



## Save the Children's IYCF-E Programming in Europe

### A Retrospective Qualitative Evaluation

#### Study Aim

To assess the unique challenges of responding to IYCF-E needs in a transiting population and to evaluate the SC IYCF-E interventions in Greece, Serbia and Croatia against guidelines and standard operating procedures with the goal to inform future procedures in similar contexts.

#### Study Objectives

1. To describe the context and challenges of the IYCF-E intervention in the transiting Refugee Population in Europe.
2. To evaluate how effectively the IYCF-E interventions in Greece, Croatia and Serbia responded against standard IYCF-E guidelines.

#### Methods

Humanitarian worker interviews were completed; SC strategic documents and assessments as well as operating procedures were reviewed. A thematic approach was used to compare individual accounts of the IYCF-E intervention. Findings were analysed using Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria created by the Organisation for Economic Coordination and Development (OECD).

## FINDINGS

**Key Findings** - Six themes emerged from the research:

#### **Theme 1 Breastfeeding Behaviour**

SC counselled breastfeeding as well as non-breastfeeding mothers and encouraged decreasing artificial feeding.

#### **Theme 2 Breastmilk Substitutes**

SC actively promoted exclusive breastfeeding but was prepared to give Powdered Infant Formula (PIF) to mothers unable or unwilling to breastfeed.

#### **Theme 3 Complementary Foods (CF)**

SC did not distribute CF but helped other organisations ensure that dietary diversity was considered during food distributions.

#### **Theme 4 Water, Sanitation & Hygiene**

Hygiene was an issue with few sanitation facilities available for caregivers to properly clean feeding equipment.

#### **Theme 5 Programme Implementation**

Fast transiting often left staff members without enough face-to-face time to counsel mothers properly. Insufficient numbers of interpreters made communication with beneficiaries from varying nationalities challenging.

#### **Theme 6 Coordination**

Initially poor coordination improved with the establishment of advocacy and IYCF-E working groups led.

#### **Conclusion**

In a unique emergency context, SC followed standard operating procedures and IYCF-E guidelines. To improve similar future interventions, recommendations are to establish IYCF-E working groups early on, implement a beneficiary tracking system and make skilled staff more readily available.