

# REOCCURRING THEMES IN OCB EVALUATIONS 2023

The Stockholm Evaluation Unit (SEU) has reviewed eight evaluations that the unit managed during 2023 to identify reoccurring themes.

## Introduction

The Stockholm Evaluation Unit (SEU) examined nine evaluations that the unit managed in 2023 to identify reoccurring themes across these. These evaluations were commissioned by OCB. This paper is the third in a series of previous analysis that has used the same approach to identify reoccurring themes in evaluations since 2019.

The SEU analysed the evaluations by gathering the conclusions and recommendations into one document, and then tagging them with key words. Key words that reoccurred most were grouped into themes and gathered under the headings.

2023’s reoccurring themes were as follow:

KEY WORDS	THEMES	HEADINGS
Responding to needs, Adaptation	Relevance	Effective and impactful intervention
Satisfaction, Effectiveness	Quality of Care	
External, Internal	Enhance coordination	Improve coordination and collaboration
Strategy, Communication channels	Communication	
Coherence, Harmonization	Promote coherence	
Mitigation, Risk analysis, Security measures	Risk management	Enhance project management
Sustainable transition	Continuity	
Handover, Rotation, Roles and responsibilities	HR management	Optimize HR practices
Induction and onboarding, Capacity building	Training and capacity building	
Co-Design, Ownership	Stakeholder engagement	Boost stakeholder engagement and foster sustainable partnerships
Strategy	Partnerships	
Community-driven activities	Community inclusion	
Plan, Tools and framework, Data collection and management	M&E practices	Optimize M&E practices

This paper outlines the frequently recurring themes identified through quantitative analysis done on eight evaluations. It presents these themes alongside related findings and recommendations. They are listed without any specific sequence. Each theme is accompanied by a brief narrative summarizing the content and synthesis of individual conclusions or findings. The themes identified are not exhaustive of areas



FINDING/RECOMMENDATION	KEY WORDS	THEME
Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the gender-specific requirements. Address gender-specific needs for ensuring that the Hub effectively serves and supports all beneficiaries. (BELGA)	Responding to needs	Relevance
The decentralization initiative was relevant to the local needs and the DRC government’s SGBV priorities, although its overall appropriateness was moderate. (KANAG)		
MSF should accept the constraints of its operating model in Afghanistan, and instead continue to make flexible adaptations that include addressing underlying issues (AFGSU)	Adaptation	
The Hub has a verifiable impact on the majority of its beneficiaries and has been successful in providing an inclusive and unconditional welcome to all in need regardless of cultural background, ethnicity, or gender. The Hub’s impact is further evidenced by the beneficiaries’ positive feedback and satisfaction levels, and the initiative has efficiently addressed their most basic needs, with a notable percentage expressing a significant positive impact in their lives. (BELGA)	Satisfaction	QoC
Positive outcomes for the community included financial and psychosocial support for patients and caretakers, which reduced the burden of the disease. (ABALA)		
Main results achieved at AE-FUTHA included timely PCR testing and appropriate hospitalization of Lassa fever patients, and compliance of staff and caretakers to infection prevention and control measures. (ABALA)	Effectiveness	

## IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

This heading highlights the need to increase the efforts aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of internal and external coordination and collaboration within project teams and with different external actors.

### Enhance Coordination

This theme focuses on strengthening coordination mechanisms and ensuring alignment among different stakeholders or teams involved in the project, both external and internal to MSF. It involves improving processes and structures to facilitate better collaboration and synergy.

- External coordination
- Internal coordination

## Communication

This theme emphasizes the importance of developing effective communication strategies and channels to facilitate dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among stakeholders.

- Strategy
- Communication channels

## Promote Coherence

This theme emphasizes the importance of fostering internal coherence and harmony within the organization or in the same project within different teams. It involves aligning activities, strategies, and efforts to ensure consistency and unity of purpose.

- Coherence
- Harmonization

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION	KEY WORDS	THEME
Share regular reports or newsletters to external stakeholders (e.g. biannually or annually) to improve trust and coordination, including on planned and performed activities, challenges and turnover in key MSF positions. (ABALA)	External Coordination	Enhance coordination
The performance-based bonus system is being implemented in a context of limited resources and considerable instability. It is also marked by a lack of support and collaboration between key institutional actors. (BANGA)	Internal Coordination	
Implement regular meetings to bring all project teams and technical referents together to ensure better coordination and coherence of the project activities. (ABALA)		
There is a need for a fresh and well-developed communication strategy. A communications strategy can not only inform, but also create space for dialogue and generate understanding and buy-in while minimising resistance or confusion. (FRCEV)	Strategy	Communications
Strengthen collaboration and coordination among partner organizations, reinforce communication channels and strategic planning by closing gaps and ensuring a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to service delivery. (BELGA)	Communication channels	
The project's coherence with external initiatives was notable, although a lack of internal coherence was reported with siloed implementation of project activities by different teams. (ABALA)	Coherence	Promote coherence
The lessons of the OCBA integration into the mission and the DepLogCo suggest that solutions to issues in the Afghanistan		

coordination, should be focused on maintaining or enhancing the coherence of the mission. (AFGSU)		
While each initiative has its own objectives and process, continuing to implement each separately is creating confusion, contributing to a lack of coherence and missing opportunities for synergies. (FRCEV)		
It is important for OCB to harmonise and consolidate related initiatives into one general stream that reflects the vision of OCB’s direction. There is a need to harmonise, reconcile and consolidate all initiatives undertaken under one umbrella as “a change programme”. (FRCEV)	Harmonization	

## ENHANCE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This heading refers to the overarching goal of managing projects in a manner that ensures their long-term effectiveness. It includes several aspects of project management such as risk management and project closure.

### Risk Management

This theme involves identifying potential risks and implementing strategies to mitigate them.

- Mitigation
- Risk analysis
- Security measures

### Continuity

This theme entails developing and implementing comprehensive plans to ensure smooth transitions or closures of projects while considering the needs of all stakeholders involved.

- Sustainable transition

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION	KEY WORDS	THEME
Risk mitigation needs to be more clearly worked into the design while not pulling the operational centre of gravity away from the Project. Risk management must not develop into a new kind of bureaucracy. (FRCEV)	Mitigation	Risk management
Future adjustments in performance reviews should first be tested in small groups, which will not create major risks for staff and those implementing this system. (BANGA)	Risk analysis	

<p>Outside of the trench, Zabarmari, source of a high number of malnourished and measles cases, represents the paradigm of this need to challenge risk analysis. Moreover, the attractiveness of its local market makes the MSF national staff visit it regularly, which further highlights the contradiction of MSF in its non-attendance. Ways of intervention should be explored, if not through regular mobile clinics. (Maidiguri)</p>		
<p>Implement security measures to ensure the safety of all beneficiaries in the common areas. Provide adequate surveillance and staff presence to maintain a secure environment. Improve safety measures already in place, taking into consideration first line workers inputs and suggestions.(BELGA)</p>	<p>Security measures</p>	
<p>If security is a constraint, simple intervention formulas could be explored that do not require a large deployment of HR such as setting up a simplified ICCM with a CHW and regularly supply drugs to the PHC and monitor the activity. (Maidiguri)</p>		
<p>Develop and implement a comprehensive continuity plan in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders at the national, State and hospital levels. (ABALA)</p>		
<p>The findings show that the Pilot presented limited potential for sustainability. Key informants were skeptical about the ability of the CSK to continue to offer free, high-quality care to survivors after the Pilot’s close-out. Lack of medical supplies and financial support were reported as significant obstacles to continuity of care. (KANAG)</p>	<p>Sustainable transition</p>	<p>Continuity</p>

## OPTIMIZE HR PRACTICES

This heading pertains to the objective of improving human resource management within MSF as an organization and in projects to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. While managing HR could be seen as a part of efficient project management, there was a substantial number of conclusions and recommendations related to HR, meriting its own, separate theme.

### HR Management

The focus in this theme is on the various aspects of managing human resources within the organization, including facilitating smooth handovers, managing turnover and rotation of staff, and clearly defining roles and responsibilities to ensure effective team functioning.

- Handover
- Rotation
- Roles and responsibilities

## Training and Capacity-Building

This theme highlights the importance of investing in training and capacity building initiatives to enhance the skills and competencies of MSF staff members. It includes activities such as induction and onboarding processes and broader capacity-building efforts to strengthen organizational capabilities.

- Induction and onboarding
- Capacity building

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION	KEY WORDS	THEME
Avoid rotating multiple staff at the same time and enforce comprehensive written handover before departure. (ABALA)	Handover	HR management
There is a wide perception that present staff levels are insufficient to achieve the Hub’s objectives, with more than half of survey respondents expressing that the current human resources available at the Hub are either insufficient or only adequate to a small extent. This is further aggravated by a reported high demand workload, and issues related to exhaustion and high turnover. (BELGA)		
Consider MSF staff rotation and other health system issues in project planning. If possible, develop a training plan that recognizes and potentially capitalizes on the pre-scheduled turnover of MSF staff. (KANAN)	Rotation	
When expanding personnel in Coordination, balance the need to maintain overall mission coherence when deciding on reporting lines and the division of responsibilities. (AFGSU)	Roles and Responsibilities	
Assign clear roles and responsibilities for programme implementors. (FRCEV)		
A well-defined set of roles and responsibilities is vital for the organizational efficiency of the Hub. A substantial percentage of staff members (38,9%) from various member organizations indicated that roles and responsibilities definitions were only moderately clear, pointing out to a need for improvements in this aspect. (BELGA)		
Establish a dedicated staff role for training trainees, interns, and volunteers. This approach aims to organize processes, reduce staff workload, and ensure effective onboarding of new staff members. (BELGA)	Induction and onboarding	Training and capacity building
Use trainings done under daily working contracts to get a commitment to work during high season. (MAGAA)	Capacity Building	

Participatory management, decisional autonomy, etc. are new concepts; there is a need for more training and capacity building in Participative Management to support the adaptation of changes. (FRCEV)		
While the project was efficient in delivering activities usually done in emergency interventions, it seemed inefficient in relation to operational research or for capacity building of routine functions such as public health surveillance. (ABALA)		

## BOOST STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND FOSTER SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

This heading refers to the process of actively involving relevant stakeholders and fostering collaborative partnerships to ensure the effectiveness, sustainability, and inclusivity of projects or initiatives.

### Stakeholder Engagement

This theme focuses on the involvement of stakeholders in project design and decision-making processes.

- Co-Design
- Ownership

### Partnerships

The theme highlights the significance of building inclusive partnerships.

### Strategy

### Community Inclusion

The theme underscores the importance of actively involving communities in project activities and decision-making processes.

- Community-driven activities

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION	KEY WORDS	THEME
It would be useful to include health workers in the design of performance appraisal processes and in the establishment of performance conditions. (BANGA)		
Co-design projects with local partners and involve them in strategic decisions to ensure that activities are sustainable and adapted to the local context, including on provision of staff incentives or the use of local material and supply. (ABALA)	Co-Design	Stakeholder engagement
Organize more discussions and involve relevant stakeholders on how OCB will change its approach to Risk Management, Accountability, and Oversight in response to changes taking place because of FrC. (FRCEV)		



The project’s initial design and strategic decisions were made without the involvement of the implementation partners, hindering ownership and sustainability of the activities. (ABALA)	Ownership	
Create or update MSF guidelines for more equitable and inclusive partnership strategies and the management of health workers assigned to the MSF project. (BANGA)	Strategy	Partnerships
Open the Hub to partnerships and collaborations with academic institutions for a continuous evaluation and scientific validation of the efficiency and impact of its services (BELGA)		
Integrate from the outset and effectively resource community-driven initiatives, including allotting sufficient time for implementation. (KANAG)	Community driven activities	Community inclusion
Utilizing the Hub as role a model for citizen solidarity can be optimized by further mobilizing volunteers as a mean to achieve a more inclusive society and potentially influence policy changes, addressing the root causes of the reception crisis. (BELGA)		

## OPTIMIZE M&E PRACTICES

This heading pertains to the overarching goal of enhancing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices within a project or organization to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

### M&E practice

This theme emphasizes the need for a development of a comprehensive M&E system, including planning and framework establishment. It involves creating monitoring and evaluation plans, defining indicators, and setting up frameworks to assess process, inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact.

- Plan
- Tools and Frameworks
- Data collection and management

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION	KEY WORDS	THEME
Develop a stand-alone monitoring and evaluation plan for initiatives intended to be piloted and replicated, this will increase their evaluability and likelihood of achieving their expected results, hence their replicability. (KANAG)	Plan	M&E practice
Develop a data collection and analysis plan at the beginning of the project to identify required data for the monitoring indicators and data collection, management and analysis		

modalities, including tools to be used and referent at project level in charge of reporting. (ABALA)		
Establish common policies and frameworks to be followed by all organizations within the Hub. The standardization will promote consistency in operations and unify the collaborative efforts of different organizations. (BELGA)	Tools and Frameworks	
Develop a fit-for purpose M&E framework capturing process, inputs, outputs, outcomes, that contains suitable indicators (qualitative and quantitative), including impact indicators, with a clear timeframe linked to the results framework. (FRCEV)		
Inadequate data collection, management and reporting of monitoring data limited the assessment of the project results and impact. (ABALA)	Data collection and management	
Improve data monitoring procedures and the use of routine motoring data to identify trends over time. (BELGA)		

## Takeaways

This section explores some of the themes that appeared more prominently across the evaluations.

The analysis of evaluations conducted in 2023 offers insights into both the successful aspects of MSF interventions and areas requiring improvement to achieve better outcomes and long-lasting impact. Across several evaluations, the quality of healthcare services provided was highlighted, as seen through patients’ satisfaction and the project’s effectiveness. Conversely, internal and external coordination and collaboration emerged as areas needing improvement due to their significant role in intervention success. Enhancing coordination could be facilitated by implementing regular meetings among stakeholders and maintaining effective communication channels internally and externally. The evaluations also pointed out a lack of internal coherence, notably observed in Abakaliki, Afghanistan, and the FRCEV evaluations.

Efficient project management practices were emphasized as crucial for ensuring intervention sustainability beyond the initial implementation phase. Strategies such as ensuring continuity and facilitating smooth project transitions and closures were highlighted. Human resource management was identified as another critical area for attention. Addressing turnover, clarifying roles and responsibilities, drafting clear ToRs and providing adequate training opportunities were deemed essential for optimizing staff performance and overall intervention success.

Stakeholder engagement stood out prominently in several evaluations, underscoring the importance of co-designing the interventions with the relevant stakeholders to foster ownership, and community inclusion. Building sustainable partnerships and empowering communities to drive intervention activities were lifted.

Lastly, optimizing monitoring and evaluation practices was deemed essential for measuring intervention progress and outcomes and ensuring coherence and

continuity. Standardizing data, tools, and policies and developing monitoring and evaluation systems were highlighted as critical for ensuring accountability and informing future intervention efforts.