

Voices from the Field

Validating Data Collection Results: Outcome Evaluation of the Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund

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With help from the European Union, the Swedish Government and UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports designed and established the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) to help the Ministry at both national and sub-national levels implement capacity development strategies in Cambodia's education sector. To date, two phases of the CPDF have been implemented. Phase I began in November 2011 and the Fund continued into Phase II in 2014. Phase II will ended in December 2017 and the third phase of CDPF will begin in mid-2018.

With the third phase quickly approaching, the CDPF Steering Committee Secretariat commissioned an external outcome evaluation of both Phase I and II. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations that will inform the positioning of capacity development in the formulation of the CDPF Phase III, to ensure that lessons learned from CDPF Phase II are documented, and to guarantee accountability of CDPF II towards donors, MoEYS, teachers and children.

The evaluation team, led by team leader Frans Van Gerwen, recently completed the evaluation. During the field work phase of the evaluation, they conducted 16 case studies on different outcome areas of CDPF Phase II; these consisted of cascading studies, specific studies and national studies. They undertook 12 district-level visits, 6 of which were in the Provincial administrative capitals, where they conducted key informant interviews, group interviews and focus group meetings. With the help of the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), that partners with UNICEF on CDPF, the evaluation team could distribute surveys to 810 respondents, consisting of Provincial Office of Education staff, District Office of Education staff and school directors, in 42 districts in 19 provinces. The response rate of these surveys was over 75 per cent. Following the completion of the data collection phase, the evaluation team could formulate preliminary findings and conclusions.

After the completion of the field work, the evaluation team held a multi-stakeholder debriefing and validation workshop at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Phnom Penh. In attendance were representatives from UNICEF, SIDA, the EU, VSO, CARE, and MoEYS. **It is fundamental to plan a validation workshop at the end of data collection, because it allows key stakeholders to provide input, point out any missing gaps or inaccuracies in the research, and to validate, comment on, and prioritize the preliminary findings and conclusions.** Although this was the last opportunity for the stakeholders to provide input prior to the findings and conclusions becoming recommendations, they had further opportunity to comment on findings when reviewing the draft report and final report.

The workshop began with introductions followed by a presentation of three case studies by the evaluation team.

After the case study presentations, the evaluation team presented a total of 19 preliminary findings to the stakeholders. Following the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria, the findings fell into the categories of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coordination, sustainability and gender and equity; impact was not included, however, because it is too early in the implementation of CDPF to assess long-term impacts.

Perhaps the most effective and informative component of the workshop was the breakout sessions where the stakeholders were split into three working-groups to discuss the findings. Each group was assigned a portion of the findings and prompted to consider two questions when analysing a finding: (1) Do you recognize this preliminary finding/conclusion and where can you provide additional 'supporting proof' (if not yet in possession of evaluators)? and (2) Which aspects of this finding/conclusion do you not recognize? Can you provide additional 'contradicting proof'? After productive discussions, each group reported back to the rest of the stakeholders. The different groups offered meaningful feedback and provided their approval, or disapproval, for each finding.



The second breakout session concerned the prioritization of the findings. The break-out groups once again assembled and decided on what they collectively thought to be the three most important findings. A short presentation of priorities was provided by each group in the following plenary session.

Breakout sessions are a crucial and necessary component to a validation workshop. During this step, the members of the reference group and other stakeholders were given the opportunity to discuss the findings of the data collection in

smaller groups which effectively allowed all workshop participants to contribute to finalizing the findings and conclusions, and ultimately, to formulate the recommendations.

Each stakeholder was also given the opportunity to prioritize the findings on their own, ordering each priority from most important to least important. The prioritization of the findings and conclusions offered by both the working groups and the individual stakeholders grants the evaluation team a better understanding of what findings they should focus on and expand upon for the final report.

With the conclusion of the validation workshop, the field work phase of the evaluation also came to an end. Frans Van Gerwen and the rest of the evaluation team felt confident in their preliminary findings and conclusions, and could use the discoveries and breakthroughs from the workshop to finalize their findings and provide meaningful recommendations to inform Phase III of the CDPF. Click [here](#) to read the final report of the outcome evaluation and find out more.