all times.

The evaluation used the methodology recommended in the various reviews of good practice in the sector, such as ALNAP, ODI and OECD/DAC. This included:

- Documentation review at various levels and across a range of sectors, including financial and logistical data;
- Discussions with UNICEF staff in the Darfur offices, Khartoum Country Office (CO), the Regional Office (RO) in Amman and New York Headquarters (NYHQ);
- Discussion with institutional stakeholders in Darfur and Khartoum, including UN agencies, host government, NGOs and donors;
- Visits to the intervention sites in IDP camps in the three Darfur states;
- Discussions with beneficiaries during individual or semi-structured group interviews.

The report meets most of the requirements of UNICEF's 'Evaluation guidelines' and complies wholly with ALNAP's 'evaluation proforma'.

Information was triangulated and validated through a series of mechanisms, including:

- Regular feedback sessions with the UNICEF CO;
- Visits to UNICEF Regional Office (RO) in Amman and UNICEF New York headquarters (NYHQ);

- A two-day workshop in Khartoum, with the participation of UNICEF staff from the three Darfur Field Offices (FO), Khartoum Country Office, Chad Country Office, the Regional Office and New York Headquarters;
- A meeting with DFID staff in Khartoum;
- A feedback presentation to the donor community in Khartoum;
- A presentation of findings was held in Geneva, which was attended by representatives from UNICEF NYHQ, RO, CO and DFID.

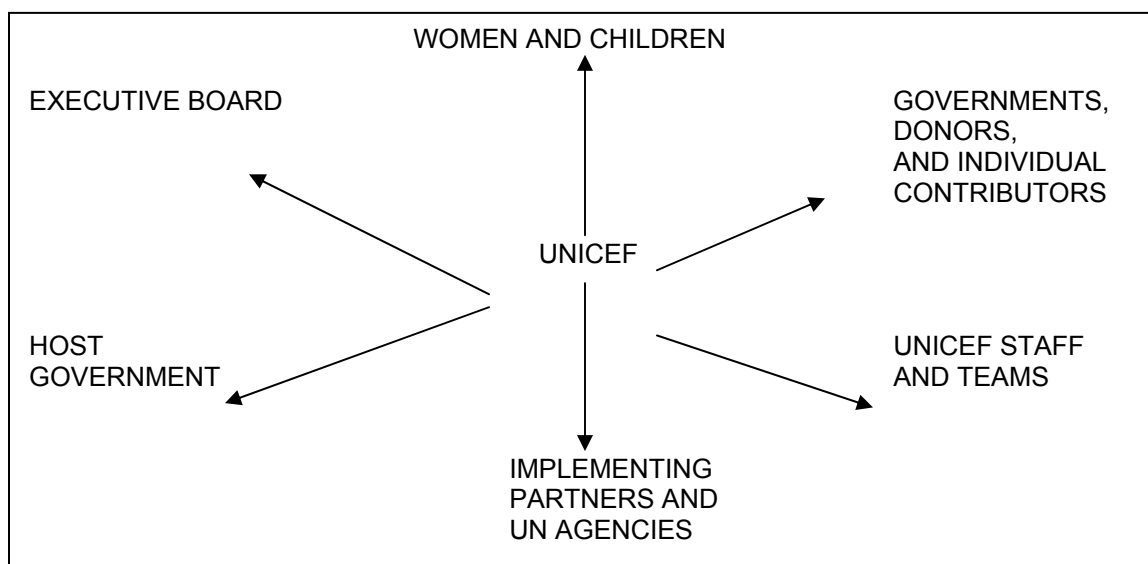
The Evaluation Team's itinerary is presented in Appendix 2, a list of people consulted during interviews and by phone is presented in Appendix 3, and Appendix 4 presents a bibliography.

A general methodology was established whereby the evaluation team would examine UNICEF's preparedness and response in relation to:

- the UN Country Team and the international community's response to the Darfur crisis;
- a timeframe ranging from the initial stages of the crisis (February 2003) to the end of the 90-Day Plan (June-August 2004), covering the implementation of the 120-Day Plan and field visits in early November 2004;
- the overall UNICEF set-up, taking into account the viewpoints of the UNICEF Country Office, Regional Office, New York headquarters, Supply Division in Copenhagen and EMOPS in Geneva;
- inter-agency mechanisms, taking into account the views of a wide range of donors, UN agencies and NGOs.

An accountability framework was drawn up, as illustrated below.

**Diagram 1: Accountability framework**



In order to inform stakeholders of the Evaluation Team's progress, the following documents were prepared and circulated:

- an Inception Report one week into the evaluation timetable, indicating how the evaluation process had been initiated and how it was developing;
- an Interim Report with findings, conclusions and recommendations, which was presented to key stakeholders on the Evaluation Team's departure from Khartoum on 10 November 2004;
- an initial version of the Executive Summary and Recommendations, which was circulated prior to the Geneva workshop on 19 November 2004.

## **2.2. Limitations**

Several limitations have affected the Evaluation Team's work, including:

- Limited duration of the evaluation, albeit a common factor in most evaluation exercises: evaluating a significantly large and widespread humanitarian programme in a complex emergency context over a three-week period is a demanding exercise.
- Complex set-up with a large number of stakeholders: the Evaluation Team invested a significant amount of time in interviewing institutional donors, other agencies, UNICEF Amman and New York, which left less time available for information gathering at beneficiary level.
- Inconsistent sets of data used in different publications and reports. The triangulation of various sources of quantitative data represented a significant problem. UNICEF quantitative data from various sources often did not match and errors were identified, which made it necessary to re-transcribe data correctly into new spreadsheets. Certain data contained in this report may not match the Humanitarian Profiles because in some instances it has not been possible to identify the origin of the Humanitarian Profiles data;
- Tight time schedules: a second series of interviews with UNICEF sector coordinators would have been extremely useful upon return from field visits.
- Information management in general could be improved at CO and ZO level: tracking down documents and information proved time consuming.
- Information has not always been made readily available and cooperating with certain sectors has been cumbersome: information has in certain instances not been forwarded.
- The Evaluation Team dispersed just after the Khartoum learning workshop, limiting the time available for collective drafting<sup>4</sup>. Despite the best efforts of the team, drafting the report within the given deadlines proved difficult.

## **3. DARFUR: BACKGROUND**

### **3.1. A fragile area**

The 'Country of the Fur' has always been a case apart in the Sudanese chess game. The region was integrated into Sudan in 1916 under the Anglo-Egyptian condominium. The Sultanate, run by the Fur Sultans, is part of a transition belt between desert and tropical zones. Darfur represents a contact zone between pastoral groups and farming communities and has always benefited from dynamic commercial exchange. Confrontation regarding land or water rights are fairly recurrent but are often settled by means of traditional conflict-solving mechanisms. The region has been severely weakened in recent years due to desertification and has experienced regular food security crises, of which the most significant were in 1973, 1985 and 2000. Darfur populations possess an extraordinary capacity to cope but their resilience has been placed under serious pressure recently. These factors have inevitably had repercussions on the recent course of events.

For many reasons, Darfur remains an area that has been overlooked repeatedly by central government. This led to a serious feeling of injustice and dissatisfaction amongst the Darfur population and tensions have run high on a number of occasions. The Darfur region was divided into three administrative sectors, the three Darfur states, as part of a 'divide-to-rule' strategy.

### **3.2. The crisis**

The history of Darfur consists of low intensity but cyclical crisis events. Although initial signals indicated that a crisis was developing in this remote western part of Sudan, the international community's attention was focused on other events. At this time, access for journalists was extremely limited. The Iraq war and a series of natural disasters, including the Bam earthquake in Iran, were dominating on the international

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<sup>4</sup> Departure of DFID representative on 5 November, UNICEF representative on 6 November and team leader on 7 November.