Terms of Reference

Forward Looking Assessment of UNICEF Community Schools Project

Background

The Pre-University Education Strategic Plan of Egypt 2007-11, developed by the Ministry of Education, has now fully integrated community based education as part of the national education reform which aims at the establishment of schools in cooperation with local communities, provision of sufficient staff, instructional materials, and school feeding program, as well as the development of effective management system. Most of these objectives are based on lessons learnt from various types of community education initiatives.

In 1975, the Ministry of Education started the One Classroom School initiative aiming at generalizing primary education and blocking the source of illiteracy. The initiative provided compulsory primary education for children at age 6-8 years in deprived remote areas and a second chance for children who dropped out or were never enrolled, through more than 2,521 multi grade schools serving an average of 70,000 children nationwide. The schools were established and managed by the communities. The Ministry of Education provided teachers, curriculum, a school meal and supervision through the nearest government primary school. In the early 1990s, in response to low enrolment of children (mostly girls) in primary education, the one classroom schools program was revitalized under the auspices of the First lady. The Ministry allocated required funds to construct and manage one classroom multi grade schools in remote deprived areas to improve girls' enrolment in primary education. To-date, the Ministry succeeded in establishing 3,146 school serving more than 65,000 girls nationwide.

In 1992, UNICEF and Ministry of Education (MOE) started a girl friendly community based initiative "Community Schools" with specific emphasis on girls in 6 districts in Upper Egypt, thereby addressing one of the core issues of disparity – both geographic as well as gender. The community schools initiative aims at increasing primary enrolment rates, with emphasis on the girl child, by providing access to quality education services in hard to reach areas of Upper Egypt. The project targets the following groups:

1. Children in the age group 6-12 who have not been enrolled in schools. Special emphasis is placed on the girl child. The ratio of girls to boys is 70% to 30% respectively.
2. Female facilitators/teachers who are diploma holders in the selected communities or nearest sites
3. Local communities who are encouraged to form education committees which assist in the school management.
4. Supervisors who are holders of university degree in education or with a minimum 3 years of past experience in the field. Their role is to provide technical and field support to the project.
Other indirect beneficiaries are parents of community schools children whose awareness is raised about all aspects of early childhood development, school personnel in the mainstream primary schools, and MOE staff in terms of the provision of training on multi-grade and child centered innovative concepts.

The community schools initiative is based on partnerships between the MOE, UNICEF, CIDA, NGOs and the communities. The MOE provides facilitators’ salaries and textbooks following the national curriculum, and technical supervision. UNICEF, with funding from CIDA, provides school furniture, supplies, and intensive capacity building activities to facilitators and communities to assure quality (the cost of the project (1992-2009) amounts to about 13,000,000 Canadian dollars). The communities provide classroom locations within villages and hamlets - so that girls do not have to travel far from their homes in order to attend classes. The communities participate through local education committees whose responsibilities include nominating young women as classroom facilitators, ensuring that the facilitators are sensitive to the local context, supervising the daily functioning of the school, and mobilizing wider community support.

The project, in accordance with MOE’s policies, was designed to emphasize the following:

- Ensure that each child has access to school (especially girls)
- Reach the unreached with special emphases on girls
- Empower local communities (especially girls and women) with access to schools, participation in public decision making and allocation of communal resources (including schools, facilitators, buildings, and building materials).
- Provide innovative pedagogies for quality education that focuses on:
  - Active learning
  - Acquisition of life skills with particular emphases on learning to be and live with others, critical thinking, problem solving and creative thinking, as well as other hygiene, health and environment related skills.
  - Values based learning with special emphases on dealing with difference, practicing rights, understanding social justice, and managing conflicts.
  - Brain based learning and one that awakens all the intelligences

The community schools project have been implemented in five phases namely: a) pilot phase from 1992 – 1994 with the objective to design and implement the project in an experimental pilot mode in 17 schools; b) development phase from 1994 – 1996 with the objectives to further develop the model to 53 schools and consolidate the partnerships with the stakeholders; c) expansion phase from 1997 – 1999 with the objective to actively diffuse the model into mainstream education reaching to 98 schools; d) consolidation phase – full community ownership - from 2000 to 2003 with the objective that the key components of the model are fully adopted by MOE and NGOs and to transfer the seedbed model to MOE; and e) sustainability phase from 2003 – 2009 with the objectives to strengthening the seedbed model and gradually transferring 25 schools each year to the MOE and the communities.
Some of the outputs of the project over the years have been to-date were: a) the establishment of 227 Community Schools serving 6,000 children in six districts in Assuit, Sohag and Qena governorates. b) provision of training to 600 facilitators and supervisors on using active learning methodology in the class room of the community schools; c) building the administrative capacity of 6000 village education committee members; d) provision of ECD training to 4200 parents/caregivers. Therefore, under the new country program of UNICEF (2007-2011), in order to assess the impact of all these achievements on communities, it was recommended to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the project and also to put in place a phasing out strategy, since the funding from CIDA is coming to an end in year 2009.

Results expected from the current phase were:

1. The existing model strengthened and completed for diffusion.
   - Pedagogical education innovation is strengthened and the curriculum is enriched in the broad sense.
   - The community participation model is completed by strengthening the education committees, which are regarded as the true cornerstone of sustainability.
2. A model for quality education completely adopted by MOE and NGOs in a way that will ensure the sustainability of its core components including both pedagogical and management components.
3. Number of pupils enrolled in community schools during Phase III will be 3500.
4. 3500 students will graduate to preparatory schools.

**Purpose of the evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a forward looking study based on the lessons learnt from phase five – the sustainability phase – of the community schools project. The main focus of the evaluation will be to develop a project sustainability strategy. It is expected that the evaluation will yield evidence on the impact of community schools on increasing access, improving quality, and achieving learning outcomes (within the framework of the criteria of child rights in education as indicted in the CRC) as well as the impact on gender issues. Further, it will contribute to the Ministry of Education and other education stakeholders' strategy with regards to Community Based Education.

**Scope of Evaluation:**

The main objective of the evaluation is to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the community schools project. Specifically this is to be achieved through answering the following main questions and the questions listed as annex 1 (Please note that the following questions are proposed to guide the evaluation process, however, it is expected that the evaluation team would recommend additions and modifications to the main research questions):
Program relevance:
- Are the objectives set in phase five of the project in line with local needs, priorities and government policies?
- Do the project interventions have a potential for replication? And under what conditions?

Effectiveness:
- To what extent have the project objectives and outcomes been met? And what are the reasons for achievement or non-achievement of objectives and outcomes.
- What are the strategies that the project has used to achieve the stated objectives and outcomes? Were they successful in achieving the project’s objectives? If yes list all the conditions, and if not study the reasons of not achieving the objectives? And suggest alternative strategy with precise actions?
- To what extent Ministry of Education at the central and governorate level, partner NGOs and the community have benefited from this project and if yes then how and if not then what needs to be done at all three level?
- Effectiveness of active learning
- Effectiveness of education committees work
- Cost effectiveness particularly as compared to that of the government schools

Efficiency:
- How efficient was the project’s management structure and processes adopted by partners for implementing the different project components? If the structure and processes were not efficient, provide alternatives?
- How efficient was the support provided by UNICEF to its partners (for examples, technical, media, national/sub-national linkages, etc.)?

Impact (qualitative and quantitative):
- What are the intended and unintended benefits of the project? And what segment of the community has benefited the most or the least from the project?
- Did the project activities improve the overall situation of the area in terms of the increasing access to the underprivileged children, specifically girls?
- Did the project contribute to capacity development of involved stakeholders (NGOs, MOE, communities, etc).

Sustainability:
- Are the stakeholders capable of sustaining the 227 community schools in three governorates without the external financial and technical support? If yes, write the steps, plan and timeline for achieving the suitability for each governorate, if not, develop community school sustainability strategy and a capacity building recommendations with precise steps for each governorate?
- Did the stakeholders participate in the planning and implementation of the intervention to ensure local engagement from the start?
Costing:
- To what extent was the project cost effective (cost analysis of inputs relative to results achieved)?
- Recommend a financial strategy for existing community schools with precise actions to reduce the financial dependency on external funding?
- Compare cost with other models of community education

Evaluation team:
The evaluation team will consist of one international consultant (team leader) and two national consultants. A group of researchers, from the National Center of Educational Research and Development will join the team to conduct the component on student learning achievements, through data collection and analysis, under the supervision and guidance of the team leader.

Evaluation process and methodology:
The overall evaluation approach and data collection methods will be developed by the evaluation team based on, but not limited to, the above mentioned questions. The evaluation team is expected to recommend additions and modifications to the main research questions. A detailed evaluation plan and tools will be produced by the evaluators at the onset of the evaluation process. The proposed methodology is both qualitative and quantitative and all data collection tools have to be pre-tested. Data will be verified through triangulations.

The following are the key stages of the evaluation process and the methods proposed to be used in the evaluation:
1. Review of existing literature and available programme documents
2. Develop evaluation methodology and tools
3. Develop plan for conducting the evaluation

Selection of the candidate will be based on the most appropriate proposed methodology

Estimated time frame:
It is planned to have a total of 40 working days during the period July – October 2008 to have the evaluation completed. For detailed timeline, please see the deliverables section.

Expected background and Experience:
It is expected that consultant should have:
- at least 10 years experience in evaluations and in qualitative and quantitative analysis, with knowledge in sampling survey methodologies;
- ability to lead a team of consultants through a project evaluation process
- fluency in written and spoken English. Arabic language would be an asset;
- previous experience or background on education with good experience in monitoring and evaluations;
- good statistical background and qualifications in social studies and community development will be a great advantage and will be given special consideration;
- good knowledge of Community Based Education;
ability to engage and form effective working relationships with counterparts and beneficiaries;
- excellent writing and analytical skills;
- strong skills in interpersonal relations, networking and communication; and
- Computer skills (Word, Excel, Power Point and other).

Roles and Responsibilities

- UNICEF will
  1. Supervise the work of the team (UNICEF's Education Section Chief will represent the organization during the process of evaluation)
  2. Provide available documentation on the project,
  3. Provide guidance throughout all phases of implementation
  4. Coordinate the review processes
  5. Approve all deliverables
  6. Organize meetings with stakeholders and logistics for field visits.
  7. Respond to the recommendations of the study

- MOE will:
  1. Grant access to the community schools
  2. Grant access to education officials
  3. Share required documents
  4. Provide researchers from the National Center for Educational Research and Development, for data collection from the field and analysis of impact on children's learning and teachers' performance
  5. Provide input to the evaluation's recommendations

- CIDA will:
  1. Provide available documentation on the project
  2. Provide guidance throughout the process of evaluation
  3. Coordinate the internal review process including responses to the consultant recommendations.

- MOE and CIDA will identify and contract two national independent consultants to conduct the evaluation under the supervision of the team leader.
- The consultant is responsible for conducting the study, submit regular progress reports, the development of work plan and methodology, the production of deliverables in accordance with the TOR). The consultant will report to UNICEF's Education Section Chief.

Deliverables (All deliverables should be in soft and hard copy):

1. A revised evaluation proposal and work plan including schedule for field research and the methodology, not later than 5 days of actual signing of the contract.
2. Presentation on the methodology of the evaluation and the tools to the UNICEF and its partners for common understanding, not later than 10 days of actual signing of the contract
3. A preliminary report on the findings will be submitted to UNICEF on the reporting format suggested below, not later than 5 days of finishing the field work
4. A presentation on the preliminary field finding will be made to UNICEF and its partners.
5. Final draft report will be submitted to UNICEF for review not later than 5 days after the presentation of the findings of the research.
6. Final report (soft and hard copies) should be submitted after 2 days of receiving the comments from UNICEF on the reporting format suggested below. Arabic version of the report should be submitted 3 weeks after approval of English version.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Deliverables:</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Revised proposal with workplan</td>
<td>August 01, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Presentation on methodology and tools</td>
<td>August 10, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Presentation on the preliminary findings</td>
<td>September 15, 2008</td>
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**Reporting format:**
- Executive Summary (REF UNICEF Evaluation Guidelines)
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Main Findings/Conclusions
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations
- Annexes (TOR, questionnaire, sampling design....etc)

**Payment Schedule:**
- 20% upon signing contract;
- 10% after delivering output number 1 and 2 listed under deliverable section;
- 20% upon receipt of UNICEF acceptable first draft including deliverable 3 and 4 listed under deliverable section; and
- 40% upon receipt of UNICEF acceptable Final Report including deliverable 5 and 6 listed under deliverable section including soft copy and one good quality hard copy both in English
- 10% upon receipt of UNICEF acceptable Final Report requested as deliverable 7 in Arabic to be submitted for final payment.
Annex 1  Questions to guide the research

- What are the results/outputs at the children level in community schools? Specifically measure the results of the children at the academic and social level? And how much the results vary in schools between governorates? (Quantitative analysis by using standard test developed to measure social i.e. communication, negotiation, confidence etc. and the academic knowledge and skills)
- How effective has been the capacity building of primary stakeholders (teachers, project NGO staff, and Education Committee members)? Measure all the capacity building initiatives of all the stakeholders against individual knowledge, skill and practice delivered by UNICEF (quantitative and qualitative analysis by reviewing project monitoring forms and reports)?
- How effective has been the refresher trainings and coaching provided by the NGO partners to the teachers?
- What is required to sustain the capacity building of the primary stakeholders i.e. facilitators, technical and field supervisors of the partner NGO’s and MOE technical staff responsible for monitoring the project without the financial support of UNICEF?
- Prepare capacity building plan for each stakeholder mentioned above with clear guidelines and also the assessment techniques/tools of the capacity building exercise
- What are the strategies the project has used for the enrollment and the activity based learning in schools? Were they successful in achieving the project’s objectives? And Why?
- Examine the existing monitoring and evaluation processes that are in place for the community schools project and suggest ways of improving them.
- To what extent have the linkages/coordination between the decision-makers/community leaders and the project at its various management levels been successful?
- To what extent quality education components such as active learning and teacher training have been implemented or integrated in the national education system?
- How does the partner organizations’ (governorate and local level) project staff perceive the project’s sustainability? Do they view it as important? What are their recommendations?
- What factors, both internal to the community as well as external, have affected the Schools sustainability?