

EVALUATION BRIEF

MIDTERM REVIEW REPORT - EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT IN GIA LAI PROVINCE

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

Overall the project has led to positive change for children, particularly those aged 0-3.

Teachers and parents/caregivers knowledge and skills significantly improved.

Children from ethnic minorities now have access to culturally-appropriate teaching and resources.

Community trust needs to be secured by completing construction of pre-schools and provision of school equipment.

Obstacles, such as slow implementation and the need for an agreed sustainability plan need to be addressed.



ABOUT THE ACTIVITY AND REVIEW

This project was designed to improve education for children in Gia Lai province, particularly ethnic minority children in disadvantaged areas. The project had four components:

- Improved education for children aged 0-3 years. This included support for parents to deliver early stimulation to their children in the home.
- Children aged 3-5 participating in quality and culturally appropriate early childhood education.
- Improved transition to primary school for children aged 6-8 in ethnic minority areas.
- Improved and integrated policy environment related to early childhood education.

The project was implemented by the Gia Lai Department of Education and Training and Plan International. Funding was provided by MFAT and Plan Australia. The project was implemented in seven communes across four districts in Gia Lai province.

The review evaluated the progress, the management and implementation of the project to date. It also recommended necessary adjustments to achieve its objectives. It focused on the performance, relevance, sustainability and management of the project.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE?

The report provided recommendations across two main themes:

1. Implementation: Ensure parents and teachers change their behaviour i.e. move from "knowing" to "doing" and school construction and procurement is completed, extending project timeframe if required.
2. Sustainability: Improve project ownership particularly at provincial level, especially through development of an agreed sustainability plan.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

MFAT, Plan International and the Gia Lai authorities implemented the Management Response to recommendations in July 2016. These are ongoing as at March 2017.

DETAILS ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Completed by: Kieu Thi Bich Thuy, Dr. Luong Minh Phuong, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Thi My Trinh, Vu Huyen Trinh, and Nguyen Tien Dung for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

WHAT HAS WORKED WELL?

Overall, the project has led to positive change for children. During implementation, structures and mechanisms for cooperation with partners were developed. This included strong support and active participation from local partners.

The “community” component has significantly improved knowledge and skills of parents/caregivers. The following has been achieved:

- Publishing a culturally relevant parenting curriculum
- 21 parents groups, 14 child play groups, 28 child play and reading groups are now operational
- Establishment of both trainer and volunteer networks for facilitating community groups.

The capacity of community volunteers to support parents/child-care givers has also improved bringing positive changes in children, particularly those aged 0-3.

The “preschool education” component has led to more confident children. Reference materials relevant to cultures and contexts of ethnic minorities were developed. Training was undertaken that met the needs of preschool teachers and managers, thus improving access to quality education for pre-school children.

The “primary education” component achieved good results. Guidelines were completed for culturally relevant instructional content and capacity for teaching ethnic minority students was improved. The active teaching method for teachers was introduced alongside a friendly learning environment initiative. Training courses improved teacher awareness, professional knowledge and teaching. This resulted in sustainable learning outcomes for children thanks to active participation and community support.

The “policy environment” component ensured lessons were systematically captured from other ECD projects in Vietnam. Evidence was documented from interventions and a local ECD network was set up. Notably, a database was developed to capture evidence and good practice for ECD, thus providing a good base for the national ECCD network.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE?

The project has not achieved all outputs, for example, the construction of preschools and provision of equipment was not yet completed. This delay adversely affected progress and local buy-in because local authorities and communities had high expectations of completed construction.

There were some obstacles that negatively affected quality and progress. This included a lack of autonomy, weak management roles and poor participation of the Management Board and the Technical Support Groups. This constrained ownership and the sense of responsibility of local partners. Consequently, sustainability of results were viewed as modest and unstable by stakeholders.

Some results are not yet sustainable due to limited practicing opportunities for some parents, the knowledge and skills of some volunteers and monitoring and technical supports of officers at commune level. The Provincial Project Management Board had not yet approved replication to other project sites and income-generating initiatives had just been implemented so effectiveness cannot yet be assessed.

EVALUATION INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM THE MFAT WEBSITE: WWW.MFAT.GOV.TZ

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