CHAPTER 8
Monitoring and evaluating

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CHAPTER 8
MONITORING AND EVALUATING

As with any major innovation, UNICEF’s experiences with child-friendly schools and learning spaces raise questions about monitoring and evaluating performance. Why do child-friendly schools/learning spaces need to be monitored and evaluated? How should they be monitored and evaluated? What exactly needs to be monitored and evaluated? Who should be involved in the process, and what are their respective roles? Who needs to know what and for what purpose?

8.1 WHY MONITOR AND EVALUATE?

The objectives of monitoring and evaluation vary, depending on the type of programme or project. Generally, the purpose is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme and its efficacy in relationship to the original expectations. Monitoring and evaluation also depend on who is the end user and what are the expectations of the endeavour. An end user may simply be interested in knowing if the programme delivers on its objectives. In some cases, they may also wish to assess the cost of achieving these objectives and whether the resources invested could have been put to better use. Other times, they are interested in measuring the programme’s impact beyond simply achieving a set of prescribed objectives.

Although monitoring and evaluation are usually linked, it is important to distinguish their purposes. Monitoring is a more immediate and continuous process meant to keep things on track and ensure that the right inputs are included for successful implementation of a model. For a child-friendly school (CFS) programme, monitoring is usually undertaken by project managers within education ministries and implementing partners who collect school, community and student-related data. The purposes of monitoring include:

- Recording and reporting child-friendly school and learning space activities, inputs, processes and outputs;
- Tracking progress on CFS interventions to inform ongoing activity;
- Providing evidence of progress for advocacy and mobilization.

A key feature of child-friendly schools is the active and meaningful participation of students and community members, along with teachers, school administrators, supervisors, inspectors and education system officials, in the monitoring process.
Based on this outline of monitoring and evaluation, it can be argued that a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluating child-friendly schools and learning spaces should be able to assess their effectiveness and efficiency at different levels – from the global (multi-country) to the national and subnational levels to the school, classroom and individual learner. With carefully designed multiple objectives for different levels, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation should be able to:

- Provide evidence for advocacy, national policy dialogue, standard-setting, accountability within the public domain, scaling up, mainstreaming and replication;
- Provide evidence to major investors in education (governments, development partners) that the CFS model is an effective, efficient, equitable way to ensure quality basic education for all children, under all circumstances, in a manner that is relevant, affordable and sustainable;
- Help establish national standards, criteria and indicators for rights-based education;
- Provide information for evidence-based decision-making that is predicated on agreed-upon national standards;
- Glean information on the costs and benefits of the CFS model as well as the trade-offs to promote sound investment in the best interest of the child in terms of education, development and the well-being of the ‘whole’ child;
- Provide information to development partners and education ministries about impact, outcomes and progress in relationship to child-friendly school and learning space objectives to help them make informed decisions about the programmes;
- Measure the impact of CFS programmes on national education systems;
- Signal ways to improve efficiency for better management and help ensure that money, time, staff and equipment invested in CFS activities are appropriate and optimal in terms of achieving outputs and outcomes;
- Inspire, empower, enable and mobilize schools, their communities and other stakeholders to create a common vision and to actively participate in an ongoing process of child-friendly school improvement;
- Track and assess individual children (‘putting a face’ on each child) in terms of inclusion, health, development, protection, learning barriers, learning achievement and special needs.
In general, the child-friendly school and learning space model should be monitored and evaluated to provide ministries of education the necessary evidence to assess its effectiveness and efficiency in helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets. The success of child-friendly schools would therefore be measured by their ability to support the stated objectives of these internationally endorsed educational goals. (See Box: Millennium Development Goals and Education for All.)

8.2.1 Assessing effectiveness, efficiency and equity

Specific targets and indicators that measure the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the CFS model are crucial. This assessment needs to generate evidence that will allow stakeholders to measure whether the model provides affordable and sustainable quality basic education. The evidence obtained from measuring CFS model indicators is used to complement information derived from monitoring progress towards the standard educational MDGs and EFA targets and indicators. Analysis of this evidence can explain why and how a child-friendly school and learning space package helps achieve MDG and EFA objectives, as well as how it influences the whole education system from the child to the classroom to the school and beyond.

8.2.2 Outcome-level evaluation and indicators

Outcome evaluation measures whether and to what extent objectives

KEY QUESTION

If the challenge of the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All is to provide affordable, sustainable quality basic education for all children under all circumstances, do child-friendly schools and learning spaces offer the most appropriate response?

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND EDUCATION FOR ALL

The MDGs include the educational goal to achieve universal primary education (the target for 2015 is to ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school); and goals on poverty and hunger, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and partnerships for development. These can all be influenced by education.

The EFA targets include: ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality (goal 2); ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes (goal 3); eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality (goal 5); improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (goal 6).

EFA has established 18 indicators to measure attainment of these goals.
have been achieved, what concrete changes have resulted from CFS inputs and processes, and whether interventions have been able to influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of students, school staff, community members and education system officials. Outcome indicators may include information on changes in enrolment, repetition and drop-out rates for boys and girls. Under the CFS framework, assessment tools on outcome indicators must cover additional aspects including child-friendly criteria and the enabling environment (the optimal conditions for children’s learning, cognitive, social and psychological development).

• Effectiveness is determined by comparing the actual results against the targets. Outcome evaluations of child-friendly schools could use standard MDG/EFA indicators to show that the model delivers on what it promises: quality basic education for all children.

• Cost-effectiveness determines the cost required for a package designed to produce a set of agreed-upon outcomes in one school. This information is especially valuable in designing ‘follow-on’ initiatives to take child-friendly schools and learning spaces to scale.

• Equity refers to non-discriminatory access and outcomes for children regardless of their sex, ethnic group, caste, religion, socio-economic status, geographical location or risk group. Outcome evaluation looks at such disparities as enrolment, absenteeism and drop-out rates from the programme to the school level. Information on disparities is fed into decision-making processes at the programme and policy level. It also informs the school self-assessment process for identifying causes and formulating actions to be incorporated into plans to improve the school’s child-friendliness.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR OUTCOME EVALUATION OF CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS AND LEARNING SPACES

What do administrators, teachers, students and parents think of the policies to improve the school’s physical environment?

Is there an improved sense of community within the school as a result of CFS measures?

Has the health status of the students, school staff and community improved?

Has life skills-based health education fostered the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills needed to adopt healthy behaviours or create conducive conditions for health?

Does the school have an adequate number of separate toilets for boys and girls that are regularly used, well cleaned and have access to water?
Child-friendly school models are the means to support a dynamic, constantly evolving improvement in overall education quality. Therefore, it would be inadequate and inappropriate to simply apply a set of standard monitoring and evaluation techniques to assess the model. Monitoring and evaluation should also be a means of driving forward the dynamic process of change while keeping track of progress in effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

Schools as institutions should be engaged with the monitoring and evaluation process, not only to provide answers to authorities but also to improve their own practice. Teachers, pupils and school administrators should be fully engaged in the process, not simply involved in filling out questionnaires or being interviewed. Monitoring and evaluation should take full account of their roles as principal actors who need to learn from their own practices in order to reflect and make changes that improve those practices. This approach yields vast benefits for the CFS model, those implementing it, those who are the main beneficiaries and those who are investing resources to mainstream the model. These aspects need to be explored and highlighted so that countries do not just adopt standard monitoring and evaluation techniques as a means of making decisions and investing in the model.

8.3.1 Monitoring and evaluation to support organizational learning

In the context of child-friendly schools, it can be argued that the fundamental rationale and most critical reason for engaging in monitoring and evaluation is to enable implementing organizations to gauge progress and determine whether the innovation is working as expected. This is significant because innovations are often judged to have failed when in fact they simply have not been properly implemented or given a chance to work.

Schools as implementing organizations need to know if they are putting in place all the elements necessary to become child-friendly. In this way, they can also lay the foundation for assessing at various stages whether the expected results are being achieved. Thus, schools are identified as learning organizations that improve on their practice through monitoring and evaluation as implementation takes place. This helps keep innovations on track and allows for corrective measures to be taken in a timely manner. Also, when schools operate in this way they become self-renewing organizations that can constantly improve the quality of their practice if given the right tools and resources.

An early assessment at the school level is central to guiding this type of monitoring and evaluation – required for self-improvement – as well as a more rigorous evaluation at prescribed stages (midterm, end) of the project/programme cycle. This assessment takes stock of the initial situation in the school. Progress then can be gauged going forward, and at some point in the future, outputs and outcomes of the CFS model can be properly evaluated.
CHAPTER 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATING

Monitoring progress during the implementation process (formative evaluation) requires answering such questions as: How fully do key actors understand the main elements of child-friendly schools? How extensively are learners, teachers and school heads included in the process of change? Are the necessary technical guidance and full range of resources available for implementing the CFS model? How fully does the community support the change process? What are the barriers to CFS implementation, and how can they be addressed?

All these questions need to be assessed in the formative evaluation through appropriate indicators and other documented evidence to establish a baseline or starting point against which the school can measure progress over time. This assessment process then becomes the means by which all members of the school community – inside and outside the school walls – can progressively determine how closely schools are realizing their vision of what child-friendliness means and refine that vision as they proceed.

Evaluating progress towards child-friendliness as a form of organizational learning means that all school dimensions and actions must be open to review by school heads, teachers, pupils, parents and community leaders. Every aspect needs to be considered and reviewed through the lens of child-friendliness and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which underpins the CFS model (Bernard, 1999).

Each school, however, has its own institutional ethos or school culture that will determine its organizational learning style. The processes, methods, tools and indicators used to monitor and evaluate self-learning need to be flexible and responsive to the school culture as well as local community conditions. These factors determine how much time and other resources, as well as the necessary authority, will be available to support self-learning through monitoring and evaluation. Schools have a vested interest in monitoring and formative evaluations to determine if they are moving along the right path and whether CFS as an innovation is being given a reasonable chance for successful implementation.

8.3.2 Schools as self-improving organizations

Successful child-friendly schools are by definition self-improving because quality improvements cannot be imposed from the outside. Despite the critical importance of this type of monitoring and evaluation for organizational learning and self-renewal, the reality is that schools often do not have the means or inclination to engage in monitoring and evaluation. School personnel are more accustomed to a process in which they complete questionnaires and answer questions for those who do monitoring and evaluation ‘professionally’ (researchers and evaluators).

Monitoring and evaluation tends to be done on schools rather than by schools or with schools. They are not seen as research organizations, and teachers are not regarded as trained researchers. The prevailing view is that schools and teachers should not be involved with monitoring and evaluation beyond filling out questionnaires, answering interview questions and opening up their practice to observation.
On this basis, schools must rely on directives, advice and suggestions from others on how to improve their practice. This approach does not provide the necessary motivation, incentive or means for schools to take responsibility and be accountable for improving education quality. It is also inimical to progress for CFS models, which by definition involve an ongoing process of change and improvement along a quality pathway.

For CFS models to be successfully implemented on a sustainable basis, schools must have the means as well as the incentives to monitor their own progress and learn from the process in order to take the action necessary to keep implementation on track. For this to happen, child-friendly schools need to borrow from the experience and lessons of a range of school-based programmes related to monitoring, evaluation and research for organizational improvement.

Programmes and projects that promote schools as self-improving organizations have been widely documented. Many countries have tried various versions of ‘school improvement programmes’ that involve schools in designing development plans in consultation with their communities, alumni groups or the ministry of education. Institutional development goals are negotiated, resources are secured, and the school generally monitors progress of implementation and evaluates the outcomes at specified stages in the implementation process.

Where school improvement programmes are linked to the CFS model, monitoring and evaluation within the school should lead to progress at the individual, organizational and community levels as strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement are identified. The school’s CFS development plan should be informed by school-level evaluations to ensure that a culture of continuous improvement is generated and sustained. To achieve this, a climate of trust and transparency needs to be established in which key stakeholders buy into the concept of evidence-based planning. This is a challenge in countries where there is a perceived benefit to distorting data, not least because education funding is often on a per capita basis and districts and schools may receive additional resources if they inflate enrolment figures.

Another type of programme from which child-friendly schools could learn is the ‘school accountability’ programme. These involve schools assessing their own progress in delivering results that meet the expectations of different stakeholders to whom they are accountable. Stakeholders include education ministries, parents, communities, pupils, religious bodies, employers and teachers’ unions. Schools that adopt this approach operate proactively, engaging with diverse stakeholders and negotiating the expectations that schools should strive to meet and how they can be made more accountable.

School accountability is a progressive and demanding approach to school improvement and is only viable if the school head and teachers are sufficiently skilled, motivated and empowered through their relationship with stakeholders. Ministries of education need to trust, support and encourage schools that adopt this approach rather than simply impose an inspectorate regime that dictates standards and demands conformity. Such schools also need support and
technical links with universities and teacher education institutions from which they can receive guidance and training to design and implement a credible school accountability approach to institutional development.

8.3.3 Teachers as reflective practitioners

Teachers play a pivotal role in the process of promoting change within their own classrooms as well as in schools and education systems generally. The success of child-friendly schools will depend to a large extent on the teachers involved. Qualifications and experience are very important in this regard, but more significantly, the pedagogic style practised by teachers will need to be child-centred to address classroom learning and school-based practices that put the best interest of children at the centre of all decision-making processes. Much of what is required to encourage teachers who can successfully implement CFS models can be achieved through education and training. But critical elements of this teacher profile can best be acquired through a mentoring process and a self-renewing practice that learns from reflection and correction. This is where genuine involvement of teachers in the monitoring and evaluation process can be beneficial for child-friendly schools.

When a teacher operates as a reflective practitioner she or he takes stock regularly and routinely of the classroom process and its outcomes: What went right, what went wrong? Why do some of the learners still not grasp the lesson, why are some children so disinterested in what is going on? And how can I make things better? Teachers who are reflective practitioners understand that their role is not to act as a fount of knowledge, dispensing information and skills that pupils simply have to absorb successfully.

Reflective practitioners are teachers who recognize that at the heart of good practice is the role of being a good facilitator of learning. This is about engaging minds and initiating learners into a world of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values about which they are intrinsically curious and that is part of their heritage as human beings. Teachers all over the world successfully perform this miracle daily in their classrooms, using a combination of knowledge of subject, pedagogic skills and an abiding passion for bringing out the best in each learner entrusted to their care.

One of the ways in which the role of the teacher as a reflective practitioner has been strengthened during recent years is by engaging teachers in ‘action research’. This can be distinguished from the more esoteric and rigorous research processes that deal with issues of correlation and causality, while developing evidence for certainty in the field of knowledge building and theory construction. Action research is concerned with a heuristic understanding of practice and with building knowledge as a basis for changing practice and taking action in real-world situations.

In Africa and Asia, versions of Collaborative Action Research in Education (CARE) have been used successfully to engage teachers
and school managers as genuine partners in monitoring, evaluation and research exercises. In this regard, great value has been attached to the unique experience and insight teachers bring to such exercises. Most teachers experience a professional transformation through their involvement with action research and go on to become more reflective in their own classroom practices. They tend to seek professional knowledge more routinely through available training programmes, engage more often with their peers on issues of good practice and develop a self-interrogating approach to facilitating learning in their school. Promoting this approach to monitoring and evaluation provides evidence for making decisions about CFS models, and it yields benefits in terms of professional development for teachers and school heads.

8.4 THE LEARNER AS THE FOCUS OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An essential monitoring feature of CFS programmes is a school-based management information system that ideally tracks individual children from pre-enrolment through completion and transition to the next level of education. In East and Central Asia, for instance, more than 10 countries now use computerized, Microsoft Excel systems based on a prototype developed in Thailand. These systems – which can also be used on calculators – maintain individual student learning profiles and early warning information on child learning that identify individual strengths, weaknesses, talents, abilities and learning difficulties. Students’ learning is tracked, and special needs, issues of protection, or causes of faltering are identified. Based on this information, appropriate proactive school, family or community interventions are developed to mitigate learning obstacles. The expectation is that children will learn and, if they do not, that their problems will be quickly and accurately identified and acted upon.

These systems differ from traditional, standardized information systems. The traditional educational management information systems, or EMIS, use data sets identified and analysed by central-level decision makers for planning and policymaking to maintain education system quality. CFS child-tracking systems use data sets identified and analysed by schools and communities based on local conditions and used for local-level action to improve child learning. These are known as learning management information systems, or LMIS.

LMIS generate computerized or non-computerized ‘files’ containing information compiled throughout a child’s school career on:

- Academic performance (grades, attendance);
- Physical conditions (health, nutrition);
- Family background and local factors that may affect child learning.
8.4.1 Creating a learning management system: Case study from Thailand

The development of an LMIS can be streamlined by setting up clearly defined steps. Thailand’s learning management system is a solid example of what goes into the process (Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University, Thailand, n.d.).

Step 1 – Educational assessment

• Teachers and children collect student educational scores from every term the student has been enrolled, using data from existing records.

• These scores are recorded as a class educational profile (spreadsheet) with numerical scores converted into letter grades (A, B, C, D) on a curve for easier reading.

• Teachers then identify children who fail temporarily, sporadically or chronically.

Step 2 – Individual and family assessment

Along with the educational profile, teachers and students create two more spreadsheets: an absenteeism, health and nutrition profile and a family background profile. The family background profile contains information collected through a two-page survey, with all results encoded to ensure confidentiality.

Schools may develop their own family indicators based on local circumstances. Some indicators on the family background profile include: parental mortality, education levels and migration status; primary and secondary parental occupations and monthly income; land ownership; family disruption issues (widowhood, divorce with no remarriage, separation); number of preschool children in the family; number of primary and secondary students and what school(s) they attend; number of uneducated family members; main child caregiver; other members of the household and total household size; and participation in village development committees. These indicators are closely related to child protection issues.

Step 3 – Analysis

Using the three profiles – educational; absenteeism, health and nutrition; and family background – teachers identify children who have failed and determine what could be causing this failure. The most common reasons for student failure are:

• Low parental education;
• Parental occupation (no secondary occupation);
• High level of land ownership;
• Low average monthly income;
• Parental migration, especially fathers;
• Poor nutritional status;
• Poor health;
• High absenteeism.

Step 4 – Action

Depending on the child learning factors, teachers work with family and community members to initiate
family and community development activities, school improvement programmes or a combination of the two in order to improve the children’s learning environment. These activities may include:

- Establishing regular parent-teacher meetings to discuss student progress and guide school activity planning;
- Increasing children’s access to and retention in primary and secondary schools through such mechanisms as scholarships or improved home-school transportation;
- Upgrading teachers’ skills in conducting action research within classrooms;
- Implementing peer-to-peer and participatory learning programmes;
- Promoting life skills development;
- Establishing day care and vocational training centres;
- Improving school lunch quality;
- Improving water supply and sanitation facilities;
- Providing access to energy and enhancing the physical environment through such initiatives as tree planting, school gardens and solid waste management;
- Addressing the conditions of orphans and children with special needs.

**Step 5 – Monitoring and evaluation**

The process should establish school- and system-wide cut-off points of inadequate child learning and associated factors such as failure rates and nutritional status. It also should set new goals, identify appropriate interventions, and determine roles and responsibilities for the school, parents, community and other stakeholders.

In monitoring individual students, the school management information system (SMIS) tracks changes in child learning and associated factors over time. This includes monitoring within the term through use of a portfolio (authentic assessment) as well as term-by-term and year-by-year throughout the child’s educational career.

In evaluating the school and education system, an accountable reporting scheme is created and implemented. Through case studies and other documentation, schools record not only their quantitative achievements but also how these results were accomplished.
PHILIPPINES: PUTTING A FACE TO EACH NAME

One strategy that helps schools seek out and assist hard-to-reach, at-risk and faltering children is the Student Tracking System. The system is being piloted in 2,000 of the more than 3,500 child-friendly schools in the Philippines. Below are excerpts from an interview with Mrs. Erlinda J. Valdez, the principal of F. Benitez Elementary School, one of the pilot schools (UNICEF, 2002 – Teachers Talking).

1. What is the Student Tracking System?

The Student Tracking System is a system of organizing important data about learners – their academic performance, physical and mental cognition and their social background. It puts together a comprehensive view of the ‘whole’ child that allows teachers and administrators to understand the total environment in which children are learning. In summary, it puts a face and memory to each name. The system is also an early warning that will identify children who need special attention, are at risk of being abused, or are at risk of faltering and leaving school. It is a system that determines the pattern and frequency of poor learning and identifies children who need immediate assistance.

2. When and how did you start implementing the system?

It all started in May 2001, when I and two of my colleagues from this school were trained on the system. The training equipped us with the skills and knowledge to create, use and apply the system in our school, using the computer-based model.

When we came back from the training, we oriented all teachers on the system, advocated to parents and asked for their support, particularly in completing the family background questionnaire for each of their children enrolled in school. To validate some questionable entries, we conducted interviews with students, other family members and community leaders. While the data gathering for family background information was ongoing, our school nurse was also doing health and nutrition monitoring for all students – after which, all teachers were asked to construct the learning profiles of each student, dating as far back as their first year in the school.

The teachers in charge summarized all the data and, together with the grade chairman, jointly identified learning falterers. Falterers were classified into three categories: chronic – those who consistently failed; sporadic – those who alternately pass and fail; and temporary – those who failed once but had no history of failure. Records of falterers (who were lovingly called ‘stars’, short for ‘students at risk’) were analysed. Conclusions of the analysis became the basis for the interventions rendered to the children. The school is now completing a research study entitled ‘Faltering at F. Benitez Elementary School: Causes, effects and possible solutions’, which we hope will guide our future interventions.

3. What benefits do you get from implementing the Student Tracking System?

Our experience with the system is still very new, but we are seeing positive behavioural changes among our teachers. Teachers, by their own testimonies and as observed by their peers and students, have become more patient and understanding of students who falter, miss or misbehave in class. In the past, they considered falterers and absentees as problem students; now they see them as students with problems. They have also come to know more of their students – their family background and their special circumstances. This, we believe, is a major step in genuinely helping students at risk.
We also have noticed closer teacher-student relationships now. Some students with special problems confide in their teachers and run to the school for refuge and consolation when their own families fail to give them the attention and care they need. Finally, the system has helped us define our school’s research agenda for the next years. Since our school’s goal is to provide quality elementary education to our students, it is incumbent upon us to find ways to make this into reality, to find causes of and address high levels of absenteeism, dropouts and underachievement. And the system is showing us how – it has given us a tool to find out the whys of the problems so we can address the ‘hows’.

4. How did you motivate overworked teachers to support the system?

When we first introduced the system to our teachers, they had mixed reactions. Some were supportive, but many were indifferent, sceptical and unimpressed. So we advocated to them, emphasizing the potential benefits of the system to them and to their students. We also ensured that their support of the system translated into additional points in their performance evaluation. Furthermore, we made it a school undertaking to conduct the research study ‘Faltering at F. Benitez Elementary School: Causes, effects and possible solutions’, which generated funds for the school.

5. What were the challenges you faced in implementing the Student Tracking System?

The challenges we faced in starting the system can be categorized into three:

a. Generating support from teachers – At first, this was hard, as a number of teachers were disinterested and unconcerned. But through a creative combination of persuasion and recognition of their contribution, we were able to generate support from them.

b. Getting correct information from parents – There were many questions in the family background profile that were ‘sensitive spots’ for parents, for example, educational attainment and family income. To get correct information from parents, we had to befriend them first, assist them in completing the questionnaires and validate the information gathered by interviewing their children.

c. Overlapping of reports – The school system requires many reports from the schools and, more often than not, schools are burdened in preparing these reports. We are, therefore, exploring ways to integrate all these databases and reports so that less time and effort is spent in preparing all of them.

6. What are the lessons learned and the future direction?

• A better understanding of the students’ family background has much to do with improving academic achievement.

• Knowing the child fully helps in educating him or her well.

• The key to teachers’ support is proper acknowledgement and recognition of their efforts.

In the next months, we intend to continue to use and strengthen the system and complete our study on student faltering. We also plan to conduct workshops, where all teachers will jointly identify systematic ways of addressing factors of faltering, absenteeism and dropouts. In the meantime, we will also help advocate for the expansion of this initiative to all schools in the Division of Manila.

8.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION TO SUPPORT CFS MAINSTREAMING

At the macro level, those who facilitate and advocate for child-friendly schools must generate evidence that supports further investments in scaling up and mainstreaming the CFS model into education systems. Such evidence helps persuade governments and other partners to support the necessary investment and be committed to using the CFS model as a means of improving the quality of education. The type of evidence required comes mainly from monitoring and evaluation exercises. In this regard, two points must be emphasized: Adherence to technical evaluation standards is critical to ensure the credibility of presented evidence. And the evaluation must be done by specialists who are largely at ‘arm’s length’ from the groups involved in designing, implementing and advocating for the CFS models. These measures enhance the value of the evidence in terms of objectivity and adherence to technical standards.

The accepted criteria of reliability, validity and generalizability are essential in the design of monitoring and evaluation tools and studies. The cost of such evaluations and studies competes with the demand for teaching and learning resources; therefore it is important to use existing data gathering and planning processes as much as possible. This reduces costs and encourages monitoring and evaluation as part of the process of mainstreaming CFS models.

A wide range of data sources is used to monitor and evaluate child-friendly schools and spaces in support of scaling up and mainstreaming. For standard survey techniques typically used in evaluation, the existing education system statistics are a good source of data for core indicators such as EFA gauges. In evaluating CFS models, however, it is critical that child-friendly school principles and issues are fully incorporated into the design of the evaluation. Credible monitoring and evaluation involve in-depth probing at the school, community and local government levels to tease out the variables that influence changes attributable to the implementation of the CFS model. In addition to quantitative data from the education system and other sources, there should be extensive use of an assortment of qualitative data and factors – including process and causal factors – which will need to be identified and explored as part of the evaluation.

Process evaluation assesses the extent to which planned outputs were produced on schedule, the efficiency of resource management in achieving these planned outputs and how well the interventions have been implemented by schools. It also identifies key factors that hinder or promote implementation. Process evaluation of child-friendly schools often includes indicators that assess children’s, communities’ and teachers’ participation in decision-making. Process indicators also can assess classroom practices, methodologies and use of child-centred learning activities.
In general, there needs to be a judicious balance of quantitative and qualitative data. Depending on the information sought, a variety of tools can be used – including individual interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, classroom observation and document analysis. Checklists often provide answers to the ‘what’, ‘how many’ or ‘how often’ questions, whereas the key ‘why’ questions that explain causality may require more open-ended approaches. ‘Yes or no’ questions are of limited use because they do not measure progress. Likert scales are more useful. (See Box: UNICEF East Asia and Pacific regional indicators, right.)

The above scale allows for the measurement of progress over time and encourages school authorities to keep toilets clean and provide a sufficient number of toilets for girls. An additional question is required, however, to establish the actual number of toilets provided by sex and the student-toilet ratio.

### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR OUTCOME EVALUATIONS

Does the school have policies to improve and maintain a healthy physical environment? Are policies implemented and enforced?

Do policies address all aspects of the physical environment (air, water, sanitation, waste, location, hazardous chemicals, transport, food, disease vectors)?

Are goals and objectives well defined, and do they establish criteria to measure and evaluate intervention activities and outcomes?

Are students, teachers, school health personnel, food service personnel, parents and community members involved in planning interventions?

Is locally relevant health education integrated into the curriculum and extra-curricular activities?

Is in-service training provided for the educators who are responsible for implementing life skills-based environmental health education?

Do teachers feel comfortable implementing the curriculum?

Do school health services periodically screen for environmental health problems?

### UNICEF EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONAL INDICATORS: TOILET FACILITIES

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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Separate facilities used by each sex and regularly kept clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Separate facilities used by each sex but not kept clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Same facilities used by both sexes and regularly kept clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Same facilities used by both sexes and not kept clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No toilet facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative data strengthen and enrich the overall quality of evidence provided by the evaluation exercise. This gives greater insight for making decisions on mainstreaming and helps address the more nuanced constraints that may affect mainstreaming of child-friendly schools. Although readily available quantitative data from official statistics are attractive sources for any CFS evaluation, it should be kept in mind that there are risks in some contexts concerning the reliability of
CHAPTER 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATING

Monitoring the financial outlay for child-friendly schools is critical for accountability, transparency and equity. Audit chains can be developed to track inputs throughout the system. For example, an audit chain could follow textbook purchases to the hands of students. As it tracks the textbooks’ journey, it could assess whether the textbooks have reached girls or marginalized children and how effectively teachers use the texts. Such ‘end-user’ auditing occurs in Kenya and Uganda through the Books in the Hands of Children campaign. In Uganda, school budgets are posted on the walls to ensure accountability to communities. This type of monitoring helps ensure that resources invested in CFS are in fact being used as intended.

Innovations often fail not because investments are inadequate but because the resources are not used in the intended manner to achieve the desired outcomes. Measuring the cost official statistics. Besides, numbers do not often tell the whole story for complex models such as CFS.

Any credible CFS evaluation should also make use of case studies of good practices, especially if they can be replicated at the classroom and school levels in a variety of contexts. Similarly, case studies about child-friendly schools’ positive effect on individual children can be powerful and descriptive evidence to enrich an evaluation. In general, case studies are good at anchoring evaluations through illustrative slices of reality. This may be just as important as the most sophisticated statistical analysis when it comes to convincing decision makers about the benefits of the CFS model.

In measuring the impact of child-friendly schools, qualitative data such as pupil and parental attitudes should preferably be quantified through use of standard instruments such as the Likert scale for measuring attitudinal and affective changes. Studies also need to go beyond the school level to assess why children are not coming to school and to disaggregate data according to such criteria as ethnicity, class and gender. Child-to-child censuses recently supported by UNICEF in such countries as Kenya and Uganda are good examples of utilizing community demographics and situations to better understand school issues. Data from other sectors, including health records from local public health centres, can also be used to gauge the impact of the schools on key MDG health indicators.

Longitudinal data would typically be required to measure change over time and assess the impact of implementing CFS models. Alternately, comparative data can be used for this purpose by selecting a sample of child-friendly schools and a control group of schools from similar socio-economic, ethnic and geographical settings in order to measure the impact of CFS models. This was done in Nigeria’s 2004 CFS-baseline study, which revealed that child-friendly schools were more popular than regular schools when compared to those in the control sample.
Tracking the outcomes of child-friendly schools and learning spaces and their progressive movement towards the child-friendly ‘ideal’ is an ongoing challenge. Country case reviews of CFS initiatives have produced relatively few examples where output and outcome results have been reported or evaluated. It is far more common to see reports primarily showing activities completed and inputs provided.

Monitoring and evaluation of CFS models have tended to yield patchy evidence to support them. There are many examples of useful and interesting evidence that show promise in terms of advocacy. But for the most part, CFS projects have not tailored their design, baselines or monitoring systems and indicators in terms of the generic CFS framework and its core principles as a dynamic ‘package’.

Since the CFS model has shifted from a rigid blueprint of set characteristics or key dimensions, aspects of the ‘ideal’ can now be identified and detailed through a common format with a degree of built-in flexibility. Inputs, activities and results can be labelled as belonging to one or another of the core principles of the CFS framework. They can then be reported in a way that would help compile results. This would provide a clearer picture of the status of implementation at the country, regional and global levels.

In general, however, few projects are being managed in a way that allows them to report on their progress in creating schools that embody the CFS conceptual framework and in realizing the benefits that accrue from such programmes. This situation has arisen across all regions for much the same interrelated reasons:

- Projects have tended to implement child-friendly schools progressively (in some cases, almost on an ad hoc basis) in terms of dimensions that most readily fit with or build upon existing programmes and local priorities. It appears that none of the projects began on a comprehensive child-friendly, school-oriented basis. Although it makes programmatic sense to build on the ‘readiness’ of existing partnerships, funding resources, expertise and a proven track record, this approach has made tracking progress of the child-friendly school as a whole concept difficult.

- Few projects developed school-tailored baseline measures with respect to the status of all CFS dimensions, either separately, as a whole, or in terms of how these dimensions related to local education systems, partner communities, schools and families.

- Projects have reported activities and results according to the specific

of CFS is also crucial for demonstrating the financial feasibility of scaling up child-friendly schooling as a rights-based approach to quality education for all. The Essential Learning Package that UNICEF recently launched will be an important tool for ‘costing’ the minimum learning package for child-friendly schooling.
strategies and elements of their own CFS programmes rather than the ‘ideal package’. In some cases, the resulting pictures are detailed descriptions of the separate child-friendly school strands. They are less informative as snapshots of whether or how these strands weave together to become more than the sum of their parts – something anticipated by the idea of the child-friendly school as an integrated conceptual and action framework.

While child-friendly school and learning space projects are evolving and likely improving in terms of reach and effectiveness, the nature and impact of this evolution are not fully evident due to a lack of good monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the dearth of evidence from cost-benefit analysis is a significant constraint to the successful advocacy and fund-raising that are needed to take child-friendly schools and learning spaces to scale.

8.7.1 Child-friendly schools and learning spaces evaluation examples

The child-friendly school initiative in Nigeria: The ‘Federal Government of Nigeria-UNICEF Mid-Term Review’ (2004) noted that 286 primary schools nationwide had been accorded child-friendly status. Various field reports also detailed the effects of CFS on enrolment and retention. UNICEF Nigeria, however, required more data on processes and pupils’ achievement in child-friendly schools, the overall impact of these schools, and a clearer overview of inputs and activities in support of child-friendly schools.

Consequently, a baseline study of classroom interaction patterns, community participation, school inspection and supervision, attitudes towards education – especially girls’ education – and school planning and management was designed and implemented. The baseline study assessed the impact of past interventions and provided a starting point for future impact studies.

The baseline assessment utilized a range of studies employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Selection was by random stratified sample, ensuring that the schools’ communities had similar profiles for such factors as urban-rural mix.

The evaluation assessed the impact of the CFS initiative in terms of:

- Outcomes – enrolment, primary one intake, gender gap, dropout rates, repetition, completion, learning outcomes and enrolment in early childhood centres;
- Processes and relationships – the quality of interaction between pupils and pupils, pupils and teachers, teachers and supervisors and inspectors, and the school and the community as well as attitudes and interaction patterns;
- Classroom interaction – discourse analysis and timeline analysis to measure the quality of interaction in a subsample of the school, using video and direct data observation as a data-gathering process.

Viet Nam’s Child-Friendly Learning Environment project: A major emphasis is placed on development and application of the Community-
based Monitoring and Programme Assessment System (COMPAS). Addressing three priority areas of the project – monitoring and evaluation, school-based management and school-community partnership – COMPAS is a project-wide data collection system aimed at creating a centralized database. It is expected to be used on a regular basis to guide project implementation in Viet Nam.

COMPAS is being developed and promoted as a mechanism and a forum that:

• Introduces and advocates child rights and child-friendly schools;
• Enables school self-assessment and planning;
• Provides data that will complement provincial, district and local planning;
• Tracks children, particularly girls and poor children;
• Creates enabling conditions to further development of the child-friendly learning environment;
• Converges with key interventions and generates stronger community participation;
• Assists principals in managing the school in more effective, participatory ways.

COMPAS includes baseline surveys that are conducted in 200 schools twice annually, at the beginning and end of each academic year. It supports training for local officials in survey techniques and use of data in decision-making and management. COMPAS is intended to work as a forward-moving cycle: advocacy and data collection training -> field collection of data -> analysis -> school action planning -> child-friendly learning environment implementation -> further ‘assessment of progress’ data collection. The analysis is used both formatively at the local level for school improvement and as input for the central database of Viet Nam’s Ministry of Education and Training for planning and resource allocation.

The Philippines’ Child-Friendly School System project: In 2003, the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, the Philippines’ Department of Education and UNICEF undertook case studies to document best practices in CFS implementation. Using observation and interviews written as relatively unanalysed vignettes, the case studies provide a different and interesting perspective on the project outcomes – a ‘window’ on what users and beneficiaries believe child-friendly concepts and practices have produced (Lopez, 2003).

The case studies are grouped in the following areas:

• Making it work – CFS system implementation;
• Liking school and staying – students;
• From teacher with love – teachers;
• Leading by example – administrators;
• Building together – community;
• For the children’s sake – student tracking.
To achieve consensus on a rights-based approach to quality education, the CFS concept needs to be mainstreamed in government monitoring and evaluation. This requires all stakeholders to agree upon the criteria for assessing the child-friendliness of the learning environment. The stakeholders include pupils, parents and caregivers, communities, school heads and teachers, religious and traditional leaders, government officials at all levels, development partners and civil society organizations. Each group has a role in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Education governance structures vary from country to country and depend on the number of tiers in each government system. Tiers may include national, district and local government, the community and the school itself. Federal systems may have an additional tier, and some countries have provincial levels above districts. Involving too many tiers may slow down or confuse the monitoring and evaluation process. Decentralization effectively places greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluating at the school and local government levels, with the central government playing more of a role in quality control and overall coordination.

A coherent monitoring system should link these various administrative levels and involve all stakeholders to some extent. Some of the stakeholders are more likely to be involved in the self-assessment process, including local non-governmental and community-based organizations, religious organizations, traditional leaders, communities and parents, local supervisors and inspectors, head teachers, teachers, instructors, caregivers and pupils. External and self-assessment criteria should be linked, but local priorities need to be reflected in self-assessment exercises and externally driven surveys.

Table 8.1 suggests potential roles for those who may be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of education, according to CFS criteria and approaches.
The ministry of education (MOE) and its directorates, including planning, examination boards, inspectorate and key parastatals.

MOE should be central to the whole process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Ensure linkage between M&E of child-friendly schools (CFS) and mainstream data on schools, early childhood development and non-formal education centres.

Capacity development may be required. State, district and local government authority (LGA) levels are involved. Focus: Policy and data analysis for sector.

Other ministries, such as water supply, environment, health, women’s affairs, social welfare and finance.

Advisory, through intersectoral committees.

Ensure that health, water, sanitation, energy and gender are given due prominence, and provide a minimum package for reducing risk and adapting to climate change.

Other ministries could assist in overall design and oversight of the M&E process at different levels in the system and in the actual M&E process at LGA level.

Academic institutions, teacher training institutions and consultancy agencies.

Technical support to ensure quality M&E and research.

Ensure quality and linkage between M&E and training of teachers and government officials.

Mainstream systems, such as local universities and teacher training colleges, should be involved as much as possible.

Major international development partners in education.

Could be represented in an overall steering committee or in agreement on key indicators and reporting systems.

Ensure consensus around overall M&E design and approach, especially for selected key indicators.

UNICEF may or may not take lead. Linked to overall education management information system (EMIS) and quality assurance. Field-based development partners may be directly involved at different levels.

International non-governmental organizations (NGOs), large national NGOs with field networks, local NGOs and community-based organizations, and the private sector.

Could be represented in an overall steering committee or in agreement on key indicators and reporting systems.

Ensure consensus around key criteria and indicators.

Involved at all levels, including international NGOs and large national NGOs, ensuring linkage with field-based NGOs and community-based organizations and supporting advocacy.

Local government officials.

Monitoring schools according to agreed-upon CFS principles, including efficient utilization of funding.

Ensure that effective information is gathered and analysed at this level.

Some LGAs have inspectorate or supervisor systems as well as EMIS.
### 8.9 OTHER ISSUES ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CFS MODELS

In general, monitoring and evaluation encompass a wide range of issues; CFS models spur even more. The emphasis of monitoring and evaluation exercises is not only to provide evidence for decision makers but also to help schools and reflective practitioners improve, and to benefit learners. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation must be integral parts of any CFS programme from the onset, rather than tagged elements on as an afterthought. If CFS is being mainstreamed, then monitoring and evaluation should be fully integrated into existing education system processes, rather than being treated as a separate or one-off exercise divorced from the rest of the system. Timing is also important. Monitoring should start early and be included strategically and thoughtfully throughout the stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious organizations.</th>
<th>Consultative or monitoring and advocacy – they need to share CFS principles, which also need to reflect their beliefs.</th>
<th>Ensure that children understand and embrace common ethics and values and demonstrate mutual respect for fellow students and their community in line with local norms and customs.</th>
<th>Involving such bodies is critical in countries where their support is required in achieving Education for All (EFA), for example, Muslim clerics in Pakistan and Northern Nigeria.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional leaders.</td>
<td>Consultative or monitoring and advocacy– they need to share CFS principles, which also need to reflect their beliefs.</td>
<td>Ensure cultural fit between school, community and local environment.</td>
<td>Traditional leaders may have as great an influence in some systems as the government and can be key agents in achieving EFA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities and parents.</td>
<td>Active participants in school M&amp;E at the community and school levels.</td>
<td>Ensure transparency, accountability, ownership and sustainability.</td>
<td>Through involvement in village or community and school committees. May include parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and Mothers’ Clubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers, teachers, non-formal education instructors, caregivers.</td>
<td>Keeping class and school/centre records on education, health, age and other indicators.</td>
<td>Ensure effective information-gathering and use at school level.</td>
<td>Effective EMIS depends on adequate information gathering at the school/centre level, as does successful school planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils.</td>
<td>Consultation and monitoring, including mapping out-of-school children and input into M&amp;E criteria.</td>
<td>Ensure that CFS criteria are generated by pupils.</td>
<td>Pupils can be involved in school committees or parallel structures and in clubs where M&amp;E is part of the function.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the programme cycle. The review of these and other key issues is an essential part of capacity-building for child-friendly schools.

8.9.1 How should monitoring and evaluation be built into overall project design?

Monitoring and evaluation procedures should be clearly delineated in the overall project design, the Education Sector Plan (if the child-friendly school is integrated within the plan) and at the various levels being monitored or evaluated – school, community, and local and national governments. A logical framework approach, or an adaptation, that clearly links objectives, key indicators and means of verification (the how) and identifies each partner’s role should be used. This avoids duplication and ensures that child-friendly schools fit within the overall government policy and planning structures.

8.9.2 When should monitoring and evaluation occur?

Monitoring should be ongoing and involve all stakeholders. Evaluations should be carried out according to agreed-upon cycles, both in mainstream government systems such as annual censuses or biannual panel inspection visits and in agreed project memoranda of understanding when child-friendly schools are supported through specific projects.

Impact evaluations that assess changes attributable to child-friendly schools should allow reasonable time between implementation and assessment. Interventions and processes may not take effect immediately. Teacher training, for example, will take a while before it influences teacher behaviour, and that in turn means learning outcomes will not be affected immediately. A period of at least two years between baseline and impact studies is normally advisable. The principal baseline can be complemented, however, by rapid appraisal baselines at the individual school level, thereby ensuring that each school has its own baseline to assist in drawing up the school development plan.

Monitoring occurs at various levels, from the global (using EFA targets) to the state and other government levels, the community, school, classroom and individual child. The quality of the school’s record-keeping should be considered an essential element of the child-friendly learning environment. Effective, inclusive school management committees are indispensable to ensure the community’s involvement in planning and monitoring school activities.

8.9.3 Why are baselines important, and what should they measure?

One of the problems in ‘selling’ the concept of child-friendly schools to development partners and governments has been the absence of baseline and impact data that demonstrate the effectiveness of activities and inputs on learning processes and outcomes. Baseline data can be provided by governments through such tools as EMIS, national surveys (including education sector analyses), inspection reports and documents such as budgets and expenditure accounts at all governmental levels. This data
should be complemented by more specific data on key CFS indicators related to processes, relationships and outcomes. A critical outcome that must be measured is the impact of the school on students’ competencies and skills, including literacy, numeracy and life skills. Mainstream instruments can be used, such as those included in Monitoring Learning Achievement surveys.

An important element in child-friendly schools is pupil participation in classrooms (measured through classroom interaction analysis) and in decision-making. The impact of child-friendly schools on the attitudes and behaviours of pupils, their families and communities in regard to such issues as health, sanitation and gender also needs to be measured. This involves studies within the school and community that measure child-friendly schools’ influence on ensuring that messages pass from child to child and from child to family and community.

8.9.4 Empowering communities and other stakeholders

In child-friendly schools, community-based monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the process. Therefore, building the community’s capacity to participate in the process is essential. To achieve this, training can be linked to broader skills development through participative appraisal approaches. Using well-tried methods such as Reflect, which combines needs analysis with literacy development, can bolster the community’s capacity to monitor and evaluate. Communities then become partners in gathering, analysis and use of data as they inform school development plans.

Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda have incorporated standard Monitoring Learning Achievement tools into their baselines.

In Kenya, schools receive a cheque directly from the Government for textbooks, and school textbook management committees manage and monitor procurement and utilization.

Evaluation and monitoring must be presented to communities in a comprehensible manner if they are to participate meaningfully in the process. Capacity development is also critical for teachers, school heads and government officials. In the case of teachers and other professionals, training in action research is essential if they are to develop as reflective practitioners attuned to the needs of their students. Similarly, children may keep introspective diaries and receive training in basic research methods. The Girls Education Movement in Uganda, for example, provided training for young children in basic research skills. Excellent examples of community involvement in monitoring and evaluation are found in Malawi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, where community participation was integral in data gathering on early childhood issues and tracking orphans within the community.
8.9.5 Gauging the impact on the education system as a whole

The impact of replicating and mainstreaming CFS initiatives on government systems should be measured. Data can be used to help governments recognize the merits of child-friendly school integration into mainstream policymaking and planning.

If child-friendly school status is awarded on the basis of a school attaining certain child-friendly benchmarks, motivation for improvement will be enhanced. On a more local level, the influence of child-friendly schools on nearby schools should also be measured when the cluster model is employed. The impact of the school on education in the local government authority can also be gauged. Additionally, progress towards sustainability needs to be monitored. UNICEF should have ‘phase-out’ strategies for all schools it supports where child-friendly learning environments will be sustained in the medium and long term after external support has ended.

The data gathered on schools should be included in an overall database such as DevInfo, which encompasses a wide range of development indicators. In this way, connections can be made between the information generated by the education sector and data from other sectors. This is crucial for measuring progress towards related MDGs.

8.10 THE WAY FORWARD

Effective monitoring and evaluation are necessary to improve schools and make them more child-friendly. There needs to be tangible evidence that schools will provide all children with quality education and that students will acquire relevant skills and competences that enable them to exercise their full rights in society. Involving all major partners at the national and district levels helps build consensus. School and community involvement in the process increases transparency, accountability and community ownership of the school. Additionally, evaluations need to reach beyond the school to map obstacles to enrolment and attendance such as the effects of poverty, discrimination or HIV and AIDS.

The monitoring and evaluation process needs to be rigorous and be trusted to generate reliable data that can be made accessible through solid database management. Too often data are gathered but not effectively disseminated or utilized. The focus needs to include progress monitoring and process assessment as schools evolve over time from using CFS principles to identifying dynamic strategies that routinely lead to child-friendly school improvements.

In the final analysis, however, two key questions will be posed to child-friendly schools regarding their contribution to quality, rights-based education for all: How effective are child-friendly schools? And what will they cost? These are the challenges to those responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of child-friendly schools.