EVALUATION OF THE GUYANA NURSERY EDUCATION PROGRAMME
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<td>Basic Education Access Management Support Programme</td>
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<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
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<td>CHSD</td>
<td>Council for Human and Social Development</td>
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<td>CPOA</td>
<td>Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education Care and Development</td>
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<td>CPCE</td>
<td>Cyril Potter College of Education</td>
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<td>CSME</td>
<td>Caribbean Single Market Economy</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>ECDI</td>
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<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
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<td>GNIP</td>
<td>Guyana Nursery Education Programme</td>
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<td>GOG</td>
<td>Government of Guyana</td>
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<td>IYC</td>
<td>International Year of the Child</td>
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<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
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<td>NCERD</td>
<td>National Centre for Educational Resource Development</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
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Executive Summary

The evaluation of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme (GNEP), commissioned by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) brings out the findings of a four-month evaluation of the Nursery Education Programme in Guyana.

In 1976, Government of Guyana introduced an early stimulation programme for children ages three years nine months to five years nine months. This programme, known as the Guyana Nursery Education Programme, is offered nationally and free across difficult terrain and multi-cultural domains. The programme is implemented across all the Regions in the country.

After 40 years of the implementation of the programme, the Ministry of Education with support from UNICEF decided to undertake an evaluation of the programme to ensure that the goals and strategies for nursery education in Guyana are consistent with global frameworks; meet the equity agenda and respond to new research findings while maintaining its cultural appropriateness. It is envisaged that the findings of the evaluation will inform an analytical review of key achievements, good practices, gaps and constraints that need to be addressed, towards the overall improvement of the nursery education programme in Guyana. The findings will also inform a revision of the existing curriculum and provide strategies for a more effective implementation of nursery education in Guyana.

This exercise sets out to evaluate the performance of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme as regards relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and cross cutting considerations. The evaluation probes into the last 10 years (2006-2016) of the implementation of the programme. The 10-year period has been chosen keeping the feasibility of the evaluation in mind.

Objectives
The objectives for conducting this performance evaluation are as follows:

1. To determine whether the quality of the GNEP offered to children and their parents, over the last 40 years, has achieved their objectives and to what extent.
2. Based on the findings from objective 1, identify sources, facilitating factors and challenges encountered in the GNEP
3. Drawing on findings from objectives 1 and 2, compile lessons learned and elaborate their implications for the future of the GNEP

Methodology
The evaluation followed a mixed method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, to assess the performance of the nursery education programme. The exercise was guided by an evaluation framework, which was prepared jointly by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF during the inception phase.

The research team comprised of one international evaluator, one rapporteur, the evaluation supervisor – UNICEF’s Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist; a programme officer – Education
Specialist in UNICEF and a Steering Committee of key stakeholders. The Steering Committee was responsible for approving the methodology; providing inputs in the overall process and reviewing the deliverables.

The different phases in the implementation of the methodology are as follows:

**Secondary Data Review and Analysis**

Review of existing literature including government reports, tools, plan documents, data from MICS, 2014, pre-school non-academic norms, guidelines, curricula, workbooks and assessment books. The objectives for this phase were to understand the current situation of the implementation of Nursery Education in Guyana, to flag where there were notable inequities and to identify knowledge gaps to be addressed in the data collection phase. The data on nursery education which was publicly available on Statistical Digest, Ministry of Education and from the MICS report was also analysed as part of the data review and this was used to support the qualitative data analysis.

**Sampling Strategy**

The evaluation followed a purposive sampling method for collecting data at a national and Regional level. At the national level, the evaluation team interviewed all the relevant ministries and organisations working on or connected to the nursery education sub-sector in the country. For data collection in Regions, the team initially identified the Regions in consultation with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. Once the Regions were selected, nursery schools and classes in the respective Regions were identified based on consultations with the Regional Education and Development Officer from each Region. During the course of fieldwork, the parent groups and case studies were selected through a snowballing approach, which means, the evaluation team consulted the Regional Education Development Officer, the teachers and head teachers from schools to identify the parent groups for focus group discussions and specific children and their primary caregivers for documenting the case studies.

**Data Collection**

The second phase was centered on data collection in the field. The main methodological choices were interviews at national and local levels with key stakeholders. These included 15 persons from the Ministry of Education and other Government Ministries at the national level; Regional and sub-regional Administration, Civil Society Organisations and community members. Fifteen **Key Informant Interviews** and six **Focus Group Discussions** were conducted with key stakeholders at the regional and local (community and school) levels. The objective was to explore the points identified in the secondary data review and analysis and to identify barriers and bottlenecks related to the implementation of Nursery Education.

**Observation of classrooms were used to** complement the process. These classroom observations were conducted to carry out facility mapping in 10 nursery schools and classes of which five were full-day observations of the pedagogical practices and interactions in the classroom.

**Data Analysis and Report Writing**
Once data collection began, interviews were transcribed and analysis began and from there, the findings were validated and expanded. The evaluation used the grounded theory method for data analysis which involved verbatim transcription of all FGDs and KIIIs, coding of data, development of themes, comparison and contrasting of themes and recording of findings, and developing theoretical propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Quantitative data was collected as part of classroom observation, which was analysed to provide feedback on the quality of nursery education being transacted in the classroom context. The analysis of the data from the Statistical Digest and MICS reports which covered part of desk and data reviews was also used to strengthen the qualitative analysis.

Limitations of the Evaluation

The following have been the limiting factors in the evaluation process:

- The quantitative data available in the Statistical Digest is only for four time periods which are 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2011-12. There is no data available beyond this.
- Some stakeholders who had requested to be allowed to provide their perspectives by email did not provide those perspectives.
- There is currently insufficient convergence and coordination between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Protection and the Child Protection agency. Hence, we could not answer the research question on “How has the GNEP led to the reduction in abuse, neglect and negative social behaviours?” Currently there is also no publicly available data around this.
- There is no official data available around the following question, “To what extent has the GNEP led to on-time enrolment at primary school?” We therefore had to drop this question as well.

Findings of the Evaluation

The findings from the evaluation of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme have been organised under the six criteria of the analytical framework (discussed in detail in the report), which are Effectiveness, Relevance, Efficiency, Equity, Impact and Sustainability.

Effectiveness

The programme scope and curricular approaches of the programme underwent a change post 2013, from play-based holistic domain-oriented approach to an academic approach based on improving numeracy and literacy outcome, thus leaving out the non-cognitive domains of child development (socio-emotional, personal, creative and aesthetic). This is a shift from a ‘whole child’ approach and more towards a downward extension of formal education. The academic structure of the nursery curriculum poses a challenge for teachers to include children with special needs and children with learning challenges as an academic curriculum is not well suited for these special categories of children. While there are structured academic programmes for teachers to complete as pre-service
qualifications, there is no compulsory, regular and periodic ‘in-service’ teacher training\(^1\) provided by Government.

**Relevance**

GNEP is the principle programme for the country to set targets for achievement of the sustainable development goals under early childhood education. While the enrolment under GNEP has increased over the time period, a sizeable number of children are still not enrolled in the nursery programme. The country does not have estimate of out of preschool children. The GNEP is not a universal programme currently as it is non-compulsory and does not cover all children between three to six years in the country.

**Efficiency**

The grant funding from the World Bank towards ‘in-service’ training of 526 teachers has been a cost-effective investment and has positively impacted the efficiency of the programme because, prior to its implementation through this funding, ‘in-service teacher training’ was not in the programme design. The financing has also enabled Government to build capacities of riverine and hinterland teachers in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The teachers who were interviewed from riverine and hinterland areas either have primary level education or secondary and they have undergone a specific focused training on numeracy and literacy after several years. They expressed that this training helped them to understand how to use learning materials more interactively in a multi grade classroom situation, improve their teaching pedagogies and promote effective classroom interactions, which showed that investment on ‘in-service teacher training’ has been ‘value for money’ investment.

The investment on care giver education builds on the MOE’s vision of primary caregiver education as a critical area of intervention which needs strengthening in terms of institutional capacity-building, development of training materials and delivery through multiple channels that reach parents and caregivers wherever they are.

The nursery field officers who are responsible for on-site programme monitoring receive a structured training when they join as field officers, however there is no provision for follow up training for capacity building and to update their skills over time.

Child to trained teacher ratio is significantly high especially in hinterland and riverine regions where multi grade classrooms are in place. The non-academic norms do not specify the ratio for children to trained teacher. This impacts the pedagogical processes and quality of interactions in the classroom, as untrained teachers are not equipped with appropriate skills to teach young children.

Teachers face challenges in including children from other language groups (other than English) as the medium of instruction is in English and the teaching and learning materials used are currently in English. The curriculum is delivered through pedagogical processes which are more suitable for formal education and are not suitable for children with learning challenges or special needs.

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\(^1\) In context of the evaluation we have defined in-service teacher training as regular (every year) compulsory training provided to nursery teachers by Government with a view to upgrade and update their skills, knowledge and practices in line with most recent research findings, global practices and emerging needs in the early childhood sector. A compulsory approach ensures all teachers must go through the training.
Some enabling mechanisms under the programme include a well-structured implementation mechanism, introduction of social assistance programme to increase enrolment and adequate number of teachers across the Regions.

The key challenges the programme is facing include the following:

- There is a complex monitoring and enforcement system involving almost five different stakeholders within Government using different tools to capture similar data;
- No mechanism to analyse the data being reported;
- Unavailability of updated data on the programme;
- Absence of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework defining clear goals and indicators linked to the goals which are to be monitored and
- Multi grade classrooms with few trained teachers in riverine and hinterland areas which affects the quality of pedagogy and interactions.

**Equity**

There is a marginal difference in the participation of girls and boys in the nursery programme. The participation of girls is 3 percentage points less than participation of girls in select years and for other years, the participation is equal. The classroom observations conducted also highlights that all children participate in activities equally and children sit in mixed groups and teachers also do not adopt any discriminatory practices within or outside the classroom.

The majority of teachers in nursery are female as the understanding is that children are women’s responsibility. As a result of this, occasionally teachers tend to use colours, objects in day to day pedagogy which are biased towards girls rather than being gender neutral.

Teachers do not have sufficient training to conduct early detection of special needs or to work with children with special needs and children with learning challenges. Teachers also face challenges in the case of multilingual classrooms where children from other language backgrounds are participating. The classroom observations and the interviews highlight that these categories of children are left out of the learning process during the programme. To address the issue of multilingualism in nursery education, the MOE with support from UNICEF has developed teaching and learning materials in other languages to promote an inclusive mother tongue based approach in nursery education. While the materials have been developed the implementation is yet to be planned.

Resource allocation is currently towards supporting children from the socio-economically marginalised communities in hinterland, through breakfast, hot meals, uniform and transportation programmes. Resource allocation is not gender based and there are no special allocations for special needs or multilingual nursery education. It was found through focus group discussions and observations that while the breakfast and hot meal programmes are in operation, communities are not aware of the uniform and transportation programme. Transportation costs came across as a major challenge in riverine areas, which is a key reason behind low participation of children in nursery education.

**Impact**
The Ministry of Education conducted the National Diagnostic Assessment in 2013 on a cohort of 710 children under the GNEP from Year One of nursery and followed this cohort when they were in Year Two. The assessment (assessed emergent literacy and emergent numeracy) aimed to find out the impact of one year of nursery programme on the cohort. The results show a significant percentage of children displaying mastery over literacy and numeracy skills especially children from hinterland communities. The achievement made by children over a one-year period (comparing pre-test and post-test) is attributed to the impact of the nursery education programme. The coastal area has been taken as the control group where the interventions under the GCEP (capacity building of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials and care giver education) have not been implemented and the children from the hinterland in the sample represent the treatment group which have gone through the intervention.

The parent education programme under the Guyana Early Childhood Education Project, was piloted in the hinterland regions and this had encouraging impact on caregivers as it enabled them to inform their knowledge, attitude and practices towards their children and helped them to be equipped with skills they need to support their children’s learning at home. Caregivers reported (during the focus group discussions) how they have been using this learning in their everyday interaction with their children. The intervention has been rolled out as a pilot in select hinterland areas and the actual duration of the intervention has been less than a year. It is, therefore, too early to establish the impact of caregiver education on the children of these caregivers.

**Sustainability**

The funding for the nursery education programme is through the central government annual budget. While the expenditure on education subvention shows a three-percentage increase, the expenditure on materials (comprising drugs and material supplies, field materials, print and non-print materials and office supplies) shows a 58-percentage decline (compared between the 2017 and 2018 budget). We saw in the earlier section, that development partners like the World Bank and UNICEF are collaboratively working with the MOE on supporting interventions in enhancing the quality of nursery education to improve learning outcomes. The funding of the initiatives like capacity building of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials and caregiver education are through the funding support from development partners and are currently not separately provided in the budget. We also saw from the costs as given in the annual government budgets that the major part of nursery education programme expenditure comprises wages and salaries and administrative costs, with only five percent expenditures towards interventions in education quality and less than four percent for materials (which includes teaching and learning as well as administrative materials). Therefore, supporting the quality interventions initiated under the GECEP, once the grant has ended, would require proportionate increase in allocations under government budget specifically for quality subventions under nursery education. Hence, collaboration and partnership with development partners would be crucial to ensure sustainability of these interventions and impact. The same holds true if the MOE develops a plan to implement the given recommendations, as presented below.

The GNEP is not supported by legislation or an act which makes it a non-compulsory programme by Government. While it is well contextualised within the Education Sector Plan and is supported by
the national budget, its outreach to all parts of the country to ensure compulsory nursery education to all boys and girls would be possible only if it is backed by legislation, which is also going to ensure continued political commitment to the nursery sub-sector and provide a set of norms and guidelines.

Conclusions

Based on the extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection from records, key informant and focused groups it is seen that the implementation of the GNEP over the last 10 years presents a complex scenario of early childhood education in Guyana.

While The GNEP has been the major provider of nursery education services, the nursery education itself is not compulsory in Guyana, i.e. it is not supported by any legislation. The programme was first implemented on a smaller scale in a select number nursery schools, especially in Region 4 and later was implemented in the other regions. It was found that the GNEP still does not cover all children due to the lack of legislation and challenging geographical contexts, especially in the hinterlands. It therefore points to the fact that where GNEP is not offered, children either attend private services (if they operate) or are out of nursery schools.

Since the inception of the programme, the MOE sought to strengthening the workforce for early childhood in the country through a number of strategies including developing nursery education leaders, offering academic programmes for nursery teachers and developing a cadre of nursery field officers responsible for regular monitoring. However, the lack of compulsory in-service teacher training, aimed at updating the knowledge and skills of teachers over time, was a notable gap. It was until after 2014, under the GECEP, that teachers in some hinterland areas have received in-service teacher training in numeracy and literacy with special emphasis on building capacities on the new materials introduced in the nursery curriculum and using these materials in multi grade classrooms.

There has been a paradigm shift in the nursery curriculum from a play-way method to an academic curriculum with emphasis on numeracy and literacy which was introduced in 2014 - a moved from the development of non-cognitive domains. It was hoped that through this children’s academic performance in Grades One and Two would improve however, this led to a change in the philosophical base, from a child-centred approach to an academic approach resulting in children going through the same content as they had gone through in nursery level.

To the credit of the MoE, the GNEP in its programme design has an element of family and community engagement in children’s learning process i.e. parent education programme was introduced under the GECEP. This has enabled the parent education discourse in a concrete way in the GNEP – an achievement that exceeds the planned results of the nursery education programme. While there is no baseline data on the parent education programme, the focus group discussions with communities have shown the pilot phase of the programme in hinterland areas has an encouraging response. The intervention has pushed boundaries to reach out to the caregivers from the most marginalised communities (even caregivers who are not literate) and have empowered them to teach their children using their life experiences. The caregivers have demonstrated
improvements in their skills and behavioural aspects when it comes to interacting with their children as they use their regular chores as opportunities and simple household items as tools to promote their children’s learning and help them to develop skills. It is also understood that the parenting programme has enabled parents to understand what their children are learning from nursery programme. It can be concluded based on the evaluation that the parent education programme has created increased demands from the communities for the programme in all areas.

The monitoring process of GNEP is complex as it involves multiple agencies, using different tools collecting data on similar indicators, without clear coordination and convergence. There is a need to develop approaches to use the data, being collected to inform decision making at levels of service delivery and also strengthening nursery field officers’ capacities through refresher trainings for upgradation of skills and knowledge.

In terms of programme equity participation and attendance, a marginal difference was seen between boys and girls. However, the majority of teachers in the profession and by extension nursery schools are women which contributes to the societal conception that women are responsible for children and use methods and objects which may be biased towards girls. Further, inequity was most significant among children with special needs and children from different language groups. The materials as well as the medium of instruction in GNEP is in English, which is a challenge for children from different language groups. Currently the GNEP does not have mechanisms for early identification and referral services for children with special needs. Teachers also do not receive training on working with children with special needs which adds to the complexity.

While there has been resource allocation through social assistance programmes like breakfast, hot meal, uniform and transportation programmes toward socio-economically marginalised communities from hinterland and riverine Regions, communities are not aware of the uniform and transportation programme. The evaluation found the implementation of breakfast and hot meals programme in operation. Transportation costs came across as a major challenge in riverine areas, which is a key reason behind low participation of children in nursery education. There is no special allocation for other marginalised groups like children with special needs and children from different language groups.

The evaluation also concluded that there is a lack of coordination and convergence between the Ministry of Education and other relevant ministries who are working on issues of young children like the Ministry of Social Protection and the Child Protection Agency. There is no active mechanism for the MOE and the line ministries to coordinate and converge under the GNEP. Considering early childhood development is a multi-sectoral subject, it is important to ensure the effective coordination and convergence between all the relevant ministries.

While the current structure of the GNEP is supported by the central budget and would continue, the current interventions in parent education and in-service teacher training initiated under the GECEP which are interventions to improve the quality of nursery education cannot continue as per present budgetary allocations and there would be a need for partnership and collaborative
approach involving development partners. The current budget does not have sufficient provisions to support interventions in improving quality of learning in nursery schools and classes.

**Recommendations**

1. **Legislation for Nursery Education**
   
a. The Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana should formulate legislation for early childhood development in the country which should include the nursery education as a compulsory programme for children between three to six years of age.

2. **Planning and Technical Assistance**
   
a. The Ministry of Education may consider analysing the current situation with regard to equitable access to nursery education in the country and execute an exercise in target setting to ensure the indicator is achieved in the course of 15 years (Sustainable Development Goal 4.2).

3. **Standards and Benchmarks**
   
a. The Ministry of Education should develop a comprehensive and progressive National Quality Standards for the nursery programme to provide specific indicators and guidelines to programme implementers and nursery schools and classes on quality improvement.
   
b. The Ministry of Education should field test and review the numeracy and literacy learning standards, which would ensure the standards are validated and contextualised to Guyanese context. Learning standards may be developed and contextualised for other domains of development including the non-cognitive domains.

4. **Programme Content**
   
a. The MOE and its partners should develop a school readiness programme for children joining Grade One to ensure a smooth and seamless transition from nursery to the Grade One curriculum.

5. **Teacher Training**
   
a. The Ministry of Education should develop a written policy on compulsory and regular ‘in-service’ teacher training and develop appropriate strategies to implement the policy.
   
b. The MOE and its partners should develop a training strategy and programme for training of nursery teachers on working with children who have special needs and children with learning difficulties.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
   
a. The Ministry of Education should review the different monitoring mechanisms and tools that are currently used and based on the review, standardise monitoring processes for results.
Section 1: Introduction

The foundations of brain architecture, and subsequent lifelong developmental potential, are laid down in a child’s early years through a process that is extremely sensitive to external influence. Early experiences in the home, other care settings and in pre-schools interact with genes to shape the developing nature and quality of the brain’s architecture. Robust evidence suggests that a year or two of centre-based pre-school education for three and four-year-olds provided through a developmentally appropriate programme, will improve children’s early language, literacy and mathematics skills when measured at the end of the programme or soon after. In the global context, early childhood (which includes early childhood education and development) has received strong advocacy and policy impetus. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2 states, “by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education”. Two related indicators to measure SDG 4.2 are:

- Proportion of children under five years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex
- Participation rate in organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex

According to Education for All, 2015 Regional Review of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) almost all countries expressly incorporate Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) into their education laws, policies and programmes. ECCE is normally defined as education targeted to children between birth or three months of age and five or six years of age, depending on the country’s official age for entry into primary school. This level of education is referred to by different names in different countries but, like primary education, is generally divided into two or three cycles. In terms of the education opportunities of children aged three to six, Latin American and Caribbean countries have tended to make slow progress in expanding young children’s access to pre-primary education. The average regional net enrolment rates in pre-primary education rose from 50.9 percent in 2000 to 66.4 percent in 2013. Notwithstanding some major variations, this positive trend was observed in 21 of the 24 countries with comparable information available. The region has a wide range of situations in this regard, ranging from countries with pre-primary coverage of around 90 percent, to others where coverage is below 40 percent. National differences in net enrolment rates in pre-primary education are associated with economic, social and educational factors (UNESCO 2013). In particular, countries with greater economic resources (measured by per capita GDP) tend to have higher levels of pre-school education coverage. However, other social development indicators are also important, even when wealth differences are controlled. For instance, countries with a higher rural population and higher child mortality had lower rates of pre-school education enrolment. Population composition in terms of age groups is also a relevant factor, as countries with a higher percentage of pre-school age population (i.e. those facing a larger task), tend to have lower net enrolment rates.

In 1997, the Standing Committee of Ministers of Education of the Caribbean countries approved the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Care, Education and Development and this Plan, endorsed by the 18th (1997) Conference of Heads, in the Special Session on Human Resource Development, set the stage for regional support to national planning in Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean region. Building on the 1997 Plan, a Regional Early Childhood Action Plan 2002-2015 was endorsed by the Fifth Special Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), October 2002. The Plan was also informed by The Convention on the
Rights of the Child, the Kingston Consensus from the Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas, 2002 and commitments made at the United Nations Special Session on Children, “A World Fit for Children” 2002. The CARICOM Secretariat and Development Partners agreed as a priority to support the development of policies, regulation and standards for early childhood development services and to harmonise expectations across the region for quality and equity in access to services. This was seen as an important development especially in the context of the CSME, free movement of skilled nationals and the associated contingent rights. A technical workshop held in Antigua, September 2006, brought together representatives from all Member States and led to the subsequent drafting of the Guidelines for developing policy, regulation and standards in early childhood development services. The Guidelines aim to provide practical guidance to early childhood officers who are charged with the responsibility of delivering a high quality early childhood development experience for the children in their countries. The Guidelines focus on the educational and development aspects of the early childhood experience in settings such as preschool and day care services. They do not address the aspects that are traditionally handled by the health sector i.e. pre-natal care, post-natal care, immunization, nutrition and developmental screening.

The Government of Guyana recognises the early childhood development years as birth to age eight and is in tune with global trends which recognise the Early Childhood Education years as the period, ages three to eight. In a broader sense, the ECE could be subdivided into Day Care Centres and Play Groups for children between the ages of 0 and 3 years old, and Nursery schools for children between three years and six months and five years of age who did not start primary education. Most of the day care centres are privately owned – the country has six municipal day care centres in Georgetown, subsided by the Georgetown Municipality; while Nursery institutions are made available free of charge for parents.

Formal nursery education was not introduced into Guyana until 1976. Prior to that, there were a number of privately owned nursery schools, but these were poorly equipped and staffed mostly by retired female teachers. The teachers had no formal training in early childhood education. Teaching at this level, in fact, was characterised as a downward extension of skills in reading, writing and mathematics as a foundation for primary education. Following the nationalisation of education, the thrust at the nursery level was not only on access but also on improving the quality of educational offering through the training of nursery school teachers. On September 13, 1976, the Government of Guyana introduced an early stimulation programme for children ages three years nine months to five years nine months. This programme, known as the Guyana Nursery Education Programme (GNEP) was offered nationally and free across difficult terrain and multi-cultural domains.

The GNEP is extended as a two-year programme for early childhood education, which the Ministry states, is designed to affect the development of their socialisation and their intellectual and psychomotor skills through curriculum activities which are based mostly on child development rather than subject matter discipline. The programme activities span four hours with play and multi-

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2 The varied experiences in the development of Early Childhood Services in the Region led to the convening of a Caribbean Policy Forum on Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Kingston, Jamaica in March 2006. The Forum was aimed at sensitising policy makers to the importance of investment in Early Childhood Development and the extent to which the success of the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME) depended on the adequate development of the Human Resources, starting with our youngest citizens.

3 Early childhood education programmes include programmes for children that have organised learning components as opposed to baby-sitting and day-care, which do not typically have organised education and learning components.

4 https://www.educoas.org/Portal/bdigital/contenido/interamer/BkIACD/Interamer/Interamerhtml/Millerhtml/mil_jen.htm
sensory approaches being the pillars upon which the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of young children is nurtured. Active learning through play facilitated by a variety of materials for skills development, experimentation, discovery and learning and a good mix of rest and quiet activity create opportunity to make social contacts in small and large groups; to share, cooperate and develop initiative and leadership skills. This strategy also provides the foundation for the appreciation of aesthetics and cultural experiences. Active parent and community involvement are encouraged. The programme is delivered in discrete nursery schools in urban and coastal areas and in primary schools with nursery classes in deep rural and hinterland locations. Thirty-eight years after its implementation – in September 2014 - the GNEP changed the age requirement to allow enrolment of children who became three years by June 30 of the year of entry. Currently the GNEP covers children in the age bracket of three years six months to five years.

Beginning in 1976 with 190 schools and a national enrolment of over 19,000, the GNEP, still not a compulsory programme, has grown with records in 2012-2013 showing a national enrolment, in public schools, of over 25,968 children in 363 discrete schools and 126 nursery classes. This translates into a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 89.9 percent excluding private schools. The Ministry’s is currently not capturing all the data from private schools but data which has been collected gives an enrolment of 1382 pupils. The national average attendance in public schools is 77 percent (74 percent boys and 79 percent girls) with a range of between 66 percent and 80 percent average attendance across Regional Education Departments. The proportion of trained teachers nationally is 69 percent.

There are two delivery models for the nursery programme and these are as follows:
1. Independent and discrete nursery schools
2. Nursery classes attached to primary schools
Nursery education is provided through nursery classes attached to primary schools especially in areas where outreach is difficult (for example the riverine areas/islands). The GNEP however does not ensure compulsory provision of nursery education to every child in Guyana.

Development partner organisations like World Bank (through Global Partnership for Education) and UNICEF have been supporting the different components of the programme. The World Bank through Global Partnership for Education has committed to a grant of US$1.7 million towards supporting (a) capacity building of nursery and Grade One teachers (b) improving supply of teaching and learning materials (c) primary care giver education and (d) project implementation support, administration and monitoring and evaluation, in the riverine and hinterland regions. The World Bank support has started from 2015 onwards. UNICEF’s support to the GNEP has been through technical assistance support to the nursery education programme since 1976.

The nursery programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Education at the central level and by the Regional Education Departments in the Regions. The following organogram presents the implementation structure for the nursery programme.
As provided in the organogram above, the nursery education is headed by the Chief Education Officer and Assistant Chief Education Officer at the central level. In the Regions, the Regional Education Development Officer (REDO) is responsible for monitoring and management of nursery schools and classes. The REDO is responsible for the Nursery Field Officers (NFO). As such, the NFOs report to the Regional Education Officer and are responsible for the regular monitoring of nursery schools and classes.

**Section 3: Purpose and Scope of Evaluation**

This exercise is set out to evaluate the performance of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme as regards effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Cross-cutting considerations will also be assessed. This evaluation is timely as the findings will inform a revision of the existing curriculum and provide strategies for a more effective implementation of nursery education in Guyana.

The GNEP has completed 40 years of its implementation and therefore the evaluation of the programme is critical to ensuring that the goals, strategies for nursery education in Guyana are consistent with global frameworks; meet the equity agenda; respond to new research findings while maintaining its cultural appropriateness.

The evaluation exercise responds to the following objectives:

1. To determine whether the quality of the GNEP offered to children and their parents, over the last 40 years, has achieved their objectives and to what extent.
2. Based on the findings with regards to number 1, identify sources, facilitating factors and challenges encountered in the GNEP
3. Drawing on findings in 1 and 2 compile, lessons learned and elaborate their implications for the future of the GNEP.
The scope of the current evaluation was to evaluate the programme in the last 10 years of its implementation which is 2006 to 2016. This period was agreed upon in consultation with Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

The programme has been in implementation for the last 40 years. The scope of the current evaluation was to evaluate the programme in the last 10 years of its implementation, mainly due to unavailability of sufficient evaluable data. Keeping in view the feasibility of the evaluation, the current evaluation has probed into the implementation of the nursery education programme in the last 10 years, which is 2006 to 2016. The evaluation attempts to capture the history and philosophy of the programme, but does not provide a comprehensive perspective about the programme’s performance before 2006.

Section 4: Methodology
The evaluation used an analytical framework (as provided below) to guide the evaluation process. The evaluation was conducted based on OECD-DAC standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact) which would be used to capitalise key findings in addition to other criteria such as “equity”. The following are the definitions for the criteria:

- **Effectiveness** is a measure of the extent to which the objectives have been achieved and the major factors influencing the achievement and non-achievement of objectives
- **Relevance** refers to the extent to which the activity which has been funded is suited to the priorities and policies of the country, target group, recipient and donor as well as global agenda.
- **Efficiency** measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs in the activity
- **Equity** means that the activity ensures all children and other beneficiaries receive opportunities, without discrimination, bias or favouritism
- **Impact** involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the intervention on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators
- **Sustainability** is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of the activity are likely to continue after funding comes to an end or funding mechanisms developed during the project span which are sustainable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Key Questions to be Answered</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>To what extent have the intended outcomes of the GNEP been realised? Has the GNEP led to better preparation for primary education?</td>
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<td>Are educators in nursery education provided with the right types of skills and competencies during their formal training?</td>
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<td>To what extent has the GNEP helped children to be developmentally on track (emotionally, socially, mentally, physically and spiritually)?</td>
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<td>To what extent has the GNEP been implemented according to more than 90 percent of the guidelines?</td>
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<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>To what extent does the nursery education programme aligned to the SDGs?</td>
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<td>Is the Nursery education delivered in a culturally appropriate manner?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>How cost effective is the current approach to manage and implement the nursery education programme? How can the cost/benefit in the Nursery education implementation be maximised?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have the nursery education standards and guidelines been implemented in a standardised way? If so, to what extent?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What are the enabling factors for and or hindrances to the effective implementation of the GNEP?</td>
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<td>To what extent has the programme allowed for community support?</td>
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<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>What is the impact of the GNEP on the knowledge, attitude and practices of the families?</td>
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<td>What is the impact of the GNEP on performance of children in primary schools?</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>To what extent are the GNEP implementation and management arrangements and funding sustainable?</td>
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<td>What recommendations and lessons learned in the GNEP should be considered for the future?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
<td>To what extent has the GNEP included issues of gender, children with special needs and language groups?</td>
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Questions were developed across each criterion and these questions were further used as research questions for the probe during the evaluation.

The evaluation followed a mixed method approach using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to assess the performance of the nursery education programme. The exercise was guided by an evaluation framework, which was prepared jointly with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education during the inception phase. The following steps define the methodological rigour of the evaluation exercise.

1. **Desk/Data Review**: Review of existing literature and data was carried out to identify the key issues from literature review which would need to be probed further in the data collection phase, along with the research questions identified as per the analytical framework. The review further enabled in describing the global evidence of the importance of early childhood education, the Caribbean Regional context and to develop and initial understanding of the situation of ECE in Guyana
   - All relevant literature including government reports and documents, policies, strategies, national plans
   - Monitoring Reports and Monitoring Tools
   - Relevant frameworks and policies from CARICOM Region
   - Reports from Donor and International Organisations like Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) reports, Situation Analysis of Women and Children, etc.
   - Documents, reports and data for information of the Regions
   - National Scheme, Pre-school Education Kit Guidelines, Reader Series, Assessment books and Workbooks etc.
   - Any other relevant documents

2. **Sampling and Data Collection**
I. **Sampling Strategy:** The evaluation followed a purposive sampling method for collecting data at a national and Regional level. At the national level, the evaluation team interviewed all the relevant ministries and organisations working on or connected to the nursery education sub-sector in the country. For data collection in Regions, the team initially identified the Regions in consultation with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. Once the Regions have been selected, nursery schools and classes in the respective Regions were identified based on consultations with the Regional Education and Development Officer from each Region. During the course of fieldwork, the parent groups and case studies were selected through a snowballing approach, which means the evaluation team consulted the Regional Education Development Officer, the teachers and head teachers from schools to identify the parent groups for focus group discussions and specific children and their primary caregivers for documenting the case studies.

II. **Data Collection at the National Level:** The following key informant interviews were held at the national level
   a. Semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with Ministry of Education and all relevant ministries involved in early childhood
      - National Council for Educational Research and Development
      - University of Guyana
      - Chief Education Officer (CEO)
      - Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO) (Nursery),
      - Chief Planning Officer
      - Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana
      - UNICEF Guyana
      - Child Link Guyana

III. **Sample Plan:** With regard to the evaluation, qualitative data was collected from all Regions except Georgetown and Region 8. The following points outline the data collection from the Regions:
   a. **Sub-National Government Staff:** In-depth Interviews with Regional Education Officers, District Education Officers and Nursery Field Officers
   b. **Teachers:** Six Teachers were interviewed across the six nursery schools and classes.
   c. **Parent Group:** One focus group discussion per nursery was carried out. A total number of six focus group discussions have been carried out across 10 Regions
   d. **Classroom Observations:** Full day classroom observations and facility mapping at, five nursery schools. This involved full day observation of classroom processes on select number of items and mapping of the facilities at the nursery schools. The classroom observation was conducted based on indicators from an Early Childhood Quality Assessment Scale, which was developed and validated in India and has been used across large scale nursery education programmes in Asia. Apart from these, shorter duration observations were conducted at five nursery classes.
   e. **Case Studies:** The evaluation involved capturing two case studies, which focused on how children have benefited from the GNEP. The following case studies were conducted:
      I. One child who has completed the nursery programme and is currently in the primary grade.
      II. One child who has completed the nursery programme and overcame his speech impairment with help of his grandmother (primary caregiver) and is now in Grade Two.
The case studies involved tracking the history of the children and capturing qualitative data on how intervention has brought change in the life of the child and also the family. The data was collected through interviews with primary caregivers of the children.

3. **Data Analysis and Report Writing:** The evaluation takes a grounded theory approach for data analysis. The following steps have been undertaken

   a. **Coding the data (categorising):** Codes are small units of meaning. The data was coded in two ways: etic and emic codes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The evaluation team developed of predetermined codes (etic codes) based on what they know from the existing literature. Most of these codes have been described in the analytical framework as discussed above. For example, child centred or teacher centred curriculum, etc. Emic codes are codes that emerge from the data which the team did not anticipate prior to conducting the evaluation.

   b. **Identifying themes (integrating categories):** The codes were grouped together to develop themes. This analysis helped the evaluation team to examine the relationships between the different codes and synthesise them. For example, the codes of teaching materials, class activities and programme philosophy were grouped under the theme of classroom curriculum.

   c. **Developing claims:** Claims were developed to clearly delineate the primary findings of the evaluation. Once claims were developed, these claims were supported using multiple sources of data. Taking an example if when the team developed a claim that child-centred approaches facilitate children’s learning, then the team needed to support this claim with data from the interview with the teacher, interview with implementers, observation in the classroom and excerpts from the curriculum (documents).

   d. **Developing a grounded theory:** The final step involved developing contextually relevant grounded theory about access, equity and quality indicators of GNEP by systematically synthesising the data from various sources (and the claims developed) (John W. Creswell, 2003).

Considering the scope and duration of the exercise the quantitative data which was used was the data which is already available in the reports, documents and Statistical Digests of different years. Quantitative data would not be collected separately from the field, except for data quality which was collected during classroom observations. The quantitative data was used to support the qualitative claims.

The following are the ways in which the quantitative data has been analysed.

   a. Child Population (latest census) and distribution of nurseries and other registered ECE centres across Guyana
   b. Enrollment of children (three to six years old) across different categories/types of ECE centres and trends in participation of children across different ECE centres over a time period
   c. Age wise enrollment of children in nurseries across Regions
   d. Distribution of nurseries across all Regions and the enrollments of children, age wise.
   e. Distribution of nursery schools and classes in Regions
   f. Teacher qualifications
g. Teacher to child ratio and trained teacher to child ratio  

h. Learning outcomes of children in nursery as per national diagnostic assessment.  
i. Comparative analysis of costs and budget allocations in nursery education sub-sector

4. Ethical Consideration
   To ensure that the key ethical principles for the conduct of evaluation involving human subjects are followed, each potential respondent was given full information about the evaluation including the purpose and potential benefits of the evaluation, their rights, and how the information collected will be used. They were also informed that all data will be kept confidentially being only accessible by members of the assessment team. Verbal consent was obtained from all those who agree to participate. (The person receiving the consent and a witness signed the consent form). All participants were informed of their right to discontinue their participation at any point and approaches for ensuring confidentiality were described.

5. Limitations of the Evaluation
   The following have been the limiting factors in the evaluation process:
   - The quantitative data available in the Statistical Digest is only for four time periods which are 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2011-12. There is no data available beyond this.  
   - Some stakeholders who had requested to be allowed to provide their perspectives by email did not provide those perspectives.  
   - There is currently insufficient convergence and coordination between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Protection and the Child Protection agency. Hence, we could not answer the research question on “How has the GNEP led to the reduction in abuse, neglect and negative social behaviours?” Currently there is also no publicly available data around this.  
   - There is no official data available around the following question, “To what extent has the GNEP led to on-time enrolment at primary school?” We therefore had to drop this question as well.

6. Potential Gap and Delimitations:
   The evaluation design is aimed at evaluating the performance of the GNEP. The scope of the evaluation does not allow for collecting data (data at different time points through pre-test and post-tests) specifically to measure impact of nursery education on learning outcomes of children along the primary grade. Ministry of Education also does not collect similar data. Keeping in view that impact is one of the criteria in the evaluation, we have used data from a national diagnostic assessment (sample-based assessment) of nursery children to evaluate impact. The team has also documented case studies of children to develop a nuanced understanding of how the nursery programme has impacted the child’s early experiences and as well as the family.

Logical Framework
   As part of the evaluation exercise, the evaluation team also developed a theory of change and logical framework to unpack the impact, outcome and output indicators of the nursery education programme. The outcomes as defined by the logical framework have been used for evaluating the nursery programme.
GNEP has been in implementation for 40 years and it is the principal programmes in early childhood subsector in Guyana. The programme scope and curricular approaches underwent a change post-2013, from play-based holistic domain-oriented approach to an academic approach based on improving numeracy and literacy outcome, thus leaving out the non-cognitive domains of child development (socio-emotional, personal, creative and aesthetic). Although GNEP is the single largest early childhood programme in the country, there are challenges in terms of and access in areas, teacher quality, usage of learning materials especially in hinterland and riverine areas and overall programme monitoring and evaluation. Government is currently undertaking reforms through interventions in parenting education, numeracy and literacy areas of curriculum to address some of the issues.
Section 4: Findings of Evaluation

This section presents the findings of the GNEP evaluation and addresses the questions and criteria in the evaluation framework (as provided above). The section was developed using findings from the desk review, data collection in 10 regions and six schools through classroom observations, focus group discussions with communities and interviews with key stakeholders, including teachers, parents, head teachers and officers in departments of education in the provinces. The findings are presented under the criteria that the evaluation aimed to address: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, impact and sustainability.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness criteria would aim at responding to the following questions:

1. To what extent have the intended outcomes of the GNEP been realised? Has the GNEP led to better preparation for primary education? Has the GNEP led to better preparation for primary education?
2. Are educators in nursery education provided with the right types of skills and competencies during their formal training?
3. To what extent has the GNEP helped children to be developmentally on track (emotionally, socially, mentally, physically and spiritually)?
4. To what extent has the GNEP been implemented according to more than 90 percent of the guidelines?

Key Findings:

- The approach towards programme scope and curricular underwent a change post 2013, in order to focus more on the development of literacy and numeracy from the nursery level itself to ensure improved literacy and numeracy outcomes in the primary level. This implies that the focus of the content of the programme shifted from a play-based holistic approach to a programme which is more focused on developing only academic skills of children in numeracy and literacy. As a result, of the shift in focus, the programme content currently being used does not lay equal emphasis on the non-cognitive domains of child development.

- Teachers find it challenging to include children with special needs and children with learning challenges, as an academic curriculum is not well suited for these special categories of children.

- The country currently does not have compulsory, regular and periodic ‘in-service’ teacher training provided by Government. There is also no written policy regarding this.

- The evaluation came across several teachers who have completed the certificate course in nursery education a decade prior but have not gone through any in-service training after that. This impacts the quality of pedagogical practices and curriculum transaction and the effectiveness of the nursery programme as a whole.

Outcomes of GNEP

To what extent have the intended outcomes of the GNEP been realised?
The GNEP is not supported by an operation implementation manual which would define programme goals, outcomes and outputs. During the inception of the programme a handbook was developed, however it has not been updated. Therefore, the effectiveness of the nursery education programme has been evaluated based on the outcomes indicators defined in the logical framework which has been developed in the methodology section of the report. The outcome indicators signify the change that is being anticipated through the nursery education programme and defined in the logical framework as given below:

2. Capacity building of teachers and teacher quality
3. Parent engagement in children’s learning process

The evaluation team has analysed the qualitative data collected from the field, quantitative data from Statistical Digest and literature under each of the areas and the findings have been presented in detail under relevance and efficiency criteria. The relevance and efficiency criteria have related questions (questions in the analytical framework) on access and programme quality, where these outcome areas are also included and hence the comprehensive findings are provided across these two criteria.

In this section on Effectiveness we further explore through two case studies on how the nursery education programme is preparing children better for primary education and the findings on teacher quality as a response to the question; “Are educators in nursery education provided with the right types of skills and competencies during their formal training?”

**Better Preparation for Primary**

*Has the GNEP led to better preparation for primary education?*

As part of the evaluation, two case studies of children have been conducted to analyse how the nursery programme has impacted the learning experience of children who have gone through the programme and moved to primary grade. The case studies have explored the cases of two children in terms of how the nursery education has prepared them. Brief common findings derived from the two case studies are presented here and the two case studies have been attached as annex 6 to the report.

The case studies of two different children highlighted that the nursery programme provided a foundational base for preparation for primary education, which is also one of the objectives of the nursery education programme. The case studies also showed that nursery education not only positively impacts children but also impacts the caregivers especially in low socio-economic and educational settings. Both case studies are of children who have other siblings and they come from a family size of five to six members. The following are the specific findings from the case studies:

1. Both case studies show that the content the children learned at nursery level was similar to the content they experienced when they moved to primary. Both case studies show that the children are already aware of the content which they are now learning in primary classroom.
2. When children learn behavioural skills in the nursery programme, they replicate the same at home while communicating with the family members. For example, the case studies show
that the care givers learned simple behavioural aspects like saying ‘good morning’, ‘excuse me’ from their children.

3. The second case study involves a child with a hearing impairment and the case highlights how the conviction used the nursery curriculum and participated in classroom sessions along with the teachers to help the child to learn. This case shows an example of how nursery education has an impact on the development of children with special needs. The case study also highlights the role of the primary caregiver in the child’s learning process and the critical need for parental participation in nursery education.

4. Both case studies show that nursery teachers have regular interactions with caregivers about what children are learning in school, the challenges and the strengths of each child. And caregivers keep a track of the children’s progress, strengths and challenges they face.

**Teacher Quality**

*Are educators in nursery education provided with the right types of skills and competencies during their formal training?*

Government-supported training of nursery personnel began in 1978. The following have been the different levels of training:

**Nursery Education Leaders:** 25 trained teachers who were either supervisors or head teachers were selected to undergo a two-year programme at the University of Guyana (supported by UNICEF in 1976). Upon successful completion of the programme, the graduates were awarded certificates in nursery education and they were referred to as Nursery Education Leaders and they were responsible for training other serving nursery teachers in schools throughout the districts. The trainings were held in the form of workshops after school hours. The interviews with the earlier programme administrators of GNEP reflected that this method helped to develop zeal within the education leaders and they acted as critical resource in providing technical assistance and driving the programme in the Regions.

**Teacher Training Programme:** This three-year training programme (offered by Cyril Potter College of Education) began in 1980 for in-service teachers, who received Trained Teacher’s Certificate. From 1985 and onwards, the training programme was reduced to two years. This is also considered as the in-service teacher training because while teachers enter as teachers with secondary level education, they have the option of completing the teachers training certificate while they are in their service.

**Bachelor of Education Programme:** In 1991, the University of Guyana introduced a Bachelor of Education programme in nursery education. The programme offered two streams which were (a) administration option and (b) classroom practitioners programme which equipped teachers to teach up to Grade Two in the primary level. In 1993, the Faculty of Education re-introduced a revised programme which was a certificate programme in education.

With respect to teacher quality, 31 percent of Guyana’s 1,700 nursery teachers remain untrained, with a much higher proportion of untrained teachers (53 percent) in remote hinterland areas
(2011/2012)\(^5\). According to the National Centre for Educational Resource Development and based on the preparation team’s\(^6\) multiple school visits, Guyanese teachers are yet to allow children to engage in independent or small-group play-based learning activities and prefer structured, didactic plenary instructional methods with firm timetables and little cross-curricular content\(^7\).

The current evaluation concluded on the following findings on teacher quality under the Guyana Nursery Education Programme.

**Pre-Service Teacher Training:** The country does not yet have a written teacher training policy for nursery teachers. However, there are teacher competencies which have been defined, but are not aimed solely at nursery teachers. The Department of Foundation and Education Management in University of Guyana and Cyril Potter College of Education (under the Ministry of Education) are responsible for pre-service academic programmes in early childhood education. The basic programme offered by Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) is the certificate course in early childhood education which leads to a two-year Associate Degree programme. The Department of Foundation and Education Management at the University of Guyana offers a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education and most recently is in the process of developing a master’s programme in Early Childhood Education with support from UNICEF.

In addition to these programmes, in 2010, in response to CARICOM’s Regional Guidelines for early childhood development (ECD), the department introduced an Early Childhood Professional Development Programme (ECDP) in collaboration with UNICEF and University of West Indies Open Campus, Trinidad. This is primarily meant of caregivers of birth to three-year-old children. Both the Ministry of Education and University of Guyana have created a structured approach for pre-service training through well-developed academic programmes.

While its widely understood (based on the interviews at a national level with CPCE, the University of Guyana and the MOE) that the basic criteria to become a teacher is completing the certificate course in early childhood education, this is not enforced. There is an unwritten requirement that the teachers who have not done this course would complete it in time during their job as a teacher in any nursery school/class. The reason why this is not enforced is primarily because there is an unavailability of educated workforce in the hinterland and riverine areas compared to the coastland. The trainers at CPCE confirmed, “In the coastal areas which now have many qualified teachers, adding more trainer teachers in [the] coastland would lead to a situation of overstaffing.”

CPCE therefore has taken an initiative to ensure qualified teachers in riverine and hinterland areas and according to this initiative, “The intake of candidates for the college is focused more on the interior location, persons who are coming from the hinterland and deep riverine areas”. “Those candidates who are from elsewhere like around the coastland are given the understanding that they are likely to be sent to teach in the hinterland, the riverine areas because there aren’t vacancies along the coastland which need to be filled.” While this initiative would aim at increasing trained teachers in the remote regions, it has also happened that candidates have not accepted their job.

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\(^5\) Education Global Practice, World Bank; 2015; Early Childhood Education Project: Operations Manual; World Bank, Latin America and Caribbean Region

\(^6\) This refers to World Bank team supporting the Early Childhood Education Project

\(^7\) Education Global Practice, World Bank; 2015; Early Childhood Education Project: Operations Manual; World Bank, Latin America and Caribbean Region
offers if they involve teaching in the remote areas. The MOE, in order to ensure qualified teachers in these regions, is planning to provide housing/accommodation facilities to teachers who would be willing to move to these regions and work there.

**Coordination:** The evaluation also found there is currently a limited coordination and interaction between the teacher training colleges and NCERD. The trainers at CPCE mentioned the fact that “All teaching material, text books, curriculum guides workbooks, that are issued in schools by the Ministry of Education should be supplied to the Cyril Potter College of Education for use in basically two areas, one, the library and the other for reference and use by staff.” They were also not completely aware of the teacher competencies which the MOE has developed and these competencies have not been considered in the nursery teacher courses as it is unclear whether these are finalised or yet to be rolled out. Without the teacher training standards being integrated with the teacher curricula, it would be difficult to ensure that the teachers achieve the desired standards and competencies.

**In-Service Teacher Training:** The evaluation further found that there is currently no mandatory ‘in-service’ teacher training policy. This means upgrading of skills after one has competed the certificate (which is the basic course) is not mandatory for the teachers. During the interviews, as part of evaluation, the team has come across five teachers (in the coastal regions) across the different regions who have completed their teacher training certificate 12-15 years ago but have not undergone any professional development programmes. While NCERD offers short term professional development programmes, these are not compulsory for the teachers to complete. If teachers’ skills and knowledge are not upgraded over time, this impacts the quality of pedagogical practices and curriculum transaction and the effectiveness of the nursery programme as a whole.

The Guyana Early Childhood Education Project aims to respond to this gap by providing specific trainings to nursery and primary teachers. Under the GECEP project, the team remarked; “We have crafted a very rich literary deep training for our teachers and during that process we tried to challenge their traditional way of thinking about how education is supposed to work for children at a young age and instead of telling. We did a lot of demonstrations, lessons and exercises where teachers themselves had to take the perspective of the child in that situation and then go back and practice, practice, practice with each other; a lot of hands-on instructional methodology and always bringing back to focus.” In the Year 1 of the project, 509 teachers have been trained across the regions and Year 2 which is the current year, the number of teachers trained increased to 526.

**Cluster Workshops:** Staff Development Session and Cluster Workshops are also opportunities for teachers and head teachers to come together share experiences. Head teachers in their respective nursery schools hold staff development sessions where they discuss with the teacher on topics where the teacher would need more help and guidance. From the interviews with both head teachers and nursery school teachers it is understood that these sessions are not regular. Although these are planned to be held every month these sessions do not happen as per the plan. The quality of these sessions depends on the training and capacities of the head teacher and in multi grade situations, these sessions are extremely infrequent as the head teacher does not get enough time to spend dedicated time with the nursery teacher. The cluster development workshops which are held periodically brings together teachers and head teachers from the neighbourhood areas where one of the head teachers would take a session. These sessions would be for two hours and would cover topics like making materials for children using local resources. The cluster workshop provides scope for teachers and head teachers, who have received training for example under the GECEP
project or have completed any professional development course from NCERD, to train other teachers and head teachers in the same cluster. There is no cascading training model in place, but these cluster workshops are coming up as opportunities.

As part of the evaluation, the team also analysed the quantitative data available in the Statistical Digest and the following diagrams present some of the findings.

*Figure 1 Regional Distribution of Graduate and Other Qualified Trained Teachers (Statistical Digest, Govt. of Guyana)*

The diagram above highlights the number of teachers who have graduate degree (any subject) and nursery training and the number of teachers with other qualifications (other qualifications except graduate) and nursery training over the four time points. In both case, there is an increase in the number of trained teachers. However, the increase in the number of graduate trained teachers is less than the teachers with other qualifications and nursery training. Most of the increase in graduate and trained teachers is in Region 4 and Georgetown because these are both areas which are socio-economically higher than other regions. In Regions 1, 8 and 9, the number of qualified teachers and increase in number of qualified teachers are the least. Based on the interviews with the CPCE, GECEP and MOE, it can be concluded that these regions are educationally and socio-economically challenging contexts where the availability of trained teachers is a challenge to date. This also explains the trend in these regions.
The figure above shows consistent decline in the numbers of unqualified teachers except for Regions 7 and 9 which are challenging contexts. Region 7 and 9 form the hinterland and riverine areas of the country, where availability of qualified teachers is critical. The interviews with Cyril Potter College of Education and University of Guyana revealed that once candidates from these Regions acquire pre-service qualifications, they tend to migrate out of these Regions to coastal areas and this leads to unavailability of qualified teachers.

**Children’s Development**

*To what extent has the GNEP helped children to be developmentally on track (emotionally, socially, mentally, physically and spiritually)?*

This section would aim to answer the questions around the nature of nursery education being delivered and the cultural appropriateness of same. This section would therefore reflect more on curriculum philosophies and content and the teaching and learning material being used in the process.

In keeping with the goals for nursery, the curricular approaches which were initially introduced were in line with the types of ‘developmentally appropriate practices’ as endorsed by Far West laboratory. In the initial years, during the inception of the GNEP, only few schools were following these curricular approaches in line with ‘developmentally appropriate practices’. The document review highlights that only four nursery schools were following curriculum which focused on ‘developmentally appropriate practices’. The guiding philosophy for the curricular approaches has been defined in the goals of the GNEP which talks about learning experiences promoted by
encouraging play, child centred learning and exploration of activities outside classroom. A review of the goals for nursery education and analysis of the interviews held at a national level highlights that the GNEP adopted curricular approaches for development of all domains of child development which are holistic. However there has been no curriculum framework that was developed under GNEP.

In terms of curriculum, there are two major milestones which have been analysed as part of the evaluation. The Ministry of Education and National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD) noted that there have been challenges in terms of student’s performances in literacy and numeracy in the primary grades, as observed during the national assessments. This has led to recognising emergent literacy as a key area of intervention at the nursery level. The MOE and NCERD developed specific instructional and assessment materials to support literacy and numeracy competencies, which included a series of nursery workbooks, readers and assessment booklets. The MOE with technical support from NCERD also developed learning competencies for literacy and numeracy which acted as a guiding philosophy for the change in curricular approaches. In addition, Government has also developed a national scheme for nursery education which provides a set of eight themes which are expected to be covered through each year of nursery. The critical points emerging from the evaluation are as follows:

The current curricular approach which is being followed is a departure from play based and exploratory approach to an approach which focuses majorly on development of cognitive skills only. While cognitive skills are important especially in terms of preparing for primary grades, research studies have shown the importance of non-cognitive skills (which include socio-emotional, aesthetic, creative, etc.) in determining long term outcomes. The current curricular approach thus provides limited scope for the development of the non-cognitive domains of child development. The literacy and numeracy standards and benchmarks are developed for Year 1 and Year 2 and these address the cognitive component of child development. During the observations in schools and from the data available in Statistical Digest, it is seen that while there are three and four-year-old children in Year 1 and Year 2, there would still be children aged four and five and above five years old. During evaluation, age wise enrolment was recorded for the classes and sections visited for full day observation.

*Figure 3 Age Wise Enrolment of Children in Nursery Sections and Classes Visited*
The graph above (figure 4) shows the age wise composition of children in schools visited as part of the fieldwork and it shows that the age compositions in both years are mixed, or in other words, two age groups are there in each nursery year.

In Year 2, some of the children are above five years. The literacy standards therefore would need to follow the age of the children rather than the level (Year 1 or Year 2). The standards would need to address each age in nursery education, which means, children who are age three, age four, age five and ages above five years but below six years. Second, during the process of development of the standards, these standards were not contextualised and validated through field testing to establish that these apply to the Guyanese context. These were developed based on the international best practices. Learning standards would need to be contextually relevant as per the learning levels of children in a particular context.

The implementation of the curriculum is supported by a time table which indicates the distribution of time for different activities. The graph here (figure 5) represents the time distribution as per the time table and percentage of time for each type of activity. A review of the prescribed time tables also reveals free play is scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 08:00hrs to 08:25hrs. It was observed during the classroom observations that children reach nursery school/class between 08:00hrs to 08:30hrs and then the teacher would conduct an assembly session. Hence, in every day practise, there is no sufficient time in the beginning of the day, left for free play activities. It can also be noted that free play is only
scheduled for three days a week which is not sufficient if the programme is aiming to implement a holistic curriculum. The other opportunity for children to play which is after the snack time is for guided play through organised games. “We do not get time for free play and pre-dismissal activities. We also cannot have more time for children to rest, beyond five minutes because we have to finish a number of topics in a term.” All the teachers interviewed remarked these as issues. It also came across from the interview with teachers that there are a “number of activities to be covered in a day”, which does not allow the teacher to move seamlessly from one session to the other. The day wise time table and classroom observation also highlight that the curriculum transaction primarily comprises of subject-based delivery of the content which includes language, social sciences, mathematics, health and family education etc., which is different from that of a domain-based approach.

All the teachers have made the observation that “there are too many topics to be covered in one term.” The diagram to the right shows the number of topics to be covered by the teachers in each term in each year of nursery. One week in each term is meant for evaluation of children. Teachers have stated that “when a child/a few children are absent, they miss a topic and then it is very difficult for us to go back and repeat these topics, as there is hardly any time.” Teachers therefore have to work more towards completing the topics in the nursery national scheme and have less opportunity to spend more time and move into depths of each topic to ensure every child in the class is learning.

The problem is more complex when we look at multi grade classroom and children from other language groups. One of the challenges is that there is no official data around the situation of multi grade classrooms and language groups of children, it has however been recorded during the evaluation process. In the riverine areas in Bartica, the nursery classes are multi grade classrooms which means one teacher has to transact the curriculum to all age groups of children in nursery all together in a single classroom. In Lethem (Region 9), it was observed that there are two distinct language groups (Wapishana and Macushi), where children speak a different mother tongue. While the materials used and the instruction in classroom are currently in English language (which is the official language of Guyana), the MOE has identified this as a challenge and is currently working on developing materials in other language groups as well.

In all five classrooms which were observed during the evaluation, there are cases of children with learning challenges (one or two children in each classroom). However, teachers recognise these children as children with special needs (this is due to the fact that teachers are not trained for early identification). The curriculum transaction is more complex in this case. First, it is observed that teachers do not comprehend how to include these children in the classroom and these children get left out and are on their own with no attention from the teacher. Second, the curriculum is heavy (also time bound) and more academic in nature which does not allow the teacher to make time in the time table and reach out to these children. The nursery national scheme, the workbooks and the assessments (we will discuss the assessments later in the report) are not adequate to address the cases where there are children with challenging behaviours, learning challenges or children with special needs.
In terms of materials being used in nursery education, there is one set of materials which is provided by Government and there is another set of materials which the teacher develops based on guidelines. NCERD has provided nursery tool kits for Year 1 (in 2015) in Nursery schools and under the World Bank supported Early Childhood Education Project, nursery kits have been distributed to nursery schools and classes in hinterland and riverine areas. In 2018, NCERD has proposed the plan to distribute the nursery kit for Year II (the gap has been because of inadequate budget availability). It was observed during the school visits that the nursery kit comprises of colours, puzzle shapes, animal toys, blocks, materials for fine motor development, stationery, etc. However, in riverine areas where there are multi grade classrooms, many of these materials have not been used till now as there is one kit for both the years and teachers in these areas are also not trained teachers and hence face challenges in terms of using these materials. The teachers in nursery schools do have these materials on display but would mostly use the materials that they have developed. Teachers themselves develop materials based on the nursery education toolkit guidelines. In addition to that, it was observed that there are a number of books used in the library corner, but all these books are not age appropriate as most of these have been provided by parents in all schools. There are distinct learning corners in nursery schools and classes (especially in coastal areas) but due to limited hours for completing each day’s schedule, children do not have the opportunity to explore these corners on their own through play based small group activities. The teacher would themselves use materials kept in the corners to conduct activities involving all children. For example, a common practise is, during pre-dismissal, teachers would use music instruments from music corner for children to play while there are group songs. It has also been observed that the books that are used for guided/shared reading and also the story books in the library corner are not always from Guyanese context—that is, they are not based on folklores, traditional stories of Guyana, etc. However, the goals of the GNEP do envision that the programme would promote patriotism among Guyanese children and unite all children and help them learn to accept each other irrespective of all differences. Therefore, contextually relevant reading materials do play an
important role here. One of the enabling factors is the point that teachers know to develop their own materials and they can use these materials to interact with the children and this is a uniform and structured method followed in all the schools and classes observed during the evaluation exercise.

**Implementation as per Guidelines**

*To what extent has the GNEP been implemented according to more than 90 percent of the guidelines?*

The handbook for the GNEP which was developed during programme inception provides the programme structure. There is no updated official operational document which provides programme guidelines. Therefore, keeping in view the different components of the GNEP, i.e. curriculum, pedagogy, classroom quality, teacher quality, programme implementation, parent and community participation, transition and monitoring and evaluation, the team has evaluated the programme based on the questions provided in the analytical framework across all the evaluation criteria. The findings therefore are presented across all the criteria and the conclusions drawn are given at the end.

**Relevance**

The section on relevance attempts to answer the following question from the analytical framework:

1. To what extent does the nursery education programme align to the SDGs?

**Key Findings:**

- The GNEP acts as the prominent programme in the early childhood sub-sector in Guyana, to set targets for the achievement of the sustainable development goals under early childhood education. While the enrolment under the GNEP has increased over the time period, a sizeable number of children are still not enrolled in the nursery programme. The country does not have an estimate of out of preschool children.

- However, the GNEP is not a universal programme currently as it is non-compulsory and does not cover all children between three to six years in the country.

The evaluation explored the relevance of the programme in terms of its broader international, regional and national context and development goals such as Sustainable Development Goals and national development plans and priorities. Before we move into the findings from the data collected during evaluation, it is important provide the analysis of the census data which would provide a context to the findings.
The graph above (figure 8) is based on Census, 2012 and highlights the population of young children in the three to six year old age bracket. The age group covered by the GNEP is three years to below six years and we have used this graph to provide an estimate of the percentage of children in each of the age groups. We see the percentage of the child population is marginally higher at four years and then five years.

This graph (figure 9) provides the population distribution of children across all Regions, by age, i.e. population at ages three, four, five and six years. This graph provides a disaggregated scenario of the child population in each of the age groups in each Region. Region 4 has the highest child population across all the Regions and in all Regions, child population in the age group of four years is highest.
The graph above (figure 10) represents the distribution of the population of young children by gender across all the Regions. We see from the graph that except for Region 7, the number of boys is marginally higher than number of girls in each Region.

A sizeable proportion of approximately 50 percent of the child population is in the age group of four to five years which is also the age for early childhood education. The maximum proportion of children are in Region 4 followed by Region 3 and Region 6. There is a marginal difference between gender distributions. However, in all the Regions except Region 7 and Region 8, male child population is higher than female child population.

In terms of access, the data shows a maximum of 55 percent enrolment for boys and 52 percent for girls. The following graphs provide the Region wise scenario.

The graph above (figure 11) represents percentage distribution of children by gender in each of the Regions. As per the graph, percentage of population of boys is marginally lower than the population
of girls in Regions 9, 10 and 1 and in the remaining Regions, percentage of population of boys is higher than girls.

The MICS, 2014 results highlight 61 percent of children aged 36-59 months are attending an organised early childhood education programme in the country. This reflects an improvement of 12 percent from 2006. This considerable improvement may be in part due to the creation of nursery classrooms within primary schools in interior regions, greater access to early childhood education services in Regions 5 and 6 through the Day Care and play groups programme and the introduction of these services in the Maternal and Child Health programme. Guyana is divided into 10 Administrative Regions but 11 Education districts, each corresponding to the 10 Administrative Regions and the Capital, Georgetown, because of its size, is given the status of the 11th Education district and the percentage of children between three to five years of age who are attending ECE programmes across these administrative regions is represented in the graph as below:

This diagram (figure 12) provides the percentage of children enrolled in any early childhood education programme in each of the Regions. The graph provides the country wise percentage of children attending any ECE in the country, which is 61 percent. The graph also provides, Region wise participation of children aged 3 – 6 and we are comparing participation in each Region to the country level participation rate.

There are significant variations of participation of children across the Regions. While Regions, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 (the coastal regions) have more than 60 percent children (in each Region) attending ECE, the access in remaining rugged hinterland Regions is significantly lower, as low as 18.1 percent in Region 1. There are three emerging scenarios here, Regions which are significantly low in terms of children’s participation like Region 1 and Region 2 (part riverine), then there are Regions which are

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slightly below 60 percent like Regions 7, 8 and Region 9 (hinterland where the indigenous peoples live) and finally the remaining Regions (urban and coastal rural) which are above 60 percent.

The analysis of the GNEP data shows that the lowest enrolment (26 percent for girls and 27 percent for boys) is in Region 4, where the child population is the highest. One of the possible factors behind this is that the GNEP is not compulsory and there are diverse ECE private providers. Hence it could be concluded that a proportion of children are participating in the other ECE programmes or are out of pre-school. However, it is important to take a closer look at the GNEP data to understand the trends over the years.

The graph above (figure 13) shows the total enrolment vis-à-vis the enrolment of boys and girls over the years. The trend lines show the change in enrolment (both total as well as for each gender) over the years. The trend line captures the change by representing increase or decrease. The graph shows a slight decline in enrolment from 2007-08 to 2009-10 and increase in enrolment from 2009-10 to 2011-12.

The same trend can be observed when we look at the disaggregated scenario, i.e. enrolment of boys and girls under the GNEP as a percentage of the population. In addition to children accessing other ECE facilities or children out of pre-school, one reason was geographical location which was a challenge for families to access nursery education. This issue was significant for communities in the riverine areas, especially because the cost of commute is high for children who are in riverine communities. “We spend a big sum of money on the oil used to run boats which are used for children’s transportation” was a remark which most of the teachers in riverine schools made.
We now take a closer look at the Region wise enrolment scenario, through the following diagrams (figure 14):
The graph shows the total enrolment of children who are under four years of age under the GNEP across all the Regions over years. We see in the graph that apart from Regions 1, 7 and 8, there is a declining trend in enrolment of children under the GNEP.
The graph shows the total enrolment of children who are of four years of age under the GNEP across all the Regions over the years. We see in the graph that apart from Region 9 and Georgetown, there is a marginal decrease in enrolment of children under GNEP, while the other Regions show increase in enrolment of children aged four years in the programme, across the 4 time periods.
The graph shows the total enrolment of children who are of five years of age under GNEP across all the Regions over the years. This graph shows enrolment of five-year-old children. We see a decline in enrolment in Regions 1, 5, 6, 10 and in the other Regions we see the increase in enrolment is marginal.
The graph shows the total enrolment of children who are of five years of age under the GNEP across all the Regions over the years. It is understood that children aged six years would join primary education. We observe from the graph, in Region 1 and 9 the number of six-year-olds enrolled in the GNEP has increased, while there has been a decrease in enrolment in other Regions.
The data captured here for children below four years old does not specify the exact range. The data also captures the number of children at four years, five years and six years. For the purpose of the evaluation, it is assumed that the children between the age ranges of four to five and five to six years have been accommodated. The data shows the enrolment of six-year-old children although children are supposed to finish their nursery education by five years. In all nursery schools and classes, children would leave nursery year 2 at five years six months and then they enter Grade One. It is understood from the interviews held that the official age of entry to Grade one is six years. The analysis further shows that the maximum enrolment is in the age of four and five years. The maximum enrolments are in Region 4, Region 6 and Georgetown. In terms of growth of the number of nursery schools and nursery classes over years, we see an increase in nursery classes by 24 percent as compared to discrete nursery schools which show a marginal decline over years. One of the reasons behind this is, access to nursery education in riverine and hinterland areas is better through nursery classes attached to primary school rather than discrete nursery schools. The diagram below represents this.

Figure 17 Number of Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes over Years (Statistical Digest, Govt. of Guyana)

![Graph showing growth of nursery schools and classes over years](image)

The graph above showcases the trend of growth of nursery schools and nursery classes over the years across Guyana. The trends show a marginal decrease in the number of nursery schools and a marginal increase in nursery classes.

The analysis of enrolment data and data on distribution of nursery schools and classes over the years provides insight on low coverage of nursery schools and classes and the high enrolment. Although credible data is not available, the respondents mentioned about multi-grade classrooms, where there was one class not only for both nursery years but also primary grades. The four schools visited in the riverine areas as part of the evaluation also confirms these claims, as three schools out of these had multi-grade classroom. This is one of the reasons why enrolment is high though number of schools/classes is low.
The graph above represents three variables which are enrolment (decreasing trend), number of nursery schools and number of nursery classes. We have used a third axis to represent the number of nursery schools (decreasing trend) and nursery classes (increasing trend) and the number of nursery schools and classes have been represented by a line graph. This method has been adopted because the enrolment numbers are significantly high compared to the number of schools and if all variables are plotted using a single type of chart, the chart representing the number of schools and classes would not be visible.

The following figure provides a disaggregated picture of the situation across the Regions. The evaluation has used the data from 2011-12.

The graph shows enrolment, number of nursery schools and number of nursery classes over the years across each of the Regions. Similar to the graph above we have used three axes to represent the three variables for better visibility. The data used is 2011-12 data which is the latest data available and this shows higher number of nursery classes in riverine Regions of the country,
compared to other Regions. The enrolment is highest in Region 4, followed by Georgetown and Region 6.

The diagram above shows the scenario where in certain Regions the number of nursery schools and classes put together are significantly low in comparison with the number of children enrolled. The indicator for SDG goal 4.2 states “Participation rate in organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex”. The GNEP as a programme and a tool to achieve this target is well set in context as it is supported by Education Sector Development Plans which are developed every four years and which lays out the strategies the programme should take in the nursery sub sector. The programme also has 40 years of experience in implementation and therefore the implementation mechanisms and structures (discussed later) are well developed and in place.

However, the challenges in this regard are as follows:

- There is a need for a law or legislation which would make nursery education compulsory thus ensuring that the Government has the responsibility of ensuring every child attends nursery school before they move to Grade One.
- A set of nursery education quality standards which would ensure good quality nursery education is transacted through nurseries
- Need for increase in coverage in the education districts, especially where the coverage is as low as 25 percent. Currently 25-55 percent of children (out of a total child population in Regions) are enrolled in the GNEP across the Regions.
- Increase in coverage needs to ensure optimum pupil to teacher ratio for each class and at the same time, the coverage should be equitable for all the Regions, specifically for Regions where currently it is low and for Regions where there are challenging geographical contexts in terms of access.

Efficiency

The efficiency criteria of the evaluation would aim to respond to the following questions:

1. Is the Nursery education delivered in a culturally appropriate manner?
2. How cost effective is the current approach to manage and implement the nursery education programme?
3. Have the nursery education standards and guidelines been implemented in a standardised way? If so, to what extent?
4. What are the enabling factors for and/or hindrances to the effective implementation of the GNEP?
5. How has the programme design addressed the issue of community support?
Key Findings:

- The grant funding from the World Bank has enabled ‘in-service’ training of 526 teachers. Prior to this ‘in-service teacher training’ was not in the programme design, which this grant has enabled and at the same time this financing has enabled Government to build capacities of riverine and hinterland teachers on literacy and numeracy. The training enabled teachers in understanding how to use learning materials more interactively in a multi grade classroom situation.

- The investment on care giver education builds on the MOE’s vision of primary caregiver education as a critical area of intervention which needs strengthening in terms of institutional capacity-building, development of training materials and delivery through multiple channels that reach parents and caregivers wherever they are.

- The nursery field officers who are responsible for on-site programme monitoring receive a structured training when they join as field officers however there is no provision for follow up trainings for capacity building and to update their skills with time.

- Child to trained teacher ratio is significantly high especially in hinterland and riverine regions where multi grade classrooms are in place. The non-academic norms do not specify the ratio for children to trained teacher. This impacts the pedagogical processes and quality of interactions in the classroom, as untrained teachers are not equipped with appropriate skills to teach young children.

- Teachers face challenges in including children from other language groups (other than English) as the medium of instruction is in English and the teaching and learning materials used are currently in English. The curriculum being academic, is delivered through pedagogical processes which are more suitable for formal education and are not suitable for children with learning challenges or special needs.

Programme Costs

*How cost effective is the current approach to manage and implement the nursery education programme? How can the cost/benefit in the Nursery education implementation be maximised?*

Noble Laureate James Heckman’s latest research demonstrates that high-quality birth-to-five programmes for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13 percent per year return on investment—a rate substantially higher than the 7-10 percent return previously established for pre-school programs serving three to four-year-olds. Significant gains are realised through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviours, and employment⁹.

The nursery education programme is primarily funded by the annual budget of the Government of Guyana. Apart from this, development partner organisations like World Bank (through Global Partnership for Education) and UNICEF have been supporting the different components of the programme. The World Bank through Global Partnership for Education has committed to a grant of

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US$1.7 million towards supporting (a) capacity building of nursery and Grade One teachers (b) improving supply of teaching and learning materials (c) primary care giver education and (d) project implementation support, administration and monitoring and evaluation, in the riverine and hinterland regions. The World Bank support has started from 2015 onwards. UNICEF’s support to the GNEP has been through technical assistance support to the nursery education programme since 2016. However, the total quantum of financing in the nursery education programme is not available. Further, the funding from the World Bank is specific to certain project development objectives. The bulk of the funding of the programme is from the central annual budget, as per the budget documents of the Ministry of Finance. The Government budget is focused on and is adequate to meet the provision of physical infrastructural inputs for improving access, increasing enrolment but with limited focus on interventions in quality improvement of the programme and thus influencing learning. The World Bank grant aims to fill this gap through investing in quality related interventions which includes US$650,000 investment on capacity building of nursery and Grade One teachers, US$400,000 investment on provision of teaching and learning materials and US$350,000 investment on primary care giver education. We would discuss here that two of the investments have had a positive impact in the efficiency of the programme. Based on key informant interviews we analyse how these investments have impacted the knowledge, attitudes and practices of nursery teachers and caregivers of young children.

1. The grant funding from the World Bank has enabled ‘in-service’ training of 526 teachers. This has positively impacted the efficiency of the programme because, prior to this ‘in-service teacher training’ was not in programme design, which this grant has enabled and at the same time this financing has enabled Government to build capacities of riverine and hinterland teachers on literacy and numeracy. The teachers who were interviewed from riverine and hinterland areas have either completed primary level education or secondary education expressed that they have undergone a specific focused training on numeracy and literacy in several years and this training helped them in understanding how to use learning materials more interactively in a multi grade classroom situation. Most of the teachers in riverine areas handle multi grade classrooms and this training has been the first of its kind for them.

2. The investment on care giver education (US$350,000) builds on the MOE’s vision of primary caregiver education as a critical area of intervention which needs strengthening in terms of institutional capacity-building, development of training materials and delivery through multiple channels that reach parents and caregivers wherever they are. The ‘parent circle’ initiative has enabled a diverse group of caregivers to become educators of their own children. By educating caregivers on simple skills, all care givers including caregivers who are not literate have been encouraged to participate in their children’s education, by using daily life chores and activities, as opportunities to teach simple concepts to their children. During the focus group discussion, it was found that caregivers are confident of what they have learnt from the parent circles and they were able to effectively report to the group of how they use their learning to educate their children. The evaluation also found that the ‘village facilitators’ who lead these parent circles have emerged as ‘change agents’ in villages and have successfully mobilised caregivers from different communities.
In context of the annual government budget allocated towards the GNEP, we would look at the capital and current expenditures in nursery education and the breakdown of the current expenditures for the most recent year. The following figure provides the trend of capital and current expenditures in nursery education in Guyana over the last few years.

The graph above shows the trend of capital and current expenditures in nursery education over the last four budget cycles. The graph shows an increase in the current expenditure over four years and a marginal decrease in the capital expenditure in nursery education. Capital expenditure which comprises of building new infrastructure, maintenance etc. need not be incurred every year for equal amounts or need not show an increase. The components of the current expenditure reflect the services being budgeted for and the expenditure incurred on these services.

In context of this cost scenario, the Ministry of Education has taken the following innovations to maximise benefits for young children, especially to increase enrolment and to keep children in nursery. These programme facilities create an enabling environment for the success of the programme:

The Health Unit within the MOE implements a School feeding programme based on the daily distribution of juice and biscuits to children in Nursery and Primary schools (Grades One and Two). All the Regions receive the biscuit and juice programme. The juices and biscuits are distributed to children during lunch time after children complete their lunch. During the classroom observations, it was observed that children do not prefer to eat the biscuits as they bring their own lunch. All teachers reported that parents also prefer their children not to take the biscuits. There has been evidence from other countries which state that the food offered in school need to be palatable and contextually appropriate for children to eat and this has been an important factor behind the success of any meal/snack programme. The juice that is distributed to children is packaged juice, which all children carry home as they already bring either juice or something else to drink with their
lunch. In the hinterland and in Region 9, Government has started the hot meal programme (this is an extension of the hot meal programme for Grade One) in addition to the biscuit and juice programme. These nurseries where the hot meal programme is running currently, have their kitchens where the food is cooked. During the observations, it was recorded that the food being cooked in these kitchens are cooked in a hygienic manner and is nutritious. It was observed that children prefer the hot cooked meal. It is understood based on the interviews with head teachers that nurseries have convergence with the fire department which supplies the fuel for cooking the meal. In 2016, the Government introduced a pilot programme in Nursery and Grades One and Two of Primary schools in three coast communities consisting of a daily Breakfast (sandwich and milk-flavoured drink) nutritionally balanced. However, this is still in a pilot stage and the Ministry of Education is yet to take a final decision on continuation of the programme.

In July 2016, the MOE initiated free public transportation for children in nurseries to address the challenges children face in accessing the nursery schools and classes. The transportation is provided in the form of buses, bicycles and boats, to reduce the transportation cost. However, this intervention is not targeted to all Regions and is limited in its outreach to only select areas where there is difficulty of transportation.

The budget, as understood through the budget documents of the Ministry of Finance, is not still focused on outcomes. Currently, the public expenditure is more focused towards providing physical inputs (including infrastructure) for improving access, increasing enrolment but with limited focus on interventions in quality improvement of the programme and thus influencing learning. There is an opportunity here to identify clear outcomes (in terms of programme quality and learning) of the programme and to plan public expenditure focused on these outcomes. The Guyana Early Childhood Education Project supported by Global Partnership of Education brings in a focus on the expenditure education quality through an approach to develop teacher capacities, learning outcomes of children and empowering and educating primary care givers of children on parenting.

Implementation Mechanism

*Have the nursery education standards and guidelines been implemented in a standardised way? If so, to what extent?*

*What are the enabling factors for and/or hindrances to the effective implementation of the GNEP?*

The nursery programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Education at the central level and by the Regional Education Departments in the Regions. The following organogram presents the implementation structure for the nursery programme.

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10 UNICEF Guyana; (September 2017); Child Focused Public Expenditure Assessment (Draft Report); UNICEF Guyana

As provided in the organogram above, the nursery education is headed by the Chief Education Officer and Assistant Chief Education Officer at the central level. In the Regions, the Regional Education Development Officer (REDO) is responsible for monitoring and management of nursery schools and classes. The REDO is responsible for the Nursery Field Officers (NFO). As such, the NFOs report to the Regional Education Officer and are responsible for the regular monitoring of nursery schools and classes.

The following are the findings regarding implementation of the nursery programme:

The REDO who is responsible for implementation and monitoring of the nursery programme is also responsible for management and monitoring of primary and secondary education. The number of REDOs in each province varies and each REDO is responsible for a set of sub-districts within a province. The REDOs undergo a training programme before they take charge as education officers and this training programme is aimed at building their capacities to work on implementation of education programmes in provinces. One of the challenges the REDOs expressed is that they do not receive technical training in the nursery education sub-sector which is a challenge for them during monitoring visits. “We do not have the technical know-how of nursery education as the training does not involve that” was remarked by REDOs. This creates a challenging scenario because they are not empowered to provide technical support to teachers and principals during their visits.

The NFOs support the REDOs in monitoring of the nursery programme. The NFOs are dedicated field level functionaries responsible for programme monitoring and technical support. One of the advantageous aspects of the programme is that the NFOs are resource persons who have qualification in early childhood education from the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPC) or University of Guyana (UG). The NFOs would normally be principals of existing nursery schools who execute a dual role, that of monitoring the nursery programme and also providing leadership to the nursery school where she/he is the principal. In addition to that, to become an NFO, one has to go through an 18-month programme which certifies the person to work in the cadre of NFO.
training provides capacity building opportunities, enabling the resource persons to use monitoring formats, conduct school visits and provide technical support to nursery teachers and principals. While resource persons are enrolled in the course, they also accompany the REDOs during their visits to the nursery schools and classes. As remarked by the Ministry of Education, the training programme for the NFOs was introduced by the Ministry of Education with technical support from UNICEF and the focus of the training programme has been on curriculum implementation and has been using the monitoring format during the monitoring visits. However NFOs were not able to recall the topics they were trained on during the 18 months training programme, they remarked “We received training on numeracy, literacy and on using the classroom observation format.” The probe found that the NFOs do not receive any follow up trainings or refresher courses of the programme they have done. However, the office of the Assistant Chief Education Officer, Nursery in Georgetown holds periodic meetings with NFOs, but these meetings are more aimed at stock taking.

The evaluation also found (based on the interviews with the Regional department of education) that parental awareness and enrolment has been low in terms of nursery education in the hinterland areas. The Regional office expressed that “the challenge is because nursery education is not compulsory and parents have the option of sending the children directly to Grade One”. Therefore, many children join schools directly in Grade One. The enrolment pattern therefore is lean in nursery and then high enrolment in Grade One and then children drop out by the secondary level. While there is no official data to support this, this point has come up as an observation by the programme implementers based on their experience of working over years. The ‘parent circle’ intervention under the Guyana Early Childhood Education Project is seen and believed as a new opportunity in the programme structure to educate and raise awareness levels of parents as first educators of children.

It was found that the monitoring and evaluation structure of the nursery programme is complex. The following are the different monitoring mechanisms under GNEP:

a. Monitoring and technical support by NFO
b. Monitoring by REDO
c. Monitoring by Monitoring, Evaluation, Research Development Unit (MERD)
d. Monitoring by Planning Department, Government of Guyana

The multiple stakeholders involved in the monitoring process is the first level of complexity of the monitoring and evaluation structure. The following issues have been identified with the monitoring and evaluation system in place for the GNEP:
The NFO is responsible for regular monitoring of the nursery schools and classes. This involves conducting school visits to carry out observation of select sessions, providing inputs to teachers to improve teaching practices if that is required and providing recommendations to the principal which they would follow up in their next visit. They are required to fill a template based on their observation which is submitted to the office of the Assistant Chief Education Officer with responsibility for Nursery Education (ACEO- N), through the Regional Department of Education. The first issue here is the number of NFOs in each province vary and there is a fixed norm as to what should be the ratio of the number of nurseries to a NFO. There is also no official data to understand if the nurseries within a Region are well divided under each NFO to ensure the NFO is able to cover these set of nurseries every month through the monitoring visits.

Apart from the monitoring checklist that NFOs have to complete and submit to the ACEO, Nursery, the NFOs are also responsible to conduct school visits for monitoring the Guyana Early Childhood Project intervention. The NFO uses a different checklist to conduct the monitoring visits pertaining to the project. The school visits by the NFOs largely vary and this is different in different Regions and are governed by factors like geographical challenges, too many or few nurseries under each NFO, and other such factors.

The figure above provides some pages from the two checklists used by the NFO. Both checklists aim to capture classroom interactions, management, transactions, organisation and physical environment. The MOE checklist has a scale of two where the NFO has to tick yes or no against the indicators and the Project checklist has a scale of four. Both tools require the NFOs to provide remarks against the option they tick and also final remarks at the end of the tool. As part of the evaluation, some of the completed forms were reviewed and it was observed that NFOs do not generally fill the remarks column and the observation is limited to ticking the options. One of the reasons behind this is that they do not have clear guidelines on what is expected to be recorded in the remarks column. The remarks column would need to record the reasons why the NFO is selecting a certain option. If this is not recorded, there is no evidence to support a certain option. The second finding is regarding the recording of teacher interactions or classroom transactions. For example, in the shared reading section in the MOE checklist, one indicator for Mathematics is “There is evidence that small groups are catered for” or under Language Experience, a few indicators are “Children are exposed to an experience”, “Teacher uses a variety of questioning techniques” or under pre-dismissal indicators are “There is evidence of storytelling”, “There is evidence of singing” and “There is evidence of rhyming”. Most of the forms which have been reviewed, say all these indicators have been observed and yes has been ticked but there is no remark. First, many of these indicators convey a broader sense and are not specific which leaves scope for interpretation by the NFOs. Some of the indicators like “Children are exposed to an experience” need more definition to ensure what exactly is the point of
measurement here. Second, these interactions may be happening once or twice or a larger number of times during the programme. The current format doesn’t capture this frequency and also does not highlight the quality of these interactions. During classroom observations and teacher interviews undertaken as part of the evaluation, it was observed that teachers do not get time for pre-dismissal, so even if they are conducting these activities like rhyming, singing or storytelling, the quality of transactions is a challenge because of limited time and an academic curricular approach. So, these activities are happening more as part of routine activities teachers have to complete. The current format is not capturing these nuances. These issues are similar even with the other monitoring checklist which is being used under the Guyana Early Childhood Education Project. The current checklist does not provide a space for recording specific recommendations that the NFO must provide based on her/his findings and space for the NFO and the head teacher and other teachers to collaboratively develop an action plan to implement the recommendations.

I. The REDOs as part of their monitoring would capture the data on physical infrastructure and timely supply of materials in schools. This data is submitted to the Regional Officer. REDOs do not capture any data on content and education quality.

II. MERD conducts monitoring visits one visit per Region and a total of 11 visits in a year. MERD’s mandate is not just nursery education but covers primary and secondary education as well. As per the MOE’s understanding MERD would visit one nursery school per month and 12 nurseries in 12 months. The MERD check list is comprehensive covering both physical infrastructure and education quality indicators. However, the data is captured similarly as in case of the NFOs, that is, by using the options of yes, no and not applicable against each indicator.

III. The Nursery Statistical and Monitoring Section of the Planning Department of Government of Guyana monitors and tracks the progress of the nursery sub sector plan (based on the Education Sector Plan). The monitoring is done in two ways. First by capturing data on different indicators for nursery education both public and private (not all private schools are covered) under Statistical Digest. The indicators covered for the GNEP are:
   a. Enrolment by Region, age, gender, level (Year 1 or Year 2)
   b. Number of school by grades
   c. Attendance
   d. Teacher qualifications and training
   e. Children who moved to another nursery or Grade One

Availability of data for nursery education is a major challenge. Currently in the Statistical Digest, data is available for 2007-08 (not all the indicators as mentioned above), 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2011-12. The data inconsistency, discontinuity (2010-11 data not available) and unavailability of data beyond 2011-12 are major challenges for carrying out any analysis. The other way the section monitors the nursery plan is by conducting monthly visits mostly in challenging Regions which would be Region 8, Region 7, etc. Based on the visit a monitoring report is prepared and shared with the MOE. Once again, these reports are not publicly available on the website. The report captures data both on physical and financial progress of the programme and there provides a comprehensive picture. For the purpose of the evaluation one monitoring report for 2017 was provided by the Planning Department and the same was reviewed. It was found that the report is capturing the planned activities for monitoring and the accomplishments set for a particular quarter. For example, the planned activity was “to monitor and supervise regions frequently with emphasis on Regions 2 and 8 to improve students’ Nursery and Literacy skills.”; The data captured says improvement in
these skills have been seen in two schools observed in the Regions. However, the report does not provide the verification method used to ascertain the findings and there is no further explanation of the finding like what the improvement is and how it has been measured. Another activity was to monitor the use of the standardised schemes in schools. The accomplishment recorded is that schemes are present in all nursery schools and are being utilised correctly. It is unclear here, what is meant by correct utilisation and how this was assessed. The monitoring report also tracks release of funds and materials to nursery schools and other administrative targets. For each quarter, the focus is on a different set of schools in different Regions. Currently there is no information management system being used to capture real time data on each child from each nursery. The official data is also not available for sub-regions/sub-districts.

There is an opportunity for integrating the different monitoring mechanisms being used for the nursery education sub-sector. There are multiple agencies involved in data collection for monitoring purposes and these data are similar for example data on the education quality and physical inputs. It is essential that for setting up a comprehensive and integrated monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the indicators on which data is being collected are linked with the goals of the nursery programme. Currently there is no established linkage between the goals which are holistic in nature with the indicators on which the data is being collected by different agencies using different formats.

The evaluation also found that while Government is prioritising collection of monitoring data from the nursery programme, there is no clear mechanism in place to understand how that data is informing the different stakeholders for improving children outcomes. There is no mechanism for data entry and analysis of the monitoring that is being collected especially by the NFOs on the checklist they use to submit data to the MOE. Similarly, the data collected by the REDO remains at Regional level and is not analysed any further. In terms of preparation of the report, the Planning Department and the Guyana Early Childhood Education Project are involved in preparing reports based on the data being collected. However, it remains unclear as to how these reports are influencing policy making at the level of the MOE, at the level of implementation being managed by the REDOs and teaching and learning practices in the classroom (in absence of a clear mechanism to use the findings of these reports).

The following points summarise the key enabling mechanisms and the key challenges in programme implementation:

**Key Enabling Mechanisms of GNEP**

- A structured implementation mechanism, supported adequately by Government budget, which involves the central level MOE office which is responsible for policy making and decisions supported by the regional education office which manages and monitors implementation and finally the nursery field officers who support the monitoring, on-site technical support and implementation at the level of service delivery.
- With a vision to increase enrolment of children under the GNEP, Government has also introduced a social assistance programme such as the provision of snacks and hot meals (hot meals are being provided in addition to snacks this is currently being implemented only in hinterland areas) in nursery schools and classrooms and providing bus, boats and bicycles in areas where access is a difficulty. Although there is no evidence of its immediate impact, the interview with Regional Education and Development Officers highlight that ‘these initiatives
are encouraging more parents to send their children to nurseries especially in riverine and hinterland areas.

- Adequate number of teachers in nursery schools and classrooms and the data analysis shows in all nursery classes and schools. All nursery classrooms

**Key challenges**

- The nursery field officers undergo a one-time 18-month induction training programme before they start working. However, these field officers do not receive any follow up/refresher trainings for capacity building and to update their skills with time. This is crucial for their capacity building as their main role is to provide onsite technical support to teachers.
- The GNEP also follows a complex monitoring and enforcement system. Currently there are four stakeholders (Nursery Field Officer, Regional Education Officer, Planning Department and Monitoring, Evaluation, Research Development Unit) involved in monitoring the programme and five monitoring tools (includes the tool used specifically for Guyana Early Childhood Education Project) are being used to capture data on similar indicators. However, there are currently no mechanisms for analysis of the data being reported. There are multiple indicators on which data is being collected at different levels but these are not clearly connected with programme goals.
- There are few trained teachers available and therefore child-to-trained-teacher ratio is high especially in hinterland and riverine regions, where multi grade classrooms are in place. The lack of nursery teacher training adversely affects the pedagogical processes and teacher transactions in classroom and especially is more complex in multi grade classrooms

**Programme Quality**

*Is the Nursery education delivered in a culturally appropriate manner?*

The evaluation responds to this question by evaluating the quality of nursery programme by analysing the quality of physical inputs being provided, the classroom interactions and pedagogical practices. Research has shown globally that the latter has a greater impact on the learning outcomes of children. As part of the evaluation we aim to understand the different components of programme quality. The following are the evaluation findings on programme quality:
**Infrastructure:** Government took up the initiative of building nursery school buildings according to a uniform design which was based on the child-friendly school concept and this was supported by UNICEF. So, the outcome of the initiative has been custom-built nursery schools across the country which consider the child-friendly school principles. The infrastructural design is however for nursery schools and does not apply to nursery classes attached to primary schools. The classrooms in nursery classes comprise of adequate spaces, separate child-friendly toilets for boys and girls with water supply. Government has also outlined a ratio of children to toilet facilities in nursery schools. The non-academic education norms do not specify any norm for handwashing. It was found during the observation that nursery schools use the taps provided for handwashing facilities. The non-academic norms mention about one tap for every child but for drinking water purposes. Children carry from their home their own drinking water. The diagram here shows the handwashing facilities in nursery schools. During the observation, it was observed that the outdoor play infrastructure in four nursery schools which were visited were not in a condition which could be used by children and in other schools although the play equipment was in good condition, yet were not used because as per the time table and curriculum, the outdoor play is a guided play and teachers make children play pre-decided games. So, these equipment are normally not used as part of these games. It has also been observed that most of the times due to hot weather outside (during the snack time) children play in the sun as there are no shaded outdoor play areas and some children refrain from participating to avoid the hot weather. Currently, in nursery schools there is a provision for a kitchenette which is not fully operational but are now being made operational to cook hot meals for the Government’s hot cooked meal programme. It was observed that in Region 1 the hot cooked meal programme is operational and the nursery school was using the kitchen facility to prepare meals.

**Teacher’s Disposition:** The classroom observation revealed that teachers are completely aware of the national scheme, the materials, workbooks and the time table. All teachers follow the time table always and they do not deviate from what is prescribed in the time table. It was observed that teachers find it difficult and challenging to include children with special needs and challenging behaviours. Teachers were able to identify children who have learning challenges, children who have a different mother tongue and find it challenging to participate and similar instances. Teachers are unable to include these children and most of the time during the class hours these children...
just sit by themselves without constant attention. In every class one to two children were identified who had learning challenges. The other observation during the classroom observation was about teachers’ positions and the positioning of the board in the classroom. According age appropriate pedagogical practices of child development, the educator and all the materials should be placed at the eye level of the child. It was observed in all the nursery schools and nursery classes that teachers prefer to stand and teach during the entire programme hours and sometimes children sit on mats, which makes their eye level even lower. In cases where children are sitting on mats and the teacher is using the board, the situation is more complex for the children to follow what the teacher is writing on the board. One of the issues which have also been discussed earlier, the teachers expressed difficulty in disposing their responsibilities because the time table they have to follow is tight and it does not allow them to spend more time on activities, if they would want to.

**Classroom Organisation:** In nursery schools where there is one classroom, the children of Year 1 and Year 2 sit in the same classroom and there are wooden small partitions just to differentiate spaces. This is mostly the case in C (enrolment is 60-149 children) or D category (enrolment is 59 children or below) schools. In some of the schools, there are more than one section in a year and all the sections of Year 1 and Year 2 share one classroom. While the physical space is sufficient considering the number of children per class, this also leads to noise in classrooms and teachers and children have to be loud all the time to interact and hear each other.

Each class has (a) shop corner; (b) dress up corner; (c) concept corner; (d) manipulative corner; (e) reading corner; (f) science corner; (g) patriotic corner; and (h) maths corner. All nursery schools and nursery classes (except for the Quarry primary school in Lethem) had all the materials and corners well organised. It was observed that teachers do not use these corners in learning activities in the daily lesson plans, as they have a prescribed time table to follow and there are no small group activities where children are provided the opportunity to freely choose and explore these corners on their own or with teacher’s guidance.

Each class has materials which teachers have prepared as well as kits provided by NCERD and GECEP project (in hinterland and riverine areas) and all the materials are organised. Given the academic curricular approach, which focuses mostly on cognitive development involving literacy and numeracy, teachers use only limited type of materials in pedagogical practices in classrooms and these materials are mostly academic materials (Material used by the children for formal reading, writing and numeracy like textbooks, readers, notebooks, pencils etc.). In order to respond to this challenge, the GECEP project is building teacher capacities to ensure teachers use multiple and diverse materials and determine how these diverse materials could be used in all activities to promote effective pedagogical practices. The teachers also develop daily lesson plans and in nursery schools these plans are displayed on the wall. The daily lesson plans are based on the national scheme and follow the same format as prescribed. Teachers work on the lesson plans jointly and it was observed in both years across and all sections, the lesson plans are the same, which would mean the same activity can be observed happening in each class and section. Considering each child is different and children’s learning contexts and backgrounds are different, more customised and contextually appropriate lesson plans need to be developed and used. An important input to developing the lesson plan is to be able to effectively use the outcomes of regular assessment to build upon customised lesson plans. While the national scheme provides a weekly prescriptive guideline for teachers to work, it is crucial to build
teacher capacities and perspectives in a manner that they are more innovative and creative in using the assessment outcomes to work on the daily lesson plans.

**Teacher to child ratio:** The non-academic norms propose that there should be maximum 20 children per teacher. There is now no norm regarding the number of children per trained teacher. The analysis below shows the two scenarios. Figure 26 shows a scenario of number of pupils per teacher (includes trained and untrained). The table 2 shows the scenario of number of pupil per trained teacher (this excludes teacher who does not have pre-service qualifications).

*Figure 25 Regional Distribution of Number of Pupils Per Teacher Over Years*

The graph above (figure 26) shows the number of children per teacher in each Region over the years. For example, in Region 1, for 2011-12, there are 17 children to one teacher. As per the non-academic standards the norm is 20 children to one teacher. In all the Regions across all years, the ratio is below 1:20.

*Table 1 Number of Children Per Trained Teacher (Statistical Digest, Ministry of Education)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>2007-08 Number of Pupils Per Trained Teacher</th>
<th>2008-09 Number of Pupils Per Trained Teacher</th>
<th>2009-10 Number of Pupils Per Trained Teacher</th>
<th>2011-12 Number of Pupils Per Trained Teacher</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Region 3</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Region 6</td>
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<td>Region 10</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The table 2 above shows the Regional distribution of child to trained teacher ratio over the years. There is a significant variation in the number of children per trained teacher. For Regions 1, 8 and 9 the number of children per teacher are significantly high. Even in other regions except Georgetown, the numbers are beyond the proposed norm. The reason for this trend is unavailability of trained teachers especially in hinterland and riverine areas. This impacts the quality of the pedagogical process and curriculum transaction in the classroom and the scenario is more complex in multi-grade settings.

**Pedagogical Processes:** During the evaluation, the research team conducted classroom observations of nursery classes and based on the observation data collected from five nursery schools, the following findings are presented below. The findings capture four critical factors during the entire duration of the nursery programme and these four factors are (a) level of participation of children in the different activities; (b) the method of organising children in and outside classroom; (c) nature of materials used during the programme; and (d) the different types of learning opportunities children got during the programme duration.

The diagram above (figure 27) shows the level of participation of children in the programme hours. The level of involvement of children is affected if one activity goes too long, beyond 10 minutes and also for activities where a based method is followed where children have to repeat what the teacher is saying. In some of the academic activities which involves reading, writing, etc., observations revealed that few children are involved because children with learning challenges and children with special needs are not able to cope up and they are not able to participate. The activities are organised mostly involving all children which also impacts involvement of children for such activities. In many of the activities children sit in groups but they are engaged together in the same activity and learn the same competency. Therefore, although they are sitting in small groups, the organisation of the activities is such that it involves all children. The graph here (figure 28) shows the frequency of the organisation of the activities.
The usage of academic materials is high in classrooms as the curricular approaches are academic in nature. Activities on literacy and numeracy which form the core of the curriculum require usage of academic materials. Manipulative materials are also used in activities of language experience and numeracy. For example, using artificial clay to copy and make single digit numbers, using paper chits to paste on number outlines. In terms of learning opportunities, most of the activities include all children and some which involve a small group which enable children to work together in the same activity. The opportunity to think and answer is also significant (please see figure 29), as there are activities where the teacher would talk about a concept and ask questions. For example, it was observed that a teacher was introducing the concept of ‘my family’ and was asking questions about ‘babies in the family’ where children had to think and answer. Opportunities to learn to share, expressing curiosity and learn to wait for their turn are significantly low. Rote methods are followed when the teacher encourages copying drawings, alphabets, etc. and also asks children to repeat what she is saying.

**Workbooks and Assessment Booklets:** As part of the evaluation the workbooks and assessment booklets for literacy and numeracy were reviewed. Some of findings from the review are discussed here:

a. In Year 1 literacy assessment book, sequencing has been introduced with complex alphabets and then with pictures (seed and then seed growing into plant). The testing should be the other way round to make it simpler. Also, for sequencing, it is important to provide the child with a greater number of sequences or steps in the concept for the child to understand. Currently in the assessment, there are only two pictures forming one sequence.

b. In the Year 1 numeracy assessment, one instruction says match equal sets, however it is not clear if the child should match equal sets from the same pattern or match equal numbers even if the pattern is different. Either way, the answer would not be incorrect.

c. There is an activity on the concept of time, where children have to indicate the time of arrival. The two times indicated in two clocks are 08:00hrs and 12:00hrs. It is observed that children would normally come between 8 to 08:30hrs, which is when their parents would drop them. In that case they would not identify 8:00hrs as the time of arrival.
d. It is also observed that in the workbooks even for Year 1, children have to write their names and the day in pencil in four-line writing format. A four-line writing format would ideally be introduced in the primary level when the fine motors are more developed.

e. It is also observed that in some of the exercises given here for counting and matching, the instruction is complex. The child will see the pictures and number together and the first impression will be to associate these two. The matching exercise would need to be organised in a way where numbers and objects are written separately and children are asked to match. Also, it would be important to provide pictures of food items which are healthy, to encourage children and parents to adopt nutritional food practices for young children.

**Child Assessments:** The teachers conduct assessment of children using the assessment booklets and each month the classroom assessments are conducted in the fourth week. The classroom assessment is aimed towards progressively tracking the improvements children are making. Currently the data coming out of these assessments are not used by the teacher as feedback for the pedagogical practices. They are already following a prescriptive time table and the national scheme and there are no clear mechanisms or guidelines to enable teachers to use this data on classroom assessments for improving the outcomes of children. Apart from these booklets, teachers have to fill the observation checklists on how children are improving on the literacy and numeracy benchmarks. The interviews with the teachers revealed that they see these classroom assessments and filling the observation checklists differently and they do not use the outcomes of these assessments as a data source to fill the observation checklist. They fill the observation checklists based on their general observation of the child. It is therefore crucial to build teacher capacities to ensure they are able to establish linkages between all the assessment methods. The nursery programme has also introduced the diagnostic assessments of children which is a national assessment and we will discuss more about the diagnostic assessment in the impact section.

**Community Support**

*To what extent has the programme allowed for community support?*

Historically the MOE has designed community and parent involvement mechanisms in multiple ways in the programme. The evaluation probed into these different mechanisms through interviews with policy makers, teachers, head teachers and community members and the findings are presented as below:

**Parent Action Committees (PAC):** In order to create strong home school linkage, PACs are supposed to be established under the nursery programme in each nursery school. These committees are duly constituted bodies with parents who serve as Chairman, Treasurer and Head of the Finance Committee. The head teacher functions as Vice Chairman and another staff serves as Secretary in these committees though this not a compulsory requirement. The PACs are primarily responsible for fund raising for the development of the school and authorising school expenditures as advised by the head teacher. Parents in PACs who are qualified may also take responsibilities like teaching
only if there is a requirement (not a fulltime role), play supervisory roles during school activities like school tours, fundraising ventures, etc. and also money and materials towards school development\textsuperscript{12}. Parent participation is limited to organising fund raising events or participating with teachers in clearing of school and nearby play grounds. The parental participation also varies from region to region. In hinterland and riverine communities, the parental participation is low considering community awareness levels are low and parents stay far from schools in these regions. One of informants from the school visited in Lethem remarked that “parents never come to drop children to school also, children come with their elder siblings, parents never participate in any affairs of schools.” Similarly, in the riverine areas in Region 7, the PACs are not active and there is no participation of parents. In terms of fund raising, parents who are members of the PAC collectively decide on holding fund raising events or deciding on a certain amount which community members can contribute. The financial contribution varies for different schools and community members are not forced to pay, but rather depends on willingness to pay. Apart from funds, it was observed that parents have contributed story books, however a review of these books highlight that these books are not always age appropriate. Teachers would normally use these books in the reading corner of the classroom.

**Parent Conferences**: Parent conferences are supposed to be organised under the nursery programme when parents visit school, observe their children in class and interact with teachers and teacher get opportunities to share feedback with the parents about their children. From the interviews held in the schools in Region 7 and one nursery class in Region 9, it was understood that these conferences are not being held as schools do not have any linkage with the parents and their participation is extremely low. In the hinterland regions, though these conferences are being held in select schools which are located in accessible areas, these are not regular, and teachers reported that even if they organise these conferences, parents do not participate. Socio-economic background (parents are mostly labourers or involved in agriculture) and educational level and geographical accessibility were critical factors which are challenges for parental involvement in the nursery programme.

**Home to Nursery Transition**: Parents of young children (children who would be entering the nursery programme) are involved in the transition programme. The PAC members who are the parents are involved directly in facilitating the transition of children from home to nursery. During PAC meetings the parents are supposed to be provided with information which parents can use to prepare their children for transiting to nursery from the home environment. Once children are enrolled in nursery, orientation sessions are to be conducted by teachers with parents and children together where they are oriented on nursery activities based on children’s interest and age\textsuperscript{13}. As part of the transition from home to the nursery programme, children and their parents are invited to visit the nursery school where children spend sometime in the class and they would mostly play with the materials in the classroom. Teachers and head teachers would take the parents through the time

\textsuperscript{12} ibid
\textsuperscript{13} ibid
tables, would show them the class, tell them about the schedule, etc. However teachers do not involve parents while conducting classes.

**Equity**

The efficiency criteria of the evaluation would aim to respond to the following question:

1. To what extent has the GNEP included issues of gender, special needs and different language groups?
2. To what extent are the resources for the implementation of the GNEP distributed in an equitable manner?

**Key Findings:**

- The participation of girls is marginally below (three percentage points) the participation of boys in select years and for other years, the participation is equal. Classroom observations reveal equal and active participation of all children and no discriminatory practices by teachers.
- Children are considered to women’s responsibility, which is why majority of teachers are women. Occasionally teachers tend to use colours, objects in day to day pedagogy which are biased towards girls and not gender neutral.
- Teachers do not have sufficient training to conduct early detection of special needs or to work with children with special needs and children with learning challenges. Teachers also face challenges in multi lingual classrooms where children from other language backgrounds are participating. The classroom observations and the interviews highlight that these categories of children are left out of the learning process during the programme.
- To address the issue of multilingualism in nursery education, the MOE with support from UNICEF has developed teaching and learning materials in other languages to promote an inclusive mother-tongue based approach in nursery education. While the materials have been developed the implementation is yet to be planned.
- It was found through focus group discussions and observations that while the breakfast and hot meal programmes are in operation, communities are not aware of the uniform and transportation programme. Transportation costs came across as a major challenge in riverine areas, which is a key reason behind low participation of children in nursery education.

**Gender, Special Needs and Language Groups**

The MICS results reflect notable differentials in terms of Urban-rural, coastal-interior and regional categories, in participation in early childhood education programmes. In urban areas, the figure is as high as 68 percent, compared to 59 percent in rural areas, and 64 percent in coastal areas, compared to 49 percent in interior areas. Among children aged 36-59 months, attendance to early childhood education programmes is most prevalent in Region 5 (70 percent), and least prevalent in Region 1 (18 percent). A very small differential by sex exists, but there are relatively large differentials by ethnicity of household head, with 72 percent of children living in households with an African household head having the highest attendance to early childhood education programmes and those living in Amerindian headed households having the lowest attendance (40 percent). Early
childhood education increases with the level of the mother’s education and the household wealth: 85 percent of children whose mother has a higher education attend such programmes, while the figure drops to 55 percent among children whose mother has only primary education; similarly, the proportion ranges between 45 percent for children in the poorest households to 76 percent for those in the richest households. The proportion of children attending early childhood education programmes at ages 48-59 months is much higher (85 percent) than at ages 36-47 months (38 percent). The figure below represents the disparities (as explained above) if we analyse children’s participation in ECE as per area, wealth quintile and ethnicity. The figure above represents the trends in participation across these categories.

In context of the GNEP, specifically, the evaluation looks specifically at gender, children with special needs and language groups. The Statistical Digest captures data on gender wise enrolment. The following figure provides a broader picture of percentage of girls and boys enrolled in the programme. The Statistical Digest provides data on four time points, and over these years, it can be seen that there is no significant difference in enrolment. However apart from 2009-10 when enrolment is equal for girls and boys, for the other years the enrolment of girls has been marginally (three percentage points) lower than enrolment of boys. We now look at a region wise disaggregated figure.

*Figure 31 Gender Wise Child Population and Enrolment in GNEP (Census, 2012 and Statistical Digest)*

The graph above (figure 32) represents the gender wise enrolment under the GNEP in all the Regions and the gender wise distribution of child population. We see approximately 50 percentage of boys and girls (except for Region 4) in each Region are enrolled in GNEP.
The graph above (figure 33) showcases the gender wise enrolment, calculated as a percentage of population. In both the figures above, we have used the most recent available data which is for 2011-12 and the data from Census, 2012. In terms of gender wise distribution, we do not observe any significant difference in participation. However, we see approximately 50 percent children in the Regions are enrolled under the GNEP (in Regions 1, 4, 8, 9 and 10 the participation is below 50 percent). The school observations conducted as part of the evaluation show that in the classroom transactions and pedagogical processes, teachers do not follow any discriminatory practices. Children sit in mixed groups in even within small groups and during the activities, the participation of boys and girls is equal. In terms of assigning responsibilities, teachers do not adopt any form of discrimination for boys and girls.

In the nursery workforce most teachers are female as children are considered to be women’s responsibility solely. It was found that there are implications of mostly female teachers in the profession which results in teachers using methods and objects which may be biased towards girls. MOE however reinforces through trainings about the importance of being gender neutral in pedagogical approaches. The officials at NCERD remarked that “we encourage teachers to use different colours and not just pink, but different colours and be more gender neutral in approach”.

The second category the evaluation takes into account children with special needs. There is currently no official data on children with special needs. In classroom situations, it was observed that teachers find it challenging to include children with special needs while conducting activities. All the teachers interviewed mentioned that they do not have training in working with children with special needs. First, teachers find it challenging to identify these children and their special needs. Teachers confuse learning difficulties and aggressive behaviours with special needs. There is also no early detection service available under GNEP, under which specialists and special educators scan
children at the time of entry or during the programme course. A review of the curriculum, the workbooks, the reader series and the assessment books reveal that the curriculum being academic in its approach focusing much on literacy and numeracy skills is not customised to meet the requirements of children with special needs or even children who have learning difficulties. It was observed in every classroom, there were one to two children who needed special assistance, but the teachers were unaware about how to attend to these children. Therefore, these children were left unattended and although they were physically present, they were not participating in any of the activities.

The third category are the groups of children from different language groups. While English is the official language of Guyana, there are other language groups in the Regions for example Wapishana and Macushi. There are children whose home languages are Portuguese and Spanish. It was observed based on the interviews with teachers that they find it challenging to work with these children whose home languages are different and especially since the teacher’s mother tongue is different. Teachers remarked that ‘these children do not speak in the class.” In the current curriculum, the materials and the assessment booklets are in English language and children who come from different language groups find it challenging to use these materials and the curriculum (as reported by teachers and as per classroom observation). The MOE with support from UNICEF is currently developing materials in Macushi and other languages which are meant to support learning of children from these specific language groups.

The fourth category to discuss would be the children from hinterland and riverine communities who come from challenging socio-economic contexts. We have seen in the previous sections the major challenges are that of low income background of these children and difficult geographical terrain which makes access a challenging issue. At the same time the education quality poses a complex challenge as out of 31 percent (discussed above) of untrained teachers in Guyana, 53 percent (discussed above) are in hinterland areas. The scenario is further challenging as there are multi-grade classrooms (discussed above) and the unavailability of trained teachers in the classrooms. The child to trained teacher ratio in the hinterland is also significantly high as we noted in the analysis above.

**Equitable Resource Allocation**

The resource allocation in the central budget for the GNEP is not gender based and it does not have special provisions towards interventions for children with special needs or multilingual nursery education. The evaluation therefore probes into special allocations towards children from hinterland community who come from marginalised socio-economic context. The evaluation notes that special assistance programmes, like the hot meals which are served in the Hinterland regions to nursery schools. Trained community member cooks are in charge of preparing daily meals using local products, where possible. In Region 9 children benefit from a Snack Programme that provides locally produce juices and peanut butter and cassava sandwiches. In 2016, the Government introduced a pilot programme in Nursery and Grades One and Two of Primary schools in three coastal communities consisting of a daily breakfast (sandwich and milk-flavoured drink) nutritionally balanced. In the case of the daily breakfast pilot the daily running costs (commodities, utilities,
packing, delivery to schools, cleaning materials, cooks’ salaries) are estimated at G$275 per child/per day. The Hot Meal Programme in the Hinterland communities is estimated at G$175 per child/per day14.

The Ministry of Education also delivers a G$200 voucher to every Regional Education Office that is then given to School principals and to the parents. Uniforms can then be purchased from selected providers. On the one other, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs provides the necessary materials to children living on the Hinterland.

As per July 2016, Government has donated ten buses, nine boats and hundreds of bicycles to several communities15 towards more efficient transport of children to schools.

The hot meal and the breakfast programme are currently being implemented in the hinterland region. However, the focus group discussions with communities and parent groups in hinterland and riverine regions highlighted that they were not aware of the intervention on uniform and transportation. In riverine regions, transportation cost emerged as a major challenge for parents to send their children to nursery classes.

Impact

The impact criteria of the evaluation would aim to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the impact of the GNEP on the knowledge, attitude and practices of the families?
2. What is the impact of the GNEP on the performance of children in primary schools?

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14 UNICEF; (September 2017); Child-focused Public Expenditure Assessment; UNICEF
Learning Outcomes

To what extent has the GNEP helped children to be developmentally on track?

The MICS 2014 has developed the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) to inform public policy regarding the developmental status of children in Guyana. The index is based on selected milestones that children are expected to achieve by ages three and four. A set of ten items are used to determine if children (36-59 months) are developmentally on track in four domains, which are, Literacy-Numeracy, Physical, Social-Emotional and Learning. As per the ECDI, in Guyana, 86 percent of children aged 36-59 months are developmentally on track. The ECDI is similar between boys (85 percent) and girls (87 percent). The index is much higher in the older age group (93 percent among children aged 48-59 months compared to 78 percent among those aged 36-47 months), since children acquire more skills with increasing age. Higher ECDI is seen in children attending an early childhood education programme at 91 percent, compared to 77 percent among those who are not attending. Children living in the poorest households have lower ECDI (78 percent) compared to children living in households of the other four quintiles (88-90 percent of children developmentally on track). ECDI increases with the level of mother's education, from 77 percent among children whose mothers have primary education, to 90 percent among those whose mothers have higher education. There is no urban-rural difference, but a coastal-interior difference is observed, with 88 percent for coastal children, as opposed to 79 percent for interior children. The proportion of children living in households with an Amerindian household head developmentally on track is smaller than those living in households of other ethnicities, with 73 percent of children on track, compared to 87-88 percent for others. Considerable regional disparities are observed, with the lowest found in Region 1 (73 percent), and the highest in Region 5 (92 percent).

As per the MICS, 2014 survey the analysis of four domains of child development shows that 97 percent of children are on track in the physical domain, 95 percent in the learning domain, but much less on track in social-emotional (75 percent) and literacy-numeracy (63 percent) domains. The
coastal-interior differential is seen for literacy-numeracy and social-emotional domains, to a lesser extent for learning, but not for the physical domain. A similar pattern is observed for the ethnicity of household head, where children living in households with an Amerindian household head are less on track for literacy-numeracy and social-emotional domains than those in other households. Looking at individual domains by region, it should be noted that the literacy-numeracy is the domain that has the greatest disparities and the lowest percentages of children on track. In Region 1, only one in four children (26 percent) is on track in the literacy-numeracy domain. In each domain, the higher score is associated with children attending an early childhood education programme, older children, children in richer households and whose mother has higher education.  

The national diagnostic assessment was conceptualised, created, piloted and published in 2013. The diagnostic assessment assesses the academic preparedness of young children before they are entering primary school. The assessment was administered to a sample of Year 1 nursery students (N=710), 364 girls and 344 boys who are in age brackets of three years six months and three years nine months. The same cohort was followed in Year 2. There are four areas in early literacy and early numeracy which are assessed through the diagnostic assessment. In early literacy, the areas of assessment are (a) autobiographical awareness (b) alphabet recitation (c) colour recognition and (d) alphabet identification.

The assessment instrument established baseline measures of children’s emergent literacy, emergent numeracy, fine motor skills, and, as an indicator of intra–personal and inter-personal awareness, their self-knowledge. The diagnostic instrument was administered at the beginning of one term in the pilot schools and in three control schools and was administered again at the end of the first term in the same pilot and control schools. The pilot schools that were using the new materials and were exposed to the new interventions had significantly better end-of-term results than the control schools. Although limited in scope, the pilot demonstrated the usefulness of the nursery diagnostic assessment. The tool was re-administered at the end of the first term of school, the instrument can also be used to measure teacher effectiveness that can inform decisions about, among other things, further areas of capacity building for teachers. The achievement made by children over a one-year period (comparing pre-test and post-test) is attributed as the impact of the nursery education programme. The coastal area has been taken as the control group where the interventions under the GCEP (capacity building of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials and care giver education) have not been implemented and the children from hinterland in the sample represent the treatment group which have gone through the intervention. The gains of children in hinterland are thus cumulative of both the nursery education programme and the interventions under the GECEP.

The following tables provide the findings of the impact of the nursery programme on the cohort of children.

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17 Ministry of Education; Guyana Education Sector Plan, 2014-2018; Ministry of Education
### Table 2 Learning Outcomes from Pre and Post Test in Literacy (National Diagnostic Assessment, GECEP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Assessment</th>
<th>Hinterland (Pre-test)</th>
<th>Hinterland (Post-test)</th>
<th>Coastal (Pre-test)</th>
<th>Coastal (Post-test)</th>
<th>Country (Pre-test)</th>
<th>Country (Post-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Awareness</td>
<td>74.32</td>
<td>87.28</td>
<td>72.42</td>
<td>90.15</td>
<td>72.74</td>
<td>89.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet Recitation</td>
<td>35.25</td>
<td>63.21</td>
<td>52.63</td>
<td>71.44</td>
<td>49.48</td>
<td>69.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour Recognition</td>
<td>35.58</td>
<td>72.27</td>
<td>61.12</td>
<td>78.55</td>
<td>46.02</td>
<td>77.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet Identification</td>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>50.45</td>
<td>62.22</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergent Literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>39.58</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.51</strong></td>
<td><strong>75.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.48</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3 Learning Outcomes from Pre and Post Test in Numeracy (National Diagnostic Assessment, GECEP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Assessment</th>
<th>Hinterland (Pre-test)</th>
<th>Hinterland (Post-test)</th>
<th>Coastal (Pre-test)</th>
<th>Coastal (Post-test)</th>
<th>Country (Pre-test)</th>
<th>Country (Post-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity Differentiation</td>
<td>50.57</td>
<td>79.39</td>
<td>48.79</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>49.09</td>
<td>71.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting Fluency</td>
<td>62.89</td>
<td>92.01</td>
<td>84.02</td>
<td>87.72</td>
<td>80.51</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape Identification</td>
<td>37.79</td>
<td>71.87</td>
<td>52.82</td>
<td>79.49</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeral Identification</td>
<td>16.39</td>
<td>64.84</td>
<td>28.53</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>26.19</td>
<td>68.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergent Numeracy</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.91</strong></td>
<td><strong>77.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>53.54</strong></td>
<td><strong>76.68</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.42</strong></td>
<td><strong>76.74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage change amongst students in the hinterland in emergent literacy is significantly high. This is primarily because of the very few children in Year 1 displayed higher levels of shape and numeral identification skills in 2015. In 2015, only 35.9 percent of students in the hinterland achieved proficiency in colour recognition, compared to 72.3 percent in 2016. The 2016 number is significantly closer to the 78.6 percent of students in coastal regions achieving proficiency. Similarly, 13.2 percent of children achieved proficiency in Alphabet Identification by hinterland students in 2015 raised 50.5 percent in 2016, closer to the level of proficiency of coastal students (60.6 percent). As Table 4 demonstrates, across the board, students in the hinterland also improved their proficiency in emergent numeracy at a higher rate than students on the coast. After one year, the students in the hinterland have reached parity to students in the coast in Emergent Numeracy, with 77 percent and 76.7 percent of students reaching proficiency in the hinterland and coastal regions respectively.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{18}\) 2017; Ministry of Education; Nursery Diagnostic Assessment Results: 2015-2016 (Draft); Ministry of Education
Table 4 Percentage Change, Emergent Literacy, 2015-2016 (National Diagnostic Assessment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Assessment (Emergent Literacy)</th>
<th>Hinterland</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Awareness</td>
<td>17.4 percent</td>
<td>24.5 percent</td>
<td>23.2 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet Recitation</td>
<td>79.3 percent</td>
<td>35.7 percent</td>
<td>41.3 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour Recognition</td>
<td>103.1 percent</td>
<td>28.5 percent</td>
<td>68.3 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet Identification</td>
<td>283.7 percent</td>
<td>-2.6 percent</td>
<td>128.4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergent Literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.6 percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.8 percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>52.5 percent</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Percentage Change, Emergent Numeracy, 2015-2016 (National Diagnostic Assessment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Assessment (Emergent Numeracy)</th>
<th>Hinterland</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity Differentiation</td>
<td>57.0 percent</td>
<td>43.1 percent</td>
<td>45.7 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting Fluency</td>
<td>46.3 percent</td>
<td>4.4 percent</td>
<td>9.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape Identification</td>
<td>90.2 percent</td>
<td>50.5 percent</td>
<td>56.5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeral Identification</td>
<td>295.6 percent</td>
<td>144.3 percent</td>
<td>163.0 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergent Numeracy</strong></td>
<td><strong>83.8 percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>43.2 percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>49.2 percent</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables above (table 5 and 6) show the percentage change in test scores in hinterland, coastal and national levels from pre-test to post-test. These results show that the nursery programme has significantly impacted the learning levels especially in marginalised and socio-economically backward communities. However, this assessment is aimed to assess only the academic preparedness of children and does not focus on all the domains of child development.

The evaluation also probed into the ‘parent circle’ intervention under the GECEP to understand how the intervention has affected the knowledge, attitude and practices of caregivers. There is currently no quantitative data available for impact evaluation of the programme. As part of the current evaluation, focus group discussions have been held with parent groups and facilitators.

The primary caregivers of young children (parents, grandparents, or other guardians) play a key role in providing a stimulating home learning environment where emergent literacy and numeracy skills
can be developed in a playful manner. This is especially important in countries with low-quality public ECE services. Yet very few Guyanese parents, particularly those in more remote areas, have been exposed to, much less trained in, methods to support their children’s early learning. Primary caregiver education is a new critical area of intervention for the MOE that needs strengthening in terms of institutional capacity-building, development of training materials and delivery through multiple channels that reach parents and caregivers wherever they are.

As per Guyana MICS report of 2014, 47 percent of children aged 0-59 months live in households where at least three children’s books are present for the child. The proportion of children with ten or more books declines to 24 percent. While no differentials by sex are observed, a higher percentage of urban children have access to children’s books than those living in rural households, and also a higher percentage of coastal children than interior children. The proportion of under-five children who have three or more children’s books is 55 percent in urban areas, compared to 45 percent in rural areas, and 51 percent in coastal areas, compared to 33 percent in interior areas. Only 23 percent of the children living in households with an Indigenous household head have three or more children’s books compared to over 50 percent of those living in the other households. The presence of children’s books is positively correlated with the child’s age; in the homes of 61 percent of children aged 24-59 months, there are three or more children’s books, while the figure is 28 percent for children aged 0-23 months. The proportion of children with three or more children’s books is very strongly correlated with the mother’s education (from 9 percent for mothers with no education to 78 percent with higher education) and socio-economic status of the household (from 25 percent in the poorest households to 76 percent in the richest households).

The survey further highlighted that 69 percent of children aged 0-59 months had two or more types of playthings in their homes. The types of playthings included in the questionnaires were homemade toys (such as dolls and cars, or other toys made at home), toys that came from a store, and household objects (such as pots and bowls) or objects and materials found outside the home (such as sticks, rocks, animal shells, or leaves). It is interesting to note that 87 percent of children play with toys that come from a store; the percentage for other types of toys are between 50 and 55 percent. No sex, urban-rural, or coastal-interior differentials are observed; an increasing trend is observed in terms of mother’s education, though to a lesser extent compared to the trend seen with children’s books – 71 percent of children whose mothers are educated have two or more types of playthings, while the proportion is 61 percent for children whose mothers have no education. Contrary to the availability of children’s books, the trend is less clear with respect to the socio-economic status of the household. Percentages vary from 43 percent in Region 1 to 79 percent in Region 2. As with children’s books, the proportion of children who have two or more types of playthings increases with age, with 78 percent of children aged 24-59 months, as opposed to 55 percent of children aged 0-23 months. Ethnicity of household head is somewhat correlated with children having two or more types of playthings. The highest proportion of under-five children with two or more types of playthings is in households headed by a person of mixed race, while the lowest percentage is in those headed by a person of Indigenous descent.
Parent Education

What is the impact of the GNEP on the knowledge, attitude and practices of the families?

The GECEP intervention builds on this context and the MOE’s vision of primary caregiver education as a critical area of intervention for the MOE that needs strengthening in terms of institutional capacity-building, development of training materials and delivery through multiple channels that reach parents and caregivers wherever they are. In this component of the project is the primary engagement piece where the project is trying to build capacity of the primary caregivers because to really revitalise the understanding that children’s success depends on strong home, school and community partnership in their education and parents are the first educators.

The ‘parent circle’ intervention has been recently piloted, and the pilot ended in the middle of June 2017. The intervention supports community consultations regarding primary caregiver engagement in children’s learning in selected hinterland and riverine communities. The intervention involves identifying community facilitators, who would hold monthly sessions with not more than 20 primary caregivers in a group, where based on certain specific materials the facilitator would build capacities of parents on how they could support their children at home. Each caregiver would commit 16 hours of time per month for this activity. The facilitator receives a certain stipend for her time for this activity.

The following are the findings from the focus group discussion held with the community in the hinterland region where this intervention was piloted.

The primary caregivers and the facilitators expressed that the parenting circle has helped parents come together and understand that the first responsibility of child’s education is with the parents and not the nursery school. However, the participation of fathers has been extremely low. In one parent group in the beginning, there would be two fathers but by the next few sessions, the fathers would not attend. But the mothers never left the parent circles. There would need for strategies to inspire and influence fathers to make them stakeholders in the process.

The responsibility of forming the group is with the facilitator. The facilitators mentioned that they would begin by talking to women in the village, speaking to men who have children, speaking to the church authorities about the activity and requesting the church to announce this parenting circle. They have also reached out to the parent committees and the elderly people in the village so that they can spread the message. These advocacy efforts enable the facilitators to gather primary caregivers for conducting the parenting circle.

Two issues that facilitators face are space for holding the parent circle and the time for holding the circles. In terms of space, the constraint that facilitators face is the lack of facilities like lack of electricity in most of the spaces where caregivers (who would be mostly women) feel physically and emotionally safe. The second issue is time of the day for holding the parenting circle. The caregivers are busy most of the time in the morning and the parenting circles cannot be held in the late
afternoon as the shorter duration of day light is an issue in the hinterland areas. So, facilitators have to work out a time with the caregivers to ensure they are able to participate and then reach back home safely.

The group size varies from area to area. While one facilitator mentioned having a group of 15 caregivers, another facilitator had a group of seven caregivers and a third facilitator had a group of five caregivers. The group members are most times parents of three to six-year-old children but in some of the groups, there are also expecting mothers as well as grandmothers. Sometimes the attrition is high and all the 20 members with whom the facilitators start do not remain till the end, so not every member of the group would go through the entire course.

The activities of the group would comprise of singing songs, playing games which parents can play with children, activities with flash cards, some body movements which parents can practise with their children. The facilitators would educate parents on how, during the daily chores, parents can use examples and teach basic things and concepts.

The ‘parent circle’ initiative has encouraged and provided opportunity to young mothers (mothers who have been otherwise ostracised by society) to join and learn about how they could teach and help their children. “The parent circle creates a bit of security or safety net because whatever is shared in the circle is supposed to be held as sacrosanct”.

The ‘parent circle’ initiative has enabled caregivers in multiple ways. For example, one mother mentioned that she is not literate and she never thought that she would be able to teach her daughter. She mentioned how the parent circle has enabled her to acquire some skills and how she can effectively use these skills to help her child and to understand what her child is learning in the classroom. Some mothers responded that they have learnt to use everyday objects to teach their children, like they would say, “tell me the colour of the cup”, “give me a big bowl”, etc. One mother mentioned she used to beat her child and once she joined the parent circle, she understood how beating can cause stress to children and the input provided by the facilitator has enabled her to change her behaviour towards her child. Some of the mothers identified that their children had learning challenges, they would take time to learn a certain concept. The ‘parent circle’ initiative enables them to work with their children at home and provide them additional support so that they are able to understand concepts better.

The evaluation also found that the facilitators have a background in nursery education (they have been teachers or head teachers) and they have acted as ‘change agents’ in the process. They have used fully all the materials provided, mobilised communities and convinced primary caregivers about the importance of parent education. The ‘parent circle’ thus reached out to the members of communities in the remote areas through a cascading effect, where the village facilitators have been trained first and then they have carried out the intervention.
The GECEP also implements a mass media campaign called “Read. Play. Love”, featuring the nation’s national leaders and heroes, focused on promoting early childhood education. It encourages parents of children under five to start modelling pro-educational behaviours for their children at home by reading to them.

**Primary School Performance**

*What is the impact of the GNEP on performance of children in primary schools?*

The GNEP does not have quantitative data on the impact of nursery education. The National Diagnostic Assessment proposes to follow up the children in the nursery cohort when they reach primary and hence the data will be collected in 2018. Hence, the team conducted case studies of two children who have completed nursery education and moved to primary grades. The findings from case studies are presented in the effectiveness criteria under the question “Has the GNEP led to better preparation for primary education?” The case studies are provided in the annex 6.

**Sustainability**

The sustainability criteria would respond to the following questions of the evaluation.

1. To what extent are the GNEP implementation and management arrangements and funding sustainable?
2. What recommendations and lessons learned in the GNEP should be considered for the future?

**Key Findings:**

- GNEP does not ensure compulsory early childhood education as it is not supported by a legislation or act.
- In terms of financing, the current interventions in programme quality, which are currently being supported under the GPE, are not provisioned under the Government budget. There would be a critical need for partnership and collaboration with development partners to upscale and sustain the interventions and their impact.
- In terms of scalability, the current programme implementation structure can be replicated and implemented in universalising nursery education in the country.

**Sustainability of Implementation**

*To what extent are the GNEP implementation and management arrangements and funding sustainable?*

The evaluation took into consideration the current funding and implementation of the GNEP and derived the following findings about the sustainability of the programme.

The GNEP is not supported by a legislation or an act which makes it a non-compulsory programme by Government. While it is well contextualised within the Education Sector Plan and is supported by the national budget, its outreach to all parts of the country to ensure compulsory nursery education to all boys and girls would be possible only if it is backed by legislation, which is also going
to ensure continued political commitment to nursery sub-sector and provide a set of norms and guidelines.

Currently the GNEP has a specific budget in the national budget, which we have discussed above. The Global Partnership of Education through GECEP is supporting teacher training, teaching and learning materials and caregiver education. These interventions are in project mode and has a specific duration after which the Government is expected to take over. Therefore, it is crucial for the MOE to reflect on how these interventions would be implemented and monitored after the project period. It would important to reflect the methods in which the current budget would need to be worked out to ensure these activities are budgeted and they continue.

The GNEP has successfully implemented a programme structure from the ministerial level to the level of service delivery and monitoring. The programme structure is uniform in all the regions with established monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Such a structure would be crucial while expansion of the nursery programme happens.

In terms of the staff and human resources, the programme is sustainable because all the staff involved from the policy making level to the level of teachers in nursery programmes are permanent government staff, which would mean that they are not volunteers and hence these positions would continue to be operational.

In order to ensure continuous real-time data, there would be a need for a monitoring system which generates real time monthly data. Moving towards sustainability would imply setting up this system.

**Conclusions**

The implementation of the GNEP over the last 10 years presents a complex scenario of early childhood education in Guyana. While there have been a number of interventions towards the provision of equitable quality nursery education to young children, there have been certain challenges and opportunities in programme planning and implementation. The points below present the conclusions drawn based on the findings of the evaluation:

1. The non-compulsory nature of GNEP poses a significant challenge to the overall issue of equitable access to nursery education. While GNEP functions as the prominent driving force in the pre-primary education sector, the non-compulsory nature of the programme would lead to leaving out children from the programme especially in riverine and hinterland regions where access is a challenge due to socio-economic and geographical factors. The non-compulsory nature of GNEP prevent nursery education to become right of every child as Government is not accountable to provide nursery education to each and every child.

2. Programmatically GNEP has undergone paradigmatic shift in the curricular approaches from a play-based domain centred approach to an academic approach with focus on literacy and numeracy, which has led to the downward extension of primary level curriculum to pre-primary level which is in turn developmentally inappropriate. The complexity of the curriculum poses challenge for teachers to be creative in transactions and also in involving children with special needs.
3. Under GNEP, teachers are not provided regular, compulsory in-service teacher training. In-service training is critical for updating skills and knowledge of teachers from time to time to improve pedagogical practices. Post 2014, after the introduction of the new curriculum, teachers (in some Regions) have received training on the curriculum, however this is not a regular in-service training.

4. The current curriculum which is in implementation focuses mostly on cognitive skills pertaining to literacy and numeracy only, which leaves a substantial gap in terms of development of the whole child. There has been no other supplementary approaches used to address this gap. The learning standards also focus on literacy and numeracy, which means there is no emphasis on non-cognitive skills.

5. The GECEP has enabled the parent education discourse in a concrete format in the GNEP. It is a solid approach used by GNEP which has made parents develop awareness about quality nursery education and empowered them to demand quality education for young children. This is a point where it can be stated that the nursery education programme has achieved beyond what it aimed for. While there is no baseline data around the parent education programme, the focus group discussions with communities has shown the pilot phase of the programme in hinterland areas has an encouraging response. The intervention has pushed boundaries to reach out to the caregivers from the most marginalised communities (even caregivers who are not literate) and have empowered them to teach their own children using their daily life experiences. The caregivers have demonstrated improvements in their skills and behavioural aspects when it comes to interacting with their children. It can be concluded based on the evaluation that the parent education programme has created increased demands from the communities for the programme to continue in all areas.

6. The programme monitoring component of GNEP is complex, as there are multiple agencies and stakeholders involved using different tools, to collect very similar data. Ministry of Education, department of planning, GECEP, regional offices of education conduct parallel monitoring of the programme with no convergence which has led to challenges like inefficient use of data, lack of sharing of information and non-streamlined processes. This is a critical area of the programme design.

7. Most nursery teachers are women and primary reason behind this is the societal conception that women are responsible for children and therefore only women should be pre-primary teachers. There are implications of a majority of female teachers in the profession and teachers use methods and objects which may be biased towards girls. The MOE however reinforces through trainings about the importance of being gender neutral in pedagogical approaches.

8. The primary issues in equity are children with special needs and children from different language groups. Children from different language groups face challenges like unavailability of materials in other languages, as well as the medium of instruction which is in English. Currently the GNEP does not have mechanisms for early identification and referral services
for children with special needs. Teachers also do not receive training on working with children with special needs which adds to the complexity. This came across a serious challenge for the families of these children and the participation of these children in the learning process.

9. Early childhood programmes imply multi-sectoral delivery of services and this a key area where GNEP is facing challenges. There is no active mechanism for the MOE and the line ministries (ministry of child protection and ministry of social protection) to coordinate and converge under the GNEP. Considering early childhood development is a multi-sectoral subject, it is important to ensure effective coordination and convergence between all the relevant ministries.

10. While the current structure of the GNEP is supported by the central budget and would continue, the current interventions in quality in parent education and in-service teacher training initiated under the GECEP. There is currently no plan to state how these interventions would be carried along once the donor funding is not there.

**Recommendations**

The goal of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme under the leadership of the Ministry of Education is to provide equitable access to quality early childhood education to children, which would impact their higher learning outcomes. The programme has completed 40 years of implementation and has undergone changes as per the education context of the country, especially in the last 10 years. The current evaluation has analysed the different facilitating factors, the challenges, the achievements and the impact that the programme has created and based on the lesson learned, the following recommendations are presented for different stakeholders. The most critical recommendations have been marked separately.

**Legislation for Nursery Education**

- The nursery programme is currently neither a compulsory provision nor an entitlement. The scope, success and budget of the programme would continue to depend on the political will towards the early childhood sub-sector and parental participation in the programme (parents opting to enrol children at nursery level). It is therefore recommended to formulate legislation for early childhood development in the country which may include the nursery education as a compulsory programme for children between three to six years of age.
- The recommended legislation for nursery education may consider developing supporting rules to ensure that the departments of education in the Regions are responsible and accountable for enrolling every child in the nursery age group.

**Planning and Technical Assistance**

- In view of the indicator “Participation rate in organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex” under the Sustainable Development Goal 4.2, the Ministry of Education may consider analysing the current situation with regard to equitable access to nursery education in the country and execute an exercise in target setting to ensure, the indicator is achieved in the course of 15 years. This would enable
the Ministry to review the budget and find out the investment it would require achieving the targets and develop appropriate strategies aligned with the Education Sector Plans and Nursery sub-sector plans.

- The Ministry of Education should develop specific strategies towards ensuring quality nursery education in both nursery class and nursery schools. This may comprise of reviewing the teacher situation in these schools and materials present. Specific strategy paper on multi grade classrooms may be developed to focus on these classrooms and ensure trained teachers are provided especially in multi grade situations. -

- The Ministry of Education in coordination and collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection and Child Protection, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Communities develop action plans to intervene in nursery classrooms to work with teacher, develop safety protocols, conduct safety drills for emergency situations and disasters, work with teachers and children on issues of abuse and neglect children in nursery may be facing.

- The Ministry should develop an outcome-based budgeting method in the nursery sub-sector which would ensure maximum and efficient resource allocation towards improving education quality and effectiveness. - **Critical Recommendation**

- A value for money study may be carried out to estimate to the total investment in early childhood and the optimum investment required (including the social and economic returns), as an impact of the investment.

- The Regional Education Departments may be supported in terms of providing technical training to the Regional Education Development Officers to build their capacities so that they are able to monitor education quality in nursery programme and provide technical support to schools.

**Standards and Benchmarks**

- While the Ministry has developed the non-academic norms to ensure minimum standards, it is recommended that the Ministry considers developing comprehensive and progressive National Quality Standards for the nursery programme to provide specific indicators and guidelines to programme implementers and nursery schools and classes on quality improvement. This document would provide a roadmap to educators and implementers on how to achieve these standards over a period. **Critical Recommendation**

- The Ministry of Education should conduct field testing and review (based on evidence from field) of the numeracy and literacy learning standards, which would ensure the standards are validated and contextualised to Guyanese context. Learning standards may be developed and contextualised for other domains of development including the non-cognitive domains. It is further recommended to modify the standards to make these age specifics instead of considering Year 1 and Year 2 and once finalised the national scheme and assessment mechanisms may be reviewed based on all the revised learning standards.

**Programme Content**

- The Ministry of Education should review the national time table and the national scheme of work toward a national curriculum framework which would look at all the domains of child development and at the same time not be prescriptive thus leaving opportunity in the time table and curriculum framework for teachers to creatively and innovatively plan a part of time each day. As part of the holistic approach, provision may be made
adequate for free play also along with guided play and adequate time for children to rest (current it is five minutes which is not sufficient). Critical Recommendation

- The Ministry with technical support from development partners should develop a school readiness programme for children joining Grade One to ensure a smooth and seamless transition in from nursery to Grade curriculum. Currently there is not educational content support being provided for seamless transition, especially when children transit from. This programme may be offered for two months before the session begins and may build some school readiness skills for children. This would be crucial for children who come without any experience of nursery education. Critical Recommendation

- The National Diagnostic Assessment should go beyond assessing academic preparedness and assess all development domains through a whole child approach. This will provide a comprehensive scenario of the child’s learning context and experience. Critical Recommendation

Teacher Training

- In context of ‘pre-service’ teacher training it is recommended, that the Ministry of Education, the Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana collaboratively develop a strategy to integrate the teacher education standards in the Nursery Teacher Training Certificate and the Bachelor’s programme. Critical R

- Ministry of Education should develop a written policy on compulsory and regular ‘in-service’ teacher training and develop appropriate strategies to implement the policy. The current teacher training under the Guyana Early Childhood Education Project may consider building teacher capacities on promoting child development in the other domains of development including psycho-social, personal, aesthetic, emotional and creative. The Project may consider developing appropriate materials, work with teachers in using these materials and existing materials for promoting activities in the other domains.

- The teacher training may include topics like using each play corner, defining and demonstrating small group activities, attribute of a nursery teacher and class disposition. Teachers may be discouraged to use rote methodology in the pedagogical process and focus more on activities that promote ‘learning to share’, ‘expressing curiosity’, ‘activities fostering creativity’, ‘learning to wait for their turn’ and other such activities.

- The Ministry with support from Development Partners should develop training programme and strategy for training of teachers on working with children who have special needs and children with learning difficulties. Special educators may be deployed in schools to provide mentoring and on-site support to teachers. Teachers working in communities which have different language groups may be trained on handling bilingual and multilingual classrooms and contexts. Teachers may be trained to develop individual education plans for children facing learning challenges or children with special needs, in conversation with parents.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Ministry of Education should develop a logical framework for the nursery education programme which would clearly define the goals, outcomes, outputs, processes and inputs. The logical framework would act as a base for the monitoring mechanism of the nursery education programme.
➢ The Ministry of Education should review the different monitoring mechanisms and tools being currently used and, based on the review, aim at streamlining the different processes (by different stakeholders) being currently used and developing a set of common monitoring tools. These tools may be piloted and validated and then may be considered for use by the different stakeholders. This would ensure no duplication and thus make the process more efficient.

➢ The Ministry of Education should work further on the Statistical Digest to develop an Education Management and Information System (EMIS) to capture regular updated and periodic data on select and contextualised indicators which would enable the Ministry to review the goals and national plans of the nursery programme. The EMIS would provide a single window approach to nursery education data and enable data driven decision making processes.

➢ The Ministry of Education should conduct a mapping exercise which would document the number of nursery field officers in each region, the number of nurseries each officer is responsible for, frequency of monitoring visits and the challenges and issues the officers face. This exercise would provide input for planning the field level monitoring system and human resource allocation more efficiently.

➢ The Ministry should develop a refresher course for nursery field officers to upgrade their knowledge, skills and to build their capacities in managing multiple monitoring tools and checklists. This may be planned and implemented in collaboration with the Guyana Early Childhood Education Project, Planning Department and UNICEF.
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Annexures

Annexure 1: Guiding Questions for Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

**Guiding Questions for In-depth Interview**

- **Enabling Environment**
  - Enabling laws, policies and legislations
  - Alignment with CARRICOM ECD Framework
  - Relevant ministries concerning child development
  - In-sectoral coordination mechanisms like national councils, multi-sectoral plans
  - Convergence at service delivery level, any government order on convergence
  - Programme scale up process and issues pertaining to same
  - Policies for in-service teacher training and how it is connected to teacher quality standards

- **Description of the Programme**
  - What are the various groups of the population being served by the centre? Consider describing the following:
    - Spatial and demographic distribution of the population being served
    - Size and coverage of the program
  - What are the primary activities of the programme? Consider describing the following:
    - Services offered to children, their families and the community
    - Observation of the real time processes involved
    - What have been the interventions over the years to strengthen the programme?
  - What is the description of the socio-cultural context in which the programme functions? Consider describing the following:
    - The social power structure in the area in relation to class, ethnicity, gender etc.

- **Other Integrated Programme Components:**
  - **Ministry of Health:**
    - What are the health-related services (for example immunisation, growth monitoring being provided to children of 3 to 6 years old through the GNEP)?
    - What standards are followed while delivering these services (like WHO standards, etc.)?
    - What are the mechanisms for service delivery? At the setting level who delivers these services and how are their capacities being built?
What are the convergence mechanisms at all levels, which are (a) central (b) Regional and (c) level of service delivery?
What is the annual budget allocated for health services of children in GNEP? What is the per child cost?
Any mechanism/intervention to work with families and parents of young children for health counselling and education? What are these?
What are the materials being used for behaviour change communication and awareness among communities? How have these been developed and are being used?

Nutrition
What are the specific services/interventions the ministry is providing to children enrolled under the GNEP? How are these services provided?
What are the specific services/interventions the ministry is providing to families/parents of children enrolled under the GNEP? How are these services provided?
How are these services delivered at the level of service delivery both for young children and families and parents? Convergence and coordination mechanism? Capacity building mechanisms?
Nutrition counselling and education services?
Are there any quality standards for these services?
Annual budget and per child costs for these services?
Any other relevant details

Ministry of Social Protection
What are the specific services/interventions the ministry is providing to children enrolled under the GNEP? How are these services provided?
What are the specific services/interventions the ministry is providing to families/parents of children enrolled under the GNEP? How are these services provided?
How are these services delivered at the level of service delivery both for young children and families and parents? Convergence and coordination mechanism? Capacity building mechanisms?
Are there any quality standards for these services?
Annual budget and per child costs for these services?
Any other relevant details

Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs, Ministry of Communities
What are the specific services/interventions the ministry is providing to children enrolled under the GNEP? How are these services provided?
What are the specific services/interventions the ministry is providing to families/parents of children enrolled under the GNEP? How are these services provided?

How are these services delivered at the level of service delivery both for young children and families and parents? Convergence and coordination mechanism? Capacity building mechanisms?

Are there any quality standards for these services?

Annual budget and per child costs for these services?

Any other relevant details

- Programme Goals and Philosophy
  - What are the primary goals and principles of an Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme known for its good practices? Consider describing the following:
    - History of the programme
    - The primary objective, mission and vision of the programme
    - The important values, goals, and principles of the programme
    - Ways in which the inclusion is addressed in the program (girls, children with special needs, ethnicity etc.)
    - Are there any linkages with national, state, or local governments

- Programme Management and Processes
  - What are the mechanisms of programme management and administration in high quality ECE programme? Consider describing the following:
    - The major activities which are planned in the centre
    - The systems in place which are used for planning of the activities in the centre
    - The people involved in the planning process
    - Opportunities for involvement of families and community members in the planning process
    - Ways in which the programme facilitates/encourages the participation of children from marginalised groups of the community
    - Role of the donor agencies in the planning process
    - Role of the government in the planning process
    - Ways in which the programme monitors the implementation of the activities that are planned
    - The monitoring structure for the implementation of the activities
  - How do programs select, motivate and retain the programme staff? Consider describing the following:
    - Credentials of staff members, ways they are recruited
    - Their reasons for joining and continuing to working the programme
• Different tiers
• Organisational structure
• Staffing pattern if any

➢ Programme Facilities and Materials (in addition to Early Childhood Education Quality Assessment Scale)
  o How does the physical infrastructure and learning materials influence children’s participation and learning in the centre activities?
    Consider describing the following:
    ▪ Description of the physical environment of the centre
    ▪ The influence of environment on children’s ability to learn
    ▪ The facilities and provisions are made available in the centre for the children with special needs

➢ Programme Curriculum
  o What are the key aspects of good ECE curriculum? How do high quality ECE programme plan and implement their curriculum?
    ▪ The primary theories guiding selection of the curriculum
    ▪ Ways in which staff members plan and implement the curriculum
    ▪ The primary focus areas of the curriculum
    ▪ The evaluation processes in place to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum
    ▪ Ways in which the curriculum address the needs of girls, children with special needs, children from different ethnic backgrounds etc.
    ▪ Ways in which the curriculum ensure cultural continuity between home and the centre
    ▪ The factors influencing planning and development of the curriculum

➢ Classroom Pedagogy
  o What are the “good practices” in early childhood classrooms and how do they influence children’s learning and development?
    ▪ The daily routine and activities for the children
    ▪ The classroom management techniques that help children to learn
    ▪ The teaching approaches which are inspired by local materials, language, ways of communication etc.
    ▪ Description of the interactions between children and teachers
    ▪ Interactions between children and their peers influence
    ▪ Assessment methods and processes children’s ways of learning
    ▪ Processes used by teachers to plan and implement daily schedules

➢ Programme Budget
  o Financing mechanisms and donor contributions
  o How were pilot and scale up phase funded?
- Any costed action plan and Per unit costs
- Sources of financing
- Challenges in financing
- Financial management, how many funds, turnover, standard accounting practices
- Annual budget for the program
- Accounts can be audited yearly
- Records such as income, balance sheets etc. should be well documented

➢ Sustaining and Scalability
  - What are the factors that need to be considered in replicating and sustaining such a programme?
    - The key aspects that contribute to the effectiveness of the programme
    - The factors that need to be considered in replicating such a centre or programme
    - The financial and other resources that are needed to develop such a centre
    - The challenges faced by the program

➢ Programme quality standards and implementation status
  - Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, use of monitoring data for decision making
  - Usage of child assessment and programme assessment data by different stakeholders including teachers, government authorities in the Regions and Guyana
  - Implementation, monitoring of teacher standards. How teacher evaluations are conducted using these standards? How is the data used?
Guiding Questions for Focus Group Discussions

- **Family involvement**
  - How does the programme influence family’s view of ECE and facilities their involvement in the centre?
    - The educational goals of the families
    - The programme’s response to families’ hopes and goals for their children
    - Ways to inform families about programme activities
    - Parenting programmes supported under the GNEP
    - The extent to which families participate in programme activities
    - Ways in which the families value the programme (e.g. would they make voluntary contributions?)
    - Ways in which parents are involved in planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the programme
    - The processes in place to involve families and seek their suggestions for programme improvement
    - Strategies used by the programme ensure the participation of families from marginalised groups of the community
    - Description of how children experience the curriculum
    - The families’ rationales for selecting this centre above others

- **Community Support**
  - How does the programme involve community members and organisations in the centre and influence their view of good ECE practices?
    - Ways in which community members are involved in planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the programme
    - The extent to which the programme staff represent the members of the local community
    - Ways in which the programme coordinates and collaborates with other community organisations
    - Ways in which the programme communicates with local community members and seek their input for programme improvement
    - Ways in which the community supports the program
    - To what extent the programme has access experts in the area of ECE
Teacher Interview Schedule

Name of School:
Name of the District and Region:

- Teacher’s name: ___________________________________
- Gender
- Age (≤20 years-1 21-30 years-2 31-40 years-3 41-50 years-4 51-60 years-5 >60 years-6)
- Do you stay in the same village where you are posted now?
- Approximate time taken to reach school from residence (<30 mins.-1 30 mins.-1 hour-2 1-2 hours-3 > 2 hours-4)
- How much time do you spend in school? (<4 hours-1 4-5 hours-2 5-6 hours-3 >6 hours-4)
- Do you teach only in the nursery class? If no, then what are the other classes you teach?
- Languages spoken by the teacher________________________________________________ Same as children, Different from children but speaks their language, Does not know children’s language

TEACHER TRAINING & SUPERVISION
- Type of teacher (Regular/Para/Any Other)
- Total teaching experience at ECE level
- Highest Educational Qualification:
- Any pre-service training undertaken? What was the training?
- Did you receive any in-service training during the year? If yes, what was the last training that you received?
- Is there a system for supervision of teachers in your school?
- If yes, who supervises you and how much time does he/she spend with you on the day of the visit?
- How often do they come for supervision/visit?

TEACHER’S TIME DISTRIBUTION
- Number of working days during the academic year 2012-13
- For how many days (approx.) you were on duty in the session 2012-2013?
- For how many hours does the school run every day?
- In a day, how much time goes into different activities related to teaching? (Options not to be given)
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Percentage (calculated by later)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Classroom teaching</td>
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<td>b. Filling/updating registers/taking attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Lesson planning</td>
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<td>d. Evaluating assignments</td>
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<td>e. meal distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Attending to parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Any other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

- How do you assess students’ performance? (Please tick, options not to be given)
  
  In case school has only primary class ask only about assessment in primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Pre-primary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Oral tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Unit tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Quarterly tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Half yearly tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Annual exams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Any other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In case mentioned CCE in question
- How do you conduct CCE?
FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER’S PERFORMANCE

- Do you face any difficulties in your job which affect your performance?
- If yes, what are the difficulties? (Please tick) (Options not to be given)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Having to teach more than one class at a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Large number of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Insufficient space in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Non-availability of teaching and learning material/delay in receiving textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Lack of motivation/interest among parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Irregular attendance of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Interference by parents, school management etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Assignment of non-teaching work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Insufficient salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Any other, please specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annexure 2- Case Study Framework

### Case Study Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History of the child</th>
<th>When was the child enrolled?</th>
<th>Age of the child</th>
<th>Any history of illness/special needs</th>
<th>Did the child attend any other ECE programme before this?</th>
<th>What inspired the parents to choose the ECE programme over other programmes?</th>
<th>Which primary school is the child enrolled in currently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of the family</td>
<td>What does the family members do to earn living?</td>
<td>What is the monthly income? How much do they spend on food, health and education?</td>
<td>How much do they spend on the education of this particular child?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic details of the family</td>
<td>Number of family members</td>
<td>Number of children and their ages</td>
<td>Occupational structure and ownership status (land, other assets)</td>
<td>Mother’s education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in Programme</td>
<td>What are your aspirations for your child? What is the child’s aspiration?</td>
<td>How will the programme help in fulfilling the aspirations?</td>
<td>Did he/she regularly attend the programme?</td>
<td>How many days has he been absent? What are the reasons?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Experience</td>
<td>What does your child do in preschool? List all the activities</td>
<td>What are the other service the child receives in the ECE programme? What do you think of the quality of these services and frequency?</td>
<td>Parenting education for parents</td>
<td>How do you think this benefits her/him?</td>
<td>What changes have you observed in your child from the time he has started going to nursery?</td>
<td>What are the things your child is learning in the ECE programme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Quality</td>
<td>Are you satisfied with the programme? If yes then why? If no then why?</td>
<td>How do you think the programme has been designed to match the interest of the child?</td>
<td>What is the most important aspect of the programme?</td>
<td>What are the key challenges of the programme?</td>
<td>Do you think any part of the programme could be made better?</td>
<td>Does your child get enough materials in the ECE centre? What are these?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect of the programme on the child

- Effect of the programme on child’s outcomes. Record on child’s performance over period, child’s development as seen by mother. What improvements do you observe in the child after she/he started attending the programme? Improvements in terms of skills acquired.
- Do you keep track of her/his outcomes? How? Do you participate in the affairs of the nursery?
- Does your child like to read/go through books? How many children’s books you have at home?
- Do you teach your child? In case you do not then who teaches?
- What do you think your child has learnt by going to preschool (including WASH)?
- Does she/he follow simple instructions at home, can differentiate between objects and sizes, able to recognise colours, able to solve simple problems?
- Does he carry out simple tasks at home?
- How is his/her behaviour and interactions with people younger to him and elder to him?
- Does he/she wait for her/his own turn or insists on being attended first?
- Is he/she able to clearly communicate her/his problems, ideas?

Effect of the programme on the family

- How has your child’s participation in the GNEP impacted you as a caregiver?
- What have been the changes in your life?
- How has this affected other members of the family?

Future Steps

- Is the child going to move to primary school? Where is it?
- Do you know what she/he is going to learn in primary? Do you think she/he has had a good ECE as a base to move on to primary? Why so?

---

Case Study 1: Case Study of Child from Arapaima Nursery School

About Glenson: Glenson Leo is currently 6 years old and studying in Arapaima Primary School. His mother’s name is Donna Leo. Glenson had studied for two years in Arapaima Nursery School before joining the primary school. He has a family of six members comprising of his grandparents, his parents and his elder sister. His other siblings are currently out of home and working or studying elsewhere. Glenson joined the nursery programme in 2015 and before this Glenson never went through any other early childhood education programme. His family is economically marginalised and his father does not have a full-time employment and earns only when he gets any work. His mother works in the same primary school where he is studying. His nursery school was 30 minutes by walk from his house and every day he would walk down to school.

Mother’s Expectation: The child’s mother is educated only till primary level. She has a total of five children including Glenson and all her three children have studied beyond secondary
level and one daughter is currently studying at secondary level. She wanted all her children to study so that they become independent. She knew that Glenson would learn about reading, writing and mathematics in the nursery programme which would enable him to move smoothly to grade 1.

**Nursery Years**: The mother mentioned that the nursery programme helped her child to gain skills of numeracy and literacy over two years of nursery education. The programme inspired academic interest in the child. When he would go back home, he would tell his mother what he learned in nursery school. He repeats what the teacher used to teach in class. His elder sister who is currently at the secondary level helps him with his studies at home. The programme has also inspired in Glenson the interest to participate in sports activities. His mother identifies that he enjoys playing and spends substantial time playing at home. His mother also took interest in the nursery programme and she mentioned that teachers would interact with her every time she went to school and give her feedback about how Glenson was performing in class. She also mentioned that the nursery programme influenced her son so much that he used to come back and teach certain things to his mother. He would say “mommy when you see somebody you must say good morning and if you want to talk to somebody you must say excuse me.” At home Glenson would help his mother with daily chores like gardening, washing clothes, fetch water and other such tasks.

**Primary Grade**: Currently Glenson is studying in primary grade and at this level, he is learning the same content which he learned in the nursery programme. He is again going through alphabets and numbers which he now already knows. So, this way, he is not having any learning issues with the Grade One curriculum. Thus, the nursery curriculum prepared Glenson for the formal education at primary level.

**Case Study 2: Case Study of Child with Special Need**

**About Elvin**: This is a study of a child whose name is Elvin Ornesto who is currently studying in Grade Two in a primary school. He attended Saint Ignatius nursery school for two years. His primary caregiver is his grandmother Maria Nestor. He was enrolled in the nursery programme at age three. He stays with his grandmother and his parents. Elvin has a speech impairment, which implies, he is not able to speak clearly and speaks very few words and makes sounds.

**Nursery Experience**: Elvin’s parents understood at his early age that he is speech impaired and they gave up their expectations about his learning. His grandmother took up the responsibility completely and ensured that he completes his nursery programme and moves on to formal education. When Elvin joined the programme at Saint Ignatius, he was unable to cope and he was not able to participate and learn. His teachers also were not trained enough to be able to work with him and address his special needs. When his grandmother would visit nursery school, she saw he was speaking some unclear words and there was no improvement.
This is the point (Year 1 nursery class) where his grandmother tried to teach him and help him with words. She worked with him and explained that he should observe how her lips move and try to copy the same. He would then observe her lip movements and try to pronounce the word. The grandmother started coming to the nursery school and every day she would sit with Elvin in the classes before and after lunch time and help him with the subjects. She would take the books and readers and help Elvin pronounce each word. It was only from Year 2, she started observing that Elvin could learn some words, say some numbers, etc. She would also draw animals and plants and then point out and speak to him and tell him, for example “cat”, “dog”. She further noticed his improvement by Year 2 when he would come back home and ask multiple questions about his class to his grandmother. Maria also believes that he met more people and made friends in nursery which helped him to concepts like respecting other, showing gratitude and such similar behaviours.

**At Home:** Initially because of speech impairment, he was not able to express himself especially if he was upset, he would just cry. But as he learned from his grandmother he could say words to explain what happened in school, how he is feeling. Elvin does not display any specific behavioural issues at home.

**Primary Years:** Currently he is in Grade Two and his grandmother believes that he is doing much better academically as his test scores have been improving over time. The concepts he is learning in primary is like what he learned in the nursery programme and therefore he is prepared. His grandmother also mentioned that she has never received any negative feedback about him from the primary class teachers about learning or his behaviours. She believes that the nursery years provided an opportunity for Elvin to overcome his speech impairment and move ahead. She thus believes that the nursery programme allowed her to work with her grandson so closely that she could teach Elvin, despite being discouraged by her other family members.
Annexure 3- Classroom Observation Format

Information Sheet

1. Region and Council: ________________________________

2. Name of Preschool: ________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. Timing of the Preschool:  From ____________________ till ____________________

4. Duration of the alternative Preschool Programme:
   - Less than 2 hrs  1
   - 2 to 3 hrs  2
   - 3.5 to 4.5 hrs  3
   - More than 4.5 hrs  4

5. Age composition of the class:
   - Less than 3yrs old
   - 3 year olds
   - 4 year olds
   - 5 year olds
   - 6 year olds
   - Above 6 years old
   - Mixed age group
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of teacher/s in the class:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name/s of the teachers:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/s spoken by them:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/s spoken by them at home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Children</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition of the class in terms of gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of children with special needs/Children with Disability:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of enrolled children:</th>
<th>No. of children attending (according to the register):</th>
<th>No. of children present in the class (head count):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Boys</th>
<th>Number of Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of boys:</th>
<th>No. of girls:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observer’s Name/s: _________________________  Date of observation: _____________
### Part 1: Facility and Classroom Observation

For Observation of Classroom Processes and Transactions, Qualitative Data to be entered later (After Recording the Data in the formats provided below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Infrastructure – Physical Setting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Toilet Facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Availability of water and soap/liquid soap for handwashing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Availability of water for drinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hazards around the preschool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clean/unclean surroundings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Safety level of building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Infrastructure facility for children with special needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Noise pollution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Classroom space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Storage for facilitator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sitting facility for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cleanliness of the classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Seating arrangements according to activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Learning/Play Aids, Programme Schedule, and Class Arrangement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Space and equipment for outdoor play/activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Varieties of equipment/materials for indoor learning/play activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Use of indoor learning materials in the class (specifically focus on access to and usage of locally sourced materials like sand, rocks, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Class arrangement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Age appropriateness of activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Weekly/Daily schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Class display</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Child produced display</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Class Composition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Class supervision by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>What is the age-wise composition of the class?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Teacher-child ratio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Personal Care, Hygiene and Habit Formation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Hand washing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Personal grooming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Independent toileting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Meal/snack time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Eating independently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E. Language and Reasoning Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Receptor language – children understanding language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Listening opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Expressive language – speaking opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Facilitator’s use of language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Activities for language development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Activities, materials for concepts formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Activities, materials for developing cognitive skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Activities for reading, writing and number readiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Activities for reading, writing and number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F. Fine and Gross Motor Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Children’s participation in outdoor activities for gross motor development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Activities for gross motor development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Free and guided activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Activities for fine motor development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Facilitator supervision and interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Children with special needs during play time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Interaction between girls and boys during play time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G. Creative Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Children’s participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Facilitator guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Music/songs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Children’s participation in singing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Music and movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Individual and group recitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Children’s performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H. Social Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Response to stranger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Facilitator’s greeting on arrival and departure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Children’s greeting on arrivals and departure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Cooperation and sharing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Free play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Quality of facilitator-child interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Facilitator’s disposition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Gender sensitivity and awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Sensitivity and awareness regarding needs of children with special needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2— **OBSERVATION PERFORMA** (Descriptions Provided)- This will be real time observation of the classroom processes and data recorded would be used to fill up the Classroom Observation Format Above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Time Duration (Record every ten minutes)</th>
<th>Describe all the activities going on</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Materials Used</th>
<th>Which of following did you see the children get an opportunity to learn/do?</th>
<th>Children’s level of participation</th>
<th>Who is handling the class/children?</th>
<th>Remarks (any specific observations in terms of gender, disability, other socially disadvantaged groups or any other notable observations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-10 min</td>
<td></td>
<td>01 Individual</td>
<td>01 Manipulative Material</td>
<td>01 Learn to share 02 Think and answer 03 Express curiosity and ask questions 04 Learn to wait for turn 05 Play/work with other children 06 Rote memory 07 None of the above mentioned</td>
<td>01 Most involved 02 Some involved 03 Very few involved 04 None involved</td>
<td>01 Teacher 02 Helper 03 Parents 04 Older child 05 Child from the same age group/class 06 Nobody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-20 min</td>
<td></td>
<td>02 In groups</td>
<td>02 Audio/Visual/Print Material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-30 min</td>
<td></td>
<td>03 All Children</td>
<td>03 Academic Material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>04 Any other</td>
<td>04 None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Range</td>
<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
<td>Column 3</td>
<td>Column 4</td>
<td>Column 5</td>
<td>Column 6</td>
<td>Column 7</td>
<td>Column 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-40 min</td>
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<td>40-50 min</td>
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<td>50 min- 1.00 Hr</td>
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<td>1- 1.10 hr</td>
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<td>1.10-1.20 hr</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Definitions for the observation Performa above:
Organisation - Individual/In groups/All Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the children are not interacting with each other while performing the activity and at the same time the facilitator is interacting with the children in an individual basis, the organisation would be coded as ‘individual’ (e.g. each children solving puzzles on their own, or drawing/painting on their own under the guidance of the facilitator).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the activity is performed in small groups among the children under the guidance of the facilitator the organisation of the activity would be coded as “in groups”. (e.g. a group of children are playing with blocks, another group is playing with dolls).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the activity is conducted by the facilitator with all the children together the organisation would be coded as “all children” (e.g. all the children singing songs together or reciting rhymes together under the guidance of the facilitator).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children are not organised in the above-mentioned categories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials Used (Please see in each category usage of locally sourced materials like rocks, sand, etc. and make special notes on how these are being used)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manipulative Material:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material/s that children are using themselves like building blocks, puzzles, picture books, dominoes, soft toys, paper folding, colour pencils, crayons, natural items like clay, stones, leaves, pebbles, sand, water etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audio/Visual/Print Material:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material/s that is/are used by facilitator in a facilitator led activity like picture charts, books, audio/video tapes, any other teaching aids etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Material:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material used by the children for formal reading, writing and numeracy like textbooks, readers, notebooks, pencils etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Children’s Level of Participation
Code the level of participation among the children by circling appropriate codes i.e. the number of children in the group who are actively participating in the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Involved:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three fourth or 75 percent of children are participating in the activity planned by the facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some Involved:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than three fourth or 75 percent of children and one fourth or 25 percent are participating in the activity planned by the facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Few Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children less than one fourth are participating in the activity planned by the facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No child is participating in the activity planned by the facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you see children getting an opportunity to learn/do the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learn to Share:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator gives explicit instructions to share materials during work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator resolves disputes between children voluntarily share their items with each other children regarding possessions such that there is sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Children resolve disputes regarding possessions themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator conducts activity which requires sharing or doing things together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Think &amp; Answer:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator asks questions which require children to think. The opportunities for thinking could be provided in the context of specific activities that the Facilitator is carrying out with the children and also in the context of everyday living and activities. E.g., what would happen if..., do you think Razak was right in...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator gives the children the time to think of the answer of the question; she is not impatient and does not supply the answer to the question herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator carries out activities where children have to think and complete the activity- e.g. matching cards, completing a pattern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Express Curiously and ask question:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator verbally encourages children to ask question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ When children ask question, she does not ignore them or tell them to ask later or to be quiet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learn to wait for turn:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ If materials such as crayons or books are scarce, children wait for their turn to use it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Children wait for their turn on the slide or the swing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Children wait for their turn to get food/books paper being distributed by the facilitator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Facilitator explicitly directs the children to wait for their turn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play/Work with other children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Group activities are organised where children have to interact with each other and work together to complete a task. E.g. – sticking paper on a big drawing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Team games are organised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ 2-3 children are given responsibility of distributing food/materials to the children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rote Memory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Learning by rote means that the facilitator makes children memorise numbers, alphabets or concepts by repeated drilling/ repetition. She does not make any attempt to make the children think or understand the concepts. This could be observed in any activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None of the above addressed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Activities where children don’t get to learn any of the above categories of items.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks

In this column, interaction between facilitator and children in terms of gender, disability and special group needs to be mentioned. For example, facilitator’s focuses only on boys to manage the class, the only interaction with girls is when she checks their tasks; or child with visual disability is included in some of the activities with other children and some tasks are specific to her needs, or child/children from lower caste sit at the back/on the ground and so on.

Here, one can also write down any other notable observations made during the interval of every 10 minutes every day. Such as, two children (boys/girls) in the group are very quiet, are not participating in the activity, facilitator just passes by them without paying any attention to them.
Annexure 4- Informed Consent

Oral Informed Consent
(For parents, community members and teachers)

Name of Evaluation: Evaluation of Guyana Nursery Education Programme

Introduction
This consent form contains information about the evaluation study named above. In order to be sure that you are informed about being in this evaluation, we would like you to either read or let someone read it to you. You will be asked to say out loud in front of two persons whether you agree to be part of the evaluation or not. The Ministry of Education and UNICEF Guyana are supporting this evaluation and are the sponsors of this study. Please ask us to explain anything you may not understand.

Reason for the study
The reason for this study is to evaluate the performance of the Guyana Nursery Education Programmed. This evaluation findings will inform a revision of the existing curriculum and provide strategies for a more effective implementation of nursery education in Guyana.

General Information about the Research Methods
If you agree to be in this research we will not take your name. There is a chance that some of the questions asked may make you feel uncomfortable. At any time, you may refuse to answer any question. But we hope that you will help us by being a part of this study.

Confidentiality
We will protect all information about you and your taking part in this study to the best of our ability. Your name will not be recorded anywhere. All forms will be labelled with a study code number and will only be seen by the people doing the study.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT
"I have read and explained this informed consent form to the study recruit. He/she has explained the study activities back to me and I am convinced he/she understands the activities that will occur. He/she has not been forced (coerced) and has given his/her oral consent to participate in all aspects of this study".

______________________________________________________________
Date Signature of person who obtained consent

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

______________________________________________________________
Date Signature of Witness
**Annexure 5- Terms of References of the Evaluation**

**Evaluation of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme**

**Background**
On September 13, 1976, the Government of Guyana introduced an early stimulation programme for children ages three years nine months to five years nine months. This programme, known as the Guyana Nursery Education Programme, (GNEP), offered nationally and free across difficult terrain and multi-cultural domains, is a trail blazer in the Caribbean. Children spend two years in a programme, which the Ministry states, is designed to affect the development of their socialisation and their intellectual and psychomotor skills through curriculum activities which are based mostly on child development rather than subject matter discipline. The programme is delivered in discrete nursery schools and in primary schools with nursery classes. Thirty-eight years after its implementation – in September 2014 - the GNEP changed the age requirement to allow enrolment of children who turned three years old by June 30 of the year of entry.

The day’s activities span four hours with play and multi-sensory approaches being the pillars upon which the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of young children is nurtured. Active learning through play facilitated by a variety of materials for skills development, experimentation, discovery and learning and a good mix of rest and quiet activity create opportunities to make social contacts in small and large groups; to share, cooperate and develop initiative and leadership skills. This strategy also provides the foundation for the appreciation of aesthetics and cultural experiences. Active parent and community involvement is encouraged.

Beginning in 1976 with 190 schools and a national enrolment of over 19,000, the GNEP, still not a compulsory programme, has grown with records in 2012-2013 showing a national enrolment, in public schools, of 25,968 in 363 discrete schools and 126 nursery classes. This translates into a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 89.9 percent excluding private schools. The Ministry is currently not capturing all the data from private schools but data which has been collected gives an enrolment of 1382 pupils. The national average attendance in public schools is 77 percent (74 percent boys and 79 percent girls) with a range of between 66 percent and 80 percent average attendance across Regional Education Departments. The proportion of trained teachers nationally is 69 percent.

The GNEP is bolstered by a tier system of standardised training beginning with on the job training through monthly capacity building; structured pre- and in-service teacher training leading to Associate Degrees through to post graduate certification. Specialised leadership, management and monitoring trainings in early childhood are also offered.

Over the decades, the GNEP made adjustments to various components namely programme structure/learning sessions; training strategies; monitoring techniques; age requirements to the nursery school programme; early learning standards; diagnostic and other assessments. Some of these were evidenced based while others, initiated as experiments became national without robust impact investigations.
With Nursery Education in Guyana taking responsibility for the child’s learning and development from the age of three years and six months and leading the way in structured programming for this age cohort, it is incumbent on the Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Education to provide the children in their charge with equal opportunities to play and learn in quality learning spaces for reaching their optimum potential. After 40 years of its implementation, this evaluation of the last 10 years is critical to ensuring that the goals, strategies for nursery education in Guyana are consistent with global frameworks; meet the equity agenda; respond to new research findings while maintaining its cultural appropriateness. The findings of the evaluation will inform an analytical review of key achievements, good practices, gaps and constraints that need to be addressed, towards the overall improvement of the nursery education programme in Guyana.

**The Purpose of the Evaluation**
This exercise set out to evaluate the performance of the Guyana Nursery Education Programme as regards effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Cross cutting considerations will also be assessed. This evaluation is timely as the findings will inform a revision of the existing curriculum and provide strategies for a more effective implementation of nursery education in Guyana.

- To determine whether the quality of the GNEP offered to children and their parents, over the last 40 years, has achieved their objectives and to what extent.
- Based on the findings with regards to number 1, identify sources, facilitating factors and challenges encountered in the GNEP
- Drawing on findings in 1 and 2 compile lessons learned and elaborate their implications for the future of the GNEP.

**Scope and Focus/Objectives**
The evaluation will provide answers to the following questions:

**Relevance**
- To what extent does the nursery education programme contribute to the achievement of the SDGs?
- To what extent does the Nursery education programme focus on the development of the whole child (emotional, social, mental, physical and spiritual)?

**Effectiveness**
- To what extent have the intended outcomes of the GNEP been realised?
- Has the GNEP led to better preparation for primary education?
- Are educators in nursery education provided with the right types of skills and competencies during their formal training?

**Efficiency**
- How cost effective is the current approach to manage and implement the nursery education programme?
- How can the cost/benefit in the Nursery education implementation be maximised?
- Have the nursery education standards and guidelines been implemented in a standardised way? If so, to what extent?
• What are the enabling factors for and or hindrances to the effective implementation of the GNEP
• Is the Nursery education delivered in a culturally appropriate manner?

**Impact** *(Though not wholly an impact evaluation, the impact of the programme will also be assessed.)*
• To what extent has the GNEP been implemented according to more than 90 percent of the guidelines?
• To what extent has the GNEP helped children to be developmentally on track?
• To what extent has the GNEP led to a reduction in on-time enrolment at primary school
• What is the impact of the GNEP on the knowledge, attitude and practices of the families?
• What is the impact of the GNEP on performance of children in primary schools?
• To what extent has the GNEP contributed to the reduction in children’s negative social behaviours?

**Sustainability**
• To what extent are the GNEP implementation and management arrangements and funding sustainable?
• What recommendations and lessons learnt in the GNEP should be considered for the future?
• What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in GNEP and how have they been addressed?

**Cross cutting contributions**
• To what extent has the GNEP included issues of gender equity, abuse and disaster preparedness?

The materials listed below will be made available to the consultant and are expected to be reviewed and referenced, as relevant, in the inception and final reports.

• The goals and objectives of the nursery education programme
• The nursery education curriculum and learning schedules
• The teacher training curriculum for nursery education
• Documents which have given direction to change in policy; assessments etc.
• Available handbook on Nursery Education in Guyana
• All related statistics on nursery education - the statistical booklet
• Reports of initiates – government and donor supported - to enhance the local nursery education programme
Evaluation process and methodology:

The consultant will commence work on July 1, 2017 and by the 30th of November, 2017 would have concluded and submitted the final report which would have incorporated the recommendations after review by MOE and UNICEF.

The consultant is expected to work closely with the key officials of Ministry of Education and UNICEF. This evaluation is qualitative and the consultant will design, conduct, and analyse participatory In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with duty bearers. Data will be collected from teachers, the communities and families of students, in Nursery education; Head teachers of Nursery Schools Regional Education Officers, other key stakeholders of the Ministry of Education.

The evaluation will be conducted in three phases i.e. 1. the inception, 2. the data collection and 3. the data analysis and report writing phases. These phases will be implemented in the stated numerical order as the completion of phase 1 is crucial for the preparation and conduct of phase 2 and both for phase 3. Once these phases are conducted the implementation of the evaluation is expected to be complete.

Phase 1: Desk review, interviews with key stakeholders, development of research instruments, and submission of inception report

- **Conduct a desk review**: Review will include but not be limited to limited policy documents and all other relevant documents as listed above; reports from feedback workshops- Monitoring documents. Existing quantitative data will also be considered in the desk review.
- **Key stakeholder interviews**: Chief Education Officer (CEO); Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO) (Nursery), MOE Chief Planning Officer, UNICEF, World Bank, Project Heads; teachers, parents/guardians; Regional Education Officers and District Education Officers; ECD Field Officers
- **An Inception Report must be submitted**: The inception report will include an evaluation matrix i.e. a table showing how each evaluation question will be answered and how the information will be collected.
- Development of research instruments IDI, FGD, Classroom Observation checklist and other instruments
- Meetings with other national stakeholders

Phase 2: Data collection

The consultant is expected to work with an in-country team to conduct IDIs with key personnel of the MOE and UNICEF. S/he is also expected to;

- conduct IDI with Head teachers and other teachers
- conduct IDI and FGDs with Regional Education Officers, community members;
- Classroom Observations ....
- Individual interviews with parents/caregivers
• Progress report to be submitted and presented on ..., 2017
• Meet with Stakeholders

Phase 3: Data Analysis, sharing of findings and writing of report

The consultant will be responsible for the data analysis, writing the report and presentation of findings to partners

□ For the data analysis, the grounded theory methodology will be used, involving verbatim transcription, coding of data, development of themes, comparison and contrasting of themes and recording of findings and theoretical propositions.

□ The safety of data during the data collection phase will be the total responsibility of the researcher; all information gathered for this evaluation is the property of MoE and UNICEF. No data collected and or reviewed for this evaluation or data to which the evaluator is privileged during time of the evaluation as direct or indirect result of being the evaluator for this evaluation, can be shared and or used by the evaluator neither can s/he approve the use of the whole or any part of it for personal or professional purposes without approval in writing from Ministry of Education and UNICEF combined.

□ The main findings will be presented by the consultant to National Stakeholders and sufficient time will be allocated for comments

□ The writing of the report should be done in constant communication with UNICEF and MoE.

□ The final report will be approved by UNICEF and MoE

Ethical Consideration

To ensure that the key ethical principles for the conduct of evaluation involving human subjects are followed, each potential respondent will be given full information about the evaluation including the purpose and potential benefits of the evaluation, their rights, and how the information collected will be used. They will also be informed that all data will be kept confidentially being only accessible by members of the assessment team. Verbal consent will be collected from all those who agree to participate. (The person receiving the consent and a witness will sign the consent form). All participants will be informed of their right to discontinue their participation at any point and approaches for ensuring confidentiality will be described.

Stakeholder Participation

National level stakeholders will be instrumental in the planning of the implementation of the evaluation to scale and the review of deliverables among other things. Stakeholders will be instrumental in the review of deliverables and providing critical feedback towards their finalisation. These stakeholders include:

• Ministry of Education and other relevant ministries – Ministry of Public Health; Ministry of Social Protection; Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs; Ministry of Communities
• Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana
• UNICEF Other national / international partners
• Representation from the Parent Teachers Associations across country
• Regional and District Education Officers
• ECD Field Officers

Qualifications and Experience

This consultancy is for one consultant (Person/Firm) who must possess the following competencies:
• An Advanced University Degree in Social Sciences, Anthropology, Sociology, education. A specialisation in early childhood/ nursery education will be an advantage
• A minimum of eight years of professional experience in designing, implementing and supervising Monitoring and Evaluation programmes and particularly early childhood development and education
• Proven experience in leading and managing outcome and impact evaluations. Good understanding of evaluation methodologies and UNEG norms and standards for Evaluation.
• Clarity of understanding and conceptualisation of early childhood / nursery education issues including the relationship to analysis of barriers and bottlenecks to educational participation,
• A good understanding of equity issues in education
• Proven analytical skills and experiences lending to the ability to identify and evaluate best practices and innovative approaches to be utilised by the project
• Excellent English writing skills
• Strong organisational and presentation skills

Accountabilities

UNICEF will:
• Meet initially with the Consultant, the Chief Planning Officer of the MoE, and other staff identified by the MOE
• Review inception report and provide feedback for adjustment
• Review data collection instruments prepared by consultant
• Attend briefing meetings
• Review draft report
• Review and approve final report before final payment is made to consultant

The MOE will:
• Initiate meeting with MOE Officials, UNICEF and other stakeholders
• Prepare and inform Regional Education Officers, Head teachers and parents outlying the purpose of the consultancy and the role they are expected to play.
• Provide the consultant with letters to be presented to key stakeholders including head teachers, parents and Regional Education Officers
• Provide the consultant with materials which will include various monitoring and other reports for as requested by the consultant.
• Review consultant’s inception report and data collection instruments
The Consultant will:
- The Lead researcher may use the services of an in-country researcher for fieldwork
- Meet initially with officials from the MOE and UNICEF to discuss the consultancy and timelines in detail.
- Will review all documents as provided by the ACEO Nursery
- Submit inception report which will include desk review, data collection instruments, evaluation matrix, work plan for the evaluation and the outline for the final report. Incorporate feedback from UNICEF and MOE and finalise inception report before proceeding for fieldwork.
- Conduct fieldwork and coordinate all activities including with the office of the Planning Unit and the Assistant Chief Education Officer, Nursery. Education (ACEON)
- Prepare draft periodic reports for discussion with UNICEF and MOE
- Discuss Preliminary findings with the Chief Planning Officer and the ACEON, key Ministry of Education Officials and Evaluation Steering Committee
- Prepare and submit comprehensive final report
- The consultant shall act in a manner within the laws of the country of Guyana.

Deliverables and Timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Main components</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Inception Report     | • Clearly outlined work plan including timelines and strategies for each phase of the study including sampling methodology  
                        • An evaluation matrix i.e. a table showing questions to be answered by the research and how the information will be collected to answer each question.  
                        • Comprehensive document review report  
                        • Interview schedule, data collection instruments i.e. FDG guides,IDI guides and classroom observation checklist along with the relevant consent and ascent forms.  
                        • Outline of final report         | 2 Week   |
| Draft Report (in line with UNEG and UNICEF’s Global guidelines on reporting standards) | • Report based on the agreed outline in the inception report, using collected data transcription of interview, coded transcripts of data according to themes checklists and notes on observations and field visits  
An Oral presentation of main findings to UNICEF and MOE on:  
• Key findings and recommendations  
• Constraints, challenges and other critical factors of research implementation  
• Outline of the next steps | 8 weeks |
| Final Report (in line with UNEG and UNICEF’s Global guidelines on reporting standards) | • Final Report based on comments on the draft report, together with the Executive Summary no longer than three pages. | 2 weeks |
### Annexure 6 - Evidence, Consideration and Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>CONSIDERATION</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legislation and Policies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no policies or legislations for nursery education in the country. The only document available is the Education Sector Plan.</td>
<td>The nursery programme is currently neither a compulsory provision and nor an entitlement. The scope, success and budget of the programme would continue to depend on the political will towards the early childhood sub-sector and parental participation in the programme (parents opting to enrol children at nursery level).</td>
<td>Formulate legislation for early childhood development in the country which may include the nursery education as a compulsory programme for children between three and six years of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no operational implementation frameworks. Hence rules supporting the proposed legislation would be crucial implementation guidelines for the Regional Departments, specifying roles, responsibilities and resources.</td>
<td>The Regional Education Departments follow the target indicators under the nursery sub-sector plan which derived from Education Sector Plan. Apart from that there are non-academic norms and a monitoring checklist are followed for implementation.</td>
<td>Recommended legislation for nursery education may consider developing supporting rules to ensure that the departments of education in the Regions are responsible and accountable for enrolling every child in the nursery age group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning and Technical Assistance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently the target setting is through the Education Sector Plan. The Education Sector Plan targets are not based on the SDG indicators. There is currently no exercise on measuring the gap, analysing what would it cost and what strategies would it take if SDG indicator has to be achieved in next 15 years.</td>
<td>There has been no such exercise that has been undertaken as of now</td>
<td>Analyse the current situation with regard to equitable access to nursery education in the country and execute an exercise in target setting to ensure, the SDG indicator is achieved in the course of 15 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no publicly available data on the multi grade classroom situation in the country. Currently the</td>
<td></td>
<td>Specific strategy paper on multi grade classrooms may be developed to focus on these classrooms and ensure trained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The GECEP project is aiming to train teachers from riverine and hinterland areas on literacy and numeracy (which includes teachers from multi grade classes), however this is a recent initiative. The teachers in multi grade situations in most cases do not have qualifications in early childhood education which makes the situation more complex.

The Ministry of Child Protection works with private nursery and day care service providers for accreditation private services to ensure safety of young children. However, there is no work with the Ministry of Education. Currently there is no convergence between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Protection.

The current expenditure budgeted for 2018 are higher than the 2017 budget. The component ‘other operating expenses’ has the highest expenditure. This component ‘other operating expenses’ comprises of events at national level and other levels, meals and refreshment and other expenses and within this the share of other expenses is the highest. However, it is not defined in the budget documents as to what constitutes the other expenses. The expenditure of children to teacher ratio is well within the norm (the norm is to 20 children to one teacher) for all the nursery schools and classes, the challenge is that there are few trained teachers available and therefore children to trained teacher ratio is high especially in hinterland and riverine regions where multi grade classrooms are in place. The non-academic norms do not specify the ratio for children to trained teacher.

Develop action plans to intervene in nursery classrooms to work with teachers, develop safety protocols, conduct safety drills for emergency situations and disasters, work with teachers and children on issues of abuse and neglect children in nursery may be facing.

Currently the public expenditure is more focused towards providing physical inputs (including infrastructure) for improving access, increasing enrolment but with limited focus on interventions in quality improvement of the programme and thus influencing learning.

Develop an outcome-based budgeting method in nursery sub-sector which would ensure maximum and efficient resource allocation towards improving education quality and effectiveness.
on quality interventions are covered under ‘Education Subventions and Training’ which comprise of the education interventions and trainings of personnel and ‘Materials, Equipment and Supplies’ which comprises of drugs and material supplies, field materials, print and non-print materials and office supplies. One of the key areas of expenditure under the Education Subvention is the school uniform programme for nursery education which comprises G$75380 for each year (2017 and 2018), which is 89 percent of the total expenditure under education subventions for both the years.

As per the budget 2017 the budget for nursery education was GY$2,107,612 which is the lowest among all the education sub-sectors. There has been no calculation of costs and benefits of this investment or any kind of economic forecasting of returns to this.

REDOs are currently involved in monitoring nursery schools only in terms of fund transfers and infrastructural requirements. They are not engaged in monitoring programme content, teacher quality or any substantive aspect of nursery education. REDOs have expressed that they face challenges in monitoring programme content and delivery.

Regional Education and Development Officers receive 18 months of training programme on education management but no specific technical training on nursery education and hence they face challenges in monitoring programme content, classroom transaction and in providing technical support.

Regional Education Departments may be supported in terms of providing technical training to the Regional Education Development Officers to build their capacities so that they are able to monitor education quality in nursery programme and provide technical support to schools.

A value for money study may be carried out to estimate the total investment in early childhood and the optimum investment required to reach the desired rate of return, as an impact of the investment.
## Standards and Benchmarks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Under the GNEP, NCERD has developed literacy and numeracy standards or benchmarks. These are learning standards developed to guide curriculum and learning materials and to measure children’s achievement on literacy and numeracy. Apart from these the country has developed non-academic norms which are mostly for physical infrastructure, child to teacher ratio and other related indicators.</th>
<th>National Quality Standards are a set of statements of expectations to assure that the nursery education services are of high quality. They provide a structure for early childhood education practitioners/teachers to systematically evaluate themselves and the programme and improve their services and teaching and learning practices. The standards create a common and shared understanding of quality nursery being provided through different models.</th>
<th>Developing comprehensive and progressive National Quality Standards for nursery programme to provide specific indicators and guidelines to programme implementers and nursery schools and classes on quality improvement.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCERD has been responsible for the development and implementation of the literacy and numeracy standards. These standards have been developed keeping in view the international best practices and Regional Guidelines on Early Childhood Development Services.</td>
<td>The literacy and numeracy benchmarks have not been field tested and validated</td>
<td>Ministry of Education should conduct field testing and reviewing (based on evidence from field) of the numeracy and literacy learning standards, which would ensure the standards are validated and contextualised to Guyanese context.</td>
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## Programme Content

| A review of the prescribed time tables also reveals free play is scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00hrs to 8:25hrs. It was observed during the classroom observations that children reach nursery school/class between 8:00hrs to 8:30hrs and then the teacher conducts an assembly session. Hence, in every day practise, there is no sufficient time in the beginning of the day, left for | Currently teachers have been provided with national scheme, which has week wise topics and a prescribed time table with allocated time for each type of activity. | The Ministry of Education should review the national time table and the national scheme of work toward a national curriculum framework which would look at all the domains of child development and at the same time not be prescriptive thus leaving opportunity in the time table and curriculum framework for teachers to creatively and innovatively plan a part of time each day. |
free play activities. It can also be noted that free play is only scheduled for 3 days a week which is not sufficient if the programme is aiming to implement a holistic curriculum.

Transition involves parents and children attending some primary classes and teachers explain the parents about the primary school, the facilities etc.

Currently there is no content or programmatic approach to support transition of children from nursery to primary grade.

Develop a school readiness programme for children joining Grade One to ensure a smooth and seamless transition in from nursery to Grade One curriculum.

The diagnostic assessment assesses the academic preparedness of young children before they are entering primary school. The assessment was administered to a sample of Year 1 nursery students (N=710), 364 girls and 344 boys who are in age brackets of three years six months and three years nine months. The same cohort was followed in Year 2.

There is a need for a national assessment to capture learning outcomes data on other domains of child development.

A National Diagnostic Assessment may consider going beyond assessing academic preparedness and assess all development domains through a whole child approach.

### Teacher Training

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher training standards have been developed by the Ministry of Education and the document is available. Currently these standards have not been factored into the teacher preparation courses.</th>
<th>Teacher training standards are important benchmarks for revising the teacher preparation courses to ensure these courses contribute to the achievement of these standards.</th>
<th>The Ministry of Education, the Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana collaboratively develop strategies to integrate the teacher education standards in the nursery teacher training certificate and the Bachelor’s programme.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The professional development courses are not compulsory for teachers and it is left to their discretion. Teachers working for more than a decade may not have gone through in-service training or have not opted for any professional development course.</td>
<td>The Ministry of Education does not have any policy for compulsory in-service/refresher trainings for teachers. Most recently trainings on literacy and numeracy have been provided to teachers in hinterland and riverine Regions under the GECEP.</td>
<td>The Ministry of Education may consider developing a written policy on compulsory and regular ‘in-service’ teacher training and develop appropriate strategies to implement the policy.</td>
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</table>
Currently teachers use lots of rote memorisation methods in classroom transaction and because they feel restricted by the time table, they are unable to use innovation learning methods on their own.

Teacher training needs to build teacher capacities on using materials and play corners in an interactive manner and include these in everyday pedagogical practices.

The teacher training may include topics like using each play corner, defining and demonstrating small group activities, attribute of a nursery teacher and class disposition.

Children with learning challenges and special needs in most of the classrooms visited and they remain left out from the learning process as teachers are not trained to handle and work with these children.

This is not considered in any part of teacher training and the only available programme for teachers is a short term professional development course (offered by NCERD) which is discretionary. The GECEP project is also not working in this area.

The Ministry with support from Development Partners should develop a training programme and strategy for training of teachers on working with children who have special needs and children with learning difficulties.

<table>
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<th>Monitoring and Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Planning Department follows the Education Sector Plan to monitor the targets in the nursery education sector and these targets are mostly aimed at physical and financial progress. These targets are not linked to the SDG and there is no clarity in term of how the SDG would be met in next 15 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Currently there is no logical framework for the nursery education programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ministry of Education should develop a logical framework for the nursery education programme which would clearly define the goals, outcomes, outputs, processes and inputs.</td>
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</table>

The monitoring and evaluation structure of the nursery programme is complex. The following are the different monitoring mechanisms under GNEP:

- Monitoring and technical support by NFO
- Monitoring by REDO
- Monitoring by Monitoring, Evaluation, Research Development Unit (MERD)
- Monitoring by Planning

Currently there are multiple stakeholders involved in monitoring of the GNEP and multiple tools being used. These tools are capturing similar data and the parallel monitoring processes are not streamlined.

Currently there are multiple monitoring mechanisms and tools being currently used and based on the review aim at streamlining the different process (by different stakeholders) being currently used and developing a set of common monitoring tools. These tools may be piloted and validated and then may be considered for us by the different stakeholders. This would ensure no duplication and thus make the process more efficient.
| Department, Government of Guyana | The statistical digest does not have data beyond 2011-12. | The Ministry of Education should work further on the Statistical Digest to develop an Education Management and Information System (EMIS) to capture regular updated and periodic data on select and contextualised indicators which would enable Ministry to review the goals and national plans of the nursery programme. |

|  | Currently there is no EMIS. Statistical Digest is the only platform where data is uploaded for the nursery programme. | It was found through interviews with NFOs and Regional Departments that there is no fixed norm of an NFO being responsible for certain number of nurseries. In some places, the number of NFOs are adequate and in some places, they are not and this impacts the onsite supervision process. |

|  | Currently there is no assessment of work load of the NFOs and there is no clear picture on the responsibility mapping of the field officers. | The Ministry of Education should conduct a mapping exercise which would document number of nursery field officers in each region, number of nurseries each officer is responsible for, frequency of monitoring visits and the challenges and issues faced by them. |

|  | The NFOs received an initial 18-month training. However, refresher or follow ups are crucial to ensure quality of supervision on field and also to ensure their skills are upgraded with time. | The Ministry of Education should develop a logical framework for the nursery education programme which would clearly define the goals, outcomes, outputs, processes and inputs. |

|  | The NFOs have not received training after the initial 18 months programme they have gone through. |  |