

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) Mentoring Programme: 2019 - 2022



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List of acronyms

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CC	Cluster Coordinator
CLA	Cluster Lead Agency
CLARE	Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action
CS	Capacity Strengthening
EMOPS	Office of Emergency Programmes
GNC	Global Nutrition Cluster
GNC-CT	Global Nutrition Cluster Coordination Team
GTWGs	Global Thematic Working Groups
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HR	Human Resources
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IM	Information Management
IMOs	Information Management Officers
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ISC	Inter-sectoral Collaboration
KM	Knowledge Management
NCCs	Nutrition Cluster Coordinators
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NiE	Nutrition in Emergencies
NIS	Nutrition Information Systems
RedR UK	International Disaster Relief <i>Charity</i>
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
The Alliance	Global Nutrition Cluster Technical Alliance
TST	Technical Support Team
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WGs	Working Groups

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) was established in 2006 as part of the Humanitarian Reform process, which aimed to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response programmes by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. The [GNC Strategy 2022-2025](#) identifies the importance of strengthening human capacity at national and subnational levels, as well as the need to ensure that all Nutrition Cluster Coordination Teams have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to ensure effective collective actions for improved nutrition outcomes in emergencies and protracted crises. More specifically, GNC has a Capacity Development framework, and the mentoring program is one of the advanced level capacities strengthening activities¹ based on pre-identified individual learning needs and clearly defined performance development priorities. Mentoring is meant to complement other activities such as face to face training, eLearning, and virtual facilitated trainings.

Objectives

This evaluation systematically and objectively assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness, coherence, sustainability and impact of the GNC mentoring programme between July 2019, when the GNC mentoring programme was officially launched, to October 2022, when the evaluation was carried out.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology was structured around the evaluation questions, linked to the [OECD DAC](#) criteria,^[2] which determined appropriate methods and approaches. This was a formative evaluation, designed to enhance programme performance and productivity. The evaluation was conducted with a participatory approach^[3] involving programme stakeholders throughout the process, from design to data collection and analysis. In addition to a desk review, qualitative data was collected through one-on-one semi structured interviews. The sampling included mentors and mentees as well as their supervisors from mentoring rounds four to six. The number of interviewees was disaggregated by sex and geographic representation, language and topics. Key informants were GNC-CT/TA/TST staff.

Findings and Conclusions

The final conclusions represent a clear and comprehensive description of the strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring programme in relation to each of the evaluation criteria. The final conclusions were based on a synthesis of the preliminary findings and a more in-depth reflection on the value and merit (and areas for improvement) of the mentoring programme. The principal investigator put the findings into a broader perspective presenting possible implications for the continuation of the programme.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Mentoring is an appropriate way to increase capacities at country level because it targets key staff and strengthens their capacity to assure the functioning of country nutrition clusters. The mentoring programme is relevant and an appropriate means to accompany other GNC CS initiatives, although it is suggested to consider revising the GNC Mentoring Guide and set clear goals:

- ✓ Better state selection criteria for mentees to prioritize CCs, deputy-CCs and IMOs;
- ✓ Include new areas of mentoring, like NiE. and clearly define the selection criteria of mentees in the nutrition mentoring guide;
- ✓ Clearly define the tasks and time commitment in the mentor's job description (FT/TA) or ToR (consultants);
- ✓ Clearly define selection criteria of mentors: ensure they have the necessary experience and skill set and state that they will need to be trained to be a mentor;

¹ <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/resources/gnc-capacity-development-framework>

Mentoring requires a lot of time commitment from both mentees and mentors. All components in the mentoring programme are relevant, and for vast fields such as NiE and coordination, mentoring is a complement to the other GNC CS activities. The mentoring application and evaluation forms will need to be revised according to the revision of the mentoring guide above.

Effectiveness

- Explore the possibility of identifying subject matter experts within the broader team. This would give the mentee the opportunity to have a main mentor and one or two sessions with a subject matter specialist, should the mentor not have the necessary capacity.
- Ensure mentors speak languages in addition to English such as, Spanish, Portuguese and French to provide adequate mentoring in Latin America and Caribbean countries.
- Conduct an internal analysis of staff capacity: for mentors, dedicating one hour per week is not sufficient, taking into consideration preparation and evaluation and in practice, a mentor would need to dedicate half a day per week to support two mentees.
- Gather an understanding of what current (if any) CS initiatives are taking place at the national and subnational level to ensure the mentoring activities are appropriate and not duplicating current efforts.
- Conduct a thorough assessment on the needs of key targets (NCCs, deputy-NCCs and IMOs) to ensure appropriate mentoring activities.
- Consider field visit exchanges for mentees to learn from other countries' nutrition clusters and for mentors to better grasp mentees' context challenges.
- Customise the mentoring programme based on geographic areas and humanitarian needs
- Consolidate the existing mentoring programme, targeting CCs, deputy-CCs and IMOs before opening it up to people in other job functions.

Efficiency

- Improve the overall management of the mentoring programme by tracking activities and identifying a clear GNC Focal Point.
- Establish a clear budget for the mentoring programme and keep track of related expenditures. Allocate budget for enough mentors to cover priority needs in the targeted countries.
- Explore the possibility of knowledge transfer from regional level and national level to country Nutrition Clusters, leveraging resources at local level.
- Make sure that tasks are clear for mentors and that specific deliverables are outlined, allowing for realistic time allocation for the task.

Coherence

- Strictly adhere to revised eligibility criteria by selecting mentees based on current role as CC, Deputy CC or IMO.
- Improve matching criteria for mentors with mentees, based on soft skills and language. When needed, an additional mentor may come in for specific thematic areas.

Connectedness

- Involve Supervisors and line Managers when a mentee applies, to allow the mentee to take the time for CS during the workday, as well as to report performance improvements.
- Ensure that mentees have better exposure to common regional nutrition issues and humanitarian situations and improve linkages with the regional level.

Impact

- Give more visibility to the mentoring programme within the targeted countries, publicising it to make sure that key nutrition cluster staff apply and receive appropriate mentoring support.

- Complement the mentoring programme with other CS activities, maximising the use of published resources such as the GNC Capacity Development Framework.
- Provide a Certificate to mentees at the end of the mentoring process.

Sustainability

- Make sure that the mentoring programme is recognised by key leadership as a CS initiative that aligns with career development programmes in HRs structure.
- Conduct business development and fundraising campaigns to ensure adequate resources are allocated to better structure the GNC mentoring programme.
- Consider training mentees at regional and local level to become mentors and are a part of a “pool” of mentors within geographic locations.
- Make sure that all mentoring documents are uploaded on a permanent server to avoid any loss of documents.
- Make sure that all material produced for the mentoring programme is available in different languages.

Human Rights, Gender & Equity

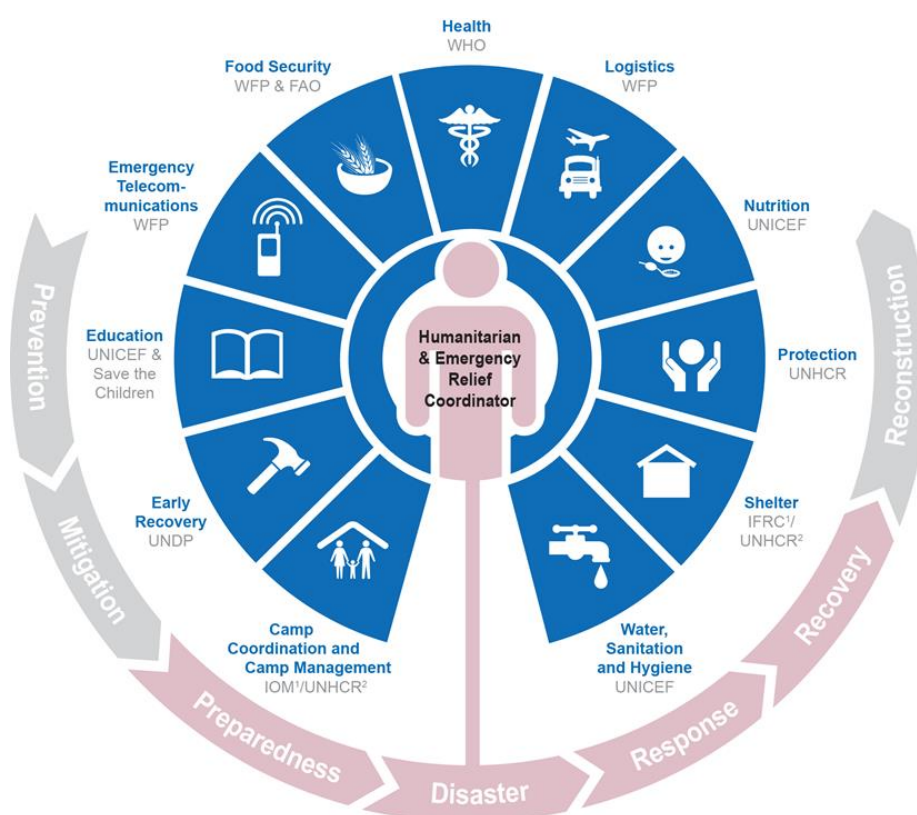
- Address Human Rights, Gender, Equality and Accountability to Beneficiaries during mentoring, referring to existing online resources and humanitarian standards.

1. CONTEXT

The Global Nutrition Cluster

The GNC exists to collectively strengthen the technical and coordination capacities for nutrition in countries, based on the needs of affected populations. This is to enable countries to forecast nutritional trends and prepare for, respond to, and recover from, shocks during humanitarian emergencies, thereby contributing to global efforts to prevent and treat malnutrition in all its forms. Clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g. nutrition, WASH, health and logistics. They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and have clear responsibilities for coordination. The cluster approach is a system of coordination which ensures that international responses to humanitarian emergencies are predictable, accountable and have sufficient global capacity to overcome complex crises and natural diseases. It also aims to improve strategic field-level coordination and prioritization.

Figure 1. Cluster Approach in Humanitarian Settings²



Nutrition Cluster Coordination Teams include:

- 1) **Nutrition Cluster Coordinator (NCC)** - The Nutrition Cluster Coordinator (NCC) oversees the coordination of the nutrition emergency response and is supported by a Deputy Coordinator and the Information Management Officer (IMO). This makes up the cluster coordination team. In some instance, these cluster coordination teams require additional CS in the core competencies for cluster coordination. The mentoring programme is relevant although may need a restructure and clear goals set.
- 2) **Deputy NCC** - ensure sufficient Nutrition response capacity and enhanced leadership, accountability and

² <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/what-cluster-approach>

predictability through strengthening the capacity of nutrition partners, preparing Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)/Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNOs) and monitoring lifesaving activities, in collaboration with the NCC and the National Ministry of Health. The Deputy NCC explore and identify appropriate partners to engage in emergency nutrition responses and facilitate the active engagement of these agencies in the cluster at national and/or sub national level, to conduct nutrition related assessments such as SMART surveys.

- 3) **Information Management Officer (IMO)** - responsible for facilitating and guiding the nutrition cluster, and cluster lead agency, in the compilation and dissemination of strategic and operational information to partners, government and other stakeholders. The IMO sets up a system for providing the minimum set of predictable, standardized and transparent information that can be made available to all stakeholders on a regular basis. To promote common understanding of the evolving situation, the IMO facilitates evidence-based decision making, improving effectiveness and accountability within the cluster.

GNC Mentoring Programme

The GNC mentoring programme is a capacity strengthening (CS) innovation for the GNC, with clear guidelines and tools. The programme began because it was found that NCCs and IMOs have a need to strengthen two main areas: technical competencies and soft skills in coordination and information management. Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship over a period of six months that allows the mentee to continue working and combine what he/she is learning with field experience. Since its inception, there have been six rounds of the Mentoring Programme and it was reemphasized in the GNC Strategy 2022-2025 as a core CS priority. The current mentoring programme is active in 18 countries that have an established coordination mechanism and / or an active NiE response.

For those individuals interested in joining the mentoring program, a self-assessment to identify gaps in capacity and/or knowledge against the [Nutrition Cluster Coordination Competency Framework](#) and/or [IMO Technical Competency Framework](#) is carried out. Mentoring is then tailored to the needs of participants, based on the gaps identified, and ad hoc objectives are set by each mentor for each mentee. The goal of the program is to improve skills of cluster coordination teams in a specific area that a mentee has self-identified. Mentors then work as guides to help mentees identify and develop practical solutions to enhance collective nutrition responses. Upon completion of the mentoring programme, there is a review of progress made towards achieving the originally identified professional development objectives. Mentees and mentors are asked to report to the GNC Mentoring Focal Point on how the mentoring programme has contributed to the mentees' professional development.

Since the inception of the mentoring programme, the GNC has received a total of 128 applications from round one until round six. Out of 128 applicants 78 were mentored (60%).

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Purpose

In addition to the continuous monitoring of the programme, a detailed impact-level review to evaluate processes and tools and learn from the first three years of implementation of the 2019 Mentoring Guide, is required. The proposed evaluation involved a structured process of assessing the success of the mentoring programme in meeting its goals. It was also an important moment of reflection on the lessons learned after the six rounds of mentoring relationships created with Nutrition Clusters at counties' level.

Based on the information provided in the ToRs (ANNEX 1) and preliminary discussions with stakeholders, the evaluation is intended to be used for accountability and learning. The key users of the evaluation are the ones more linked to possible concrete actions for improvement.

2.2 General Objective

The evaluation's objective has been to assess systematically and objectively, the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness, and sustainability of the GNC mentoring programme between July 2019 when the GNC mentoring programme was officially launched to October 2022, when the evaluation was carried out.

2.3 Specific Objectives

2.3.1 Analyze the effectiveness and identify gaps of the mentoring programme by capturing the experience of programme beneficiaries to refine the mentoring programmes approach.

2.3.1.1 Indicate how to further enhance the mentoring programme as per the new GNC Strategy 2022- 2025, how to strengthen inter-agency intervention (UN and technical partners) and how to integrate service packages.

2.3.1.2 Provide insights and lessons learnt to develop a new advocacy strategy to strengthen high level advocacy and resource mobilization for the GNC Mentoring Programme.

Table 1: Users and uses of the evaluation

Evaluation Users	Uses of the evaluation (how the findings and recommendations will be used)
GNC Mentoring Programme UNICEF Geneva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the mentoring programme and refining its approach and effectiveness. Expand the mentoring programme as indicated in the new GNC Strategy 2022- 2025. Build a strategy to strengthen inter-agency intervention with global level technical partners and integration of packages. Develop a new advocacy strategy for greater engagement of national actors and donors, besides international ones at global level.
Nutrition Clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become familiar with the approaches identified as successful and introduce them more systematically into operations by building on lessons learned.
Mentors-Mentees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recommendations for improving the mentoring programme through the experience of mentors and mentees by identifying gaps and highlighting successes.
Clusters system/UN in country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacity through high level involvement of COs and participation of Cluster Coordinators, Cluster Co-coordinators, and Information Managements Officers in the programme. Strengthen inter-agency intervention with national technical partners and integration of packages.
Counterparts and IPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen support to Country Governments, by better understanding their needs, both at national and sub-national level, and adapt the nutrition mentoring programme accordingly. Verify the best approach for capacity building of IPs involved in the Nutrition Clusters, both national and sub-national level.

Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To have a better understanding of the nutrition mentoring programme and hence, to better define financial support.
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3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The scope of the evaluation aimed at generating independent credible evidence of the results and constraints experienced by the GNC mentoring programme, to enable reflection, learning and provide recommendations for the improvement of the mentoring programme and development of mentoring best practices. The evaluation focused on the six rounds of mentoring that took place between July 2019 and the end of 2022.

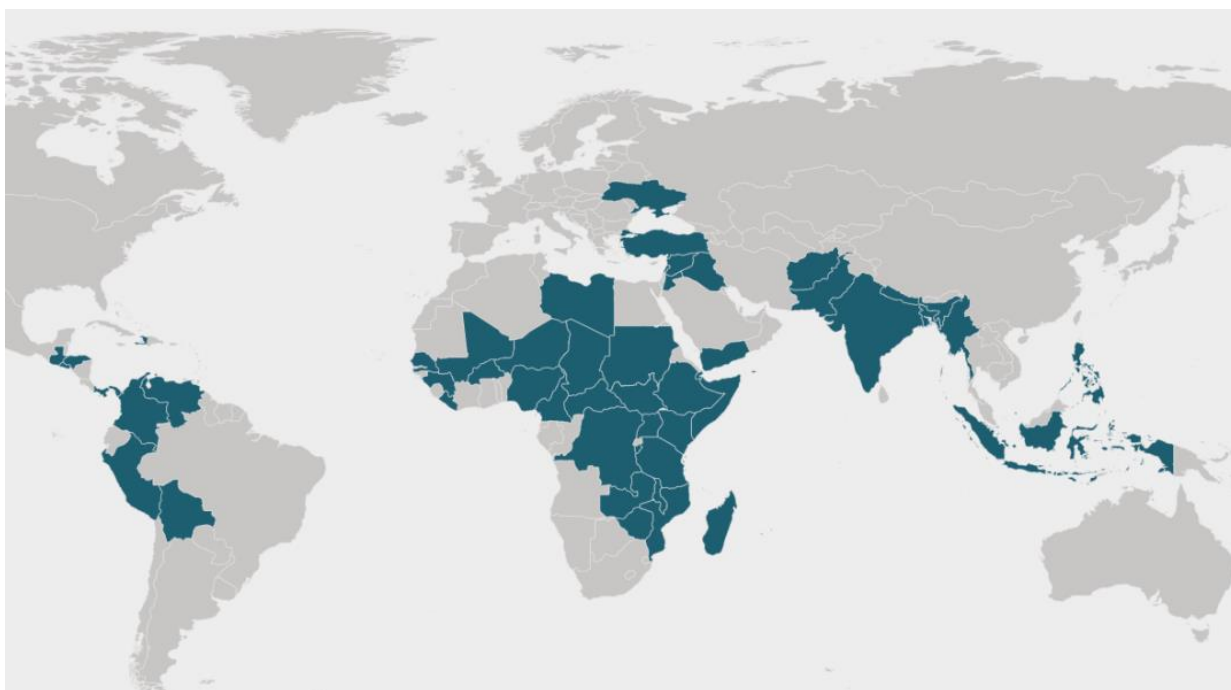
3.1 Thematic Scope

The mentoring programme was proposed because it was found that NCCs and IMOs have a need for development in two main areas: technical competencies and soft skills in coordination and information management. It was thought that these areas could be effectively addressed through a mentoring approach, a relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. In 2022, a new component was added to the programme and mentees who wanted to be mentored in NiE programming now include nutrition cluster coordination teams and nutrition cluster participants, including LNGOs. Although not in the original TORs, this component was included in this evaluation, even though its first mentoring cycle was still ongoing.

3.2 Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of this evaluation covered all countries with established nutrition coordination mechanisms and that are supported by the GNC.

Figure 2. GNC priority countries' Map



3.3 Chronological scope

The implementation period covered by the evaluation is from July 2019 to October 2022, when the evaluation was carried out, toward the end of round six.

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology was structured around the evaluation questions, which determined appropriate methods and approaches, indicators, data collection and analysis to provide answers to the questions and achieve the objectives of the evaluation.

4.1 Approach of the evaluation

The overall approach chosen for this evaluation was developed based on the ToRs, preliminary discussions with stakeholders, and the review of mentoring programme documents, including the guide. This was a formative/empowerment³ evaluation, designed to enhance programme performance and productivity with a focus on practical problem solving, as well as improvements and outcomes. The evaluation involved the programme's stakeholders in the entire process, from the design to the data collection and analysis.

4.1. Methods and data collection tools

Qualitative data were collected through:

- One-on-one interviews
- Semi structured interviews

1-on-1 interviews are **interviews that are in person and occur between one interviewer and the interviewee**. Semi-structured interviews in qualitative research are **used to collect qualitative, open-ended data**. Both of these methods were also appropriate for analysing gender, equity and human rights issues.

The collection tools and data sources were validated by an Evaluation Reference Group before data collection began. Tools and questions were adapted based on the recipients, such as mentors, mentees and leadership level individuals.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling frame, the rationale for selection, the selection mechanisms, the numbers selected from potential subjects (sample size, calculation parameters, etc.) and the sample limits was discussed with the Reference Group. The number of interviewees was disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories. Table 2 below summarizes the sampling strategy.

People interviewed were mentees and mentors (CCs and IMOs) while key informants were GNC-CT/TA/TST staff, TWG (technical working group) chairs and co-chairs, and supervisors of mentees. The selection criteria of mentees was based on geographic location, language, and the mentoring round they are in. CCs and IMOs were equally represented, as were men and women.

³ https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/empowerment_evaluation

Table 2: Overview of sampling strategy

Data collection tools	Sampling method	Total	Women	Men
Interview guide individual interviews with mentees round 3-6	<i>Non-probabilistic / by reasoned choice</i>	18	50%	50%
Interview guide individual interviews with mentors	<i>Non-probabilistic / by reasoned choice</i>	8	50%	50%
GNC-CT/TA/TST UNICEF staff	<i>Non-probabilistic / by reasoned choice</i>	6	50%	50%
Supervisors of Mentees	<i>Non-probabilistic / by reasoned choice</i>	18*	50%	50%
TOTAL		50		

* Only 50% of mentees provided the contact of their supervisors. Once contacted only four supervisors answered, both from NGOs and UNICEF

Qualitative Data Collection

The Principal Investigator was responsible for interviews. Participation in the interviews was completely voluntary and all interviews were done online, with each participant providing a verbal consent before audio was recorded. To comply with ethical protocols, all transcriptions and compilations were void of identifiers, and protected by passwords. Qualitative data was stored in a safe and secure place.

Quality Control

The Principal Investigator facilitated quality control measures of the entire study process. Primary data collection took place over a period of two to four weeks to ensure all targeted interviewees were included. Reviews focused on whether the right participants were selected, completion of data collection, probing and quality write-ups.

Qualitative Data Compilation and Analysis

The principal investigator reviewed and analysed all transcriptions thematically before using them for analysis. Qualitative data analysis used a ‘framework approach’ developed for applied qualitative evaluation where the objectives are developed in advance based on the information needs of the stakeholders. Themes focused on the respondent experiences, needs and programmatic questions as defined above, but also allowed for additional relevant themes to emerge from the data for future mentoring programmes. The qualitative analysis was conducted involving transcripts – transcribed into English – and research memos from structured observations.

The principal investigator led preliminary report writing, validation, incorporation of comments and final report preparation. The triangulation strategy (use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis, including at least three lines of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the evaluation in relation to a certain question - data sources) is also important.

The methods were used in a way to ensure that qualitative findings are internally valid and that conclusions are robust.

4.3 Ethical Considerations and Evaluation Principles

The principal investigator adhered to all research ethical protocols. The principal risk involved is the possibility of an inadvertent disclosure of confidential information. During every step of the evaluation, participant privacy and confidentiality was protected and was discussed with participants, e.g., that confidential information and disclosures on the part of other participants should not be shared outside the team, and that participants should adhere to confidentiality guidelines. Participant information will always remain confidential, unless required by

UNICEF to release information. Reports about the study and results that may be published in scientific journals will not include any identifying information that would expose participant identities. The principal investigator followed ethical obligations of the evaluators like independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability.

4.4 Limitations and constraints of the evaluation

Limitations and constraints were encountered during the evaluation, including information gaps and strategies for mitigating bias as presented in the table below.

Table 3: Limitations and Constraints of the Evaluation/Proposed Mitigation Strategies

Limitations and Constraints	Mitigation Strategies
Availability of interviewees	Interviews were planned early in advance using a doodle poll
Time zone difference	Calls organized accordingly allowing for flexibility
ICT issues	Adapt to the needs of mentees using either computer or mobile and different apps (Skype, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp) or recording the interview in case the connection was not stable
Mentees no longer working with the same organisation	A batch of mentees were selected. Those that didn't reply were replaced with a 2 nd batch of mentees
Different languages of mentees	Principal investigator spoke different languages
Information on specific budget for mentoring programme	The analysis couldn't take into consideration the cost of the programme
Availability of data since round one due to change of server and staff turnover	Interviews were carried out from round 4 to 6
Full set of information on selection process of each mentee and filled evaluations by mentors and mentees	The analysis was conducted via interviews with mentors and mentees
Uncertain number of mentors due to staff turnover throughout round 1 and 6	All mentors were contacted regardless of whether they were currently employed
Availability of JDs of all Mentors from round 1 to round 6	The analysis was based on findings more than on factual checking

5. FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

In 1991, the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation defined six criteria for evaluations criteria and updated those in 2019 to include evaluating international development co-operation programmes. They have since become a cornerstone of evaluation practice and are widely used. The purpose of the evaluation criteria is to identify evaluation questions, with each criterion providing a different perspective on the intervention, its implementation, and the results.

5.1 Relevance

Relevance: In evaluating the relevance of the programme, the following questions were considered: To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid? Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the GNC Strategy and its objectives? Are the activities and outputs consistent with the intended purpose of the programme?

Quotes

Interviews with Mentees, Oct 2022

"The mentorship programme gives me elements of knowledge needed for very technical work, otherwise its impossible to perform as IMOs"

"The training is on the job, allowing the time to practice and to continue working while learning"

"The GNC provides a unique opportunity of mentorship, as other clusters do not do it"

Interviews with Mentors, Oct. 2022

"The timing is an issue, in country they are super busy"

"The mentee needs to have 4 to 5 months of experience in their position to be more aware about what the job entails and their knowledge gaps"

"Mentoring is time consuming. Still it is an obligation to be a mentor in addition to other tasks. To prepare yourself for 1 h session takes time and after the lesson there is a form to fill out on what has been done. Reporting is cumbersome. 1 hour session means 3 hours or half a day. It is crucial to organise our capacity strengthening activities."

"We are obliged to do it out of free time. And we do not have a lot of free time"

QE R.1. How closely is the mentoring programme aligned with coordination and country level needs?

A set of sub questions were administered to both mentors and mentees:

To Mentors: Does the mentoring programme add value to the overall goal and interests of the GNC? Is the mentoring programme appropriate to attain one or more of the organization's goals to achieve a desired state in the future?

To Mentees: In your experience, what are the country level coordination needs according to key cluster core functions? How closely is the mentoring programme aligned with coordination needs country level? Which are in your experience the aspects on sessions or topics within modules that better address those in the mentoring programme? And which are useless, if at all?

1. Sometimes NCC have other duties within the organisation, and do not have the required knowledge of latest practices and tools needed to coordinate the nutrition cluster. Furthermore, at the sub-national and national level the NCCs follow the actions of other clusters like Health and Food Security.
2. Often, Deputy NCCs come from NGOs or CBOs, depending on the resources available in the country, and do not necessarily have the full knowledge of how a nutrition cluster works and what is expected of them.
3. Sometimes a UNV, or an M&E staff, either from UNICEF or NGOs with very many other compelling priorities within his/her organisation, are appointed to the IMO position. In some cases, statisticians or people with business or mathematics degrees are hired as IMOs, with most not having a nutrition nor health background, thus lacking the necessary NiE knowledge. This is more likely to happen in developing countries that do not have immediately available people or a prepared NiE response.
4. The mentoring programme is relevant in a continuously evolving context where high level knowledge and digital skills are needed, that often do not come from regular trainings or university's studies. Moreover, Humanitarian Response may require abrupt changes or accelerated interventions, depending on the context of the emergency. This requires specific personal mentoring to accompanying on the job duties. A tailored set of objectives is established at the beginning of mentorship, based on gaps identified by the mentee. Mentoring is needed in the few months after starting an assignment.
5. As mentioned, NiE (Nutrition in Emergency) was recently introduced to the mentoring programme. NiE mentoring is important, especially to those deputy-CCs or IMOs who have not worked in a nutrition humanitarian context before. During the GNC Technical Support Team retreat from 15-17 November 2022, it was reiterated that the NiE component be a stand alone programme for other cluster participants and LNGOs. The question about the best modality to provide NiE technical skills, and to which cadres, remains open. Mentoring is a lengthy time demanding process, still not fully empowered and consolidated to address CCs, deputy-CCs and IMOs needs. GNC is encouraged to assess the feasibility of NiE mentoring as a stand alone programme and the resoures needed.

QE R.2. Is the time allocated for the mentoring (3-6 months) appropriate? Should it be revised?

6. Most of the mentees interviewed had either a three or six month mentorship, depending on the objectives set at the beginning of the programme, with one mentor allocated to them covering all topics. **Most mentees suggest that six months is the right time for beginners**, while three months would be enough for those that have only minor gaps to address in their current position. All mentees were happy with the process; with the time allocated to set objectives at the beginning; on the amount of discussions they had; and on the evaluation at the end. No issue was reported about the self assessment nor the evaluation tools.
7. **Mentees receive mentoring once every two weeks.** This is adequate if mentees adhere to suggestions to read documents and practice exercises during that time. However, mentees are very busy with field activities and sometimes they do not show up for an appointment with their mentor or they postpone the call. This is difficult as mentors have reserved their time for them. Postponing calls or not showing up for sessions also means that by the end of the programme not all objectives will be met, leaving some mentees' questions unanswered and gaps still not filled. Although e-learning modules are available, those are complementary to the mentoring process. On the other hand, it is not a requirement to take them all, as it depends on learning objectives set at the beginning of a mentorship.

8. **Time is an issue for mentors.** Mentors, who are often consultants, designate time out of their calendar to carry out mentoring. They can allocate one hour per week or every two weeks for mentoring, depending on how many mentees they can support, however, one hour is often not enough and it usually ends up being three to four hours. If a mentor has two mentees this means that every week they spend half a day on the mentorship programme, often with preparation and evaluation time not included. In addition, in some mentors' ToRs, CS was appearing, but not specifically as mentoring, yet it was a deliverable. This has been rectified and mentoring is appearing in all ToRs now. Still it needs to continue to be included as a deliverable for those hired as consultants within GNC-CT.

QE R.3. How strategic is the mentoring programme? (HQs only)

9. The mentoring programme is strategic for the GNC and it is included in the GNC strategy 2022-2025. In this sense the mentor programme responds to country needs and it is strategic because it produces *“an additional value for the country”*.

Conclusions for RELEVANCE

REL 1: In some instance, the cluster coordination teams require additional CS in the core competencies for cluster coordination. The mentoring programme is relevant although may need to be better structured and designed to set clear goals and ambitions.

REL 2: All components of the mentoring programme are relevant, but mentoring is time consuming. For a vast thematic area like NiE and for its targeted people (clusters participants and LNGOs), GNC CT should consider exploring its feasibility at present. A thorough assessment on key target priorities (CCs, deputy-CCs and IMOs) compared to existing human and other resources needed may be worthy at this point of time.

REL 3. Mentees indicated that six months is the right time bracket for mentoring, allowing for exposure and clarifications through discussions in their daily activities. Three months could be enough for those with experience and who just need a refresher or accompaniment on specific aspects. For mentors, one hour per week is not sufficient taking into consideration preparation and evaluation. In practice, it takes half a day per week to prepare for two mentees, which many mentors have.

REL 4: The programme started because it was found that NCCs and IMOs have a need for development in two main areas: technical competencies and soft skills in coordination and information management. The GNC mentoring programme guide was tuned to those two cadres that are strategic for the Nutrition Clusters and therefore for GNC. If other themes are targeted, as indicated in the GNC Strategy 2022-25, the mentoring guide should be updated.

5.2 Appropriateness

Appropriateness. Appropriateness is the quality of being suitable or right (fitting for purpose). In the case of the GNC mentoring programme, it's whether it is suitable for the context in which it operates.

Quotes

Interviews with Mentees. Oct 2022

"My mentorship action plan was prepared in agreement with my mentor. During mentorship, I was asked the points I was mostly interested in. Mentorship is flexible in timing; one can read at night or during weekend. My mentor was always available, every day, anytime I could write her. This will continue since it remained a good relationship. Any webinar or event I can reach her immediately to invite me."

"Mentorship is a long process. Not just a few days training or workshop. You can reach your mentor any time."

"Face to face encounter is very crucial for such a programme."

"Workshops are intense but in a short space, real live mentoring is closer to the situation on the ground, and it is more appropriate."

"Since we are stretched, mentorship with weekly or bi-weekly meetings are much better than a workshop, although they could be complementary."

QE A.1. Is the mentoring programme responding to the individual needs of mentees?

10. The mentoring programme is suitable since it is tailored to the needs of participants by setting objectives at the beginning of the programme.
11. There is a set of minimum requirements that must be demonstrated in the application process to become a mentee.⁴ Mentees will have to be current Nutrition Cluster staff and should have the following characteristics:
 - Willingness to learn and assume responsibility for acquiring or improving skills and knowledge.
 - Self-responsibility to proactively engage in raising current job challenges and identify goals that actively enlist the assistance of the mentor.
 - Receptivity to constructive feedback and coaching.
 - Commitment to the time schedule, preparing for and participating in mentoring sessions regularly.

Mentee applications are submitted to the GNC mentoring focal point, who will check them for adherence to minimum qualifications and experience. The focal point will convene a GNC mentoring selection committee who will approve all mentees. Once approved, applicants will be notified and invited to participate in the mentoring programme.

12. During the evaluation it was found that the mentorship programme opened to applicants beyond the roles of CCs and IMOs to other nutrition cluster members and even to previous CCs or IMOs no longer on the job, wishing to get a certificate for career purposes. Within GNC CT there was a recent concerted decision to expand the mentoring programme to broader cluster partners, to reach people beyond UNICEF, who are involved in the response, particularly I/LNGOs. While the need is there, from a management perspective this suggests the need for an assessment to consider all aspects involved in mentoring, including human and financial resources available.

⁴ GNC Mentoring Programme Guide. June 2019

13. The GNC CT is already constrained with time and human resources, and it may not be appropriate to go beyond the scope of work described in the mentoring guide.⁵ The risk is lack of impact and overstretching the already limited resources available. This also suggests the need to review and update the GNC Mentoring Programme Guide at least every three years.

QE A.2. Is mentoring the appropriate way to increase capacities at country level?

14. The mentoring programme achieves the objectives of strengthening the capacity of key nutrition cluster staff to ensure the functioning of the nutrition clusters in country. To perform well, CCs in addition to leadership and coordination skills, need a deep knowledge of the nutrition determinants and best practices in the country, can network with partners and understand the political and security environment.
15. IMOs face new complexities related to ever changing and evolving online platforms and tools. In addition, IMOs must adapt existing in-country IM approaches to collect, analyse and report activities and resources, and identify information gaps. Furthermore, IMOs are requested to establish and maintain information databases to consolidate, analyse and disseminate critical information to decision making. Through mentoring, the capacity of IMOs is strengthened and contributes to the core Cluster/Sub-Cluster functions, both at national and at sub-national cluster level.

QE A.3 Is the mentoring programme the only viable way?

16. **Mentorship is a viable way to have effective impact on nutrition clusters activities**, as explained above. Mentors are Nutrition Cluster staff or those who have worked previously in a cluster function but are currently not employed with that function, who understand the role of NCCs and IMs in nutrition cluster teams and who are willing to fill the role.⁶ Ideally, mentors should have specific characteristics required to be a mentor, such as: embody enthusiasm to develop Nutrition Cluster staff professionally and to work more effectively; experience in emergency nutrition response, ideally in a cluster role; a strong understanding of the IASC humanitarian protocols and of new global humanitarian policies and tools; as well as hands on experience in coordination.

17. **All interviewed mentees believed they could not have reached the same results with another CS activity.** They found that training is often too theoretic while mentoring gives them the opportunity to learn while doing and applying it to the situation on the ground. The flexibility of the mentoring programme allows for exchanges out of the set hour, to ask for clarifications. Some mentees asked to add a component for mentors to join them in the field or a study trip for mentees to see other context and how the cluster works in other countries.

Conclusions: APPROPRIATENESS

⁵ GNC Mentoring Programme Guide. June 2019

⁶ GNC Mentoring Programme Guide. June 2019

APP 1: The mentorship programme is tailored to the needs of participants by setting ad hoc objectives for each mentee. Mentees fall into two categories, nutrition cluster coordination and information management. With time the programme started to open to several other demands and topics, such as NiE, without a thorough assessment of internal capacities.

APP 2: Mentoring is an appropriate way to increase capacities at country level because it targets key staff (CCs and IMO) and strengthens their capacity to assure the functioning of country nutrition clusters.

APP 3: Mentors are current GNC and Technical Alliance staff and who are willing to fill the role. Mentors are paid for their work, although the level of effort (LOE) is not well estimated – for example, the estimation of one hour a week, in practice, means half a day per week.

APP 4: The mentoring was suggested by mentees to be a strong CS programme to increase knowledge and skills. However, more tips and advice on context would be needed, and customisation by geographic areas according to differences in humanitarian needs.

5.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness: In evaluating the effectiveness of the programme, it is useful to consider the following questions: To what extent were the objectives of the programme achieved or are likely to be achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives of the programme?

Quotes

Interviews with Mentees, Oct 2022

"We needed more additional discussions about the situation on the ground"

"We need longer discussions and exchanges on real practices in country and best practices in country wide emergency situations in the same region at the same time."

"There was not enough time to discuss questions"

"GNC mentorship programme is an innovative structure to strengthen humanitarian development".

"Specifically, I can target HNO (Humanitarian Needs Overview), HRP (Humanitarian Response Plan) and now I know how to prepare a Nutrition Communication Plan and Evaluation. But still have some weaknesses, especially on the fundraising component."

"Mentorship is not an innovation per se but an excelling platform for learning. Mostly it depends on Mentor /Mentee relationship".

Interviews with Mentors, Oct 2022

"I would like to become able to train other people and mentor my people in my country"

"GNC is a very busy environment where staff need to make the effort to do mentorship and allocate time to meet mentees."

"Mentors and mentees end up not meeting regularly because of lack of time. It would be worthy to explore how to mentor within the country rather than across countries, as it may be easier"

"Mentorship is voluntary. One may decide if he/she has time. It is a choice."

"In country it could be done as part of your job, in the daily work. If put into context, it could be part of your responsibility."

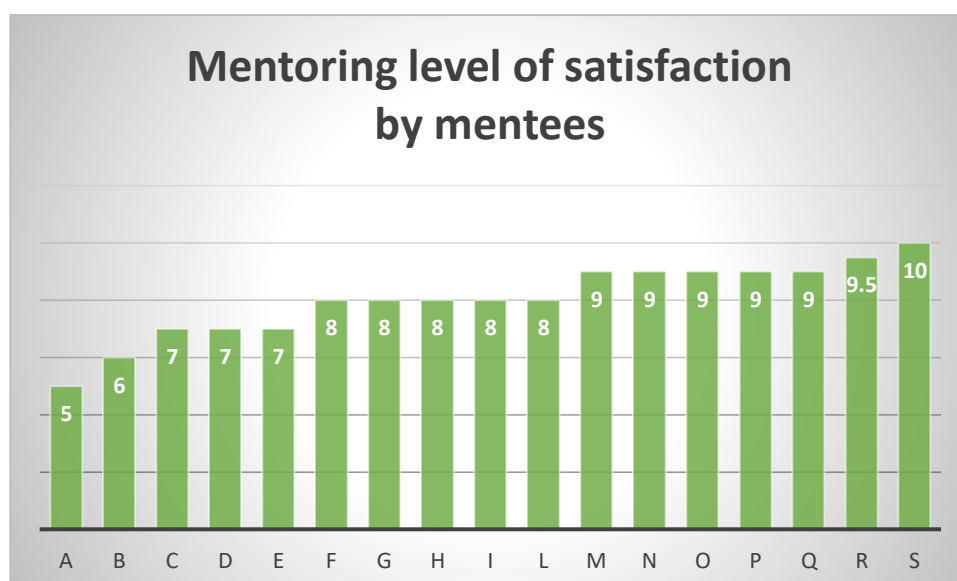
"If supervisor is involved, he/she could interact with mentee to verify the progress and try to discuss bottlenecks."

QE E.1 To what extent have the learning objectives of the programme been achieved in the different areas i.e. how diverse have the activities been with CCs and IMOs?

The most important part of the mentoring agreement is setting the learning objectives. This will serve as the evaluation criteria at the end of the mentoring period. A set of templates are created to support the entire process of mentoring including mentoring agreement, evaluation and tracking checklist.⁷ The mentors and mentees were happy with the forms, but shared that it takes a long time to fill them in.

18. To answer the question "To what extent have the learning objectives of the programme been achieved", a Likert Scale was used.⁸ It is made up of a 10-point rating scale ranging from one, being "I strongly disagree" and 10 "I strongly agree". Most mentees indicated 9 as the level of objectives achieved, and only one 10. The 9 was mostly related to their capacity to be present in all sessions, due to field emergencies or internet problems. Some mentees felt that discussions were not considering the situation on the ground and the time allocated to discussions was not sufficient. The biggest dissatisfaction was expressed by a mentee whose mentoring ended after two months and the mentor was not re-hired nor replaced to finalise the mentorship. In other cases, language difficulty was flagged. Spanish speaking mentors are needed for CS in Caribbean and Latin American countries. The biggest generalised dissatisfaction is the lack of a Certificate at the end of mentorship.

Figure 3. Achievement of learning objectives and learning satisfaction according to mentees



Source: Principal Investigator. Interviews to Mentees, Oct 2022

⁷ GNC Mentoring Programme Guide. June 2019

⁸ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1877129715200196>

19. According to mentors some mentees do not always connect, or they postpone their meeting due to high work burden and field movements. As a result, objectives are not always achieved.
20. When to start mentorship needs to be better explored as mentorship often begins too late when staff are already underperforming in his/her tasks. Otherwise, most mentors are enthusiastic of mentorship programme, and confirm that objectives are always set, and evaluations are always done. Some mentors suggested to explore more country level capacity strengthening support for cluster participants.

QE E.2 To what extent have the programme modules been adequate and effective in delivering the expected results?

21. Topics are grouped together in modules for mentoring purposes. In the mentoring guidelines, the category is related to the mentoring *topic*, not the *job category* of the mentee. Thus, NCCs could choose to be mentored on a relevant IM competency area and equally, IMs could choose to be mentored in nutrition cluster coordination. The question on whether each mentor has all competencies is arising and brings up the idea of exploring the possibility of two sessions with a specialist for specific subjects, in addition to a dedicated mentor.
22. Additional topics have been added to the modules and an online platform was built to support mentoring. Earlier rounds were carried out in a more difficult learning environment since modules were not all uploaded and the online tools and learning resources were incomplete. All modules are now available online.

QE E.3 To what extent has CC and IMO participation been effective in strengthening capacities for better cluster coordination or Information Management?

23. Mentees gained their knowledge from at least three types of exposure:
 - a) Mentoring programme: **“my competencies increased a lot”**, on core cluster competencies and the humanitarian programme cycle;
 - b) Technical working groups (TWG),⁹ learning features and benefits. For example, the Inter-Cluster Nutrition Working Group that provides technical direction to in-country Clusters on nutrition-sensitive programming throughout the Humanitarian Programme Cycle; and
 - c) Putting knowledge into action: learning by doing especially at the beginning in their role as CCs and IMOs.
24. According to mentees, the mentoring programme is a great asset without which they couldn't fully understand their role. The Nutrition Cluster Coordination Toolkit¹⁰ provides a comprehensive package of practical tools to support NCCs and nutrition cluster partners, to effectively deliver on the six core cluster functions, enhance accountability to affected populations, and improve the impact and reach of nutrition programming throughout the humanitarian programme cycle.¹¹ Although a Nutrition Cluster toolkit is available online, the mentoring programme allows mentees to better understand the tools available in the toolkit.

⁹ <https://agora.unicef.org/course/info.php?id=33180>

¹⁰ <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/coordination-toolkit>

¹¹ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space>

QE E.4 To what degree does the GNC mentoring programme serve as an effective capacity development strategy within the Nutrition Cluster at global, regional, national, and subnational levels?

25. As per previous paragraphs, the GNC mentoring programme serves as an effective capacity development strategy within the Nutrition Cluster at national and subnational levels. The global level is more connected to the field, while the regional is still to be developed, apart from ESARO where a nutritionist is a mentor. Mentees requested better exposure of common regional nutrition issues and humanitarian situations, including linkages with the regional level.
26. Particular attention is to be given to Spanish speaking Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries. GNC is supporting the nutrition clusters in the LAC region, however there is need for more support/focus in the mentoring programme. This means that GNC must plan for adequate in number of Spanish speaking mentors.
27. Language is also an issue for francophone countries, mostly Western and Central African ones, but also Haiti. Currently, most mentors are English speaking with French being the second language.

QE E.5. What was the innovation that contributed to this success?

28. Mentorship is an innovation for the GNC and is based on a needs assessment and provided by very motivated staff. The person providing the mentoring is recognised by their mentees as a high-level expert in the subject matter to which they are mentoring.¹²
29. **Mentorship increases connectivity between the GNC and the countries clusters.** According to some mentees and mentors no other clusters are providing mentoring or, if they did, they stopped because of high demand of use of resources (e.g. human). Innovative tools and webinars are made accessible to mentees.

QE E.6 Documentation of activities run by the mentoring programme is up to date? Storage of data are consistent? Who has been doing it?

30. **Documentation of activities of the mentoring programme is a weakness** – there isn't a dedicated person to organise and keep data updated (Secretariat or dedicated Mentor). In fact, only part of data from rounds 1, 2 and 3 are available. While the number of staff mentored and from which country cluster were available, the names and the contacts of mentees was not tracked.
31. **Staff turnover created a gap in institutional memory** and uncoordinated data transitioning from a temporary server to AGORA system created a loss of information. This has to do with lack of time within GNC team, where staff is overstretched by multiple tasks, and the lack of attention to this programme by senior leadership team at country level.

Conclusions: EFFECTIVENESS

¹² GNC Mentoring Programme Guide. 2019

EFF 1: Most participants expressed strong agreement to the effectiveness of the programme, with some lower points given due to practical issues linked to time of mentor or of mentees. The biggest generalised dissatisfaction is the lack of a certificate at the end of mentorship.

EFF 2: Some mentees felt that discussions were not considering the situation on the ground, and time allocated to discussions wasn't sufficient. The question on whether each mentor has all competencies is arising and brings up the idea of exploring the possibility of having a main mentor and one or two sessions with a subject matter specialist.

EFF 3: CCs and IMOs said that they gained their knowledge from 3 levels: 1) mentorship programme; 2) technical working groups (TWG); 3) and from learning by doing, especially at the beginning in their role of CCs and IMOs. The mentoring programme is key in helping mentees better understand their role within nutrition clusters and helps them understand the tools available in the Nutrition Cluster Coordination Toolkit.

EFF 4: The mentoring programme serves as an effective capacity strengthening strategy within the Nutrition Cluster at national, and subnational levels. The global level is more connected to the field, while the regional is still to be developed. Mentees requested for better exposure to common regional level nutrition issues and humanitarian situations and links to the regional level. Issues with French and Spanish languages among mentors was reported, especially by Caribbean and Latin American countries.

EFF 5: Mentorship is a capacity strengthening innovation for GNC, with clear guidelines and tools.

EFF 6: Documentation of activities of the mentoring programme to date has been weak. Lack of a dedicated person to organise and store data, staff turnover and storage on a temporary server created some loss of information. Nor is it clear who the GNC Mentoring Focal Point is.

5.4 Efficiency

Efficiency: Efficiency measures the outputs—qualitative and quantitative—in relation to the inputs. When evaluating the efficiency of GNC Mentoring Programme the following questions were considered: Were activities cost-efficient? Were objectives achieved on time? Was the programme implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Quotes

Interview with Mentees, Oct 2022

"Terminology that I never use to understand became more tangible. Now I understand cluster activities better."

"It was a revision of concepts and practices, summarised lessons, information that can allow me to train my team."

"I saw improvement on daily basis, cross checking easily."

"Mentorship should be very organised to empower the CCs, since cluster role is very important in leading the nutritional response and ensure coordination among various partners"

"You get more organised; you think more organised. I realized that I should be more directive, now I changed style of leadership to coordinate better"

“To present data is very important. I was given tools to use I had never used before and that I was not aware of. This made me underperform. I didn’t know how and where to start from. An earlier induction would be needed. But if I was informed at the beginning of mentorship programme it would have helped”

Interviews with Mentors. Oct 2022

“A Mentor has a lot to offer and needs to have experience, therefore should be SELECTED WISELY and CAREFULLY.”

QE ECY.1 What are the comparative advantages of the GNC mentoring programme vis-a vis other capacity development initiatives?

32. The comparative advantages have been described in the above paragraphs. In summary:
- Mentorship is a one-to-one relationship, while training is with several people. Mentorship builds a lot of trust, and the mentee can open up to share his/her challenges: “It unpacks your ideas”.
 - While a training is generally a week or two, and it is a full immersion of learning, mentorship is a longer process that is compatible with the day-to-day work.
 - It is a mix of purposeful conversation, eLearning and practical exercises that are revised with the mentor and compared with field actual experience.
 - Mentorship is personalised training and is built on specific gaps of the individual, identified at the beginning. In addition, it allows good integration among different programmes (Nutrition, Health, WASH, etc.)
 - The reason for a six-month mentorship is so the mentees can ask question concerning real challenges encountered in the field and the timing is aligned with certain job requirements, such as planning for SMART Surveys or preparing HNO/HRP, etc.
 - It allows for greater sustainability; it can be done remotely and creates relationship that are beneficial beyond mentoring.

QE ECY.2 What are the resources needed to carry out a good mentoring programme? (HQs only)

33. **Financial resources** from the past three years were not specifically reported, and a dedicated financial report wasn’t available. Ad hoc fundraising, for the particular purpose of supporting the mentor programme is lacking, as it is considered part of other tasks. Still mentoring requires an important number of resources. **Keeping track of resources utilised for this very programme would be important to evaluate cost-efficiency.**
34. **Human Resource** - GNC mentors must ensure that all Nutrition Cluster Coordination Teams have the knowledge, skills and experience needed to ensure effective collective actions for improved nutrition outcomes in emergencies and protracted crises. One of the key CS activities within the GNC Strategy is to provide access to structured mentoring – based on pre-identified individual learning needs and clearly defined performance development priorities. However, as described above, timing allotted to mentoring is not well defined in GNC staff TORs (only few cadres are full time employees of UNICEF, most are consultants).

35. GNC made a huge investment in the past three years on learning material and creating online opportunities for learning, in addition to the one-to-one mentoring.¹³ A repository with large data storage is quite easy to access online.

QE ECY.3 To what extent is the strategy cited a worthwhile investment in educational resources? (HQs only)

36. Mentoring is a worthwhile investment in educational resources as the mentor is guiding the mentees to identify, together, the most appropriate online learning resources to look at. For some mentees it came at the right time while for others, it was too early or too late. *“I performed better after months of mentorship but if I could come back now to my mentor, I would have more precise questions”*. The main gap observed is the lack of involvement of mentees supervisors from application and during mentoring to the evaluation of progresses made in the field.

QE ECY.4 To what extent could the same results have been achieved by other, less costly alternatives?

37. To measure whether the same results could have been achieved by other, less costly alternatives wasn't possible because of lack of a dedicated budget.

Conclusions: EFFICIENCY

ECY 1: GNC mentoring programme has a comparative advantage vis-a vis of other capacity development initiatives: a) Mentorship is a one-to-one relationship and builds trust; b) Mentorship is a mix of purposeful conversations, eLearning and practical exercises; c) Mentorship is personalised and built on specific gaps of the individual; d) While a training is full immersion, mentorship allows to work alongside the programme; e) Mentees are exposed to new tools to perform their duties.

ECY 2: Resources to carry out a good mentoring programme refer to financial, human and learning resources. For human resources it is necessary to plan for mentors according to countries' needs. Resources not planned in this sense show an unclear level of engagement in the line management for the mentorship programme. At country level the role of supervisor of mentees is almost none since the mentee can apply without talking to the supervisor.

ECY 3: Time is a major challenge. The level of commitment to the mentorship programme is not always optimal.

ECY 4: Mentoring is a worthwhile investment in educational resources for the GNC despite all difficulties.

5.5 Coherence

Coherence: Coherence refers to the compatibility of the GNC Mentoring Programme with other interventions of GNC and of countries' nutrition clusters. This means that the effects of the interventions are considered in a more systemic and context-coherent manner, distinguishing between internal and external coherence.

Quotes

¹³ <https://hdss4im.com/>

Interviews with Mentees. Oct 2022

"I have been a cluster coordinator for 1 year on a temporary appointment. I have 1 month left and then will retire. It would have increased my chance to have a full-time position with the Nutrition Cluster if I had this mentorship before."

"I would like to be part of GNC support team since I am in the nutrition humanitarian response for more than 12 years. I would like to receive a mentorship participation certificate from GNC".

QE Coh.1 To what extent was the Mentoring Programme coherent to the larger strategic framework of GNC?

38. The Mentoring Programme is coherent with GNC Strategy and its objectives. The GNC Strategy 2022-2025 goal is to provide general support to strengthen national and subnational technical and coordination capacities for nutrition by 2025 to 80 countries with ongoing, or at risk of, situations of fragility. Selection of geographical areas is based on global team assessment of countries' needs in priority countries. NiE is included in the new strategy.
39. The Mentoring Programme is coherent with the Cluster Approach in Humanitarian Response. However, it may be difficult to mentor all GNC priority countries considering staff turnover. Considering the already overstretched human resources, it will be necessary to select staff in need of mentorship by focusing on the key functions of IMOs and CCs. The level of resources put into mentoring and the engagement of senior leadership in this programme will have to be further verified.
40. The Mentoring Programme is not always coherent with real cluster and country needs since some mentees interviewed, were not currently working as CCs, deputy-Coordinators, or IMOs, but they had worked in that role before. Some of them were at the end of their career, near retirement and others looked at having a certificate for career development. In the case of NiE those were cluster participants from different national or international NGOs with a nutrition or health background. Instead, it would be interesting to provide some NiE concepts to those key staff that do not have that background. The mentoring programme is not always coherent with the internal agencies' organization structure, as supervisors are not always involved.

Conclusions: COHERENCE

COH 1: The Mentoring Programme is coherent with GNC Strategy, its objectives and priorities as well as with the Cluster Approach in Humanitarian Response.

COH 2: The Mentoring Programme is not always coherent with real clusters and country needs since some mentees interviewed, were not working as CCs nor deputy-Coordinators, nor IMOs. The Mentoring Programme is not always coherent with the internal agencies' organization structure, since supervisors of applicants are not always involved.

5.6 Connectedness

Connectedness: Connectedness means being professionally linked with countries' clusters, and the robustness of such relationships, building trust to one another, and reciprocity that gives the capacity for collective harmonized interventions.

Quotes

Interviews with Mentees, Oct 2022

"It is like if you have a tutor for yourself, it is great"

"It makes us more in correlation with other colleagues with proper practices"

Interviews with Mentors, Oct 2022

"It is the greater experience that connects with country needs."

"What mentees get from mentors' results in skills development and vice-versa. This is a two-way relationship"

"People do not see this separately, but mentoring is not training".

QE C.1 How clearly has the GNC mentoring programme been linked with the other capacity development initiatives at global, regional, national, and subnational levels?

41. Linkage with other capacity development initiatives within GNC are well developed. However, the GNC may not be always aware of the CS initiatives at national level or sub national level. Nor is there evidence of an organised sharing of CS best practices among different clusters – among regional and global level Nutrition Clusters and among Nutrition, Health, WASH and Logistics Clusters. An important experience of connectedness is the one of GNC Technical Alliance that has developed technical support packages to best meet the technical needs of local NGOs.
42. Mentoring constitutes a big motivation as it keeps the GNC and clusters more connected. From the Mentors' perspective, the relationship that mentoring yields is unique, the feedback is very positive, and the achievements are beneficial. Some mentors specified that mentoring is not like training and they think that mentoring is more beneficial than a week full immersion training. Moreover, key documents and topics have a repository and can be easily accessed.
43. The Mentees experienced a close relationship with mentors and therefore with GNC. Mentees found the online platform to be user friendly, although internet connectivity creates some hassle for downloading documents. It was suggested that mentoring should be coupled with field visits and exchanges, both for mentees and mentors, to understand each other's experience and the reality on the ground. Mentees do feel that they are not connected, almost at all, with the regional level.

Conclusions: CONNECTEDNESS

CON 1: The mentoring programme is an experience of connectedness, as mentoring keeps GNC and clusters more connected. Linkage with other CS initiatives within GNC are well developed. The GNC does need to be more aware of CS initiatives at national level or sub national level. There is no evidence of an organised sharing of CS best practices among different clusters – among region and global level Nutrition Clusters and among Nutrition, Health, WASH and Logistics Clusters.

5.7 Impact

Impact: describes the positive and negative changes produced by the GNC mentoring programme, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. When evaluating the impact of the programme, the following questions were considered: What has happened as a result of the programme or project? What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?

Quotes

Interviews with Mentees, Oct 2022

"I'm happy to inform you that we have successfully reached this programme's end. When we first began the programme, I never imagined I would be able to make as much progress as I have. It was an excellent opportunity to learn from my mentor and her vast experience; I want to thank her sincerely from my heart; she was so patient during this exercise. I am also grateful to GNC for this mentoring programme and for providing me with a fantastic mentor."

Interviews with Mentees' Supervisors, Oct 2022

"Actually, the mentorship was a good opportunity for the mentee to have a clear understanding of the cluster work."

"The programme provides a good platform to interact with experienced professionals and learn from them, for one team member, I think she has benefited in a good way from the programme as it gave her more understanding of the cluster work and coordination."

"I believe this platform is different as it provides an opportunity for the mentees to identify with their mentors' areas they want to focus on and the development path is created jointly with the mentor. It also a platform to establish long lasting relationships among professionals working in different countries and contexts."

"The mentorship programme is still ongoing for one team member, and he has benefited from the programme, and he is using the experiences of other countries in developing programme initiatives."

"The programme is a good platform which contributes to the enhancement of emergency coordination, for our country context and since it is a repeated emergency context, the mentee has already had the knowledge and experience in that area. Thus, I believe this programme was a chance for him to share experiences".

QE 1.1 To what degree has the GNC mentoring programme contributed to improved emergency coordination and response at country level?

44. To measure this, a Likert rating scale was used to measure opinions, attitudes, or behaviours. It consisted of a question, followed by a series of five answer statements. A scale with five choices starting at one end with "I strongly agree" and at the other end with "strongly disagree," was administered to interviewees. Respondents choose the option that best corresponds with how they feel about the programme. **The answers were 99% on the "I strongly agree" side.**

QE I.2 To what degree has mentees' work improved because of their participation in the GNC Mentoring Programme?

45. To a large degree, positive improvement was seen as the report stated that come from the GNC after a few months of mentoring. Some Supervisors expressed satisfaction as the programme was beneficial in several areas, particularly in introducing the mentee to GNC work and materials. *“From 1 to 10 I would score 8, since it provided F. with information and knowledge that she can use to work in the field and with other cluster members.”*

QE I.3 What are the results that mentees can demonstrate because of their participation in the GNC Mentoring Programme?

46. The GNC Mentoring Programme produced positive changes in Cluster Coordination and the extrapolation or presentation of nutrition data. Both mentees and their supervisors acknowledge high impact from the programme and in improving their performance, CCs and IMOs delivered better HNO/HRP and experienced increased skills in coordination. Some mentees are still in touch with their mentors and continue asking for clarifications, when needed.

Conclusions: IMPACT

IMP 1: The impact of the mentoring programme is immediate in addressing the functions of country nutrition clusters. This produces positive changes in cluster coordination besides extrapolation and presentation of nutrition data, and therefore of humanitarian response. Some mentees are still in touch with their mentors and continue asking for clarifications, when needed.

5.8 Sustainability

Sustainability: When evaluating the sustainability of the programme, the following questions were considered: To what extent did benefits accrue from the programme? What were the major factors, which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme?

Quotes

KII HQs, Oct 2022

“Sustainability of the mentoring programme is an issue due to the challenge of retention of good talents and huge staff turnover.”

QE S.1 What is the adaptability of the mentoring programme to the new GNC strategy (2022-2025)?

47. The new GNC Strategy 2022-25, foresees key changes to how GNC has been working in the past:
- a. From coordination to both coordination and programme components of NiE through the NiE Technical Alliance.

- b. From providing support during NiE response and recovery phases to supporting countries, their coordination platforms, and national governments and local authorities with preparedness for, response to, and recovery from humanitarian crises.
- c. From supporting national coordination platforms to supporting national and subnational coordination platforms and partners, with increased focus on localization, including direct support to local NGOs.
- d. From focus on officially activated IASC clusters to supporting both cluster and sectoral coordination mechanisms.
- e. From focus on global-level coordination platforms to maximizing support provision from national, regional and global platforms.

The mentoring programme is on the way to be adapted to new ways of working as per GNC Strategy 2022-2025. However, with introducing new topics like NiE, the programme will need to consolidate before expanding. The possibilities of mentoring at regional and local level are still to be explored as well as sectoral coordination mechanisms.

QE S.2 Is there evidence that the initiative has potential to grow – scaling up and out – beyond Cluster Coordination and Information Management, e.g., include components of NiE programming? (HQs only)

48. The sustainability question was mostly for mentors and other HQ staff, and it was addressed by Key Informants at the GNC level and mentors. The impression is that GNC Operational support team is composed of very motivated staff that really want to improve performance of Nutrition Clusters at country level: “GNC can push for the mentoring programme to be more effective, changeable and sustainable, not leaving national nutrition clusters’ to do it alone”. To expand to other topics and other cluster participants, the mentoring programme needs to consolidate, addressing priority CS needs for CCs, deputy CCs and IMOs first before thinking about addressing other cluster members and LNGOs CS needs.
49. **Consolidation and focus are the recommendations.** The mentoring programme needs to be fully integrated within GNC *modus operandi/ ways of working* and given adequate space and structure. Adequate financial and human resources need to be assured for the next 5 years to do quality work. The actual challenges and constrains with human resources, and time, suggest that NiE could be part of mentoring to key staff, while other Cluster members and LNGOs could be provided NiE CS through seminars and workshops. More attention should be given to diffuse the mentorship opportunity among Nutrition Clusters. A reflection is needed on how mentoring could be done at country level, and which practical exercises and field visit exchange could be organized to complement actual mentoring.

Conclusions: SUSTAINABILITY

SUST 1: The Mentoring Programme needs to be adapted to new ways of working as per GNC Strategy 2022-2025, maintaining a realistic focus on IM and NCC with elements of NIS and NiE. The possibilities of mentoring at regional and local level are still to be explored as well as sectoral coordination mechanisms.

SUST 2: To expand to other topics and to other cluster participants, the mentoring programme needs to consolidate, addressing the priority CS needs first before addressing other cluster members and LNGOs needs. The mentoring programme needs to be fully integrated within GNC *modus operandi* and given adequate space

and structure. Adequate financial and human resources need to be assured for the next 5 years to do a quality work.

5.9 Human rights, gender and equity

The question on gender, human rights and equity was added by the principal investigator. Gender inequality exacerbates food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in humanitarian crises.

Quotes

Interview with Mentees, Oct 2022

“There is a gender-based module that balances how to integrate disability with nutrition services, no harm from the planning side, and inclusion of vulnerable people in decision making.”

“Yes, Equity, AAP, Gender data disaggregated by sex et age. To ensure women beneficiary have same benefit.”

“Cross cutting issues in NiE: gender mainstreaming sensitivity in programming and gender discrimination, were equally treated and supported.”

“During mentoring the most important aspects of human protection, accountability, gender mainstreaming, cross cutting issues and other vulnerable groups that do not have equal access were addressed.”

“I felt mentoring was well balanced for gender, while disability was not encountered.”

QE HR/G/E i.1 To what extent have specific gender, human rights and equity considerations been considered in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme? And what about accountability to beneficiaries?

50. This question was addressed mostly to mentees to understand how much the mentoring programme had improved mentees understanding and integration of these themes. While during mentoring those thematic areas are treated as cross cutting, according to all mentees they were not given specific modules on the above aspects, nor they had requested for it. A bigger consideration to gender, human rights and equity must be incorporated into the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme. Same about accountability to beneficiaries.
51. [WHO](#) estimates that 15% of any given population is living with a disability and the number is often higher in populations that experience poverty, natural disaster or conflict. The HNO and HRP are the foundations for humanitarian response planning and if persons with disabilities are not accurately reflected in these documents the needs of this vulnerable group will not be addressed in the response – leading to an increase of vulnerabilities and needs.¹⁴ The Cross Cutting Themes Disability Workstream has conducted a review of disability inclusion in 2022 (English language only) HNO and HRP nutrition chapters.
52. The principles of Gender need to be emphasised into the mentoring programme, as well the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). Access to good nutrition is a basic human right and a fundamental component of human dignity. All gender and age groups are entitled to equal access to nutrition services and the foods they need to live a healthy life. The principle of accountability is also well known to the

¹⁴ <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/sites/nutritioncluster.com/files/2022-08/HNO%20HRP%20Review%20Nutrition%20and%20disability%20%202022.pdf>

mentees. They know that this entails respect and promotes the rights of legitimate humanitarian aid recipients and their right to be heard and meaningfully involve them in project planning, implementation, evaluation. An AAP stock taking exercise in UNICEF-led clusters is being carried out.

Conclusions: HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER and EQUITY

HRGE 1: While during mentoring those thematic are treated as cross cutting, according to all mentees they were not given specific modules on the above aspects, nor they had requested for it. A bigger consideration to gender, human rights and equity must be given in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of the nutrition mentoring programme. Same about Accountability to Affected Population.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of this evaluation and in the light of the various findings and conclusions highlighted, several recommendations are suggested. The recommendations are actionable and useful to the users of the evaluation identified in the scoping phase (relevant to the intervention and realistically describing how they can be made operational in the context of the evaluation).



These recommendations were validated during the workshop from 15-17 November 2022. The exchanges focused particularly on two aspects of the recommendations, namely feasibility and relevance to the implementation context, helping to finalize the prioritization of recommendations.

Table 5. Strategic and Operational Recommendations

Recommendations			
Preliminary Conclusions	Text of the Recommendation	Recipient(s)	Level of priority*
Effectiveness	Revise GNC Mentoring Programme Guide to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Better state selection criteria for mentees to prioritize CCs, deputy-CCs and IMOs; ✓ Include new areas of mentoring, like NiE and clearly define the selection criteria of mentees in the nutrition mentoring guide; ✓ Clearly define the tasks and time commitment in the mentor's job description (FT/TA) or ToR (consultants); ✓ Clearly define selection criteria of mentors: ensure they have the necessary experience and skill set and state that they will need to be trained to be a mentor; ✓ Revise the mentoring application and evaluation forms according to the revision of the mentoring guide above. 	GNC HQs	H
	Concentrate GNC efforts to prepare and support regional and national level mentors and create a "roster" that can be mobilized when needed	GNC HQs	M

	Ensure mentors speak languages other than English (Spanish, Portuguese and French at least) and provide adequate number of slots for mentoring for Latin America and Caribbean countries, by dedicated Mentors for each geographic area or Continent, if needed	GNC HQs	H
	Consolidate the existing mentoring programme, targeting CCs, deputy-CCs and IMOs before opening it up to other areas of mentoring. Consider mentees field visits to learn from other countries' nutritional clusters and for mentors to better grasp mentees' context challenges.	GNC HQs	H
	Adopt flexible criteria in establishing mentoring objectives with mentees and focus on soft skills and a mix of topics to strengthen inter-cluster coordination capacity.	GNC HQs	M
	Gather an understanding of what current (if any) CS initiatives are taking place at the national and subnational level to ensure the mentoring activities are appropriate and not duplicating current efforts	GNC HQs	H
Efficiency	Improve the management of the whole mentoring programme better structuring it with a Secretariat to track activities and keep institutional memory, identify a clear GNC Focal Point and budget for enough Mentors to cover priority needs in the targeted countries as per the GNC Strategy 2022-25 (CCs, Deputy CCs, IMOs)	GNC HQs	H
	Explore the possibility of knowledge transfer from regional level and national level to country Nutrition Clusters, leveraging resources at local level	GNC HQs	M
	Focus efforts on CCs, Deputy CCs and IMOs for a better feedback, return of investment and funding	GNC HQs	H
	Make sure that the mentoring programme is clearly spelled out among the capacity building duties of mentors and that specific deliverables are attached to it, allowing for a realistic time allocation for this task.	GNC HQs	H
	Establish a clear budget for the mentoring programme and keep track of related expenditures.	GNC HQs	M
Coherence	Revise eligibility criteria of Mentees and strictly adhere to it by selecting mentees based on current role rather than aspirational criteria	GNC HQs	L
	Improve matching criteria for mentors with mentees, based on soft skills and language. When needed, an additional Mentor may come in for specific thematic areas.	GNC HQs	H
Connectedness	Involve Supervisors and line Managers when a mentee applies, to allow the mentee to take the time for CS during the workday, as well as to report performance improvements.	GNC HQs Clusters	M
	Ensure that mentees have better exposure to common regional nutrition issues and humanitarian situations and improve linkages with the regional level.	GNC HQs	M
Sustainability	Make sure that the mentoring programme is recognised by key leadership as a capacity building process, recognising interlinkages with career development programmes in HRs structure	GNC HQs UNICEF Clusters	M

	Conduct business development and fundraising campaigns to ensure an adequate level of human resources and funding to better structure the GNC mentoring programme	GNC HQs UNICEF	H
	Make sure that all mentoring documents and materials are uploaded on a permanent server (and available in different languages) that should replace the temporary one, to avoid any loss of documents.	GNC HQs	M
	Consider training mentees at regional and local level to become mentors and are a part of a “pool” of mentors within geographic locations.	GNC HQs	M
Impact	Give more visibility to the GNC Mentoring Programme within the targeted countries, publicising it to make sure that key nutrition cluster staff in need apply and receive appropriate mentoring support	GNC HQs UNICEF	H
	Complement the Mentoring Programme with other capacity development activities, maximising the use of published resources and exercising tools.	GNC HQs	M
	Provide a Certificate to mentees at the end of the mentoring process.	GNC HQs	H
Human Rights, Gender & Equity	Emphasise Human Rights, Gender, Equity and Accountability to Beneficiaries during mentoring, referring to existing online resources and humanitarian standards	GNC HQs Technical Alliance UNICEF	M

* High (to be achieved within 3 months maximum; Medium: to be achieved within 9 months; Low: to be achieved within one year or more - maximum two years)