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Early Childhood Care and Development in Gia Lai Province



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NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Aid Programme

MIDTERM REVIEW REPORT

Project „Early Childhood Care and Development in Gia Lai Province“

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Photo : A meeting of one child play and reading group in De Ba Village.

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Abbreviations

ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EM	Ethnic Minority
CTT	Core Teacher Training
BOET	Bureau of Education and Training
DOET	Department of Education and Training
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PTM	Professional Teacher Meeting
PMB	Project Management Board
NZAP	New Zealand Aid Program
WU	Women's Union

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Consultant Team

Executive Summary

Project Overview

The Early Childhood Care and Development Project in Gia Lai province (June 2012 - March 2017) has been designed with an aim of improving and maintaining the development results of children aged 0-8 in Gia Lai province, particularly ethnic minority children in the most disadvantaged areas. The project has four specific objectives including: (i) Improved young children's development status, with a focus on age group 0-3, through enhanced support from community-based care and early stimulation initiatives in targeted communities; (ii) All children aged 3-5 participate in quality and culturally appropriate formal or non-formal early learning opportunities, including a dedicated school readiness program for 5 years old; (iii) Improved quality of pre-school to primary school transition of children aged 6-8 in ethnic minority areas; (iii) An improved and more integrated policy environment related to ECCD.

The project has been being implemented by Department of Education and Training of Gia Lai province and Plan International in Viet Nam with the fund from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand and Plan Australia. The project has been carried out in 7 communes of 4 districts of Gia Lai province, namely Tu An commune (An Khe district), Ya Hoi and Yang Bac communes (Dak Po district), Kroong and To Tung communes (Kbang district), and Kong Yang and Yang Nam communes (Kong Chro district).

Objectives and methodology of the review

The midterm review evaluates the progress, the management and implementation approach of the project, and puts forward the necessary adjustments in order to achieve its set objectives and goal. The review focuses on the evaluation of the performance, relevance, sustainability and management of the project.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, specifically: desk-study, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and questionnaires for parents of children aged 0-8 and community volunteers. This MTR report has been written on the basis of data from 53 in-depth interviews and 24 focus group discussions; 6 case studies and 30 observations; 141 questionnaires of volunteers and parents aged 0-8. The review used the software Transana 2.52 for the analysis of the qualitative data, and SPSS for that of the quantitative data.

Key findings

After 3 years of implementation, the ECCD project shows the relatively good outputs about the capacity of parents, local authorities, community people, educational administrators and teachers of preschool and primary schools. As a result, the project has brought about the significant changes of children's development. However, the project has not achieved some outputs as scheduled, for example, the construction of preschools and provision of their equipment. This delay adversely affected the progress of the project and its already-attained results because the local authorities and communities have had high expectations of the infrastructure construction.

During the implementation process, the project has developed an organization structure and cooperation mechanism among different partners from the national level to commune/village

level and received the strong supports as well as the active participation of the local partners. Nevertheless, the project has been encountering some big obstacles that have negatively affected the quality and progress of the project. The low autonomy, weak leading roles and poor participation of the Project Management Board and the Technical Support Groups at the provincial level in the project activities have been seen as the greatest challenge. This constrained the ownership and the sense of responsibility of the local partners of the project activities. Consequently, the sustainability of the achieved results was assessed to be modest and unstable by the concerned stakeholders.

Project Performance

➤ The “community” component obtained the outputs, short-term and medium outcomes at a quite good level and to be relevant with the needs of community. The project developed and published culturally relevant parenting curriculum; established and operated 21 parents groups (parents of children aged 0-8), 14 child play groups (0-3 years old), 28 child play and reading groups (4-11 years old); developed a core trainer network (40 persons) and a volunteer network (126 persons) for facilitating the community groups. As such, knowledge and skills of parents/caregivers about early childhood caring and development have been significantly improved. Additionally, the capacity of community volunteers of supporting parents/child-care givers about early childhood cares and development, of facilitating and organizing community groups has been remarkably upgraded. This has brought about the significant changes in terms of physical body, language, cognition and emotion of children, particularly children at the age of 0-3. However, the achieved results have not yet been secured to be sustainable because of three main reasons: (i) the practicing opportunities of some parents of child cares and education remains limited; (ii) knowledge and skills of some volunteers regarding facilitating community groups remain very poor; (iii) the monitoring and technical supports of some core officers at commune level are still ineffective; (iv) the Provincial Project Management Board has not yet approved the replication plan of community groups to the out-of-project sites proposed by the provincial women’s union; and (v) the income-generating initiatives of community groups have just been implemented so their effectiveness has not possibly been assessed at this stage. The expenditure of this project component is quite good, over 70% of its allocated 3-year budget in total.

➤ The “preschool education” component achieved the outputs at the modest level in terms of both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The project completed the development of reference materials relevant to the cultures and living contexts of ethnic minorities and improvement of capacity for preschool teachers and managers regard the implementation of the new preschool curriculum. The training contents have met the needs of preschool teachers and managers. The better capacity of this target group has significantly improved access to quality education of preschool children. As a result, children have become more confident and active in communication. They could well speak and understand Vietnamese language, effectively perform the requirements of preschool teachers. However, the delay of construction of preschool infrastructures and facilities and the provision of teaching and learning equipment as well as indoor, outdoor play toys adversely affects the trust of community. Additionally, it also causes difficulties in directing the implementation of the project of local authorities. The project implementers are currently making great efforts in accelerating this construction process and the provision of equipment through enhancing the participation of concerned stakeholders and receiving the advices and assessments of construction consultants that ensure the proper following of necessary standards and procedures as well as requirements of the donors. Because the budget allocated for the preschool construction and the provision of teaching and learning equipment as well as play

facilities accounts for over 90% of the total budget of this component, its expenditure is quite low, only 8.9%.

➤ The „primary education“ component achieved the output and result indicators at a good level. The project completed the indicators as scheduled in the project plans with the relevant and effective adjustments. To be specific, the project completed the compilation of a guideline material on implementing the culturally relevant instructional contents; improved the capacity of teaching ethnic minority students and using the active teaching method for 31 core teachers and 220 teachers; implemented the initiatives of building friendly learning environment (including 9 friendly libraries in 9 primary main schools and 40 mobile libraries in the project satellite schools). The outputs and results of the project met the needs of the target groups. The training courses effectively improved awareness, professional knowledge, teaching method and skills of teachers and administrators, and adequately provided the teaching and learning conditions. As a result, children like schools, actively participate in the school activities and hence, the learning outcomes of children become much better. The sustainability of the project results of this component is assessed to be quite high because the project promoted the active participation and supports of community in the implementation of the initiatives on building friendly learning environment, successfully encouraged teachers and administrators to actively adopt the knowledge and skills into the teaching practice; strongly secured the usefulness and practicality of the materials for teachers in terms of culturally relevant teaching for Bahna children. However, the replication of the achieved results remains limited because of the poor participation of the provincial project management board into the project activities. Although the project attained almost all the output and result indicators as indicated in the plans, the expenditure reached the relatively good level (62% of the total three-year budget of this component). This can be explained by a remarkable amount of budget saved owing to the combination and adjustments of some activities in order to ensure the relevance of the project activities with the local contexts. Moreover, the activity of building capacity for parents to support teachers to reduce the language barriers in their teaching has not been implemented.

➤ The „policy environment“ component obtained the output and result indicators at a fairly good level. The project systematically captured lessons learnt from other ECD projects in Vietnam and the region; documented the evidence-based project interventions; developed an ECCD network and alliances at the national level; and effectively conducted the ECCD evidence-based advocacy. Notably, the project developed a database including evidences and good practices of the importance of ECCD with the participation of local officers and community. This is a good base for the operation of ECCD network at the national level regarding the organization of effective workshops/dialogues with the attendance of policy makers and international organizations. The outputs and results met the needs addressed in the project at the good level. However, the project has not held up a workshop/dialogue at the provincial level, not yet established an ECCD network at the provincial level as scheduled. Consequently, the project has not promoted the synergy of different resources and linked the concerned stakeholders in order to make changes in or improve ECCD policies of Gia Lai province. Hence, the development of an ECCD integrated policy environment remains modest. The sustainability of the achieved results of this project component was assessed to be at the modest level. The expenditure is quite modest (approximately 57% of the total budget allocated for this component of three years).

Relevance of the project

According to the assessments of concerned stakeholders, the project has the high relevance. Apart from the relevance of the project interventions with the local needs, the project ensures its overall relevance with the development orientations, context and resources of the

localities. On the other side, the project is relevant with the approach, strategy and priorities of Plan International Vietnam and the donors.

- The project activities supported the implementation of the local policies of Gia Lai province in particular and national policies in general. For example, the project enabled the locality to realize the new rural area development program and the five year preschool universal education proposal; and the regulations about the relevant teaching for target groups by regions and ethnic minorities; etc.
- The project activities are culturally relevant such as curriculum adjustments, material development and training courses, etc ...
- The project interventions delineates the child-centered strategy of Plan International Vietnam and priorities of the donors and international community: the project activities target at children, promote the participation of children, create conditions and opportunities for children towards comprehensive and individual full development as well as contribute to the realization of Millennium Development Goals in terms of reducing the child mortality (Goal 4).

Sustainability of the project

Some achieved results of the project have been greatly appreciated and currently replicated to the out- of- the project areas. However, the project needs to secure some conditions in the coming time so as to ensure the sustainability of these results. In practice, the project successfully replicated some effective models/interventions such as: how to implement the new preschool curriculum; friendly libraries and professional teacher meetings in the primary schools. In addition, the sustainability of the project is manifested in the following important aspects:

- The project management, cooperation mechanism the concerned stakeholders, operational mechanism of schools and community have been developed and contributed to the maintenance of the results in the project localities;
- The project developed competent human resources to take over and maintain the project activities: the project attached the importance to the development of a network of core technical support officers at the provincial, district and commune levels.
- The project activities are incorporated into the regular activities of the sectors and Government agencies so their sustainability is quite high;
- The project starts the preparation of some approaches to potential financial sources and fund-raising activities so as to maintain the project activities: mobilizing the contributions from community and setting up the contribution mechanism for the parents meeting groups, promoting the implementation of income-generating initiatives of the community groups.

However, some factors constrain the sustainability of the project results, for example:

- The poor cooperation among the sectors and agencies at the provincial and grassroots levels;
- The inadequate practicing capacity of local partners
- The inactive participation and autonomy of partners, particularly local partners at the provincial level.
- The implementation of income-generating initiatives and fund-raising activities is at the first stage. So it is too early to assess the results and effectiveness of these models/activities.

- The unavailability of the project phase-out roadmap and replication plans of the project results after the project ends.

Project Management

The project has developed an effective system of project activity management. The project management has had low operational costs because the project activities have been effectively incorporated into the activities of government organizations. As such, it has made an optimal use of the local available resources and line management mechanism of the mass organizations. In this project management model, the local partners from the provincial level to grassroots ones have been granted with a great autonomy of the project planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. In practice, the project activities have been well managed at the district, commune levels because the monthly meetings and quarterly planning workshops have been organized with the active and adequate participation of concerned stakeholders including members of the project management board at the district level, the district technical assistance officers and the commune core members. In these meetings, the participants frankly shared, discussed their assessments of the project activities and put forward the challenges and recommendations for actions in the next months.

Particularly, at the village level, the beneficiaries have been encouraged to give out their needs in order to develop the action plans of the group meetings. Moreover, they have directly involved in developing the monitoring and evaluation indicators of the most significant changes of the project interventions. This secures the transparency and accountability of concerned stakeholders regarding the results and effectiveness of the project activities. Meanwhile, these activities have occurred without the adequate and active participation of the members of the project management board and technical support officers at the provincial level.

Management Structure and Coordination Mechanism

The project management structure at the provincial, district, commune and village levels has been established with the representatives of local authorities and professional agencies. This has ensured the linkage of the government agencies at the different levels in the process of the project implementation. The management structure of the project is very clear with the detailed authorities, responsibilities and obligations of members in the project operation. The project has obtained a close and frequent cooperation at the village level. However, the provincial project management board has not yet comprised of the representative of the provincial people's committee. And the district technical support group lacks the participation of the youth's union. Therefore, the participation and cooperation among the partners at the provincial/district levels has not been effective. Some government officers have been concurrently taking the government tasks and the project responsibilities. Moreover, the project has encountered difficulties in recruiting some full-time officers. This adversely affects the monitoring and technical supports of concerned stakeholders of the project.

Project Planning

The project planning and budgeting at the provincial and district/commune levels secures the participation, autonomy, transparency and accountability of concerned stakeholders at the different levels and adequately reflects the needs of local partners. The planning process offered opportunities for all stakeholders to review and self-reflect the project activities, to understand the activities of other project components and to strengthen the cooperation, coordination the project interventions in the localities at the district, commune and village levels. However, the participation of Project Management Board and Technical Support Officers at the provincial level in the project planning and budgeting at the district level

remains very limited. This has led to their poor understanding of the project activities. Additionally, the provincial technical support group has not contributed their ideas to the monthly detailed project plans of the local partners. This, to some extents, has constrained their active participation in the project activities.

Project Implementation

The government agencies have closely cooperated with each other in the project implementation at the district, commune and village levels. The local leaders have been willing and actively engaged in the project activities. There have been sufficient guideline materials for some project activities such as training, initiatives, operation of community groups, etc. The monthly meetings and quarterly planning workshops (at the district and commune levels) have been organized with the adequate and active participation of concerned stakeholders (including the district project management board, technical support group, and commune core officers).

However, some shortcomings of the project implementation remain existing such as: the inadequate cooperation between the provincial government agencies and the district ones; the poor autonomy and responsibility of local partners and the limited leading roles of Department of Education and Training (DOET) as a coordinating unit, for example, the replication of the community groups that has been proposed by the provincial Women's Union; the instability and serious shortage of the project officers; the great difficulties in recruiting qualified and relevant consultants of some training courses and research/studies; the cumbersome and very slow process of initiatives' approval and the accumulated training courses during the first two years of the project that have considerably affected the teaching and learning of schools.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has ensured the participation of concerned stakeholders and conducted on a frequent basis. The tools and reporting system of the monitoring and evaluation has had adequate and clear guidelines. The M&E approach has significantly enhanced the capacity of the project beneficiaries owing to its effective empowerment, active participation, strong ownership and commitment of local partners. The findings from M&E and the following suggested adjustments have been timely received and made by the local partners so as to achieve the progress and indicators as designed in the project plans. Nevertheless, the participation of the provincial technical support group and the project M&E officers in monitoring and providing technical supports to the project activities at the grassroots level has been reflected to be very poor. The project has been in shortage of competent M&E officers. The M&E competence of core officers at the grassroots level remains very inadequate. Consequently, the M&E of core officers has not sufficiently met the needs of volunteers and teachers for technical supports.

Risk Management

The project has developed an effective and clear framework of risk management. This framework has regularly been updated (yearly). As such, the project has timely pointed out the potential risks and put forward their solutions accordingly.

However, the risk management framework has only been developed by the project officers of Plan International Vietnam while the local project management officers have shared to be unable to engage in this work. Additionally, very few evidences showed the suggested solutions of the potential risks have been effectively adopted. As a consequence, some risks remain existing.

Conclusions

- The project achieved the outputs and results as planned at a quite good level, particularly those of capacity building of all four components, after three years of implementation.
- Some project activities have been delayed and need to be accelerated in order to minimize the negative effects of the project outcomes/results, specifically, the construction of school infrastructures and facilities, the provision of equipment and play toys for preschools, replication of community groups to out-of-the project sites, the establishment of ECCD network at the provincial level.
- With the existing progress, it is foreseen that the project may hardly complete some project activities and secure the quality of some planned result indicators.
- The project activities and achieved results/outcomes are assessed to be of high relevance though their sustainabilities need to be further enhanced in the coming time.
- The project management has effectively conducted at the grassroots level (specifically, commune and village levels) despite its great improvements at the provincial level.
- The roles of Provincial People's Committee in the monitoring and evaluation should be strongly promoted so that the unexpected problems could timely be solved during the project implementation. Importantly, the ownership, autonomy and responsibilities of concerned stakeholders need to be further strengthened in the coming time. These are seen as the decisive factors of the fulfillment of the project expected results and sustainability.

Recommendations

General recommendations

- A roadmap of consolidating, improving the quality of and replicating the achieved project results needs to be developed.
- The practicing activities should be strengthened in order to change behaviours of the project stakeholders.
- The remaining project duration needs to properly be considered so as to achieve the planned interventions and objectives.

Specific recommendations:

Project Planning

1. The sense of responsibility and the participation of concerned stakeholders (including PMB, Plan and Technical Support Group) in the project planning need to be enhanced.

Project Implementation

2. The timely, effective leadership and monitoring of DOET should be further promoted. Particularly, DOET needs to properly execute their rights and responsibility of the project coordination and implementation authorized by the Provincial People's Committee.
3. The active participation and leading roles of PMB and Technical Support Group at the provincial level in the project activities need to be enhanced.
4. The stability and sufficiency of the project human resources need to be secured. The timely and practical solutions in response to the risks of human resources (including educational officer, community officer, monitoring officer). The core members should be "sufficient" and "relevant" in terms of representatives of the sectors and agencies who act as the facilitators of roll-out training courses and the technical support officers for the community group meetings, etc.
5. The core groups need to be further developed in terms of both quality and quantity.

6. Learning and sharing mechanism/opportunities should be established among teachers within a school and among schools, among village volunteers, among the project districts and communes.
7. Sufficient time of the consultant recruitment needs to be ensured so as to have the qualified and suitable consultants. Additionally, the project should develop and diversify the sources of consultants through in-service trainings and access to experts/specialists of the relevant institutions.
8. Effective solutions for the delayed activities need to be elaborated.
9. The procedures of selecting, examining and paying for the community and school initiatives should be improved. The guidelines of procedures and requirements need to be developed and strictly followed.
10. The project activities continue to be incorporated into the programs of the government agencies, local authorities and community.
11. Community and core officers at the grassroots level need to be supported to conduct the fundraising activities and implement the initiatives. During this process, the local available resources should be made full use of.
12. The awareness of educational administrators and teachers of their autonomy in the development of guiding materials on implementing culturally relevant curriculum needs to properly be improved.
13. The establishment of an ECCD network at the provincial level needs to be accelerated.

Monitoring and Evaluation

14. The monitoring and technical assistance of the technical support group at the provincial/district levels for the project activities at the grassroots level like schools and community groups should be strengthened.
15. The quality of monitoring and implementing the full process of monitoring and technical supports of core members should be improved: a plan on coordinating and assigning the core members in order to help volunteers to effectively facilitate the group meetings.
16. The quality of technical supports and monitoring of Plan project officers needs to be improved.
17. Learning and sharing mechanism, cross-visits among teachers of schools, among volunteers of community, among the project districts and communes should be developed.
18. Professional seminars/workshops at the school and community levels should be organized. These workshops will create opportunities of sharing and learning among community groups at the commune/district levels and among schools in the project districts. Additionally, the project activities are reviewed and subsequently the project activity plans will be developed through the workshops.

Risk Management

19. Capacity and participation of the members of local PMB in forecasting and managing the project risks need to be improved.
20. Solutions for the risk management should effectively be adopted in practice.

OVERVIEW

The early childhood care and development in Gia Lai province has been implemented from June 2012 to March 2017 under the Memorandum Of Agreement signed between New Zealand Aid Program (NZAP) under Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand (MFAT) and Department of Education and Training (DOET) of Gia Lai province and Plan International. The project has been implemented by DOET of Gia Lai province and Plan International in Viet Nam with the funds granted by NZAP and Plan Australia.

Goal of the project: Lasting and improved child development outcomes for children of 0-8 years old in Gia Lai Province, with a specific focus on the most disadvantaged ethnic minority children.

4 mid-term outcomes:

- i. Improved young children's development status, with a focus on 0-3, through enhanced support from community-based care and early stimulation initiatives in targeted communities (Cornerstone 1)
- ii. All children aged 3-5 participate in quality and culturally appropriate formal or non-formal early learning opportunities, including a dedicated school readiness program for 5 year olds (Cornerstone 2)
- iii. Improved quality of pre-school to primary school transition of children aged 6-8 in ethnic minority areas (Cornerstone 3)
- iv. An improved and more integrated policy environment related to ECD (Cornerstone 4).

Project sites

The project has been implemented in 7 communes of 4 districts of Gia Lai province including: Tu An (An Khe district), Ya Hoi and Yang Bac (Dac Po district), Kroong and To Tung (KBang district), Kong Yang and Yang Nam (Kong Chro district).

The project interventions:

The project interventions have been developed on the basis of the conceptual framework namely *“Four cornerstones towards the sound development of preschool children”*. The project focuses on: 1) preliminary period (including pre-born period) in order to secure the rights of children aged 0-3; 2) learning and exploration opportunities of children, particularly children aged 3-5 through formal and non-formal education; 3) preparedness for children aged 6-8 in the transition period to primary education, and 4) investment in ECCD through the policy development, multi-sector cooperation and financial supports.

Key activities of the project target at the most disadvantaged children from ethnic minority groups, specifically:

- 1.1. Improve knowledge and practice of parents/caregivers in ECD through developing a culturally relevant parenting curriculum; establishing and effectively functioning culturally appropriate parenting group initiatives.
- 1.2. Enhance community-based supports for parents/caregivers in ECD by setting up and strengthening village ECD workers/volunteer network and advocating village leaders to promote good practices in ECD in their village conventions;
- 1.3. Strengthen capacity of communities for establishing, managing or supporting community based early stimulation and learning initiatives;

- 2.1 Improve child-friendly pre-school infrastructure in ethnic minority communes by providing newly built/upgraded child friendly infrastructure and appropriate learning materials, indoor/outdoor facilities and equipment for promoting culturally relevant learning through play;
- 2.2. Improve capacity for preschool teachers and preschool managers to implement child-centred preschool programs relevant to ethnic minority children, including a dedicated school readiness program for 5 year old through contextualizing preschool materials and teaching practices.
- 2.3. Conduct quality in-service training and preschool-based capacity building for core teachers and preschool managers and provide roll-out training for teachers;
- 2.4. Build a new professional development model for teachers and preschool managers by reforming professional teacher meetings;
- 2.5. Create opportunities for teachers to adopt their new acquired knowledge, skills in order to deliver the culturally relevant teaching through small initiatives (in the direction of applied pedagogical research);
- 3.1. Enhance child-friendly and stimulating environment at school for young ethnic minority children through building capacity of content adjustments, culturally relevant methodology, teaching planning, culturally relevant material development for teachers and administrators; building friendly libraries and access to satellite schools with supports from parents and community;
- 3.2. Improve capacity of teachers administrators to develop adapted materials and utilize teaching methodologies relevant to early grade students by providing in-service training for core teachers and provide roll-out training for all teachers regarding skills on active teaching and teaching Vietnamese language as the second language;
- 3.3. Develop a new professional development model for teachers and preschool managers by reforming professional teacher meetings;
- 3.4. Create opportunities for teachers to adopt their new knowledge, skills on the relevant teaching by encouraging them to realize their small initiatives (in the direction of applied pedagogical studies);
- 3.5. Enhance the participation of parents in the school activities through transition workshops, mobilize parents to support teachers to reduce the language barriers.
- 4.1. Implement the research, monitoring and evaluation, documentation of the project initiatives in order to develop a rich database with good evidences of the importance of 0-8 year-old child development.
- 4.2. Improve the awareness of ECCD and the importance of comprehensive early childhood development by the establishment of networks and alliances of ECCD;
- 4.3. Conduct the evidence-based policy advocacy with the success stories of ECCD initiatives.

For the past three years of the project implementation, the stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the project (including DOET of Gia Lai province, Plan International in Vietnam) and the donors (NZAP and Australian Plan) understand that a mid-term review of the project is much needed in order to put forward the effective and practical recommendations for the implementation of the project in the two remaining years.

Additionally, the integrated approach of the project to ECCD in the aspects of early childhood caring and development (including medical cares, learning, emotional and social development, the rights of protection and participation) is quite new and has very few practical lessons learnt in Vietnam, particularly for the ethnic minority communities in the

disadvantaged regions. As such, the mid-term review of ECCD project of Gia Lai province is of great importance to the assessment of the above-mentioned approach. It also puts forward the necessary reforms or adjustments for the implementation of the project so as to achieve its objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

The mid-term review of ECCD project of Gia Lai province aims at identifying the degree of achievement of the objectives, effectiveness, impacts; assessing the relevance and sustainability of the project. At the same time, the review puts forward the recommendations in order to attain the set objectives, goals of the project.

Specific objectives and the key questions of the mid-term review of ECCD project of Gia Lai focuses on the following issues:

Key questions of the review:

Assessment of the project performance:

- How has the project achieved the outputs, short-term outcomes, mid-term outcomes at the time of the review? How is the possibility of the achievement of the set outputs, short-term and mid-term outcomes of the project?
- How have the project resources including human resources, technical resources, materials supports of community and available resources of localities contributed to the achievement of the project outputs and outcomes? (sufficient or insufficient; effective or ineffective utilization of the resources)
- What are the advantages and challenges of the facilitation or prevention of the achievement of the project's set outputs/outcomes?
- How have the stakeholders who have engaged in the project implementation at the different levels made use of these advantages or overcome the challenges in efforts of achieving the project outputs/outcomes?
- What are the lessons learnt and recommendations for the project implementation?

Assessment of the relevance of the project:

- How relevant have the project activities been to the local needs, context, conditions and resources?
- How relevant have the project activities been to the approach, principles, priorities of the strategy of child development right of MFAT and Australian Plan and Plan international in Viet Nam?
- How relevant have the project approach, design been to the theoretical fundamentals and practical needs?
- How have the project interventions supported to implementation of the local policies of Gia Lai province in particular and the national policies in general?
- To what degree have the project interventions satisfied the needs of parents, community, schools and children?
- How relevant have the project activities been to the local context, conditions and how has the project made use of the available local resources?

Assessment of the sustainability of the project:

- Which factors are important to the sustainability of the project outcomes/results?

- What are the operational mechanisms of community developed by the project so as to secure the sustainability of the project outcomes/results?
- What are the operational mechanisms of schools developed by the project so as to secure the sustainability of the project outcomes/results?
- What are the advantages and challenges of the project in order to ensure the sustainability of the project?
- How have the project activities contributed to the development and implementation of government policies?
- What are the lessons learnt and recommendations for improving the sustainability of the project?

Project Management

- How is the project management and effectiveness?

The results of the mid-term review of ECCD project of Gia Lai province will be used by the national and local government agencies, project officers and donors including NZAP and Plan International in Viet Nam. The mid-term review report may be an important reference document for concerned stakeholders and donors who have interest in ECCD.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Approach

The consultant team adopted four major approaches to the mid-term review of ECCD of Gia Lai province including: (i) result based management approach: the activities and results of the project will be reviewed and compared with those in the project design in order to assess the degree of the project's achievements at the time of the review and address the results that need to be strengthened to complete the planned indicators by the end of the project; (ii) approach of inter-cooperation among concerned stakeholders, specifically: the cooperation between Plan International Vietnam and DOET of Gia Lai province; the cooperation among PMBs at the provincial, district and commune levels; the cooperation between the engaged partners and beneficiaries of the project; (iii) multi-perspective approach: all the factors related to local policy environment, socio-economic development context, participation of concerned stakeholders, project management and all the project components to be considered during the review; and (iv) participatory approach: this approach empowers the participants during the review. This approach uses the participatory rural assessment tools (PRA) to collect the data from the beneficiaries of the project and create opportunities for them to reflect their ideas and feedback on the participation, implementation and the project management and share their needs or ideas about the project.

Methodology

With the above mentioned approaches, the consultant team used both the qualitative and quantitative methods to collect information for this review. The qualitative tools gathered data from many sources, many different stakeholders in order to secure the reliability and validity of the review. The secondary data were collected through the desk-study of the project documents including the project design document, periodical reports of the project to the donors, articles and stories about the project's interventions and impacts, etc. The primary data were collected from the in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) with the concerned stakeholders like the project officers in Gia Lai and Hanoi, PMBs and the technical support teams at the different levels, volunteers, core commune ECCD officers, parents and observations of the meetings of the play and reading groups and parenting groups, etc.

The research ethic strictly followed the principles of confidentiality, human dignity, community values and child rights. Notably, the authenticity of the collected data was respected and promoted throughout the data collection, analysis and reporting.

Data collection

The data were collected in 4 of 7 project communes including: To Tung (Kbang), Kong Yang (Kong Chro), Yang Bac (Đak Po) and Tu An (An Khe) of Gia Lai province. The selection of sites, target groups and sampling for the review have been discussed and agreed between the consultant team and PMBs at different levels and Plan International Vietnam so as to secure the representation and generality of the project target groups.

Table 1 indicates the participants of the data provision and methods of the data collection for the review.

Table 1. Target groups of the review and methods of the data collection

	Target groups	IDIs	FGDs	Questionnaires	Observations	Case-study
1	Children aged 0-3				4	
2	Parents of children aged 0-8		4	92		2
3	Volunteers	4	3	49		2
4	Core commune ECCD officers	4	4			
5	Children aged 3-5				8	
7	Preschool teachers	4	4		8	1
8	Preschool managers	4				
9	Children aged 6-8		4		5	
11	Primary teachers and librarians	6	4		5	1
12	Primary school managers	4				
13	Technical support team at the district level	14				
14	PMB at the district level	4				
15	Technical support team at the provincial level	5				

16	Provincial Project Management Board	1				
17	Plan International Vietnam and NZAP officers	3				
	Total	53	24	141	30	6

The collection methods of qualitative data:

Desk-study of related documents and materials: the consultant team conducted the review of the project design document, the result based management framework, the description of the project activities, the project management and operation handbook, the monitoring and technical support handbook, Year 1 and Year 2 project report submitted to NZAID, reports to Australian Plan, Terms of Reference, and the training materials. These data are the valuable inputs for assessing the project performance, the relevance and the sustainability of the project.

In-depth interview (IDI) with the concerned stakeholders at the different levels (including the central, the provincial, district, commune and village) and the representatives of different agencies such as: donors, PMBs, technical support teams, participating stakeholders and beneficiaries. These interviews were conducted with some key questions. These questions were developed on the basis of the review framework in order to collect the ideas of interviewees about the progress and approach of the project implementation and put forward the recommendations.

Focus group discussion (FGD) with parents of children aged 0-8, the members of core commune ECCD officers at the commune level, volunteers, preschool and primary teachers. The participants of FGDs were randomly selected with the consideration of gender equality. FGDs were conducted with the participation of different target groups. The local interpreters, coloured cards and some other equipments were used to support FGDs, particularly the groups with difficulties in Vietnamese language.

Observations of parents of children aged 0-8 in the group meetings, teaching and learning activities of teachers and students, facilitation of volunteers in the community groups in order to understand the participation of concerned stakeholders, the advantages and challenges, the interest and activeness of their participation, etc.

The collection method of quantitative data:

Questionnaires were used with volunteers and parents of children aged 0-8 in the purpose of understanding the awareness, attitudes and practical skills of volunteers and parents of early childhood caring and development, also their ideas about the achievements of the project, the relevance and sustainability of the project results.

In addition, the consultant team collected information through the concensus meetings with Plan officers in order to clarify the information, resources and feedback on the review framework, questions, indicators, design and available sources of the project concerned materials/documents.

Data analysis

The qualitative data were transcribed and analysed with Transana software version 2.52. The consultants classified the different ideas about the project performance, relevance, sustainability in order to secure the validity and reliability of the review arguments. All the different ideas were recognized and cross-checked. There is no conclusion given out on the basis of the idea of only one person or group. The review framework indicates that the important results are firmly achieved with the support of clear evidences. The cross-check and assessment of the

results were carried out with the reference to the different sources including the review of documents or materials, interviews, questionnaires, etc. The quantitative data were processed with SPSS.

The draft version of the report were submitted to Plan International Vietnam, NZAP officers and local partners in order to receive their feedback or comments for its revisions. This secures the objectivity, transparency and validity of the review.

Limitations

Up to 80% of ethnic minority who engaged in the review encountered difficulty in communication in Vietnamese language. Hence, the data collection were conducted with the translation supports of the local ethnic minority officers at the commune level, volunteers. Consequently, the translated information did not sometimes reflect the questions of data collectors and responses of the information providers. The duration of each interview were longer than the schedule.

Although the logistical arrangements for the review were carefully made by the Plan team in Gia Lai, the consultant team could only conduct an interview with the director of PMB, two technical support officers at the provincial level and one of four PMBs' director at the district level. The consultant team did not have opportunity of interviewing the technical support officer of the preschool education division of DOET, representative of women's union and other members of PMB at the provincial level. The absence of these officers was explained that they were busy with their ad-hoc government tasks. At the district level, the consultant team alternatively conducted the indepth interview with the deputy heads of PMBs in order to ensure the collection of sufficient information.

Notably, the team had no meeting with Youth's Union of all four districts because they were on business trip. Therefore, the team collected the necessary information from this target group by consulting the ideas of the officers from other mass organizations such as women's union, healthcare center. However, the collected data did not reflect the viewpoints and perspectives of the youth's union on the project activities.

Another constraint of this review is the overlap of the activities. The review concurrently occurred with the project film making in 4 communes. As a consequence, this overlap challenged the review team to secure the quality of the collected data because of its hurry in the interviews or discussions.

FINDINGS

PART 1: EVALUATION OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE

1. The “Community” component:

1.1 Introduction:

The main objective of the community component is to improve child development, especially the group of 0-3 years old through community’s initiatives of nourishing and stimulating child development in the project areas. To achieve this goal, the project conducts capacity building of the community and creates favorable conditions for the community to actively practice training knowledge and skills of health, caring and stimulation for the healthy development of children. This component creates foundation and conditions for children to access early childhood education and primary education of the project in a sustainable manner. Therefore, specific activities of the project aim at laying a strong foundation for physical and emotional development of children. Moreover, such activities help develop and promote commitments to participate in community development activities of stakeholders.

1.2. Project implementation - Outputs

1.2.1 General evaluation:

Appendix A shows relatively sufficient number of achieved outputs. All outputs of the “community” component have reached indicators planned in the 5-year plan of the project, excluding the indicator of scaling-up parenting groups in the communes outside the project areas. Regarding the quality of the achieved outputs, it is evaluated to be relatively good but some aspects need to be improved. Specifically, parents’ practicing skills of caring and educating children as guided are still limited. Knowledge and skills of facilitating community groups’ meetings of some volunteers remain inadequate. The supervision and technical supports of commune core officers are not effective and timely. Additionally, the income-generation initiatives of community groups are in the initial phase so their effectiveness cannot be assessed. The expenditure of 5 types of outputs is quite good, 71% of total budget of the “community” component in 3 years.

1.2.2 Number of achieved outputs:

Appendix A clearly shows 5 types of outputs of the “community” component have been completed, some even better than the indicators as planned in the 5-year plan of the project. However, the indicator of establishing parents groups in the communes outside the project areas has not been carried out as planned in the early 2015.

- Outputs achieved beyond planned indicators: Outputs 2 and 3
 - Output 2: 40 core officers of child development and 126 volunteers participating in 11 key training courses, 42 roll-out training ones, 21 parents groups established and put into operation. Compared with the planned indicators, 6 additional volunteers and 7 more parents groups were produced.
 - Output 3: Develop more sets of materials, including: 01 guideline on play and making games for child play and speaking groups, 01 material for child play and reading groups (4-11 years-old); 01 material for volunteers of child play and speaking groups (0-3 years-old); 01 “Stick and stone” training manual. The development of additional materials aims at supporting volunteers to facilitate the community groups’ meetings in the most effective way.

- Achieved outputs with adjusted indicators including *development of culturally relevant curriculum for parents* (output 1), *initiatives of stimulating development of 3 year-old, and 4-11 year-old children* (outputs 4 and 5).
- Output with unfulfilled indicator as planned: replication of parents groups in communes outside the project areas (output 2) has not been implemented because DOET of Gia Lai has not signed the contract with the provincial Women Union. It is explained by DOET that this activity has not been included in the project design.

In general, the project has well achieved almost all indicators as scheduled in the 3-year project design excluding one output because of the delay in its approval by the Provincial Project Management Board.

1.2.3 Quality of achieved outputs:

The quality of 5 outputs is relatively good. However, it is seen that the capacity of volunteers and the quality of supervision and technical supports for community groups need to be improved in the next phase.

The quality of output 1 – *the development of culturally relevant parenting curriculum* secures the requirements in terms of scientific, practical, useful and timely aspects. The compiled material is assessed to be scientific regarding its approach, educational content, layout and language. The curriculum is evaluated to be practical on the basis of the feedbacks of volunteers, the core group and the parenting group on the appropriateness of its instructions. The contents of the material are also culturally relevant, primarily in terms of its images. The images reflect the local cultures and the reality of the community life. In addition, the curriculum is compiled and provided in a quite responsive and effective manner for the parents groups’ meetings. The usefulness of the compiled material is apparently confirmed through the appreciation of the volunteers, parents, the core district/commune and Plan project officers. It is a useful tool for improving knowledge and skills of parents and concerned local stakeholders to care for and nurture children. Currently, the curriculum is being printed for the use of areas outside the project. Notably, it has even been translated into English and widely disseminated to the international community.

The quality of output 2 - *culturally relevant parenting groups*– is quite good with the evidence of the participation of parents and the facilitation of volunteers. According to the project report, 779 parents regularly took part in the periodical meetings of 21 parents groups. Parents even enthusiastically contributed local food and fruits for such meetings, which helps save fund allocated from the project (VND 200,000 for tea-break) to buy stuff for practice of nutritious food for children or soap; toothpastes to practice personal hygiene for children. However, it is supposed that the roadmap of cutting/reducing technical supports of teachers needs to be implemented in an appropriate manner to assure the quality of activities of parents groups. Accordingly, the withdrawal of teachers from the technical support groups at the commune level of the community groups whose volunteers have the good capacity should be carried out. However, the supports of teachers to the volunteers of the ineffectively operating community groups should be continued.

The quality of output 3 – *Network of staff/volunteers in the children caring and development field* – The project has trained 40 core staff and 126 volunteers in 11 courses of key training and 42 courses of extended training and developed more some supporting materials for community-based groups. All volunteers have highly appreciated knowledge and skills in the training classes. But some volunteers didn’t understand clearly materials on guiding groups so they couldn’t transmit all contents. The practicing proportion in the meetings remains very little. The volunteers shared that they faced constraint of scientific knowledge of caring, educating and stimulating children development, etc. Moreover, the majority of volunteers

have the limited capacity of communication in Vietnamese language while many core commune officers cannot understand the ethnic minority language. Consequently, they hardly understand contents delivered by volunteers and discussions between volunteers and parents. According to the observations of the community groups, the volunteers played a crucial role in facilitating the community groups' meetings without the effective monitoring and technical assistance of the core commune officers. Notably, there is a shortage of a cooperation mechanism between the core commune officers and volunteers in the planning activities of the community groups. Moreover, more than 42% of groups dealt with the changes in their volunteers during the operational period. This adversely affects the quality of the activities of community groups.

Some ECCD posters and materials are attractive, appropriate to users, clear and usable for children of different ages, simple and easy-to-understand to facilitators of community groups. For example, the guidelines on play and making games from local materials; "Stick and Stone" training manual for child play and reading groups, a booklet on good practices of child caring and education and 4 communication posters on ECCD.

Output 4 – *Community-based learning and stimulation initiatives for development of under three year-old children* – including child play groups (under three year-old) with the participation of 355 parents and 393 children. As indicated in the project plan, 28 child play groups will be established. During the implementation period, some changes have been made to ensure the relevance with the local contexts. Hence, 14 groups are kept unchanged. According to the observations, the evaluation team found that the quality of parents group meetings of 0-3 year-old children remains inadequate. Some reasons for this argument include: (1) community groups' meetings with large number of participants, including adults and children at the different ages, therefore, parents concentrated more on caring, nourishing and managing children; (2) poor management capacity of many volunteers; (3) language barrier because a significant proportion of the Bahna parents are not able to communicate in Vietnamese language while the materials are in Vietnamese language and a few number of volunteers are fluent in Vietnamese and Bahna languages; (4) inadequate technical assistance of core commune officers, (5) withdrawal of preschool and primary teachers from supporting the volunteers of parenting group as planned in the 3rd and 4th year of the project.

Output 5 – *Community-based initiatives on development stimulation of 4-11 year-old children* is a special output because it enhances the effectiveness of other outputs in the components 2 and 3 of the project. The quality of this output is relatively high. A large number of children (1,158) participate in 28 child-play-and-reading groups. Children are excited and active in the group meetings, even on rainy and uncomfortable days and holidays, etc. According to a group of volunteers in charge of child play and reading groups in Kong Yang commune, Kong Chro district:

"Previously, children only learnt in the classroom and rarely had opportunity of joining the fun activities in the village. Now the volunteers organize fun activities at Rong houses funded by the project, children excitedly and actively participate in the group activities. They voluntarily take part in the group activities without being reminded. Through the games, activities of reading the stories in groups, children become more confident and dynamic in communication. "

However, the playing and reading activities need to be diversified in more various forms in order to maintain and attract children's regulation participation.

1.2.4. Disbursement fund for outputs:

After 3 years of implementation, the budget disbursement managed by ODA and Plan account for more than 79% and 64% of their total budgets allocated for the 3 years of the

project, respectively. Correspondingly, all 5 types of outputs have gained the indicators in the 3-year plan, excluding the indicator of scaling up parenting groups in the areas outside the project. The expenditure proportions for 5 outputs in the community component in the last 3 years is illustrated in Figure 1.

Budget managed by Plan International: The output 1 of developing educational curriculum for parents on nurturing and caring children gained the best disbursement with 98% of the total budget allocated for 3 years of implementation. The disbursement budget is particularly low regarding the outputs 2 and 3 (specifically, 53% and 57%). The reason is that the Provincial Project Management Board (PPMB) has not approved a plan of replicating the parents group model proposed by Women's Union in the areas outside the project. Also, some core training courses were not conducted at the provincial level as planned. Instead, 4 key staff were assigned to attend training course in Hanoi and they will undertake the roll-out training courses at the local level. This leads to the low expenditure proportion of these project activities, although the project achieved the indicators as planned.

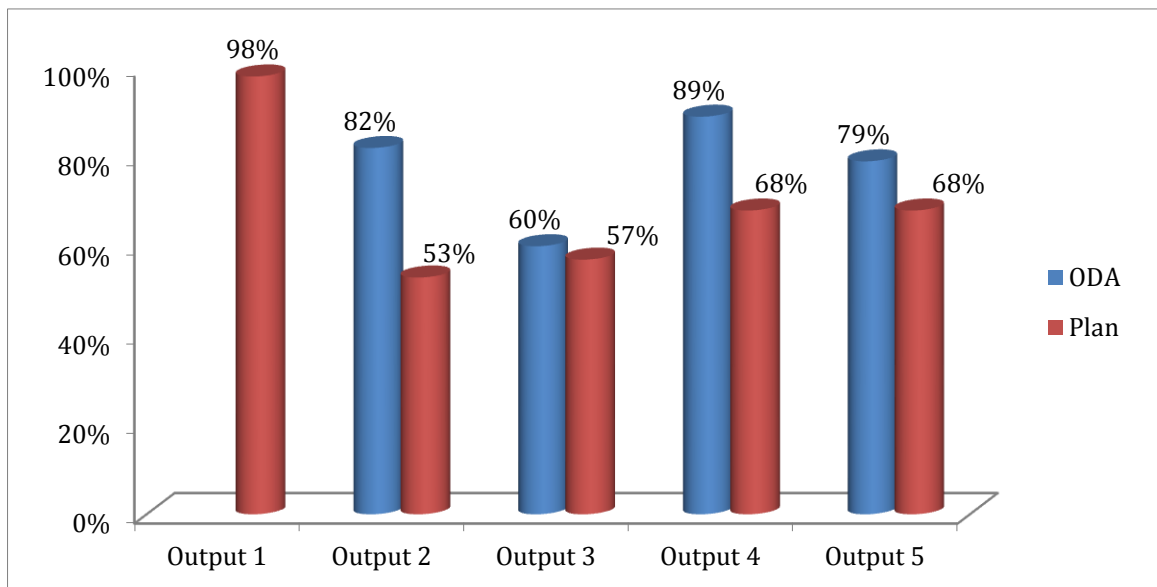


Figure 1. Budget disbursement by the outputs of the „community“ component (2013-2015)

Budget managed by DOET: this budget has been spent quite well, specifically 60-89% of the allocated budget for the outputs 2-5. Of this budget, the activity of developing a core team and volunteers (output 2) and learning initiatives to stimulate the development of children under 3 years old in the community (output 4) achieved the best performance, corresponding to the budget disbursement of 82% and 89%. Though the project activities have achieved the indicators of the output 2 as planned, the parenting group activity has had the relatively low disbursement budget (about 46% -66% of the allocated budget) because the establishment of the parenting groups and the budget transfer of the operation of the parenting groups from the provincial level to the local level has been shared to be very slow compared to the schedule in the yearly activity plan of the project.

Regarding the output 3, the training for key staff of 40 non-project communes has not been conducted. Therefore, its budget expenditure is low, around 60%. Also, some activities have been adjusted to ensure their relevance to the local context and enhance the effectiveness of the project. For instance, 7 child play and speaking groups were not established as scheduled

in the third year. Alternatively, 7 child play and reading groups (4-11 years old) were additionally established. A considerable number of community-based initiatives could not be implemented. Specifically, of total 43 approved initiatives, 16 initiatives have not been implemented by the local partners within 3 months in accordance with the requirements of the project. Some communes like Krong of Kbang district did not prepare any initiatives because of their concerned officers being occupied with the government tasks.

1.3. Project implementation – Short-term outcomes:

The short-term outcomes of the project were achieved at a quite good level in terms of both quantity and quality. Although the outcomes have not been reached as the expected level because of parents’ limited practice of child-cares and education as guided, and the poor capacity of facilitation of some volunteers.

Appendix B indicates the short-term outcome indicators are obtained as planned, specifically, the short-term outcomes 2 and 3 exceeded the planned indicators. However, regarding the short-term outcome 2, the indicator of initiative performance has not been attained as designed in the plan.

The evidence from the in-depth interviews, the focus group discussions and the observations of the community groups showed the positive changes in terms of the awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors regarding child cares and education of parents/caregivers and communication and facilitation skills of the volunteers and core officers at all levels.

Short-term Outcome 1: Knowledge and practices of child care and development of parents/caregivers are improved

Of total 774 parents from 21 parents groups in 7 project communes, 247 parents have applied and practiced well the transmitted knowledge and skills about child care and education.

Figure 2 indicates that 80% - 90% of the interviewed parents responded that through the parents groups’ meetings, they acquired more knowledge about child care and education, while the remaining (below 21%) said that they acquired little knowledge about that.

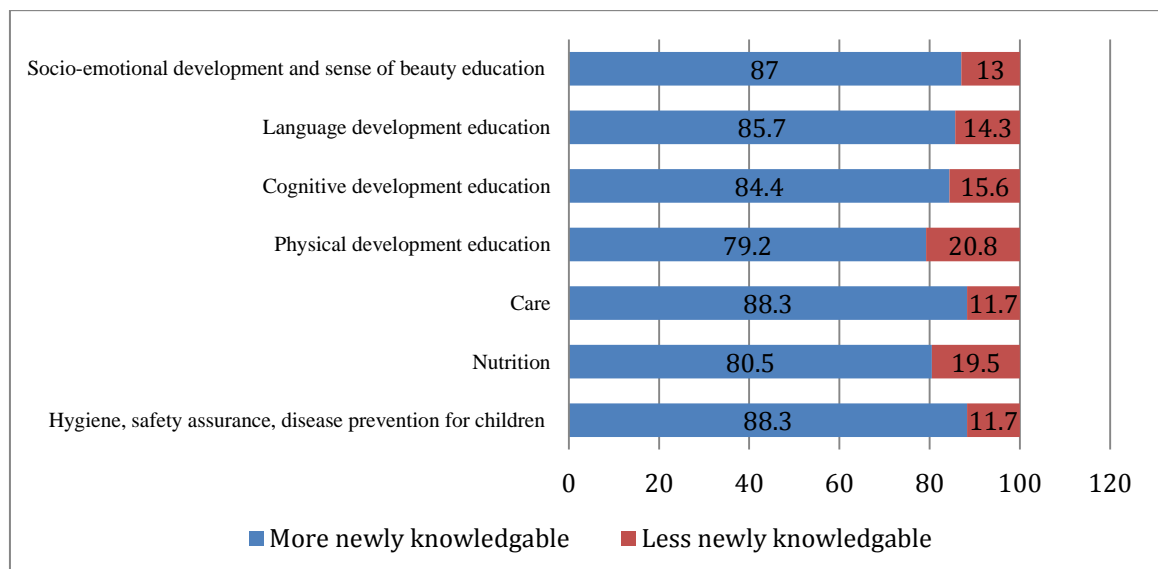


Figure 2: Parents of 0-8 year-old children assess the changes in terms of their knowledge when attending the parent group meetings

According to the in-depth interviews or focus group discussions with parents, 100% of parents have confirmed their participation in parents groups' meetings helped them to have more knowledge about health and nutrition for children, how to take personal care and hygiene for children, hygiene of housing and surrounding environment ... A 26-year-old Bahna mother with 2 children (8 and 5 years old) said:

"Previously, we poorly understood what to do when our children were ill. When some volunteers bought thermometers for measuring body temperature of children, parents did not know what for it was used, and how to use it. Now, in our houses we have a thermometer and know how to use it when our children have a fever."

The changes in parents' awareness and knowledge have led to the changes in their behaviors of caring and educating children, although those changes have not yet been significant in some aspects. Figure 3 shows practices have been applied by parents at home. Over 90% of parents with children under 5 years old said that they have played more with their children, while only 57% of parents said that they practiced hygiene and safety for children. 72% to 78% of parents with children under 5 years old said they practiced cooking nutritious meals for children, preventing diseases, making toys for children. In fact, these practices have not regularly adopted and become habits of parents because their practice is limited.

A 25-year-old Bahna father living in Kong Yang commune, Kong Chro district said:

"Previously, we were confused, we did not know what to do when our children had a fever. But since joining parents groups' meetings, we have known how to handle our children's illness at home. We keep antipyretic drugs at home and know to compress cool water on the forehead. Now we're completely calm when our children are sick."

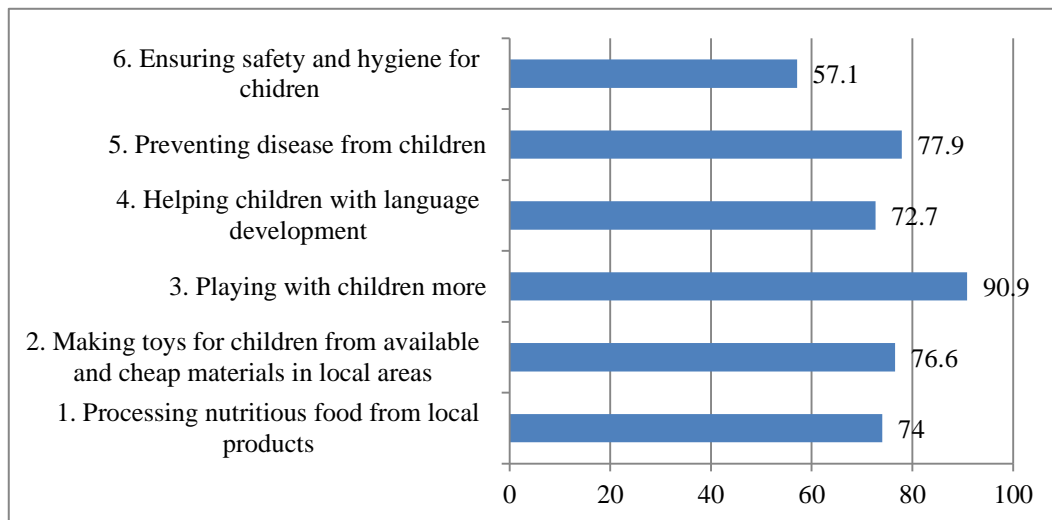


Figure 3. Parents of 0-8 year-old children assess the changes in terms of care and educational practices at home

Short-term outcome 2: *Support mechanism of the community for parents/caregivers in the field of ECCE is improved.*

The ECCE network with 126 volunteers operating 63 community groups in 42 villages of 7 project communes. Of these, 65% of volunteers are capable of well communicating and guiding parents groups' meetings, exceeding the planned indicator by 25%. However, the volunteers' capacity of supporting parents to apply knowledge and skills acquired from the

meetings to the daily lives is still very limited. Members of the commune core team frankly revealed that their monitoring and technical supports through household visits were not really effective.

The survey with 49 volunteers indicates that 95.9% of these volunteers said that „they are able to organize and facilitate parents groups’ meetings“, around 80% of volunteers said that „they know how to conduct community communication, preparations for the meetings, how to revise lessons, to introduce and share experiences, to guide parents’ practicing by themes“. Only 55% of the volunteers shared that „they are able to develop plans and summarize contents of the groups’ meetings“. In the different communes, the self-assessment of volunteers on their ability in terms of the diversified aspects is varied (Figure 4).

According to the process of capacity building, volunteers enhance knowledge, skills and effectively organize, operate community meetings. Moreover, volunteers understand psychological needs of children and parents when they work more with the community. The volunteers from villages’ Women's Union in charge of the groups of children aged 0-8 shared:

"At first I was really afraid, just afraid to say something wrong, ha a fear of ridicule. But when having been trained on facilitation skills, adult-teaching methods, communication skills, organizational skills and meeting planning, I gradually become self-confident in my work. Now, I am very confident in organizing the parents groups’ meetings".

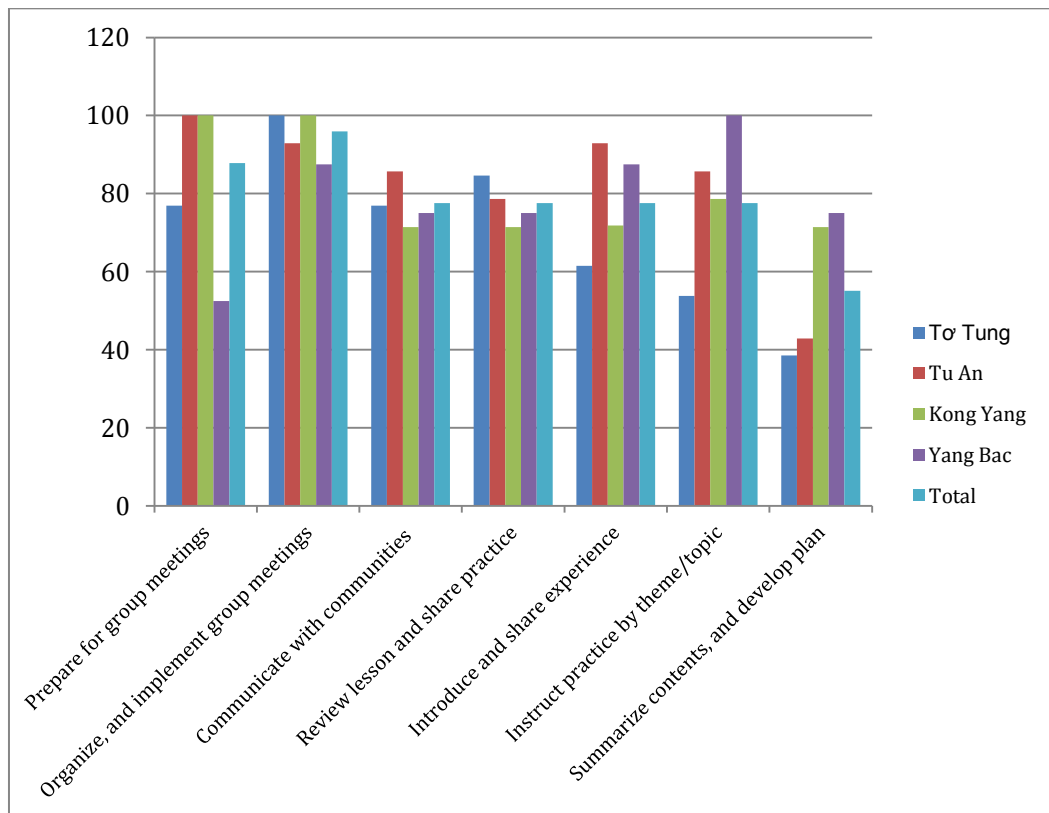


Figure 4: Self-assessment of community volunteers of their competence on facilitation and organization of community group meetings

According to the observations, the consultant team also found that although the fun atmosphere and active participation of the parents were created, the way of communication and dissemination of knowledge in the groups was less effective. The volunteers mainly provided information but created few opportunities for the parents to interact and exchange or share ideas with each other. This suggests that the project should continue to strengthen and improve knowledge and skills in organizing group activities for the volunteers.

By the end of the 3rd year, the project has had 27 community initiatives to be successfully implemented, thus the implementation of community initiatives has not achieved the expected results and has not met the needs of the people, because of (i) the slow and cumbersome approval process of the initiatives; (ii) the poor capability of the initiative development of local officials, specifically risk forecast and cost estimation. For example, in Yang Bac commune, the initiative of building a commune play-ground had cost estimation of about VND 7 million. However, after the initiative was approved and put into implementation, the amount increased to about VND 12 million. Within the regulation, the project could only support VND 5 million. The local government encountered difficulty in mobilizing local people's contributions. Consequently, this initiative failed to be implemented. In addition, income-generating initiatives of community groups has just been deployed. Hence, its results cannot be evaluated at this time.

Short-term outcome 3: *Community's capacity of establishing, managing or supporting learning initiatives and stimulating the development of children is strengthened.*

40 key officers and 126 volunteers have been trained from 11 key staff training classes and 42 roll-out training classes. This indicator exceeded the target set by the project (160 trained ECCE staff from 5 training classes). In addition, 2 sets of materials for child play and speaking groups (aged 0-3) and 5 sets of materials for child play and reading groups (aged 4-11) have been developed and distributed to the groups. This result exceeded the targets indicated in the plan (including one set of guiding materials and 1 set of tool kits for groups of children).

1.4. Project implementation – Mid-term outcome:

The mid-term outcome of *"The development of the children, especially the group aged 0-3, is improved through community-based care groups and initiatives to stimulate the development of children in the project community"* has achieved the indicator exceeding the plan. At the same time, the project activities have brought about changes in attitude, communication, consciousness and habits of children. Overall, the medium-term outcome has been achieved at a fairly good level.

The changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of parents/caregivers in terms of childhood care and education have significantly contributed to the achievement of this medium-term outcome. Appendix B indicates that 55% of parents involved in community groups have known how to care for, teach and stimulate the development of children; and approximately 2,477 children have participated in the community groups. This indicator exceeds far beyond the targeted indicator in the plan by about 700 children aged 0-8.

Figure 5 below shows the opinions of parents on their children's changes when parents adopt the acquired knowledge, experience in childhood care and education from the parents' groups' meetings. 100% of parents agreed that their children's development is improved. Specifically, 69.8% of parents said that the physical aspects, movement, language and communication of their children have been upgraded; 67.4% of parents said that their children's cognition have positively developed and 20.9% of parents mentioned the changes of their children in terms of social, emotional, aesthetic aspects. Although the achievement has not been excellent, these changes have been recognized to be very significant and

amazing, particularly in the disadvantaged areas and within its implementing period of less than 3 years.

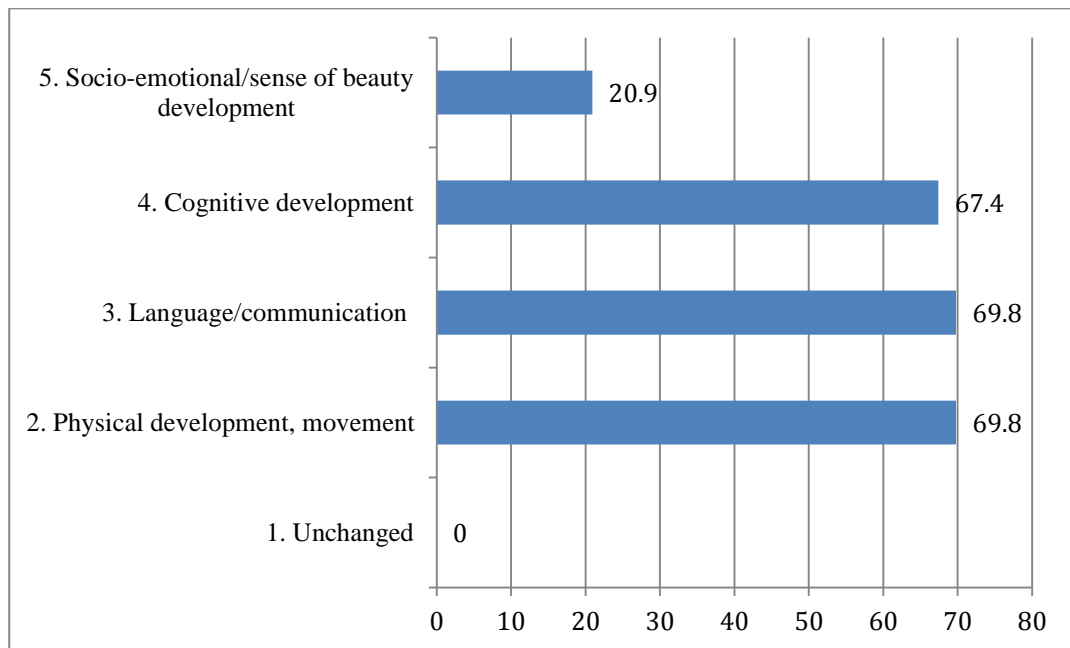


Figure 5: Self-assessment of parents of children aged 0-3 of changes after they participated in the parents groups' meetings

According to the focus group discussions with the parents in the group meetings and the observations of the children accompanying their parents, the majority of children were clean, flexible and looked very healthy. This implies that their parents have paid due attention to childhood care, nutrition and disease prevention. Notably, the children were very excited about making different shapes with their parents.

Furthermore, the observations provide the concrete evidence about the development of children in the project areas: children become more dynamic, confident and strong in communication. A group of volunteers in charge of child play and reading groups (aged 4-11) in Kong Yang commune, Kong Chro district said:

"Previously, children rarely had access to the fun activities in the village. Now the youth organize fun activities in the Rong house every month with the supports of the project. Children excitedly, voluntarily participate in the groups' activities without being reminded. Thanks to games, entertainment and reading activities, children become strong and more dynamic in communication. "

1.5. The relevance of the 'community' component:

1.5.1. Overall evaluation

The activities and outputs of the component entirely meet the needs of parents/caregivers, community and children. The technical supports and financing resources are adequate for the achievement of the planned outputs despite some constraints of the participation of technical support group and the leading roles of local partners.

1.5.2. The relevance of activities and outputs of the project to the needs for awareness enhancement and provision of high-quality preschool education for the community:

The needs of the community are embodied in the specific objectives of the project, including capacity building and caring practices and child development for parents/caregivers, improved support mechanisms for community, the parents/caregivers in the field of early childhood care and development, and strengthen the capacity of community management in

establishing or supporting learning initiatives and stimulate the development of children. On average, 5 types of component outputs meet local needs. Appendix Table C shows several illustrations of conformity of output achieved with the needs identified in the project.

The relevance to the needs for capacity building and practice of ECCE of parents/caregivers

The content of the meetings, especially knowledge and skills in some topics are highly appreciated by parents, for example, the nutrition for children, treatment of common diseases at home, communication and play skills with children, language development, physical and physiological development of children, etc. Additionally, parents practiced how to play and interact with children, cook nutritious food, how to solve problems where children have common diseases. Parents also share their experiences and help each other to deal with their own problems in life. However, conditions for practicing the knowledge and skills of childhood care and education at home were extremely inadequate. For example, raw materials and foodstuffs were not available in localities and the poverty of parents prevented them from access to these resources. Consequently, the possibility of applying transmitted/acquired knowledge and skills from the parents groups' meetings was very limited. Although the awareness and knowledge of parents/ caregivers of childhood care and education have been improved, their behaviors have not much changed because of their few opportunities of adopting/practicing their acquired ECCE knowledge and skills into practice.

The relevance to the needs for improving community based support mechanism for parents/caregivers in the ECCE field

The community based support mechanism for parents/caregivers has been promoted through the development of ECCE networking and community initiatives. This activity is consistent with the characteristics of the Bahna community and parents/caregivers. Bahna people usually apply and actively participate in activities as they are provided with specific guidelines and see apparent benefits of these activities to their life and the development of their children. Therefore, the network of volunteers in villages has been developed in order to create favorable conditions for strengthening support the community in the application of training knowledge and skills/ guidance from the project to life.

The project has recruited and trained 126 volunteers to support the operating activities of 63 community groups in 42 villages in 7 communes. This has met the need for improved support mechanism of community for parents/caregivers in the field of ECCE.

The relevance to the needs for enhancing community's capacity in development, management and support of initiatives of learning and stimulating children's development

The establishment and operation of 14 child play and speaking groups (with children aged 0-3) and 28 child play and reading groups (with children aged 4-11) has met the high demand for strengthening the capacity of community in the establishment, management or support of initiatives of learning and child stimulations; simultaneously, satisfied the needs for creating great opportunities, playground and language development for children aged 0-3 and 4-11. The number of parents and children in the groups (average 50-60) has been higher than the expected number. This implies that the community groups' activities have met the expectations of the community, the parents/caregivers and the demand for "playing for the children's development". Through community groups' activities, parents have accessed to knowledge and skills of caring and stimulating child developments, and children have comprehensively been developed through singing, dancing, and playing games, reading books, painting, claying soil...and at the end of meetings, children also enjoyed nutritious

porridge. The parents and children enjoyed and actively, fully participated in the community groups' meetings.

1.5.3. The relevance of (technical and financial) resources to the project's outputs:

Appendix Table D shows the technical assistance resources for 5 outputs of the "community" component is fully defined and in accordance with the outputs of the project design. According to the design, technical assistance human resources from the different levels, and particularly emphasizing the role of local human resources such as education officers, women's union, youth's union, health staff at the different levels and community representatives. However, in the implementation period of the project, the participation and the leadership roles of local human resources have still been limited, especially the members of the Project Management Boards and the technical assistance teams at the provincial and district levels ... in such activities as material compilation, extended training, monitoring of technical assistance for community groups' activities. The provincial technical assistance officers disclosed that their role of guidance and technical assistance hasn't been promoted in the roll-out training courses and the material development though they involved in providing feedback and conducting appraisal of the compiled materials. Obviously, this process has not promoted their ownership and sense of responsibility of the project activities and its achievements, constraining the replication of the successful examples.

In the project design, the financial resources of the project are managed and spent from 2 sources, including the budget managed by DoETs and Plan for 5 outputs. This model is totally suitable for enhancing the mutual responsibilities and promoting smooth cooperation between the two partners. The project upgrades the capacity of local partners and improves the sense of responsibilities and ownership of the local authorities for the project activities. In reality, the allocated budget of the project for the outputs 2-5 ensures the relevance to the project design. Accordingly, Plan's budget has been used for core trainings, material development and consultant recruitment. Meanwhile, the budget managed by DoET has been spent on roll-out trainings, operation of community groups and organization of local communication events. However, the technical assistance officers in the in-depth interviews shared that the parenting curriculum development that has been managed by Plan has been locally relevant. However, the local partners haven't had fund for this activity from their managed budget so their participation in the material development has been limited. Regarding the outputs 2 - 5, DOET has been responsible for the budget at the grassroots level and the extension of the project activities that have been monitored and provided technical supports with by Women's Union, Youth's Union. As such, DOET has had a quite sole power in the budget management. The delays in the fund transfer and the extension of project activities have unavoidably occurred when the members of the provincial PMB and technical assistance team haven't effectively involved in monitoring and evaluation and provision of technical assistances for the project activities. For example, Women's Union has proposed the replication plan of the community groups in non-project communes since the end of 2014. Nevertheless, this proposal has not been approved by PMB (specifically, DOET of Gia Lai province that has been authorized by Gia Lai Provincial People's Committee to manage the project). In response to this delay, DOET has explained that this activity has not been included in the project design.

1.6. Conclusion

The "community" component has achieved all 5 outputs' indicators excluding only one indicator of replicating the community group models in non-project communes. The short-term and mid-term outcomes have been gained at a relatively good level. The disbursed budget in 3 years of the project has relatively been good (71%). Of which, the expenditure of

the outputs 2 and 3 has relatively been low. The autonomy, active and dynamic involvement of the members of the provincial PMB and technical assistance team need to be enhanced. Particularly, the leading role of DoET (as the project coordinating unit) has to be properly taken in collaboration with the provincial Women's Union in order to conduct the project activities.

2. “Preschool education” component:

2.1 Introduction:

The main objective of the component is that all children aged 3-5 years are entitled to quality formal and non-formal learning opportunities that are culturally relevant. The project focuses on the cognitive, language, emotional, social and physical development for children by creating a friendly environment for children to learn and develop and apply active teaching methods and improving the transition between preschools and primary ones. Specifically, the project focuses on the implementation of culturally relevant preschool curriculum, the development of a friendly educational environment in which with education content and plan selected in accordance with the context of life and characteristics of Bahna ethnic minority children, strengthen the involvement of parents in caring and educating their children, enhance the readiness of the school to support the transitional period from preschool to primary school of the children

2.2 Project implementation - outputs

2.2.1 Overall evaluation

Regarding the quantity and quality, the outputs of the "Preschool education" component have been achieved at a modest level. The outputs and outcomes related to capacity building: developing locally relevant preschool materials (output 3), capacity building activities (output 4) and provision of materials for teachers and staff (output 5) have achieved a relatively good quality and fairly met the needs of managers, teachers and community. The project has not constructed preschools' infrastructures and facilities (output 1) and not provided equipments and toys for preschools (output 2). This has negatively affected the implementation of the overall project plan, and the application of trained knowledge and skills to teaching and learning practices. Notably, it has adversely influenced the trust of local authorities and community in the project.

The construction of schools and provision of school equipment for schools accounted for a big proportion of this component's total budget (90%). Therefore, the disbursement budget only reached 8.9% of the total allocated budget of this component in the 3-year activity plan.

2.2.2 Number of achieved outputs

Appendix Table A specifies 02 outputs have completed the indicators as set out in the 5-year plan of the project, 01 output has not achieved its planned indicators and 2 outputs have been delayed.

- Outputs achieved indicators as planned: Outputs 3 and 4
 - Output 3: The preschool materials have been well-localized. The mother-tongue based teaching practices through playing activities and transition into the use of Vietnamese language as the instructional language have appropriately been designed in accordance with Bahna children at the early stages of primary education. The project has achieved the adjusted indicators compared with the initial ones. Specifically, 01 set of guiding material of the implementation of the Bahna group's culturally relevant ECCE programs was

completed and ready for printing, 01 set of reference material for Bahna pupils have been compiled and being finalized.

- Output 4: The teacher training and capacity building at schools for preschool managers and teachers have been implemented. The output's indicators have been adjusted compared with those in the original plan. Accordingly, the project has trained 31 provincial/districts level key persons and 167 preschool teachers and managers through 14 training courses, 216 teachers from 41 preschools in the non-project areas. Additionally, 14 workshops on sharing experiences have been held up, and 52 schools initiatives were implemented in 9 preschools.
- Output 5: the adjusted indicator has not been completed, namely: "pre-school teachers and management staff are provided with material sources to serve the professional development". This output has been implemented together with the outputs 3 and 4. In nature, material sources need to be "open" on the basis of training materials, shared experiences via workshops, initiatives of locally adjusted instructional contents and teaching activities in order to implement new preschool curriculum.
 - The project has not completed the development of guiding material on preschool professional development activities because the project has encountered a difficulty in recruiting qualified consultants. Expectably, the material will be developed by the educational specialists of Plan in the coming year. In addition, the development of pilot training models in 2 preschools (in An Khe and Dak-po) were unfulfilled.
 - The project has not provided 9 packages of equipments for professional development activities due to the delay of the output 1.
- Output 1 and 2 have not been implemented according to the plan: the construction and upgrading of schools' infrastructure and facilities and the provision of indoor and outdoor equipment for active learning activities through culturally relevant playing. To date, the construction of 5 main schools and 16 satellite ones were approved by donors and has been being implemented. The categories of buying learning equipment have recently been approved and have been launched for bidding.

The delayed implementation of the output 1 is due to:

- The selection of locations for school construction has failed to meet the project purposes approved by the donors (the selected construction sites were located outside the project communes).
- The construction design and costs failed to meet the requirements of the donors so they had to be redesigned.
- The bidding procedures were not properly followed in accordance with the donor's regulations so it took time to back and forth for revision.

In summary, 3/5 outputs of the project have not achieved their indicators as scheduled in the plan. The project needs to take effective measures to accelerate the delayed activities that have fallen quite far behind the project schedule.

2.2.3 Quality of achieved outputs

The quality of 3 achieved outputs reached a fairly good level with some improvements to ensure the proper understanding of the nature of the developed materials, the timely

provision of compiled materials, the relevance of the training contents to actual teaching conditions, the simplification of procedures of approving initiatives

Quality of output 3: According to the preschool teachers and managers, the set of guiding material on Bahna culturally relevant adjustments of preschool curriculum and the set of reference materials for Bahna children at the preschool age and the first years of primary education has been very useful. The necessity of these materials is shown regarding the content of the modules relating with preschool curriculum and guidelines on implementing preschool curriculum of Ministry of Education and Training. Moreover, these materials enabled preschool teachers and managers to implement preschool curriculum in practice. However, these “open” materials have not yet properly understood by some preschool managers and teachers. To their mind, these materials guide them how to make adjustments and deliver culturally relevant instructions for specific lessons. In practice, these materials merely provide them the methodology of making adjustments of instructional contents. The preschool managers and teachers said they have been looking for a printed material with specific guidelines for more favorable implementation of new preschool curriculum. A vice-principal of a preschool in Dak Po District shared that

“Teachers are still encountering difficulty in implementing new national preschool curriculum. Although preschools have been directed by BOET officers about the curriculum adjustments, teachers are still very hesitant. So far, teachers have not received the guiding material on making adjustments of curriculum in line with the local context. Therefore, they do not dare to make changes of curriculum”.

The guiding material on adjustments of preschool curriculum is going to be printed and distributed to teachers in the schoolyear of 2015-2016 by DOET of Gia Lai province. The reference material for Bahna children was consulted with teachers through 5 consultation workshops. And it has been reviewed by DOET, the Department of Culture-Sport at the provincial level and BOETs in the project districts via 2 workshops. It is currently in the editing process on the basis of the reviews given by the Provincial Appraisal Council.

Quality of output 4: Renovation in teacher training and professional teacher meetings for preschool teachers and managers. The training activities have met the needs for supporting the implementation of locally relevant preschool curriculum. The training courses have made teachers more confident in implementing the culturally relevant preschool curriculum for minority children. The preschool teachers and managers highly appreciated training contents of the project. After the training courses, 31 key officers and 167 preschool teachers and managers have known how to analyze program, make education planning and organize learning activities for preschool children. Moreover, the quality of this output is manifested through the high interest of preschool teachers and managers at non-project schools in participating in the training courses. They were willing to travel far and participated in the training course without any allowances. The project conducted the roll-out training course for 216 key teachers of 41 preschools in the non-project areas. However, the quality of the output 4 is not really high because the training contents in the first three years of the project focused on the capacity building for preschool teachers of delivering the preschool curriculum in a single preschool class. In reality, preschool classes primarily compose of children at the different ages – more than 80% of preschool classes are multigrade classes with children at 2-3 ages. Although preschool teachers clearly grasp knowledge, skill and teaching methods from training classes, they still face difficulties in applying them into teaching multigrade classes. Besides, when they organize activities in multigrade classes, preschool teachers often prioritize the implementation of curriculum for 5 year-old children. This obviously affects the right to access relevant education for 3 and 4 year-old children.

After 3 years, 52 initiatives have been approved and deployed at 9 preschools. These initiatives have highly been appreciated by schools because they created opportunities for preschool teachers and managers to actively renovate teaching methods and develop friendly learning environment for children. The participatory method of training courses on the development and implementation of initiatives has been evaluated to be good by preschool teachers and managers. However, the initiatives-based practicing opportunities in the actual classroom remain very limited. Some preschool teachers and managers disclosed that they faced difficulties in re-dissemination of the initiative development and implementation to their colleagues. Moreover, they hand't got sufficient technical assistance from the project staff regarding the initiative development and implementation. The long approval process of initiatives and the repeated requirements of adjusting initiatives adversely affected the implementation of school initiatives. Nevertheless, according to the project officers, the project process of initiative development and selection significantly changed teachers' awareness and writing of initiatives in the traditional manner. These initiatives are no longer token as they used to be in the past. Alternatively, they really improve the teaching and learning quality.

Quality of output 5: The materials served professional capacity building of preschool teachers and managers at preschools have sufficiently been provided despite some delays in supplying some guiding materials. The project provided the materials as planned in the outputs 3 and 4 after the training courses so that teachers can put their acquired knowledge and skills into practice. According to the survey, preschool teachers and managers highly appreciated the materials and disclosed that they effectively used these materials in their teaching practices. The materials supported teachers to effectively teach Bahna children. However, the guiding material on the professional teacher meetings is still being compiled with the implementation of the pilot model at 2 preschools. Teachers and managers have been looking for this material day by day with the hope that it helps them to enhance the quality of childhood care and education.

In conclusion, the quality of 3 outputs in the "preschool education" component is relatively good. Nevertheless, in order to secure the quality of achieved outputs at a higher level, the project needs to ensure timely material development, consistent understanding of the 'open' nature of guiding materials, relevant training contents and adequate technical assistance for initiative development and implementation and simplification of initiative approval procedures.

2.2.4. Disbursed budget of outputs:

The disbursed budget managed DoET and Plan reached 5.1% and 53%, respectively of the total amount allocated for 3 years of the project. The spending budget from ODA under management of DoET accounted for very low rate because of school construction and provision of equipment and teaching tools for preschools have not been conducted. Similarly, the budget managed by Plan was disbursed at a low level because consultants for material compilation and training courses have not been recruited. Therefore, 2 of 5 outputs have completed the planned indicators. The budget spent on 5 outputs in the preschool education component for the last 3 years is specified in the Figure 6 below:

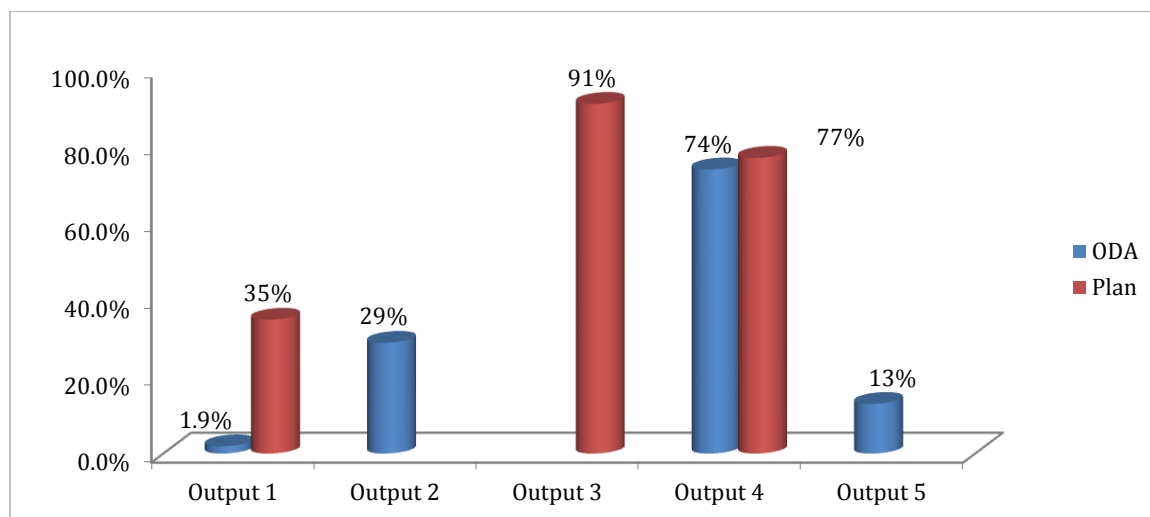


Figure 6: Expenditure per output of the preschool education component (2013-2015)
preschool education

Budget managed by DoET:

The outputs 1 and 5 were achieved at a low rate (1.9% and 13%, respectively) due to the construction of schools and procurement of equipment and toys have not been implemented. In particular, the output 1, the proposed upgrade and minor repairs of preschools have not been approved by the Provincial Project management board.

The budget disbursement of the output 2 (29%) is higher for equipping and providing some learning and playing materials for 9 preschools, the procurement of equipment and furniture using local materials has not been implemented. The output 4 has the best disbursement rate (74%), while the roll-out training activities and the professional sharing and learning meetings are organized among schools.

Budget managed by Plan International:

In fact, the output 2 has produced toys on the basis of applying new knowledge in classroom and implementing initiatives developed by teachers. The output 5 has gained some products that have already been implemented within the activities of the outputs 3 and 4. Nevertheless, 2 outputs have not been disbursed (0%) because of the delay in the preschool construction and the failure in the recruitment of qualified consultants of some training course and material development, for example, the development of guidelines on making learning and playing tools from locally cheap materials and the material on professional development of teachers based on project experience.

The outputs 3 and 4 have the best disbursement rates (91% and 77%, respectively) because the material compilation is consistent with local area training; and the capacity building for preschool teachers and administrators is implemented well according to the plan.

In short, the delay in the implementation of activities under Outputs 1, 2 and 5 has led to the low disbursement proportion.

2.3. Project implementation – Short-term outcomes

Generally, the short-term outcomes of the “preschool education” component have not been achieved. Appendix Table B shows that the short-term outcome 2 on ‘*Capacity of teachers and managers in implementation of child-based preschool education suitable for ethnic minority children has been enhanced*’ has been attained at a relatively good level, even exceeding the set plan of the project in terms of the quantity. However, the project has not achieved the short-term outcome 1 on ‘*infrastructure of preschool institutions in ethnic minority areas has been improved towards child friendly orientation*’.

In this component, the budget proportion for the outputs 1 and 2 accounted for about 90% of the component's total budget. Hence, the delay in the implementation of infrastructure construction and the provision of school facilities led to the fact that budget disbursement for 3 years of the short-term outcome 1 was dramatically low (3.1%) while this proportion of the short-term outcome 2 reached 62% of the component's total budget.

Regarding the overall impacts of project interventions on general development of project areas, according to local feedback, the delays in school construction and the provision of teaching and learning equipments for preschool institutions have had negative impacts on the achievements of the project in general and those of the "preschool education" in particular.

Short-term outcome 1: *Infrastructure of preschool institutions in ethnic minority areas towards child-friendly orientation has been improved*

As of the mid-term evaluation period, the construction of 5 main preschools and 16 satellite ones was approved. At present, it is in the bidding process with the premises preparation for construction and portfolio of facilities and tools.

The evidences from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion show that the delay in school construction and provision of teaching-learning facilities and tools has had adverse impacts on the project's results. This reduced community's trust in the project activities and caused difficulties to the local authority's leading roles. The Vice-chairman of Commune People's Committee of a project commune said:

"The current problem is that the people just see physical supports, which is here evidenced by the construction of school facilities ... The people looked for this and waited for it so long. It has been over 2 years, but people have yet to see the school buildings. We are not afraid of non- construction from the project but what we fear most is the loss of confidence of local people and their increasing doubts about the effectiveness of the project. And we have also been reminded and criticized by our leaders for many times. The slow construction have also caused many difficulties for our leaders to direct local people".

Short-term outcome 2: *Capacity of teachers and managers has been improved in implementation of child-based early childhood education suitable for ethnic minority children, including specialized program for 5 year-old children.*

Appendix Table B shows all 4 indicators of the short-term result 2 exceeded those in the project plan, specifically: 100% of Bahna students have accessed to the guiding material on locally relevant curriculum adjustments rather than 50% as targeted in the plan, 96% of key teachers are able to monitor and provide technical assistance for preschool teachers and managers, exceeding the planned indicator by 26% (70%), 89% of preschool teachers effectively applied the active teaching method of culturally relevant preschool curriculum for Bahna children (exceeding the targeted indicator by 49%), 84% of managers effectively provided supports for teachers to apply locally relevant preschool curriculum. In total, 131/145 preschool teachers and managers of 9 preschool institutions knew how to apply preschool curriculum.

According to the discussions and observations of preschool teachers and children in the classroom, the capacity of preschool teachers and managers has been enhanced through involving in training activities. So far, teachers in the project areas have known to develop educational plan for implementing preschool curriculum, selected suitable educational contents for their children, especially Bahna ones. Teachers become confident in organizing a teaching period with the participation of colleagues inside and outside school through professional teacher meetings among schools. A principal of a preschool institution in Kbang district said:

"2 years ago, we were very confused and did not know how to implement preschool education program. The training course on four modules of preschool education, which is organized by Plan International has helped us understand preschool curriculum. We know to make planning of applying locally relevant preschool curriculum, selecting themes and designing appropriate forms of education that are responsive to the characteristics, needs and interest of children, especially Bahna children and the local contexts in terms of culture, and economic conditions "

However, the training contents focused on the delivery of teaching in single classes, while in fact, more than 80% of classes is multigrade ones with children of 2-3 ages. As such, teachers faced many challenges in applying training contents into reality, for example, difficulties in selecting teaching topics, implementing teaching contents relevant to different needs and abilities of children at the various ages...In addition, key staff lack capacity of providing technical assistance to solve emerging problems in classroom. Therefore, preschool teachers mainly expect supports from the national consultants through classroom observations, visits and direct comments (twice every year).

2.4. Project implementation – mid-term outcome

The mid-term outcome of “All 3-5 year-old children can enjoy high quality formal and non-formal learning opportunities suitable for local culture, including universalization program for 5 year-old children” has achieved the indicators better than the planned ones. The mid-term outcome is evaluated to be at a good level.

Based on the general evaluation of the consultant team, the project activities create chances to access quality preschool education suitable for children’s culture, changes in awareness, knowledge, attitude, teaching method and skill of preschool teachers and managers have important meaning to the achievement of this mid-term result. However, to ensure access to quality education, enough equipments and facilities need to be sufficiently provided in the learning environment.

Appendix Table B shows 95% of 3-4 year-old children accessed formal education at preschool level (85% in the set plan), 99% of 5 year-old children reached at least 80% of child’s development benchmark and readiness to go to school (90% as stated in the plan).

Similarly, the evidences from the observations and discussions indicate children become more confident, flexible and better at communicating in Vietnamese language, understanding and implementing teachers’ requirements. When the professional and expertise knowledge, skills of preschool teachers and managers are remarkably improved, they well perform tasks of preschool teachers: know how to design locally relevant teaching contents and forms for minority children and specific conditions of local areas, prepare relevant teaching aids such as actively collecting local photos, images, real objects of local people ...which have positive impacts on children. A teacher in a preschool of Dac Po district said:

"Teaching by themes close to the life of children creates excitement for both teachers and children. For example, Hoan Kiem Lake that is a topic of a lesson is a location entirely strange to Bahna children here. Although the teacher tried to describe and explain it, children could not understand. Now this topic is replaced by Rong house, or a hero of Bahna ethnic group that are familiar with Bahna children’s life. This arouses children's interest and motivation in learning"

2.5 The relevance of the preschool education component:

2.5.1. General evaluation:

The capacity building for preschool teachers and managers are relevant to the needs for access to quality preschool education. However, the delay in the construction of preschools and the provision of teaching facilities has not met the needs of parents, community and children. The evaluation team supposes that technical assistance and financial sources have not ensured the relevance to the outputs as designed in the project plan. Therefore, the relevance of the outputs and outcomes in the “preschool education” component to the needs for access to quality preschool education of community is assessed at a low level.

2.5.2. The relevance of project activities and outputs to the needs for access to quality preschool education:

The demand for access to quality preschool education of the community, including the need for improved infrastructure of kindergartens in ethnic minority areas towards child-friendly, and the need for capacity building of preschool teachers and managers in the implementation of preschool education program and to ensure the rights of children. In the project design, 5 types of outputs are completely in line with local needs. In the implementation process, the outputs 3, 4 and 5 have met the needs of management staff, preschool teachers, parents and children in a relatively good manner regarding material compilation, capacity building training and assistance sources for initiatives. However, the outputs 1 and 2 have not met the local needs because of slow implementation compared with the plan.

The relevance to the needs for improving infrastructure of preschools in ethnic minority areas

The local authorities, schools, parents and communities all confirmed facilities of preschools in ethnic minority areas towards child-friendly direction would create opportunities for children to have access to quality and equal preschool education, particularly, in the remote villages. Schools built in distance-appropriate locations can facilitate parents’ taking and pick-up of their children to school. Moreover, the provision of equipments inside and outside the classes creates opportunities for children to have high quality learning and playing environment.

The situation of school construction and provision of equipments inside and outside classes is delayed, hence, local area evaluated that this activity has not yet met the needs of the community.

The relevance to the needs for capacity building of teachers and managers in implementation of preschool education program ensuring children’s rights

The managers, preschool teachers, parents and the community highly appreciated the supports for the implementation of program and teaching practices in line with local area and development of culturally and locally relevant learning materials. In addition, the core training and roll-out training courses for managers and preschool teachers have been designed to integrate into regular training activities and based on a survey of the needs for training contents, which met the needs of managers and preschool teachers in implementing effectively preschool education program for Bahna children.

In the project implementation period, some outputs have been adjusted to ensure effectiveness of needs of the community. Specifically, regarding the output 1, the construction of 18 sites was approved to decrease to 17 sites because the project management board of Kbang district proposed to combine the site in Kta village with the site in Cheng village (Kroong commune of Kbang district) because the distance between 2 villages is only 120m. Similarly, regarding the output 3, according to the original design, 2 sets of documents will be compiled for J’rai and Bahna groups. However, the project adjusted to have intervention on Bahna group because of Bahna people accounted for the

majority in the project communes. The adjustment of this output is consistent with local needs.

The above analysis shows that the short-term outcome 1 did not meet the needs for improving infrastructure conditions for children's development and learning. Meanwhile, the short-term outcome 2 met the local needs at a relatively good level. The capacity building trainings and material compilation helped preschool teachers and managers to teach Bahna students more effectively. In particular, the initiatives of preschool education were recognized to be highly relevant and efficient by schools and communities.

2.5.3. The relevance of resources (technical and financial) to the project outputs:

Table Appendix D shows among 5 outputs, the outputs 1, 2, 3 and 5 have inappropriate technical support resource. Based on the analysis of human resources, these outputs lack tight coordination between DOET and Plan International. Specifically, DOET is the unit in charge of directing and making decision on the selection of locations, construction, design and organization of the construction bidding ... the participation of Plan International, local authorities, schools and communities in the process of making this decision is very limited. Due to the lack of participation of stakeholders, the bid documents must be adjusted several times although the construction consultant of the project have evaluated, commented and asked to modify.

Regarding the material development activity on preschool education, the material development process with the participation of the relevant authorities and teachers in all the stages, so that the material development not only brings about products but also equips the methods for preschool teachers to continue developing materials during teaching practice period. In the process of material development, Plan plays a key role for the development of materials and mobilization of the participation of stakeholders, the active participation of local partners such as DOET, Department of Culture, Tourism and Information, BoET, Teacher Training College, the preschool teachers, and community ... remain limited, they only contributed their opinions and/or appraised materials. Thus, the active participation of local partners in material development has not been promoted.

Regarding the output 4 on capacity building for preschool teachers and managers, the relevance of technical assistance is at an average level. The project has had inter-cooperation among local agencies (such as DoET/BoET) and Plan International. Specifically, Plan is responsible for training core officers while the local agencies (including DoET and BoET) are in charge of implementing extended training activities at schools. However, according to local feedback, the involvement of DoET experts in core training courses as "observers" has not promoted their leading roles in accordance with the line management of the sector. Therefore, the commitments of monitoring and technical supports of provincial officers have been very low.

2.6. Conclusion

Generally, the preschool education component has not achieved the outputs and outcomes as desired. The budget disbursement was at very low level (8.9%) because about 90% of the budget of this project component focuses on the delayed activities such as construction and supply of equipments, the provision of indoor and outdoor play equipment for schools. The ability to complete the indicators of outputs and outcomes will be difficult without the improvement in smooth coordination mechanism among the stakeholders in the project activities of this component. Furthermore, the project should ensure sufficient conditions for preschool teachers and managers to apply the training contents suitable for the actual teaching; improve monitoring mechanism of technical assistance at the school level, and timeliness of compiled materials.

Although the financial resources and technical assistance have been adjusted but it needs further improvement to ensure the autonomy, ownership and accountability of local authorities in the project activities

3. The “primary education” component:

3.1 Introduction:

The primary education component aims at the main goal of "Quality of the transition period from pre-school education to primary school of children aged 6-8 years in ethnic minority areas to be improved, particularly it is reflected in the results of Maths and Vietnamese subject". The component ensures the continuity of the friendly stimulating environment and the method of play-based learning from preschools to the first years at the primary school. Teachers are better equipped on how to manage the transition period due to the knowledge of early childhood development and have a more positive relationship between the school and family. This significantly contributes to the preparation of child readiness to school.

3.2 Project implementation - Outputs

3.2.1 General evaluation:

The quantity and quality of the outputs in the "Primary education" component are fairly good. All 3 types of outputs in the "elementary education" component completed indicators as planned in the project with appropriate and effective adjustments. The project has compiled materials on guiding implementation of appropriate teaching content suitable for local areas, building capacity for managers and teachers in order to enhance teaching and learning quality and create effective and friendly learning environment at the primary education level. However, the activity of parents acting as teaching assistants for teachers in reducing language barriers has not been conducted.

The disbursed budget of the outputs in this project component reached a fairly good level (62% of the total three-year planned budget). Some activities in this component have been adapted to fit in with local conditions. As a result, the project has saved a considerable budget while the indicators of outputs and results have also been achieved.

3.2.2 Number of achieved outputs:

Appendix Table A shows 3 types of outputs in the “primary education” component have gained the adjusted indicators.

Output 1: Initiatives of the school’s friendly learning environment to improve the learning environment. Some indicators in the project plan have been adjusted, for example:

- According to the initial project design, each TOT training class in Pleiku will have 2 roll-out training classes in An Khê (40 trainees per class and 2 trainers per class). The project has adjusted this and accordingly implemented the roll-out trainings at the district/school level. This has increased the number of teachers and managers who could take part in the extended training courses. Simultaneously, the number of trainers, teaching assistants and supervisors has also increased. For example, 4 training classes on preschool education and 7 training classes on primary education were held up at 4 districts. Therefore, the number of training classes has increased from 2 training classes as scheduled in the original plan to 7 ones on primary education and 4 ones on preschool education. The number of trainers and teaching assistants also increased from 4 to 12 at the preschool level and 21 at the primary education level. However, this adjustment doesn’t lead to increase in budget. Instead, this resulted in a reduction in the expenditure due to free-of-charge accommodation and travelling for participating teachers. This saving budget was additionally spent on

procurements and small repairs for schools (specifically, VND 50 million/preschool/year; and VND 40 million/primary school/year).

Output 2: Adjusted materials compiled by teachers meet needs of ethnic minority students at the first grades of primary education level. Indicators in the project plan have been revised as follows:

- Compile 01 guiding material on implementing suitable teaching contents (for Grades 1 and 2: Maths, Vietnamese language, and Nature-Society) instead of 2 guiding materials on teaching suitable for each Grade (1 material for Grade 1 and 1 material for Grade 2).

Output 3: Teachers for the first grades of primary education and school managers have been trained and guided on child-based teaching method suitable for local culture and the transitional period. Indicators in the project plan have been revised as follows:

- As of the third year, the project organized 13 core training classes for 31 key teachers and 82 extended training classes for 220 teachers. Compared with output indicators in the initial plan, the project has exceeded the set targets. For example, the number of primary teachers involving in training increased from 80 to 220.
- 01 guiding material on teaching Vietnamese language as a second language and 252 copies were distributed to teachers/managers of project schools.

3.2.3 Quality of achieved outputs:

The quality of the three types of outputs in the primary education component is at a quite good level.

Output 1 - Initiatives on friendly learning environment of schools, aimed at improving the learning environment are evaluated to be fairly good. This is reflected in the ability to capture trained knowledge and skills of teachers, librarians/managers, the quality of the friendly library and friendly corners and quality of the initiatives implemented by primary schools.

158 librarians and managers from 52 schools in 4 project districts know the important role of the library for the students, especially the important role of reading books and newspapers for the strengthening of Vietnamese language development for children, especially Bahna children. However, based on observation and exchange of information, the evaluation team found skills of working with ethnic minority children, ways of organizing playing activities and guidance of reading skill to children of young librarians need to be trained more in order to attract more children and maintain routine of going to the library of children.

09 friendly libraries towards children 9 main schools and 40 friendly library corners at project satellite sites have been built and put into operation. Many books and playing activities were organized for children in outdoor activities and break time. Librarians and children actively mobilized and contributed books to libraries, learnt about and designed folk games suitable for children. However, limited space of friendly library has not sufficiently met the needs of the students. Moreover, types of books in the mobile libraries have not regularly been changed at schools. This has caused more difficulties in keeping children's habits of going to the library and reading books.

51 initiatives were implemented at 9 schools to promote creativity of teachers in improving the child-friendly learning environment. The initiative focused on making teaching aids, how to creatively apply active teaching methods, games for children ... These initiatives are evaluated to be of high quality and often assessed and adjusted before being sent to BoET and Plan International. According to teachers, initiatives have gradually improved capacity of teachers and school managers in developing and implementing initiatives, particularly

promoting solidarity and sharing experiences among teachers. However, similar to the pre-school education component, the project aims at changing teachers' development and implementation of initiatives in the traditional way to the focus on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, but the approval process of initiatives is complex, cumbersome and slow. Therefore, the period of applying initiatives into real teaching at school in the school year is unsuitable and difficult for teachers and managers when they deploy initiatives.

Output 2: Guiding material compiled by teachers on teaching is suitable for ethnic minority students and such material is highly appreciated.

The material has been compiled with the participation of teachers and managers in many workshops. The material is in the printing phase and will be distributed to managers and teachers to apply in teaching activities at school. However, currently, the project is waiting for changes in curriculum contents of MoET, so the material will be temporarily photocopied for teachers instead of being printed and issued.

Output 3: is good based on the evaluation of stakeholders. The capacity of teachers and managers on active teaching method, teaching method suitable for ethnic minority students and transitional period has been improved remarkably.

By participating in the training classes, the ability to grasp knowledge, skills and training methods of teachers, librarians/managers is quite good. 31 core teachers and 220 classroom teachers enhanced expertise in designing lessons and organizing effective teaching and learning activities; know how to conduct friendly teaching and how to teach ethnic minority students, know to analyze the actual situation, select and integrate appropriate topics into lessons. Teachers clearly understand children's rights, especially the right to access to quality education. In addition, teachers know active teaching methods, diversify teaching activities to inspire students and know how to care about all students. Thanks to the training of new professional teacher meetings, teachers know to differentiate students and teach each group of students, support students during the instructional hours in a timely manner. In particular, managers are now able to understand psychology and emotions of teachers and students. School managers have advanced their management knowledges and skills owing to their practice and experience. Moreover, they are able to develop planning and reporting.

Along with training for teachers on teaching Vietnamese language as a second language for ethnic minority students, the project supported to compile guiding material on teaching Vietnamese language as a second language and distributed 252 copies for teachers and managers of project schools. This material is highly appreciated and helps teachers to overcome difficulties in teaching ethnic minority students.

However, some training contents were rigidly and ineffectively applied by teachers because of their irrelevance to students and conditions of classrooms. A Kinh female teacher aged 28 years, teaching Grade 2 Bahna students said:

"Mind-map technique and tablecloths are difficult for my students. When I organized students to work in groups and encouraged each student to give his/her ideas to a child who provided a comment. But my students just sat still and failed to follow my guidance. My children have poor capability of language; their writing and speaking remain limited so they can not express their opinions."

3.2.4. Disbursed budget of outputs:

The financial resources of the "primary education" component are used relatively efficient compared to the number of outputs achieved as planned although regarding output 1, some activities have not been implemented or activities of output 2 are slower than the set target.

The budget resources managed by the Department of Education and Training and Plan were disbursed at a level of nearly 62% of the total budget allocated to each party for three-year activity plan of the project. Figure 7 shows the progress of disbursement of the outputs. Overall, the rate of disbursement in this activity reached a relatively good level with output 3 and the low level with output 1

Budget managed by Plan International:

The budget managed by Plan is disbursed at a high level with the output 3 (72%) and the output 2 (69%), low level with the output 1 (40%).

Appendix Table A shows resource training class, materials developed and printed according to the plan so budget disbursement of the output 3 is the highest. Regarding the output 2, material compilation was completed; however, due to the printing phase so disbursed amount in reality for this part will be higher than than 69%.

Initiatives on friendly libraries were implemented with relatively good fund mobilized from communities. In addition, the number of librarians is 30 as per the plan but in fact, there are 9 librarians a 9 schools, which led to decrease in the number of schools and amount of fund so the disbursement rate of output 1 was at a level of 40% after 3 years of implementation.

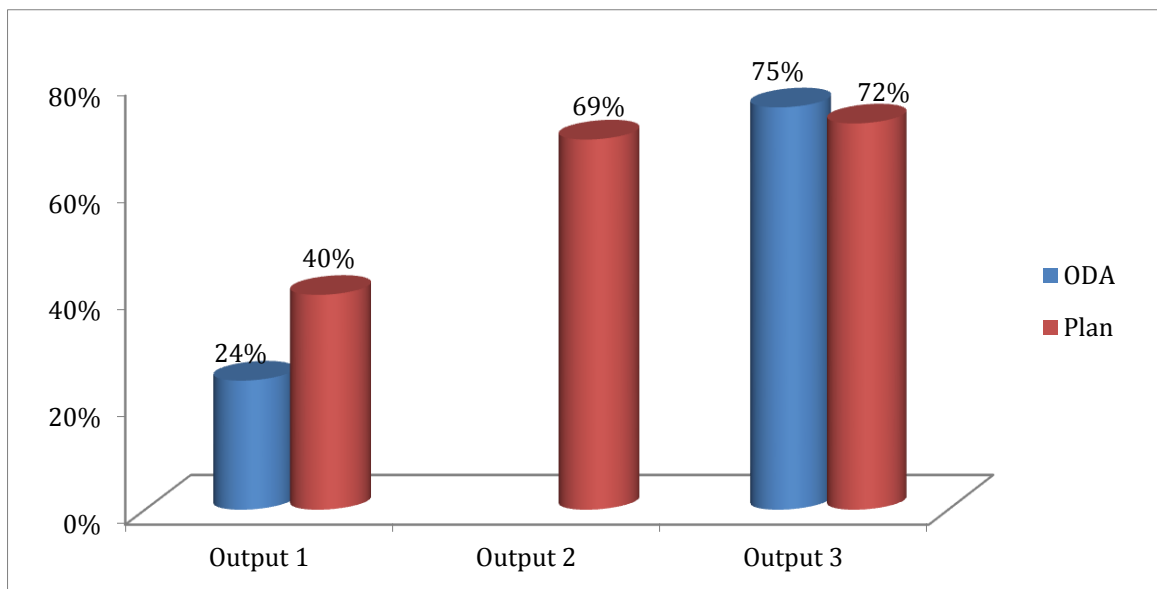


Figure 7: Expenditure per output of the primary education component (2013-2015)

Budget managed by DoET:

The budget managed by DoET was disbursed for the output 3 at a high level (75%) and for the output 1 at a low level (24%).

With the output 1, the initiatives were mainly implemented in the 2nd and 3rd years, including 18 and 33 initiatives, respectively. The first-year initiatives focused on making playgrounds, fences, outdoor toys ... but in the next year, initiatives focused on improving teaching methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, the number of teachers participating in proposing initiatives was higher in the second year (total budget is kept unchanged, VND 10 million per school)... However, the budget is very low at the output 1 because two major operations in this output were under the budget managed by the Department of Education, which has been so far stalled. Training activities for parents were conducted to support teachers in reducing language barriers in the process of teaching ethnic minority students. The reason why this activity has not been implemented is that the local

partners (in particular, the project management board of the district) are afraid of the viability and sustainability of this activity. This is a lesson learned from a big project that was implemented locally. In addition, the Provincial Project Management Board has delayed approving the proposed minor repairs and purchase of equipment for libraries (worth VND 20 million per school) of 9 primary schools due to lack of consistency in making the approval decision

Regarding the output 3, the roll-out training activities and workshops on idea sharing have been organized sufficiently as planned. Therefore, disbursement of output 3 is evaluated to be the best, with 75% of total budget allocated for 3 years of the project.

The project needs to promote activities of output 1 and printing of materials on guiding adjustment of lesson plan and contents suitable for local areas in the coming time to ensure effectiveness of relevant activities in this project component.

3.3 Project implementation – short-term outcomes:

The short-term outcomes of the primary education component have been gained at a good level regarding indicators included in the plan and actual impacts on teaching and learning in the class for students, especially ethnic minority students. Appendix Table B shows clearly quantitatively achieved results, including illustrations from in-depth interviews, focused group discussion with the stakeholders and based on observation of schools and classes to provide qualitative comments.

Short-term outcome 1: *Friendly learning environment stimulates the development of ethnic minority children, especially in the transitional period from the learning environment in mother tongue to the learning environment in Vietnamese language has been improved.*

The short-term outcome 1 is assessed to be a prominent success of the project in the primary education component. Along with a friendly learning environment and equal development right of minority children, the project has specifically accomplished the following results (as shown in Appendix Table B):

- ✓ 100% of main schools in project communes have friendly libraries.
- ✓ 78% of satellite schools have mobile friendly libraries, nearly doubles the indicator set in the plan by 2016.
- ✓ 83% of classes in the project schools have socio-emotional environment friendly to children, exceeding the set indicator by 40% of that total number of the project schools by 2016.

The friendly libraries were built at schools and have created chances for minority pupils to access sources of books, stories rich in genres, suitable for culture and their ages. In libraries, students are playing games for intellectual development as clay soil, jigsaw, painting ... Especially, due to friendly library model, children have been given the opportunity to decide participation in the library on their own and express their thoughts via their products. Moreover, children were encouraged to share their products with friends. Therefore, the activities in libraries have effectively contributed to the development of communication and Vietnamese language skills of children.

Students of satellite sites in the disadvantaged areas are more disadvantaged than those in main schools in terms of both facilities and teaching and learning aids as well as caring of parents. In satellite campuses, there is no separate library room, no specialized librarian. Hence, when the mobile libraries have been moved to schools, students have being directly guided by teachers. Owing to these mobile libraries, students in satellite sites often read books and stories in the first recess and initial learning period. Thus, the mobile library has reduced the gap in opportunities of entertaining for between students in satellite schools and

those in main ones. However, according to the in-depth interviews and focused group discussion, teachers and students expressed their desired categories of books and stories that need to be updated on a weekly basis in order to attract children to maintain their reading habit. Moreover, it is necessary to diversify games for children in libraries.

The friendly libraries have, to some extents, stimulated children to like reading and developed their reading habit by regularly going to libraries. A librarian of a primary school in Tu An commune, An Khe district said:

"Previously, students rarely went to the library because books were put on the shelves in the room and the space was too narrow for children to sit in to read books. Now, an outdoor-friendly library with many stories and fun activities greatly attracts children's attention. For children in the mountainous areas, especially in the remote areas, it is more greatly significant when a child has interest in holding a book to read".

After attending the training classes, teachers have known how to improve classroom environment in the friendly spirit, especially for ethnic minority students. The decoration in the class with the presence of Bahna ethnic group through costumes and items, pictures of the scene associated with everyday life. In particular, teachers have had a better understanding of children's rights, particularly the right of access to quality education of, and of their language, culture and characteristics. As a result, in communication with students, teachers showed their friendliness, shared and supported them to overcome difficulties of language barriers when they learnt. This has made students closer to teachers and felt more confident in communication. A female Bahna student, at Grade 4 of a main school of Kong Yang commune, Kong Chro district said:

"I would love to go to school because my teacher delivers interesting instructional periods. I find it easy to understand the lessons when learning through visual aids or real objects that are very familiar with the lives of our Bahna people. Especially my teacher knows the local language, so I am no longer fear of being scolded or criticized when I give a wrong answer to her questions. Now friends in my class are rarely absent from class, because everyone likes going to classes. In schools, we can read book, play and even receive compliments and rewards by the teacher."

However, the mobilization of parents and communities in activities of developing friendly learning environment is still limited. Currently, parents mainly involve in contribution to building and upgrading of schools, rather than in teaching and learning activities. Based on the in-depth interviews and focused group discussion, parents and communities are all ready to support teachers to reduce language barriers between teachers and students in the class, especially at satellite campuses when mobilized. But teachers and managers are afraid of capacity and barriers of participation time of parents and communities while support fund is insufficient for this activity of parents and communities in the local area. Therefore, stakeholders said that language barrier, especially for students at the first grades of primary education level leads to limitation in terms of effectiveness of project activity in development of a friendly environment at school.

Short-term outcome 2: *Capacity of teachers and managers in material compilation and application of locally relevant teaching methods has been improved.*

The short-term outcome 2 is evaluated to be fairly good. Teachers have been strengthened in terms of teaching capacity, material development and locally relevant curriculum adjustment. The outcome indicators are included in Appendix Table B as follows:

- ✓ All 9 project- schools have applied the adjustment of curriculum.

- ✓ Guiding material on teaching Vietnamese language as a second language was compiled and distributed for 9 schools at 4 project districts.
- ✓ 96% of core teachers of project schools have applied active teaching method suitable for local context of Bahna people.

Through training classes, the professional knowledge, skills and teaching method of teachers have significantly been improved. Particularly, teachers have become more confident when their colleagues visited and attended their teaching periods. They have voluntarily registered to deliver the sampling teaching periods so that teachers inside and outside schools attended and shared their observation findings in the professional teacher meetings.

Observably, the managers and teachers have changed their evaluation, feedback giving patterns when they attended the learning periods of their colleagues. They no longer concentrated on observing teachers, instead primarily observed students' learning and interaction in classroom. Subsequently they provided positive and constructive feedback with an emphasis on enhancing the equal participation and development opportunities for all students in class. Therefore, class observations following new professional teacher meetings creates pleasant atmosphere for teachers, promotes experience sharing among colleagues, creates constructive and inquiring environment among teachers, enhances self evaluation and feedback, self learning of each teacher. This creates motivation for changing and renovating teaching methods towards students for teachers, including old teachers who are afraid of changes. Currently, teaching is designed based on learning ways of students to enhance real participation of students in the class. A Principal of a primary school in Dac Po district said:

"The comments on a instructional period are no longer concentrated on criticism. Alternatively the professional teacher meetings promote the learning and sharing among teachers. Therefore, it develops the inter-support relationship and fosters the solidarity among colleagues".

Moreover, managers and teachers of schools all know to develop plan, adjust the program to match with ethnic minority students and local ones, guiding professional activities well, having skills of teachers effectively. A Bahna teacher teaching a multigrade class in a satellite campus of Kong Chro district said:

"Previously, when teachers deliver their instructional periods according to textbooks, students find it difficult to absorb all the instructed contents. The more we explain the more they do not understand because the teaching contents are strange to them. This causes great pressure on them when teachers easily become angry with students. Now we know how to adjust teaching contents to fit children's life; we develop culturally responsive teaching materials and share with other colleagues. Now when we find that children become more relaxed and positive during school hours, we also feel happier and more motivated. "

In conclusion, the short-term outcomes of the project have not only achieved quantitative indicators as set in the plan but also improved the awareness, professional knowledge, teaching/management methods and skills of managers and teachers. Based on that, the project has contributed to making children interested in learning and actively participating in class activities.

3.4. Project implementation – Mid-term outcome:

The mid-term outcome of "Quality of the transitional period from preschool education to primary education of 6-8 year-old children in the ethnic minority areas has been improved" has been attained with the indicators better than the planned ones. Generally, the mid-term

outcome has achieved the indicators at a good level that have greatly improved students' learning achievements.

The capacity building for teachers and managers has important meaning to improvement in friendly learning environment and enhance the quality of material compilation. All 3 short-term outcomes supplemented each other towards the development of friendly, active and high-quality learning environment. This creates a stable foundation for children to move from preschool education to primary level and access to quality education.

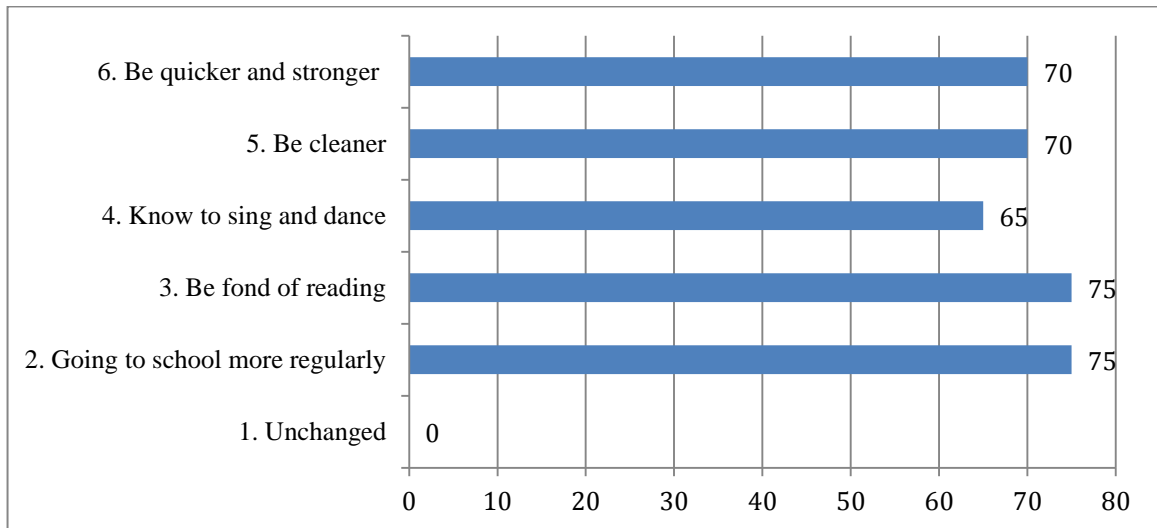


Figure 8: Self-assessment of parents of children aged 6-8 of children's changes after parents attended the parenting groups' meetings

According to the annual report of the project, the improvement in learning results of Grade 1 and 2 children has been achieved in all project schools (90% for Maths and 89% for Vietnamese language). This result is relatively good compared with the planned indicators (85% and 60%, respectively after 5 years of the project implementation).

Based on the survey and information from in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with parents, it is said that the project has motivated and inspired children to go to school and developed some necessary life skills for children (Figure 8). For example, 75% of total number of parents having 6-8 year-old children answered 'children like reading books and attend class more regularly', 70% of total number of parents said that 'children become cleaner, faster and healthier' and 65% of parents thought 'children know how to sing and dance'. No parents said 'children keep unchanged'.

3.5 The relevance of the „primary education“ component:

3.5.1. General evaluation:

The project activities totally match with the needs for school readiness of children from preschool education to primary education and ensure access to quality primary education. Generally, the outputs of project activities have been achieved at a relatively good level and met needs of different subjects in the primary education component. However, the evaluation team also thought that financial and technical assistance sources have had some unsuitable aspects with the outputs in the project design.

3.5.2. The relevance of project activities and outputs to the needs for access to quality primary education:

The needs for access to quality primary education are presented in the specific objectives of the project on the development of a friendly environment stimulating development of ethnic minority children and the capacity of teachers and managers in material compilation, the application of locally relevant teaching method. The “primary education” component consists of 3 types of outputs suitable for needs identified in the project (Appendix table C). Such outputs have met the needs for capacity building of managers, teachers, parents and children; for material compilation. The trainings have been delivered in a relatively good manner. And the initiatives have effectively promoted culturally responsive teaching for students, especially Bahna ones. Along with the development of friendly libraries, the outputs have relatively well-met the needs for improving friendly environment and stimulating the development of ethnic minority students.

The relevance to the needs for a friendly learning environment and stimulating development of children

Creating a friendly learning environment, promoting the initiatives of students in learning, and enhancing the active participation of stakeholders in schools activities are recognized as the strong needs of local authorities, schools, parents and children.

The local authorities at all levels in the project areas are in close collaboration with schools to upgrade facilities and equipments for schools, organize playing and development activities for children, engage children and parents in school activities, develop community groups in the purpose of raising parents’ awareness of caring and educating children... In particular, establishing and developing friendly libraries are meaningful to attract children to school so that children can both learn, and play at school.

Learning the concepts matching local context and capacity of children, and learning through games have stimulated children to actively participate in classroom activities. So parents and children become more active in supporting teachers to find local items, producing teaching aids from local materials to make the teaching hours more familiar and interesting for children

The relevance to the needs for the capacity building of managers and teachers in material compilation and application of locally relevant teaching method

Teachers and managers at primary schools in the project areas highly appreciated the supports of guiding the curriculum adjustments, compiling culturally relevant teaching materials and improving the application of child centered teaching methods. The ways of material development and roll-out training created opportunities of real participation and increased the sense of ownership of teachers and managers.

The training courses for managers and teachers are based on the surveys of the needs for training contents. Therefore, the training courses are in line with the needs of primary managers and teachers.

The interviews and group discussions with different subjects in the mid-term review (including local government officials, parents, communities, and schools) showed that the capacity of teachers and managers have been greatly improved. Additionally, they have sufficiently been provided with locally relevant teaching materials. Notably, the initiatives in primary education has adequately supported to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching and learning practices, especially for Bahna students. This underlies the development of friendly learning environments in which children are "happy" and "proactive" in learning.

3.5.3. The relevance of (technical and financial) resources to project’s outputs:

The outputs of this project component have achieved the output indicators as planned. Table D shows the outputs 1 and 3 have appropriate technical and financial resources, but some

aspects need to be improved regarding the participation and leadership role of provincial officials in compiling documents, training and monitoring, technical assistance and guidance for implementation of local initiatives. Regarding the output 2, technical assistance does not match the output of the project.

In terms of the outputs 1 and 3, technical resources are presented via tight coordination between DOET and Plan International in the process of building, deploying initiatives and training. Accordingly, teachers and school managers have developed initiatives based on the guidelines of Plan International and core staff at the school and district levels. Similarly, teachers and school managers have been trained by the core staff at the school and district levels with the supervision/technical assistance of Plan staff. However, technical assistance officers at the provincial level haven't really participated in and taken their leading role in the process of guiding implementation of initiatives and extended training to teachers and schools managers. This has constrained the ability to replicate the good results and ensure the sustainability of the project.

Regarding the output 2 of the compilation of the guiding material on locally relevant instructional content adjustment of Grades 1 and 2, the conformity of technical assistance resources remains at a low level. Similar to the preschool education component, Plan International has played a key role in the activity of compiling this material while the active participation of DOET and local partners has been very limited. The local partners have primarily been involved in this process as providing information, comments and/or material appraisal. Thus, the ownership of local officials with the project results has been assessed to be at a low level.

The project activities in the field of primary education have been funded from two budget sources managed by DOET and Plan International. In particular, the outputs 1 and 3 are spent from these two sources so the autonomy, the roles and responsibilities of these two partners of the project activities have been ensured. However, the funding for the output 2 has merely been allocated from the budget managed by Plan International. Therefore, it has not promoted the autonomy and the responsibility of local partners in the process of material compilation and development.

3.6. Conclusion:

In summary, the project has achieved outputs, short-term and mid-term outcomes at a relatively good level, fully relevant to the local needs. The disbursed budget of this project component is at a fairly good level (62%) and engaged with the appropriate adjustments, so the project saved a lot of costs. Although some activities have been delayed, the project has been evaluated to have a high possibility of achieving the planned indicators in the coming years.

In this component, the project needs to improve the involvement of the technical assistance team at the provincial and district levels to support and guide the formulation and implementation of initiatives; the practicing and the application of trained knowledge, methods and skills in the teaching process. Moreover, the project needs to implement the activity of building capacity for parents to act as teaching assistants to teachers in reducing language barriers for minority students in classroom.

4. The “policy environment” component:

4.1 Introduction:

The main objective of the policy component is *"Policy environment on early childhood development to be improved and better integrated."* The project has built a forum for all the

relevant stakeholders in order to promote policy advocacy through the successful practices. In addition, the project enhances the evidence based policy advocacy by documenting the achieved results and good practices through research, monitoring and evaluation.

4.2 Project implementation - Outputs

4.2.1 General evaluation:

Three-quarters of the outputs of the "policy environment" component has not completed as planned in the design. Among 4 categories of this component's outputs, 1 output completed the plan (Output 1), 2 types of outputs completed some indicators, but delayed compared to the plan (outputs 2 and 4), 1 output reached 50% of indicator set out in the project plan (output 3). The quality of the outputs has been evaluated to be fairly good.

The project has significantly contributed to the policy impacts through building networks, organizing forums and workshops on early childhood development in the Asian region and the national level. However, the impacts on changing policy at the provincial level remain modest. In particular, the project was initially successful in the capacity building of managers, teachers and communities who have directly involved in the process of monitoring and evaluation of the project changes.

The disbursed budget of 4 types of outputs has been at an average level (nearly 57% of the total three year planned budget of this component)

4.2.2 Number of achieved outputs:

Appendix Table A showed the achieved indicators of 4 types of outputs against the project plan as follows:

Output 1: The system of lessons learned from other early childhood development projects in Vietnam and in the region have been gathered.

With this output, the project has completed indicators set out in the plan, in particular:

- 1 domestic tour and 1 tour to visit New Zealand on the preschool education development model.
- Reference materials of Asian Network on Preschool education Development (ARNEC) were translated into Vietnamese and used to develop policy advocacy materials.

Output 2: The research activities have been carried out additionally to the project and for the documentation of evidence-based interventions.

To date, the project has completed the indicators set out in the project plan. However, the implementation process of activities and achieved outputs were delayed compared to the set schedule.

- The project has deployed 02 long-term studies (including a longitudinal study and a model study on preschool education and community education) and 01 mid-term review of the project. In actual implementation period, research and evaluation activities were delayed compared with the plan. For example, the study on preschool education model and MTR was prolonged due to difficulties in recruiting consultants meeting the requirements...
- Communication materials including 800 project brochures, the outfits such as shirts, windbreakers have been completed for the volunteers and the participants of the early childhood development and care network...
- 2 articles about the project results were published in the electronic newspaper of the Communist Party of Vietnam and a documentary film has also been completed

Output 3: The networks and alliances for early childhood development are set at the national and provincial levels.

Compared to the indicators set out in the plan, the project has reached 50% of indicators, in particular:

- Develop a network of early childhood care and development at the national level and collaborate with VVOB to organize roundtable dialogues on early childhood care and development with the participation of donors such as the World Bank, UNICEF, Aid et Action, Vietnam Institute of Education Sciences (Preschool education Research Center), Ministry of Education and Women's Union... Such roundtable dialogue was held recently with the participation of the ECE Department (Ministry of Education) with its presentation on universal ECCE scheme for 5-year-old children....
- Coordinate with the Ministry of Education and Training and the international organizations to organize 2 workshops and national level forums through this network, including Global Education Week towards the theme of "Every child needs a teacher" (2012); the Forum on improving national education quality (2013); the workshop on "Towards high quality preschool education" (2014).

Within this project, Plan International has actively acted as the coordinator of the ARNEC network in Vietnam, and promoted the sharing of good examples of educational projects on early childhood development in the international forums. The indicators have not been reached as planned, including: the organization of provincial-level seminars/forums on policy dialogue; the establishment of a network of early childhood development education at provincial level. Therefore, the project has not linked to the programs/projects related to early childhood care and development in Gia Lai province to share experience and support, to avoid overlapping; and thus, constrain the coordination and integration of policy environment on early childhood development education.

Output 4: Advocacy is based on effective evidence of early childhood development and incorporated early childhood development initiatives to be deployed.

The indicators have been achieved as follows:

- 09 policy advocacy workshops held in 7 project communes. Among them, the 1st workshop held in 7 communes of 4 project districts. The 2nd workshop organized in 2/7 communes in the Koong Chro district. 05 advocacy workshops were held in 04 districts in the 3 years of the project.

The policy advocacy workshop at provincial level has not been organized because it requires approval from the provincial People's Committee.

4.2.3 Quality of achieved outputs:

The quality of all 4 types of outputs in the policy component is at a good level.

Output 1:

The study tour to the preschool education model in Quang Tri province for 28 preschool education development officers and technical assistance team members and study tour in New Zealand for 14 officers in Gia Lai province, the Ministry of Education – Training and Plan staff was held in the first year. Through this visit, the staffs learned the experience of caring, developing preschool education. Also, from viewing prominent model and the results of preschool education, they were more committed to participate and support the adoption of the lessons learned in the project implementation.

The reference materials on the development of preschool education of early childhood network in Asia Pacific (ARNEC) were used to develop guidelines for community groups

and implement policy advocacy. Specifically, the messages from this document have been incorporated into the development of materials in the components of the project. For example, the message of "1000 first days of the children" has been incorporated into the guiding material of parents group with children aged 0-8... This helped update programs and activities of preschool education with other programs in the region.

Output 2:

From training courses and workshops on monitoring-evaluation on the most significant changes in the longitudinal study, core community members, core preschool and primary education members grasped the techniques and used tools to measure the most significant changes from the project through training and workshops on monitoring and evaluation, develop indicators for the implementation of indicators of output results. The targets were developed by teachers and integrated in the implementation plan and annual report. This helps teachers to be proactive in fostering and enhancing learning outcomes of students. A Grade 3 teacher of Kbang district said:

"Thanks to the project, learning outcomes of students in my class have been changed. In the beginning of Grade 4, students didn't know to read and write, although they were in Grade 2. And I applied the mixed teaching method for different students and provided more supports for poorly performed students. By the end of the schoolyear, I'm really excited, 4 students can read and write Vietnamese language well. However, one child is still facing with poor capability of this subject. If I followed the traditional method, these 4 students could have sat in a wrong grade"

The local officials said that their direct involvement in the development of the monitoring indicators enabled them to assess which project activities were good, not good and how to adjust activities in a timely and effective manner. However, there have been some difficulties in developing and applying the indicators in practice because the local officials have not yet approached this assignment for the past time.

800 project brochures with the concise contents, and eye-catching images effectively transmitted the projects information to preschool managers and partners involved in the preschool education development support program.

With the achieved outcomes/results, the project has attracted the interests and support of the management staff for project activities. For example, DOET has directed all district to scale up the project's new professional development model to all schools in the project area and even in some places outside the project areas. In particular, BOET of Kbang district actively directed the expansion of new professional development activities immediately after the roll-out trainings.

Output 3:

The project has developed a network of preschool education at national level, of which, Plan has play roles of the co-chair in operating this network. The network has provided an opportunity for international and local organizations to share, learn from experience and programs on early childhood caring and development. With 2 forums and a national conference, the network has not only enhanced the mutual cooperation of the stakeholders, but also provides an opportunity for policy makers (namely the Ministry of Education and Training) to see the resources of international organizations so as to take advantage of synergies for the development of preschool education. On this basis, MOET made decisions and issued the appropriate and effective guidelines to develop preschool education. For example, a national scheme of strengthening Vietnamese language for children prepared to Grade 1 has been developed and implemented.

Output 4:

The initiatives and effectiveness of the preschool education model at the conferences/workshops at all levels have been evaluated to have positive impacts on the community, policy makers and stakeholders. On the one hand, such workshops helped to raise the awareness of community and local leaders of action plans of the concerned stakeholders related to childhood care and education, the malnutrition issues, personal hygiene and environment protection, prevention of injuries to children. The stakeholders participated in implementing the developed action plan after the workshops. On the other hand, with typical good examples of early childhood caring and development through workshops at all levels, the results achieved by the project has received recognition and attention of local authorities, agencies, local community and organizations. In particular, the guiding materials on the parents group with children aged 0-8 have been being translated into English so that such materials can be widely shared with the international community

4.2.4. Disbursed budget of outputs:

The disbursed budget of the policy component managed by DOET of Gia Lai province reached 35% while that managed by Plan International was at a higher level (66%). Figure 9 shows the the output 3 has no budget allocated and spent.

Budget managed by Plan International:

This budget was disbursed with the best proportion with the output 1 (100%) and at a quite good level with the outputs 4 and 2, 82% and 57%, respectively, of the total three year planned budget. In details, the research activity and the documentation of project activities, the results of the project and promotion of sharing among regions through study tours between Gia Lai staff and other provinces have been implemented very well by Plan International. Some ongoing activities included a mid-term review (MTR), a longitudinal study and a study on preschool education intervention. These activities took place more slowly than the planned schedule because of the difficulty in recruiting qualified consultant(s). Moreover, the project could not control the working schedule of foreign partners for the longitudinal research.

With the output 3, the project has not yet established a network and alliance of preschool education development at the provincial level because the management staff was busy with their government tasks of the sector. Moreover, the procedure for organization of workshops must be approved from Provincial People's Committee (PPC)

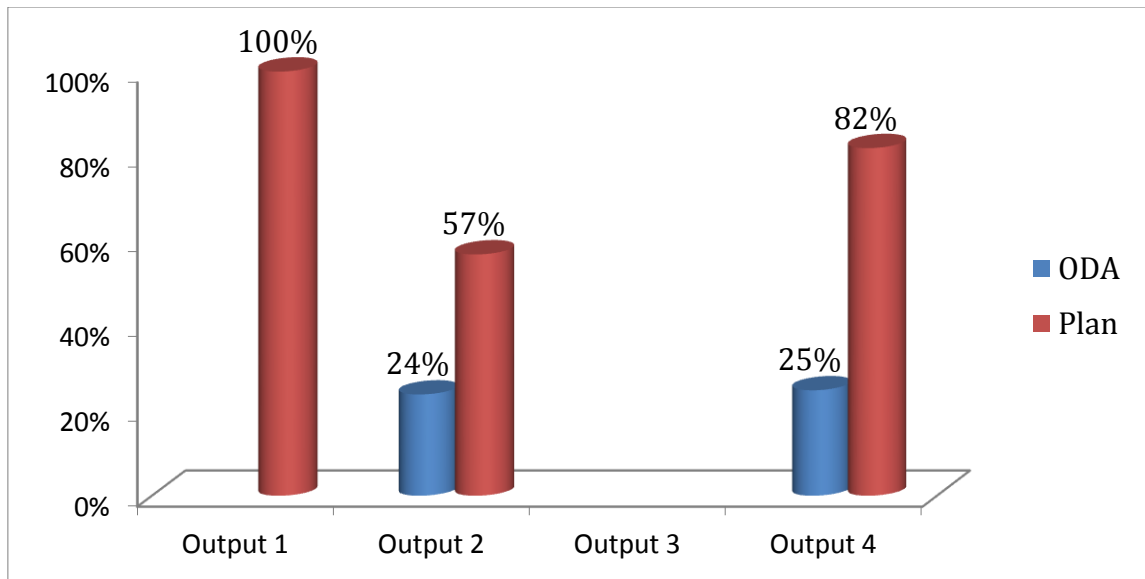


Figure 9: Expenditure per output of the policy component (2013-2015)

Budget managed by DoET:

Figure 9 shows the budget managed by DOET with relatively low expenditures of the outputs 2 and 4 (about 24-25%) due to the delay in organizing the policy dialogue workshops at the commune/district level, the policy advocacy workshops at the provincial level and the roll-out trainings on the documentation of the project interventions for preschools and primary ones.

At the same time, the participation, monitoring and evaluation of the technical assistance team and Provincial PMB were still very limited. Moreover, DOET of Gia Lai province has not organized the study tour to Ha Giang in order to exchange experience for its community members.

The briefings of PMB at the district level have not regularly been implemented because the local leaders have been busy with the tasks of the sector.

4.3 Project implementation – Short-term and mid-term outcomes:

The short-term outcomes in the “policy” component have obtained the indicators at a modest level.

Short-term outcome 1: *Database includes evidences and good practices of the importance of early childhood development through research, supervision, evaluation and documentation of initiatives.*

The project has built a comprehensive database including evidences and good practices of early childhood development with the participatory approach. With the external project stakeholders, journalists and television reporters at the both provincial and national levels have approached the project activities to write articles and reports on the preschool education development model. In addition, national and international consultants from Vietnam Institute of Education Science, Ministry of Education and Training and the independent research agency, Monash University (Australia) involved in the study and assessed the project activities. According to the opinions of the project staff and local stakeholders, the articles, reports and review reports and studies have been received by local partners. These documents have partially raised the awareness of local authorities and community about early childhood care and education. With internal stakeholders of the project, the technical

support officers at all levels, key officers in community component, key staff of preschool and primary levels, volunteers, teachers and managers of preschools and primary schools, parents, children and local authority officials have participated in collecting information through monitoring and evaluation tools of the project and identified the most significant changes in project operations.

Short-term outcome 2: *Awareness of policy makers about early childhood development as well as importance of integrated early childhood development initiatives has been enhanced.*

100% of core officers of villages, communes, and districts participated in communication and dialogue events on the preschool development organized by the project. Additionally, these officers also participated in training courses on capacity building of planning, monitoring and evaluation, communication skills, knowledge of children's rights, early childhood development and care model in the community ... A health officer of Kbang district shared in an in-depth interview that:

"Joining forums, training workshops on preschool education development, organized by Plan International, I has improved and updated professional knowledge and skills. I have acquired an understanding of community development that a health officer did not learn in medical school. Particularly, I have learnt the soft skills such as presentation skill that helps social workers to communicate, and provide effective education for local people."

In addition, through the project activities, local officials know how to plan activities, integrate the project activities in those of the education sector. The integrated activities were carried out in a number of events such as the full moon festival, children's day, first day of a school-year ... Moreover, it has been included in some social conventions of the villages and the socio-economic development plan of localities, the plan for developing new rural areas, for example, environmental issues, child protection, child's rights, child care and education such as malnutrition, medical care... in Jang Nam commune (Kong Chro), To Tung (Kbang).

The project has neither organized the workshop and policy dialogue forum at the provincial level nor established a network of preschool education development. Therefore, the short-term outcome regarding the policy change has not attained the planned indicators.

Regarding the medium-term outcome of "Policy environment on early childhood development is improved and more integrated", it is found to be difficult to assess the degree of the project achievements when the project has not identified the specific indicators of the improved ECCE policy environment. In fact, some initial results have been recognized by national policy makers. For example, Ministry of Education and Training invited Plan International Vietnam to make a sharing of its experiences with the participants of the project of strengthening Vietnamese language for 5 year-old children. Plan Vietnam presented the development of guiding material on locally relevant curriculum adjustment in a thematic workshop on mainstreaming ethnic minority cultures in education by the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and UNESCO held up in 2015. Moreover, three community group models have been being proposed by the provincial Women's Union for replication outside the project areas.

Nevertheless, the project needs to further promote the involvement of provincial policymakers so that the issue of preschool education development and coordination mechanism among stakeholders is incorporated into the socio-economic development plan of the localities.

4.5 The relevance of the "policy environment" component:

4.5.1. General evaluation:

The designed project activities entirely match with the project's outputs. During the implementation period, the project outputs have met the needs identified in the project at a quite good level. The evaluation team noted that the relevance of technical supports and financial resources to the outputs of the project needs to be improved to achieve the expected mid-term and long-term outcomes of the project.

4.5.2. The relevance of the activities and outputs of the project to the need for improving the policy environment of early childhood care and education development:

The relevance to the needs for enhancing evidence for the importance of preschool education through research, monitoring, evaluation and documentation of initiatives

Stemmed from the need for specifying the changes in the awareness about the importance of preschool education to the behavior change of caring and educating children of community and policy-makers, the project has designed appropriate activities. The evidences were collected from the study, the communication materials and experiential initiatives, and stories from the monitoring of the most significant changes. This has been done by local officers and volunteers, different stakeholders within and outside the project such as consultants of MOET, and Universities, Institutes and national journalists and reporters.

The relevance to the needs for raising awareness of policy makers on early childhood development as well as the importance of initiatives of integrated early childhood development

In response to the need for improving professional knowledge and skills of policy-makers, the project activities such as sightseeings, seminars, forums and network establishment of provincial preschool development units have been designed. The organization of national and abroad trips is aimed to meet the demand for learning experience and raising awareness about the importance of early childhood development of policy makers and the project implementation officers in localities. In addition, the evidences on the outcomes and effectiveness of preschool education development model in local areas will be used in forums, policy advocacy seminars and media to promote policymakers' access to information; to understand the implementation method and develop plan for integrating the project activities into those of the education sector. Especially, the workshops and forums underlie the cooperation of potential programs/projects and available resources in the localities.

The policy makers at all levels and community need to see the tangible effectiveness and benefits of the project activities on the improvement of their living conditions and the promotion of the physical, mental, intellectual development and communication for their children. These specific evidences effectively result in the changes of their perceptions and behaviors. A member of a project management board in a project district said:

"The project has promoted the participation of the mass organizations, and unions in the community development programs through policy dialogues and communication. For example, Yang Nam commune is considered to be very unsanitary. After the dialogue held at the commune level showed the specific evidences on the causes and consequences of unhygienic issues, Youth's Union, Women's Union and Health center were in collaboration with the community to clean from indoor house to lane outside. Gradually, people in the villages have formed cleaning habits in families and communities. Then, villages in Yang Nam commune are very clean; children live in clean air and have more healthy development. "

4.5.3. The relevance of (technical and financial) resources to the project's outputs:

Of the four types of outputs in Table D of the "policy" component, the coordination between the technical and financial resources has basically been consistent in the outputs 1 and 4 of the project. Particularly, regarding the outputs 2 and 3, the allocation of technical and financial resources has not been relevant to the project's outputs.

With the output 1, the technical assistance sources have mainly provided by Plan International Vietnam, Plan Australia, experts from the Institutes in terms of arranging the study tour, developing the translated materials of Asian Network on the early childhood education development. This activity has mainly been coordinated and implemented by Plan Vietnam with its funding. It is assessed to entirely be suitable when Plan Vietnam has developed an extensively sharing network with national and international organizations. On that basis, Plan International could effectively and appropriately consult the preschool education development models to organize the study tour and other relevant, useful materials which need to be shared, learnt and applied in Gia Lai province.

With the output 4, the workshops at the commune and district and national levels were held up in the cooperation among local officials and Plan officers at all levels. At the national level, the project has created opportunities and promoted the participation of local officials in large and important forums and conferences. However, the changes in terms of the awareness and participation of policy makers at the local areas (provincial, district and communal levels) were ineffective. The local officials were not active in setting up the network and sharing experience with other partners and localities. Moreover, the evidences of the achieved results have not widely been shared by local officials on these forums. Therefore, it is found that the policy impacts would have been more effective and extensive when local officials strengthened their capacity and responsibilities of active sharing of the project's results in the policy advocacy forums at the national level.

With the outputs 2 and 3, the technical assistance sources were inappropriate. In the design, the project activities have not promoted the autonomy and the participation of local officers and beneficiaries. For example, in the output 2, the documentation of the most significant changes of the project may have been implemented by core officials, volunteers, teachers and beneficiaries (including parents and children) on their own with the technical assistance from consultants and Plan officers. On that basis, the funds would have been distributed according to the two budget sources managed by DOET and Plan International. The funding mechanism would have ensured the inclusiveness and opportunities for local people to get involved in the implementation of project activities.

Particularly with the output 3, although the national network has functioned well and mainly operated under the administration of Plan International, a provincial network of preschool education development has not been established. It was disclosed that this delay had been caused by the requirements of the provincial people's committee's approval of this establishment. In our view, this delay could be due to the absence of a binding responsibility mechanism and poor participation of technical assistance team and PMB's members in the policy advocacy activities.

4.6. Conclusion:

In summary, the project component has achieved the outputs at a good level. The project outcomes of improving and integrating ECCD policy environment are also assessed to be good. To further consolidate the achieved results, the delayed activities such as establishing a provincial ECCD network; organizing provincial workshops/dialogues on policy need to be pushed up. The effectiveness of the policy component can be improved when PMB and the local authorities at provincial level actively engage in leading and monitoring the project

activities. The delay of some project activities has resulted in a slightly above average disbursement level for the 3- year project implementation (57%).

PART 2: THE SUSTAINABILITY AND THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

1. The sustainability of the outputs of four project components:

1.1. “Community” component:

In general, the five outputs of the “community” component are assessed to have high sustainability if there are solutions to integrate them into regular activities of Women’s Union and Youth’s Union as well as promote the quality of parenting groups’ activities by improving volunteers’ knowledge and facilitation skills, supporting income-generation activities, fostering technical supports of core officers, particularly in material development, trainings and workshops, improving the selection and approval process of community initiatives. Importantly, District Women’s Union and Youth’s Union should engage in the roll-out trainings, monitoring and technical supports for the community groups at the grass-roots level. This likely promotes the sense of responsibility and ownership of project results for the local partners. Specifically:

* Output 1 and 3: The sustainability of the educational curriculum for parents as well as materials for parents is assessed to be relatively high because: (i) they respond to the need for improving childhood cares and educational knowledge and skills of parents and community, especially in the disadvantaged areas where people have limited access to information and communication. (ii) Women’s Union has strongly supported and actively integrated them into its regular activities. Notably, it has developed a proposal of replicating the project’s community group model to the non-project areas. It is expected that approximately 250 copies of the handbook on facilitating the community groups of parents with children aged 0 to 8 will be delivered to parents and about 2,600 copies of the material on childhood cares and development for parents will be distributed to non-project sites, etc. Therefore, curriculum and materials for parental education will be used after the project ends.

* Output 2: The parenting groups will be sustainable if a number of conditions are guaranteed. The operation of parenting groups responds to the community’s need for communication and parents’ need for childhood caring and development. The community and local authority also recognize the effectiveness of parenting groups in improving childhood caring and education. As a result, the provincial Women’s Union is planning to replicate the parenting group model in the non-project areas. However, the sustainability of parenting groups is not ensured because of inadequate volunteers and budget. The volunteers of parenting groups are not stable while some have poor capacity of facilitating groups’ meetings. Moreover, the operation of these groups mainly depends on the project budget. There have not been effective solutions to secure budget for their operation after the project phases out. So far, 10 out of 27 initiatives are involved in farming and the other 17 initiatives focused on construction and learning. It is too early to assess the success of the farming initiatives because they are in the initial phase of implementation.

* Output 3: The quality and stability of the volunteer network for childhood caring and education have not been secured. There has been lack of key staff at the district and commune levels to participate in technical supports and roll-out trainings. For example, there is only one health worker from Kong Yang commune taking part in the roll-out training, meanwhile, the commune core team usually consists of 3 members (including Vice Chairman of Commune People’s Committee, Women’s Union officer and health worker) from Krong, To Tung and Tu An communes. In addition, only one participant at the district level per district attended the roll-out training, namely one PES staff of Dak Po district, one staff from District Health Department from Krong Chro and An Khe district, and one staff from Women’s Union from Kbang district. As a result, there was poor participation of staff

at the district level, few participants from Women's Union and especially none from Youth's Union attended the roll-out trainings. This caused difficulties for staff from Women's Union and Youth's Union at the commune level to implement the project activities because of the lack of direction by the line management agencies at the district level.

Furthermore, there has been an instability of volunteers (over 40% volunteers were replaced) while a number of volunteers have had limited knowledge about childhood caring, education and stimulation. Remarkably, a number of ethnic minority volunteers have had poor capability of reading and speaking Vietnamese language. Meanwhile, district/commune technical support staffs also encounter a great obstacle of communicating in the minority language. As a consequence, they have hardly provided technical supports to volunteers.

* Output 4 – Local initiatives on stimulating child development from 0 to 11 years old: The establishment of parent groups with children aged 0-3 and child play and reading groups aged 4-11 properly responds to the need for comprehensive development of children aged 0-11 and their language development (Vietnamese). However, the sustainability of parenting groups with children from 0 to 3 years old was not ensured. The quality of parenting groups' operation was not high because volunteers had limited knowledge and skills of organizing activities and supporting practices. Local income-generating initiatives have not been successful. Meanwhile, the integration of parenting groups' activities into the mass organizations' regular activities such as Women's Union and community activities managed by local authority were not effectively implemented, especially Women's Unions at the district level have not provided technical supports to roll-out training and parenting groups' meetings at the commune and village levels such as in Dak Po, Krong Chro and An Khe districts.

Regarding child play and reading groups (4 to 11 years old children), the consultant team recognized that the sustainability of these groups needs much effort to be improved. Although the children were observably very excited and actively engaged in the groups' activities, and the volunteers had good capability of organizing such kind of activities, the repeated games and out-of-date reference materials likely reduced children's interest. The activities of child play and reading groups have not been integrated into the local regular activities, especially into those of Youth's Union that has not yet participated into the roll-out training, monitoring and technical supports for these groups.

Nevertheless, the technical support team at the commune and village levels has been selected from representatives of Women's Union, Youth's Union, health station and village head. This personnel arrangement promotes the possibility of higher sustainability of the community groups when their activities become habitual and regular community activities in villages.

1.2. "Pre-school Education" Component

This component is recognized to be highly sustainable thanks to its achievements in improved pedagogical capacity of teachers and educational administrators of implementing locally relevant preschool curriculum. The sustainability lies in the procedure and results of capacity building through training. The capacity building has been conducted with an emphasis on (1) improving awareness and analytical skills of new preschool curriculum and implement the curriculum through training modules for key administrators and teachers; (2) sharing and learning experiences through local workshops with the participation of pre-school teachers; (3) promoting practicing opportunities at schools through initiatives. The results of the capacity building clearly showed that many pre-school teachers in project sites understood the curriculum and could apply knowledge and skills they gained in training, the workshops into their plan and teaching in line with local context. Moreover, when they meet

difficulties in implementing the new curriculum because training courses or workshops could not anticipate all latent issues that might emerge from teaching and learning situation, they organized professional meeting at school or among schools to share and support one another, study and learn from relating materials, asked for technical supports from the central experts. This shows a good signal for on-going professional development of pre-school teachers. In order to secure the sustainability of this result, however, it is necessary to find the way of training and promoting the capacity of key teacher so that they can play the key role in teacher training at school (better than depending on the provision of technical supports by only one central expert – Ms. Lan Phuong), in providing technical supports for schools' initiatives. PMB(s) needs to simplify the requirements for the approving procedures of initiatives in the direction of weighing the objective of capacity building for proposing initiatives and that of encouraging and promoting teachers to practice for professional development on the equal basis. On the other hand, the capacity of pre-school teachers will not be upgraded unless Early Childhood Education Department, Gia Lai Education Service actively participate in this activity as well as Gia Lai Teacher Training College has innovative program on education and training for local pre-school teachers.

The sustainability of the output 3 and the indicators of the output 5 needs to be taken into account. The development of the “open” material on implementing Pre-school Education Curriculum was contributed by administrators and pre-school teacher of the project sites and was reviewed by the educational administrators and pre-school experts in Gia Lai province and at the central level. Though the material has not been published and provided to teachers, the application of its content into the teaching practices in the project schools affirmed its high sustainability. In order to enhance its sustainability, however, it is necessary to accelerate process of publishing and provision of the material in hardcopies to replicate the experience of implementing the Curriculum in line with the local context in both project sites and non-project sites. Besides, it is essential to promote training and experience sharing workshop on developing the material of implementing pre-school curriculum in multigrade classes in order to enhance the quality of implementing pre-school curriculum.

In this component, it is especially essential to boost up the school construction and equipment provision (output 1 and 2), the provision of manual on new professional teacher meetings at the preschool level (output 5). Because the delay will mitigate the sustainability of application of newly-equipped knowledge and the capacity of administrators and pre-school teacher into implementing pre-school curriculum as well as negatively affect the quality of teacher capacity building which has achieved in the above-mentioned outputs.

1.3. “Primary Education” Component

The sustainability of primary education component is assessed to be high because the project encouraged the active participation and supports from community into the application of initiatives on friendly learning environment, active practicing of knowledge, skill and teaching methods acquired from the capacity building training for primary teacher and education administrators, the high relevance and frequent utilization of the developed materials. However, the probability of replicating the project results remains limited because of the poor participation of provincial PMB into the project activities.

**** Output 1: Initiatives on school friendly learning environment***

The community readiness for contributing material, intellectual and personal resources to friendly school library showed the sustainability of this project activity. Children have become excited and actively engaged in library activities. Librarians have been active and enthusiastic in organizing library activities for children. The sustainability will not be ensured unless there is a strong commitment of budget from the local education sector or

authority for purchasing and updating the list of books, learning materials, the provision of stationeries for children drawing, equipping and making toys and organizing playing activities in the library.

Regarding the professional teacher meetings and the active teaching and learning, the sustainability of these two activities is very high when they are integrated into the regular tasks of schools, in daily teaching and learning practices because they are essential and relevant to their work, produce good results in improving the educational outcomes of students. Therefore, these types of activities should be implemented according to the wishes of teachers and schools who are aware of effectiveness, voluntarily apply and promote them in schools. The innovative professional meetings were introduced to 2 project schools and 19 non-project schools in Kbang district, to 15 schools in Krong Chro district with their funding from the local budget.

Output 2: Develop 01 manual on locally relevant instructional content adjustment (Grade 1 and 2 for Maths, Vietnamese and Nature & Society)

This material was supported by educational administrator and primary teachers and used in the teaching and learning practices. However, this material has not yet printed out because the project is waiting for national new curriculum. Hence, it has not been used outside the project areas. As a result, the sustainability of this activity is not ensured.

** Output 3: Provide trainings and materials for teacher and educational administrator on teaching Vietnamese as a second language for children*

The training contents were integrated into school professional teacher meetings as they were recognized to be useful, realistic and well-responded to primary teacher's needs for designing lesson plans; effective, friendly classroom organization and classifying children according to their competence. However, the replacement of district key teachers by school ones challenged them to deliver the roll-out training courses because they had constraint of problem-solving skills in classroom. Moreover, this also reduced chances of technical support and exchange among schools in spite of the fact that this model created more chances for key school administrators and teachers of engaging in roll-out training and of being more active in training schedule.

Recognizably, the provincial technical support officers of Gia Lai province did not actively participate in the project activities of all three outputs. Additionally, they did not take advantage of their technical support expertise in implementing the project.

1.4. "Policy" Component

In general, the sustainability of this component's outputs is assessed to be at a medium level.

The project provided capacity building and created chances for local staff and community of developing the M&E indicators, identifying the most significant changes given by the project activities and directly joining in M&E. With this local human resource, the project has created an evidence-based database for the project results through documenting the project activities, producing news and films. This brings about the persuasive effects on the replication of the project results.

In addition, the local officers were provided with the capacity building training to organize dialogues and workshop at the district and commune levels. Thanks to the policy advocacy workshops, the project results were shared with an aim of replicating and mobilizing the local authorities at all levels to improve the ECCD policy environment.

The project succeeded in establishing the network of ECCD at the national and international levels served the organization of forums/dialogues and workshops. Through these dialogues and workshops, the project activities, models and initiatives of ECCD in Gia Lai were shared

and connected with in-country and external organizations and MOET. Therefore, the project results are known by MOET, other localities, organizations and individuals. This facilitates the replication of the project results out of project sites.

Although the project succeeded in establishing and promoting the ECCD network at the national and international levels, the network at the grassroots level has not been established. This was due to a lack of active local partners, especially at the provincial level. DOET has not effectively played its key roles as a project coordinator authorized by the Provincial People's Committee. As a result, the policy advocacy at the local level was not effectively implemented. This negatively affects the sustainability and replication of the project results.

1. General assessments on the sustainable factors of the project

2.1. Management and cooperation mechanism among stakeholders at the grass-roots level and operational mechanism at the school and community contribute to the sustainability of the project results in localities.

The establishment of a management, cooperation and monitoring mechanism among the project partners at the different levels, especially at the district and commune levels, has highly appreciated. The project activities have not separately been implemented; they have been integrated into the sector tasks. As such, the project sustainability is quite high. In order to promote the autonomy in management, the project carried out activities to enhance the capacity for partners in planning, monitoring, technical supports, program management, evaluating and reporting; developed a project management manual, samples for information collection and report. The project approach and implementation greatly contributed to the sustainability of the project results.

Regarding the component 2 and 3 (education component), the head of Provincial Management Board of Gia Lai Province – Director for DOET issued Document No.118/BDH dated 2nd February 2015 instructing all schools in the 4 project districts to create favorable conditions for other schools in the project to apply the new professional teacher meetings, setting up friendly library and promoting friendly learning environment at schools.

The leaders of BOETs in 4 project district also actively replicated the project activities in the district, trained teachers of non-project sites with the contents they found useful such as promoting friendly learning environment, active teaching methods, positive disciplines, professional teacher meetings.

Regarding the “community” component, the cooperation mechanism among local partners, particularly Women's Union is very good for replicating the project results. Because it is a social association with the network from the central level to province, district, commune and village levels. The representation of Women's Union in PMB and technical support team at all levels ensures the implementation and maintenance of community activities, especially organizing and sustaining parents groups. In fact, Women's Union submitted the proposal on replicating community groups to the provincial PMB for its approval. It also planned that

“After the successful replication of parents groups' activities, we expect that it will be evaluated and taken over by the local authorities. The replication of community groups is planned to secure the budget from Women's Union and Provincial Science and Technology Department” (said by Chairwoman of Women's Union).

On the other hand, the relevance of the project operational mechanism to the community one also ensured the high sustainability of the project. Through the management, implementation and supports by core commune officers including Chairman or Vice Chairman of Commune People's Committee as head of the technical support group and representatives from

commune mass organizations, a group of volunteers are set up with the participation of village head, youth's union officer, women's union officer or active persons in the village. This group played crucial roles in implementing and sustaining the project activities in community. Furthermore, the awareness and commitments of volunteer in promoting the project activities were very high. Notably, they understood that their work would make significant contributions to village and community development. Hence, they were ready to sustain and develop the group activities without the project allowances. The results of parents groups' activities and child play and reading groups might be sustained and maintained by these volunteer groups after the project ends.

2.2. The development of good human resources – core member network, technical support team who take over and sustain the project activities

The project design paid attention to establishing a network of key staff and technical support ones at all levels. The network has been set up, strengthened and developed during the implementation of the project. The network members were not only provided with knowledge and skills for themselves but also equipped with essential skills for planning to organize and monitor training, carry out roll-out training. This secures not only the effective implementation of the project but also its sustainability after it phases out.

Through the discussion with the provincial and district technical support staffs, they informed that they were provided with skills for planning and need assessment, organizing training and implementing effective training. They reported that they not only updated and reinforced the professional knowledge but also had other extensive knowledge such as child rights, community-based childhood care, positive discipline, etc. Apart from the improved knowledge, they also got good soft skills in training, presenting and problem solving and planning.

School administrators and teacher revealed the significant changes in the awareness and skills of these groups. Teachers stated that they often felt very worried, even “scared” when any monitoring and inspection team came to school in the past. Now it has changed. Technical support officers are very friendly and constructively provide technical supports rather than criticize teachers. A preschool administrator of Yang Bac commune of Dak Po district said that:

“...District technical support officers have changed a lot thanks to new monitoring styles, their gestures, behaviors and attitudes are very friendly. Now, teachers are not afraid of making mistakes when district technical support officers attend their instructional periods. They even look forward to meeting them in order to discuss and improve their professional qualification.”

Commune core officers have also been recognized to have good capability and to be quite confident in organizing roll-out training for schools after TOT and sustaining the project activities in community. Members of key groups both at school and in community have good planning skills and actively apply it in their daily work. The establishment of core groups in the educational sector and community helps the localities to have sufficient human sources and ensures the replication of project models into non-project sites. In addition, they are able to apply knowledge and skills in planning, organizing and implementing advocacy for their work. Chairman of Communal People's Committee in one project district shared:

“Before the project, I myself found difficult to effectively do my tasks. Since the project was implemented, I have attended many trainings, known how to plan or give presentation in front of the crowd, facilitate discussions and meetings. I have also learnt how to control anger and how to praise my employees”.

The members of core groups in preschools and primary schools have good professional qualifications and training skills after their participation in delivering roll-out trainings at school. They actively prepare and guide teachers to solve problems in reality. They provide trainings not only in their school but also in non-project schools. In Kbang district, two core groups of two project schools are invited to provide roll-out training for non-project schools in the district. In the four project districts, there have been inter-school meetings in order to promote the replication and technical supports into non-project schools. Each group includes about 3 or 4 schools which are not very far from each other in order to easily access, exchange and share experience. After training, there is a monitoring mechanism through joining in professional teacher meetings by grades among schools. For example, good models of professional teacher meetings, friendly library or friendly learning environment, etc. in Dak Po district have been shared with non-project schools under the form of inter-school professional meetings.

Along with capacity building for key groups in order to sustain the project results, the project paid attention to the documentation by developing manual for technical supports and operation of core groups. There are a number of manuals such as parenting curriculum; milestones for childhood development; manual for management and organization of playing children group for volunteers; volunteer handbook; handbook for childhood development staff. These materials were developed through a series of material consultation workshops. Consequently, the establishment and development of core groups with qualified members and the development of manuals are conditional factors for securing the project sustainability.

2.3. The project initially develop some fundraising and income generating models to sustain the project results

Regarding the financial resource for maintaining the project results, it is recognized that the capacity building for stakeholders, the establishment of project management mechanism, the integration of project activities into government agencies' ones has fostered the sustainability of the project results. For example, DOET of Gia Lai province integrated the professional teacher meetings into the training plan 2015. And they used core officers of 4 project districts to provide inter-school training to non-project districts by its annual training budget; Dak Po and Kbang districts used their key staff to provide training for teachers in the non-project sites. The provincial women's union proposed to replicate parents groups. They are planning that this model will secure funds from Women's Union or Provincial Department of Science and Technology after its effectiveness is assessed.

On the other hand, with its relevant and effective interventions, the project mobilized significant contributions from community. For example, community contributed labor source, cash and books to set up friendly libraries in all project schools. In To Tung commune of Kbang district, the project provided 10 million VND to build out-door libraries. Then the community was aware of the benefit of library to their children so they contributed 70 million VND to build this library. Through small initiatives in community, with project financial support of 5 million VND, the community made more contribution to public and useful construction in community. According to different stakeholders, it was very difficult to mobilize community financial contributions, even 5,000VND per household before. Now, the project helps community understand the benefits of these contributions so if there are some financial supports from the project, they will be ready to make contributions to the construction. Typically, in Hung Dong village (Kong Yang commune, Kong Chro district), each household contributed some hundred thousand VND to upgrading community house, building cement yard and fence. One stone exploiting company in Kong Yang, Krong Chro district supported the commune with 10 million VND to organize Children's Day (1/6).

Furthermore, the project focuses on setting up a mechanism of contributing to parents groups' meetings. For instance, along with the project supports, parents were encouraged to bring available food, vegetables to practice cooking nutritious meals for children; plant vegetables to supplement nutrition to children. The project also set up self-mobilized fund in community to sustain and develop effective models of the project. For example, in Kong Yang commune, Kong Chro district, members of parents groups with children aged 0-3 were mobilized to contribute 5,000VND per month to set up a sharing fund with the total budget of from 20 to 30 million VND. The fund is self-managed by groups' members. Besides, in this commune, Youth's Union contributed 20 million VND to the fund owing to the profits earned from land and payment from cutting sugar cane by young people. The self-managed fund of community provided non-interest loan to poor members. In addition, the fund was used to cover other community activities such as celebrate Children's International Day, Mid-autumn festival, etc. The establishment of self-managed fund in community guaranteed the replication of project results and ensured the sustainability of the project models in community. In order to sustain the project results in the community component, the project should support parents groups to develop and successfully implement initiatives, especially income generating and livelihood initiatives. This is a prerequisite condition for the establishment of self-managed community fund to cover expenses for the project after it phases out.

In general, after 3 years, the project results such as professional teacher meetings, friendly library, active teaching method have been replicated into non-project sites. The project also established mechanisms, conditions for human and financial resources to ensure the replication of the project results. The project has closely cooperated with concerned agencies (especially at the commune and district level) since the beginning of the project implementation. The project paid attention to strengthening capacity building for all partners in all components. The local authority played key roles in managing, monitoring and implementing the project activities and cooperated with Plan International to participate in dialogues with policy-makers. The cooperation between the educational sector and other social organizations has promoted the project sustainability, the integration of childhood education into mass organizations' programs and brought about more sustainable changes in childhood education.

Nevertheless, the project should sort out some shortcomings in the following possible ways: (i) strengthen cooperation among agencies at the provincial and the grass-root levels; (ii) promote active participation of local partners especially at the provincial level in the project activities; (iii) implement interventions on fundraising and income-generating initiatives in community in a more effective manner; (iv) elaborate the roadmap for sustaining and replicating the project results; (v) promote ownership, active participation and responsibility of provincial agencies such as DOET, Teacher Training College, Youth's Union, Women's Union and Provincial Health Department in terms of the project implementation.

2. Project relevance:

The project is designed based on four corner stones in order to ensure the stable development and readiness for children, community, and prepare a good transition from pre-school to primary school. Moreover, the project is designed on the basis of a participatory survey and needs assessment on ECCD in Gia Lai in 2011. Therefore, the four components of the project namely community, pre-school education, primary education and policy environment have high relevance.

3.1. Project activities support the implementation of local policies of Gia Lai in particular and national policies in general:

The project interventions effectively support the policy implementation, specifically five-year socio-economic development plan from 2011 to 2015, program on developing new rural areas from 2011 to 2020 in Gia Lai province. Through its activities, the project has positively influenced local people and community and created the results relevant to criteria of building new rural areas such as environmental criteria (clean environment, improved hygiene awareness, latrine digging, tidy house keeping and environment cleaning); education criteria (active participation in childhood care and education).

The project activities also support local authority to implement national program relating to childhood development in the period of 2011 to 2015 including: National Nutrition Program, National Action Plan for Children, Five-Year-Old Pre-school Education Universal, Pre-School Strategy in the period of 2011 to 2020, National Education Development Strategy 2011-2010 and National Program for Five Million Mothers to Practice Child Raising.

With the approach based on *Four Foundations to Ensure Strong Development for Children*, the project actively contributed into the plan of Five-Year-Old Pre-school Education Universal in the province, contribute to fulfill the objective of Five-Year-Old Pre-school Education Universal in Gia Lai province in 2015. Capacity building for pre-school teachers to implement New Pre-school Education Curriculum of the project contributed to realize the Curricular 17/ 2009/TT-BGDĐT issuing the New Pre-school Education Curriculum.

A number of project interventions such as training courses on using ethnic minority language; training on active teaching and learning method; innovative professional teacher meetings, friendly library, teaching Vietnamese language for Ethnic Minority Children contribute to the implementation of Government's and education sectors' policies such as Instruction 38/2004/CT-TTg dated 29th November 2006 issued by Prime Minister regarding promote training ethnic minority language for officials working in ethnic minority and mountainous areas; Circular No. 59/2012/TT-BGDĐT regulating criteria for evaluating and recognizing national standard school in which include requirements for friendly library and active teaching methods to ensure quality of learning and teaching; Document No. 8114/BGDĐT dated 15/9/2009 regarding Project on strengthening Vietnamese for pre-school and primary student in ethnic minority area; Document No. 896/BGD&DT-GDTH ngày 13/2/2006 regarding adjustment teaching and learning content with local context.

3.2. Project activities are relevant to local context, conditions and make full use of local resources:

The results of field research on knowledge and practice of childhood care and development of ethnic minority which are conducted by an independent research team and Plan International at the beginning of the project were used to develop and implement the project interventions. They were recognized to be relevant to community cultures and local conditions by the project partners. Particularly, education initiatives were developed in line with current context and resources, activities of parents groups developed from active practices in Bahna's lives. This not only makes project activities relevant to local culture but also make full use of local available resources.

Similarly, the interventions at school have also been designed to be relevant to cultures of ethnic minority students, respect cultural and language diversity. Learning materials for ethnic minority students were adapted cultural appropriately, specifically: pre-school materials and teaching and learning practices were adapted to respond ethnic minority students' need at the early grades of primary education, suitable for the situation of teaching Vietnamese as their second language. Initiatives on promoting friendly learning environment, practices of active disciplines encouraged children, make them more confident,

and created equal and respectful relationship between teachers and students, between children and their peers at school.

The relevance to local culture, policy and conditions made the project mobilize participation from agencies and unions from the provincial to the commune level. At commune and village levels, the project focused on mobilizing prestigious people in community such as village old people, village head and other people to participate in the project activities. As a result, the project mobilized the participation of parents, children in the villages in developing initiatives.

Particularly, during the project implementation, a number of interventions were timely adjusted in order to be relevant to local resources, context and situation. This ensures the effectiveness of activities, money saving and relevance to local needs. For instance, in the 3rd year, the number of child play groups with children aged 0-3 was not increased to 21, there were 14 groups like in the 1st and 2nd year. Alternatively, the number of child play and reading groups with children at the age of 4-11 was increased to 28 groups in the 3rd year in order to be relevant to the local context. Besides, a number of adjustments were considered carefully. According to the opinions of some stakeholders, the combination of TOT training with roll-out training helped key staff at schools have sufficient capability of problem solving. At present, a number of administrators and teachers stated that some key staffs did not have sufficient capability of and confidence in solving the problems emerging in the roll-out training at schools.

3.3. Project interventions follow Plan International's child-centered strategy and priorities of the donors and international community:

The credo of PLAN strategy is child-centered and child-participatory. The project used the approach of comprehensive and integrated childhood development. Children are offered with favorable conditions to develop their full ability through improving their health and cognition and language development, social emotions. At schools, children can more actively interact in class, especially play, read books and explore knowledge in friendly libraries. In community, children can participate in the child play and reading groups in the villages. There were a lot of child participation in these types of group because the location is near their house and they can play freely such as drawing, reading, playing games, singing and dancing.

In addition, the objectives and principles of the project are relevant to International Convention on Human Right that New Zealand Aid Program supports to implement Millennium Development Goals, Education for All. The project approaches based on four corner stones of ECCD are completely relevant to the priorities of NZAP with a focus on the investment in childhood care and development.

The project contributed to the implementation of Goal 3 (MDGs) regarding “Promote gender equality and women empowerment” through parents groups. The project significantly improved parents’ awareness and knowledge that enabled mothers to properly practice nutrition diet, childhood care and education. The changes in children care, hygiene and raising and good communication skills strengthened women’s roles in family and community. When parents acquired knowledge on childhood care and development at the first stages namely pregnancy vaccination, nutrition diet, infant care and awareness of regular pregnancy check-up, infant mortality rate will be reduced. This contributed to the realization of Goal 4 (MDGs) “Reduce infant mortality rate”. The project interventions also contributed to the achievement of 3 specific objectives of Education for All, including: Extend childhood care and education (Objective 1); Ensure quality primary education for all (Objective 2) and Gender equality in education at all learning level (Objective 3).

3. Conclusion:

The project has quite high relevance despite the unstable sustainability. Some conditions need to be secured in coming time in order to improve the project's sustainability. A number of project results are highly recognized and supported by the officers from the central level to the grassroots ones and are being replicated into non-project sites. The knowledge of and skills in childhood care and education for parents, community and key staff; and knowledge, skills and method for teaching pre-school and primary teacher were applied in practice in order to develop childhood education. Particularly, training contents are integrated into regular tasks of mass organizations and local authorities and schools.

Moreover, the community activities and school initiatives strongly respond to the needs of parents, community and children. Therefore, community and teachers provided active contributions in kind and cash to the implementation of the project activities of community and friendly library.

The materials have ensured the relevance to local cultures and target groups so they have also been used in non-project sites.

However, the project sustainability is limited due to passive, irregular and ineffective participation of provincial officers, a lack of budget commitments from local government for community groups and a lack of successful initiatives of income generation. Besides, core officers at the district and commune levels in the „community“ component are inadequate. The constraint of core officers' and volunteers' capability and the instability of volunteers and teachers at the different levels challenges the project's sustainability.

The project partners understand well that the project will end in 2017. Therefore, the project beneficiary and local staff should prepare readiness and plan for budget and personnel to sustain the project results after it phases out.

PART 3: MANAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

1. The project management structure:

The project management structure ensures the representation of diversified agencies at the different levels in the project activities. The full representation of the local authorities and professional specializing agencies at the provincial, district, commune and village levels promotes the linkage among these levels in the implementation of all the project components. Figure 10 indicates that the management structure consists of the following stakeholders:

- The provincial level: The provincial project management board (including the leaders of DOET, Women's Union, Plan International in Gia Lai, and the teacher training college, of whom the director of DOET of Gia Lai province takes the roles of the Head of PMB) – Plan project team and the provincial technical support team (including preschool education and primary education officers of DOET Gia Lai, representatives of Youth's Union, Department of Health, Women's union and teacher training college).
- The district level: the district project management board (including vice-chairman of people's committee, head or deputy head of BOET, chairwoman of women's union) and the district technical support team consisting of officers of BOET, women's union, youth's union and bureau of health.
- The commune level: the core technical support team includes 6 key members namely vice-chairman of commune people's committee, representatives of women's union, youth's union, healthcare center and manager of preschool and manager(s) of primary school(s).
- The village level: the technical support team consists of head of village, healthcare officer and officer of either women's union or youth's union and preschool and primary teachers who assist the volunteers in the initial period when these volunteers have not sufficiently been confident in and capable of facilitating the community groups' meetings.
- The Plan team in Gia Lai is comprised of a project manager, an accountant, an administrative officer, an educational officer, a community officer, a monitoring and evaluation officer. Additionally, the project team receives the supports from the educational program manager and specialists in community development, preschool and primary education, monitoring and evaluation, etc of Plan International Vietnam in Ha Noi.

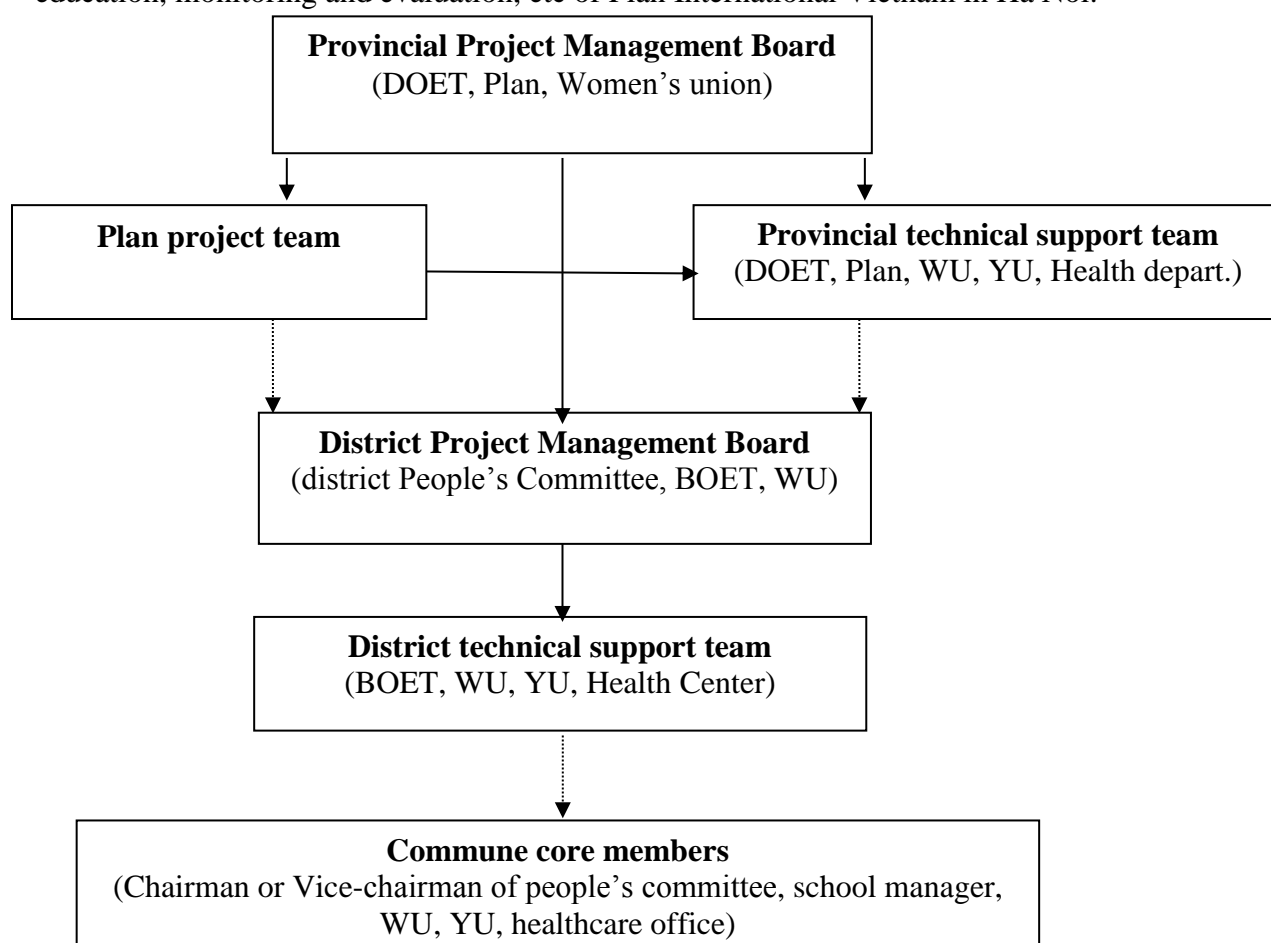


Figure 10: Project management and implementation structure

The project management and operation handbook developed by the project has helped the concerned stakeholders to understand their positions, responsibilities and authorities in the project work and also the project tasks of other agencies or partners, the cooperation and information sharing mechanism and reporting. Nevertheless, the ownership, responsibility and activeness of some local partners have not been strong. Consequently, it has adversely affected the project performance progress. According to the project management and operation regulations, the provincial project management board (PPMB) directly manages and undertakes the project, takes over the responsibilities of reporting to the provincial people's committee of Gia Lai province and the project donors. However, the absence of a representative of the provincial people's committee in PPMB has been assessed to adversely affect the progress of the project implementation. For example, when the provincial people's committee has no representative in PPMB, DOET needs to ask for its approval of the activities related to the cooperation among the provincial agencies and the approval procedures of the donors. This has caused the delay in the project implementation.

In general, the project management structure ensures the representation of all concerned partners at the different levels with a clear demarcation of their responsibilities, a close cooperation mechanism, learning and sharing, networks at the international, national and local levels. This has facilitated the incorporation of the project activities into those of the government agencies. Nevertheless, the absence of the provincial People's Committee's representative in the PPMB and lack of a responsibility binding mechanism in the project implementation has negatively influenced the project progress. The existing management structure of the project is assessed to effectively maintain and strengthen the achieved results of the project owing to the increased ownership of the concerned local partners in the project activities at the district and commune levels. In contrast, the poor cooperation among the agencies at the provincial level, the inadequate participation and low activeness of the members of PPMB and the provincial technical support team have been reflected by the local partners and communities to be the key elements that hindered the project progress and its sustainability.

2. The project planning:

The annual budgeting and planning process of the project ensures the participation, autonomy, transparency and accountability of the concerned partners at the grassroots level and the opportunities of reflecting the needs of local stakeholders. Moreover, the project planning process has also created the opportunities for the local partners to share, understand, review the implemented activities and to develop the plans for the next period; promoted the cooperation and coordination of the project activities among the project sites. Particularly, this process has also secured the ownership and activeness of the participating partners in the project implementation.

In order to undertake the project planning and budgeting, the provincial project management board has closely cooperated with Plan International Vietnam to hold up the annual project review and planning workshops. The participants of this workshop usually include PPMB, provincial technical support team, district project management board. The participants have reviewed the project progress and results of the previous year, subsequently discussed and developed the objectives of the next year and prioritized the key interventions. The provincial PMB and Plan project team have taken responsibility of cooperating with DOET to develop the project activity plan and budget for TOTs, events at the provincial level, school construction and provision of equipments/facilities, etc. Following the provincial planning and budgeting workshop, the quarterly planning workshops have been organized in all 4 districts. The participants include the provincial/district PMBs, provincial/district

technical support team, commune core officers. In practice, the representatives of the provincial PMB and technical support team have usually been absent from these workshops. Therefore, the facilitation of these workshops that should be done by the provincial PMB and technical support team has been undertaken by Plan team in Gia Lai. In the quarterly planning workshops, the participants have reviewed the project activities and achieved results in the previous quarter, addressed causes and solutions for the delayed activities. This quarterly planning has enabled the local partners to be active in the project activities and also identify the solutions for the pending activities.

After the planning at the district level, the communes have had their own coming quarterly project activity plan and adjusted (if needed) to submit to the district PMB for its approval. The communes' and districts' plans have been aggregated into the district annual project plan that have been submitted to the provincial PMB for its approval. The quarterly planning showed to be effective (building capacity for participants engaged in the project implementation, accelerating the project progress and enhancing the activeness of members of district PMB and commune core members). With the supports of the provincial technical support team and Plan team, the provincial PMB has reviewed and contributed their ideas to the district activity plans. At the same time, the provincial PMB has also reviewed their project activities and submitted the overall project plan to NZAP and Plan International Vietnam. The provincial PMB has also been responsible for finalizing the plan and submitting this final plan to NZAP and Plan for their approval.

However, some improvements need to be made in the project planning and budgeting. The provincial technical support team has not had opportunity of contributing their ideas to the monthly detailed project activity plan. Consequently, a few participants of one or two training courses have not been suitable. For example, only the managing officers (head or deputy-head of primary education department of Teacher training college) were invited to participate in the training course on teaching of the combined grades while the lecturer in Mathematics or Vietnamese language were not invited. As a consequence, the adoption of the transmitted knowledge and skills from the project training course into practice has not been promoted because the lecturer(s)/expert(s) did not know the training contents. Notably, the active roles and participation of the provincial PMB and technical support team in the project planning and budgeting remain very poor. This affects their understanding/mastering and implementation of the project activities.

In brief, the annual, quarterly and monthly project planning process indicates that the planning has properly been carried out and undertaken with the participation of community. This process shows that the project management boards have effectively mobilized the participation of community and implemented the project activities, particularly at the commune/district levels. The project planning and budgeting has promoted the leading roles of the administrators from the provincial to the district, commune/village levels such as DOET/BOET, district people's committee, women's union at the different levels, etc and the autonomy of the commune core members, preschool/primary teachers, volunteers, etc in the project activities. The project planning and budgeting also indicates that the project interventions have been elaborated on the basis of the project progress and achieved results, the needs of teachers, children, parents and community; and the capacity of concerned stakeholders. This process allows a timely adjustment of the project activities and budget so as to ensure their relevance with the local contexts and the effectiveness of the project activities. However, the project needs to improve the sense of responsibility of the provincial PMB and technical support team of their participation in the project planning and budgeting at the grassroots level. Also the provincial technical support team needs to have opportunity of contributing their ideas to the detailed monthly project activity plan.

3. The project implementation:

During the project implementation, the cooperation among the agencies/sectors has closely enhanced at the district, commune and village levels. The officers at the grassroots level have observably been very willing and active to take part in the project activities. However, this has poorly occurred at the provincial level. The responses from the different target groups and the observations show that the managers at the grassroots levels have actively engaged in the project activities because these activities serve their work well. At the district level, BOET has been responsible for the teacher inservice training and the activities related to the schools. The women's union has taken over its responsibility of the community activities related to the parenting groups. The youth's union has been in charge of organizing the play and reading activities for children. The healthcare center has provided the professional knowledge and skills related to health for the community groups and community development activities, etc. Specially, the activities between schools and community have closely been linked by the non-formal educational expert of BOET via the meetings and training courses. These concerned partners have frequently and closely cooperated in the project activities. This ensures the consistency and effective inter-supporting mechanism in the implementation of the project plan.

The project activities such as trainings, initiatives and group meetings have provided with sufficient guiding materials. It can be concluded that the material development of the project has been undertaken in a very scientific and proper manner that has effectively upgraded the capacity of concerned stakeholders. The teachers, volunteers and other participants who attended the training courses have highly appreciated the training contents, methods and conditions.

The monthly meetings and quarterly planning workshops (at the district, commune levels) have been held up with the adequate and active participation of concerned stakeholders (including district PMB and technical support team, commune core members). In addition to the monthly, quarterly and yearly planning, the project meetings have been organized at the commune and district levels in the purpose of reviewing the project progress and developing the project activity plan in the coming month and quarter. The representatives from the local authority, community, mass organizations and professional agencies have fully participated in these meetings as introduced in the project management structure. These meetings have focused on reviewing the progress of the project activities, the advantages and challenges, the problems of the project implementation and the activity plan in the coming time. In principle, the planning has secured the sufficient participation of representatives from the different sectors/agencies and also integrated the voices of community and local people. The interviews reveal the positive assessment of the organization and effectiveness of the planning meetings. Moreover, these meetings have been considered as the lessons learning and sharing seminars about the project management by the practical evidences of the project activities in the localities.

The ownership and autonomy of the local partners and the leading roles of BOET as a coordinating agency of the project have not been ensured in some project activities. During the project implementation, the Plan project officers have closely cooperated with PMBs at the different levels to undertake the project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The inter-cooperation and inter-dependent mechanism among concerned partners has been promoted. At the provincial level, Plan International Vietnam in Hanoi and Gia Lai have been responsible for the organization of TOT trainings in Pleiku city with the participation of the core officers of the project districts. With the TOT trainings related to preschool and primary education and community development, the provincial PMB directed the district PMBs and commune core officers/teachers and administrators to conduct the roll-

out training courses at the districts or schools/communes for administrators, teachers and volunteers. The provincial women's union has been in charge of roll-out trainings of the community component in the communes outside the project areas. This working mechanism has been assessed to be relevant and secure the capacity building, ownership and responsibility of the local partners in the project activities. However, in practice, the cooperation between Plan International in Gia Lai and DOET has encountered some difficulties in the project implementation. The management mechanism of the project implementation remains loose. Hence, the degree of participation in the project activities primarily depends on the "human" factor. The information exchange and the cooperation among members of the provincial PMB and technical support officers have been reflected to be irregular and untimely. The participation and the activeness of the provincial PMB and technical support team in the project activities have been very poor. As a consequence, some project activities have been left far behind the planned schedule. The pressure of the project progress has driven the Plan officers in Gia Lai to actively implement the project activities despite the absence of the local partners at the provincial level. Some information providers have supposed that this has affected the capacity building and ownership of the local partners with the project activities.

The human resource of the project has been unstable and insufficient. This situation has been considered as the greatest obstacle of the project implementation. Therefore, the project officers have had to concurrently take the different tasks or engage in the monitoring and technical supports to the activities that they do not have the proper professional knowledge. As a consequence, it has affected the quality of monitoring and technical supports.

Furthermore, the project has often dealt with the difficulties in the appropriate consultant recruitment for the training courses and research. Until the midterm review, some project activities have not yet been implemented or left far behind the project plan. One of the major causes has been the difficulty in successfully recruiting the appropriate consultants. The project needs to have the solutions to sort out this situation.

The initiative screening and selecting process has been very cumbersome and slow. This has not only challenged the implementation of the initiative but also discouraged teachers, commune officers and community people to develop their initiatives. Due to the typical features of the teaching, the initiatives of teachers should be carried out in a certain period of the school-year, specifically, for specific lessons, topics and charter, etc. The slow process of initiative selection has made teachers miss the appropriate timing of their initiative implementation.

The training courses have accumulatively been organized in the first two years of the project. Consequently, it adversely affected the teaching and learning in the project schools. The review of the project reports indicates that the tense timing of the training courses in the first two years negatively influenced the deployment of human resources in the project schools.

4.. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting:

The project activities have been monitored and evaluated on the frequent basis. The diversified forms of monitoring and evaluation have been undertaken: technical support based monitoring, community based monitoring, quarterly evaluation, monitoring of project progress, etc. The monitoring and evaluation tools have adequately, clearly been guided. The evaluation approach of the project ensures the capacity building of the project beneficiaries because they have been empowered and actively participated in the project activities. As such, the ownership and commitments of local people with the project activities have been increasingly strengthened. The evaluation results of the project progress and adjustments

have properly been received by the concerned stakeholders and the timely revisions have been made in order to secure the achievement of the set indicators in the project design. However, the participation of the provincial technical support team remains very limited in the monitoring. The project has lacked the M&E officers for a long time. The capability of monitoring and evaluation of the core officers at the grassroots levels has been ineffective. The monitoring and evaluation has been token so it has not yet met the needs of teachers and volunteers for technical supports.

Monitoring framework

The monitoring framework has been considered as a navigation tool for identifying the scope of monitoring. The PMB developed the monitoring framework including the factors such as (i) objectives, outcomes and outputs, (ii) indicators, (iii) expected results, (iv) Methods of data collection, and (v) referring the collected achievements to the project log framework. The scope of the monitoring framework is also addressed by short-term, mid-term and long-term outcomes and outputs.

On this basis, the monitoring frameworks have correspondingly been developed for the “community”, “preschool education”, “primary education” and “policy” components. With these frameworks, the concerned stakeholders could easily review and monitor the project activities and have the timely and appropriate adjustments and enhancements.

Monitoring tools and reporting

The project has trained and guided the local officers how to monitor, evaluate and use the M&E tools in an effective manner. The M&E tools and reporting have been designed with the clear and relevant objectives, sufficient and friendly-user guidance. However, the information collected from these tools have primarily been quantitative rather than qualitative. Remarkably, the project has emphasized on the capacity building for local officers and beneficiaries regarding the development of M&E indicators. This has promoted the participation, empowerment, transparency and accountability in the project implementation.

The M&E officers have been trained and built capacity of M&E knowledge and skills, monitoring planning and reporting, and guided how to use the M&E forms and the regulations on report profile keeping and submission. Particularly, the project has built the capacity for the project implementers and beneficiaries of how to develop M&E indicators and, how to identify the most significant changes from the project activities. As such, the officers, community people and teachers could put forward the appropriate and timely adjustments of the project activities. Therefore, the M&E tools have highly appreciated by the local officers and ensured the transparency and accountability of concerned stakeholders in the project implementation process.

The M&E tools have properly been used in order to monitor and understand the progress of the project implementation, achieved outputs and outcomes by the monitoring time. On this basis, the adjustments have been proposed in the purpose of achieving the set targets/indicators in the project plan. Additionally, these tools have also aimed at providing the system of tables and forms serving the reporting, documentation and checking in the field.

According to the assessment of the local officers and the observations of the practices, the monitoring tools and reporting system have been quite adequate and played significant roles in monitoring and managing the project activities, particularly contributed to the monitoring the indicators of project outputs. The evaluation team also reviewed some monitoring tables used by volunteers and observed how they were used in the field. These monitoring tables showed more quantitative data than qualitative ones. However, the team has not had

opportunity of reviewing the M&E indicators developed by the local officers and beneficiaries so no assessment of these indicators could be made. In our view, the existing M&E tables and forms for the community groups and schools need to be guided in a more specific way so that the qualitative data can be sufficiently collected. The qualitative data are important inputs for the project officers to make the appropriate adjustments or enhance the project activities.

Monitoring work

The project has developed a close monitoring mechanism with the participating partners at the different levels including the direct beneficiaries of the project. Nevertheless, the participation of the provincial PMB and technical support team in the project M&E remains very poor and that of the district ones have not regularly occurred.

For the past three years, the donors (NZAP and Plan International Vietnam) have conducted the periodical and ad-hoc monitoring of the project management and implementation. Meanwhile, the provincial PMB has rarely monitoring the activities of the district/commune PMBs. Similarly, the district PMBs and technical support team have not regularly monitored the project activities at the grassroots levels. As a result, the leading and technical supports of the line managing agencies for the grassroots partners (including schools and mass organizations in villages) remain very inadequate.

The monitoring and technical supports for the community groups and schools have not yet been effective. The project has had a clear assignment of the technical supports among the professional agencies for the community groups. On the basis of the monthly activity plan submitted from the commune core officers, the district technical support team made assignment of the project sites and specific tasks for each officers. For example, the health officers are responsible for the parenting groups with children aged 0-3, youth's union officers monitor and provide technical supports for the child play and reading groups (4-11 year-old children), women's union officers in charge of monitoring and supporting the activities of parenting groups with children aged 0-8, preschool and primary educational experts of BOET(s) in charge of preschool and primary schools, non formal educational expert(s) of BOET(s) in close cooperation with mass organizations to undertake training and technical supports for the community groups.

The monitoring and technical support experts have professional knowledge and good working skills with community complemented with the pedagogical techniques of preschool and primary teachers. For instance, the commune core members cooperated with volunteers to visit households of community groups' members on the periodical basis (3 households/time/month). The household visits enabled the local officers and volunteers to understand how parents adopted the transmitted knowledge and skills from the parenting groups into practice; and to provide timely technical supports as well as to show the care of the local authorities.

The monitoring and evaluation has been organized with the following main types:

- Regular monitoring that has mainly been undertaken by the district technical support team and Plan officers.
- Community based monitoring that has been conducted by teacher, local authorities and volunteers in accordance with the periodical group meetings.
- Monthly evaluation: a monthly meeting at the commune level has been organized with the participation of vice-chairman of commune people's committee, representatives of women's union, youth's union, health center, headmasters of preschool and primary schools and volunteers of community groups.

- Quarterly evaluation: this has been undertaken by the provincial/district technical support team and Plan project team.

In the third year of the project implementation, there have been 82 monitoring visits in communes and 82 ones in preschools and primary schools. These visits have been conducted by the Plan team, the district technical support team, and the commune core members. Hence, compared to the total number of 63 community groups, 9 primary schools and 9 preschools in four project districts, such number of monitoring visits has not satisfied the needs for technical supports of the community groups and schools. Regarding the quality of monitoring and technical supports, this is also not ensured, particularly when the local core officers often encounter the language barrier in the monitoring and technical supports for the community groups' meetings. Such limited number of monitoring visits has been due to a very few number of staffs at the district level, shortage of Plan project officers in some positions because of the difficulty in the recruitment of qualified and suitable officers (for example, educational officer, etc), overload work of BOET officers. Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation reporting procedures as required by Plan International Vietnam have been reflected to be cumbersome (including report, evidences and photos of the monitored activities) while the financial supports for these officers have been very small. However, from the perspective of the project manager, these required procedures are necessary in order to improve the quality of monitoring and give out the evidences of changes of the project activities and capacity of the local M&E officers and avoid the token monitoring.

The observations of the community groups indicated that the commune core members did not have the monitoring plan and clear cooperation mechanism among the team members in order to support volunteers to facilitate the community groups' meetings. The monitoring of commune core officers only emphasized at the number of participants while no technical supports given to volunteers were witnessed. After the groups' meetings, the core officers neither shared their observations nor withdrew lessons with volunteers.

The project developed a system of M&E reports of Plan team, district technical support team and commune core members. However, the monitoring and evaluation has not been adequate in terms of both quantity and quality because of the extremely poor participation of the provincial technical support team and representatives of some district mass organizations such youth's union and health center. Additionally, the quality of monitoring and evaluation has been very low when the M&E undertaken by the core officers remains token and primarily checks the number of participants and lack a clear assignment plan among the core officers and their cooperation in providing technical supports to volunteers. The requirements about the M&E reports have been very bureaucratic and demotivated the local officers to actively engage in visiting the community groups..

Follow-up of monitoring

The M&E results have been adopted in order to make the adjustments. The M&E information have regularly been shared in the monthly meetings at the commune level. In these meetings, the members have reviewed the project activities and developed the activity plan in the next month. The difficulties in the project implementation have been timely discussed among the partners so as to address the solutions and promote the close cooperation in the project activities in the coming months. In the quarterly meetings at the district level, the participants include the district PMB and technical support group, commune core members have shared the monitoring results on the quarterly basis, specifically, the completed and delayed activities, advantages and challenges, etc monthly monitoring planning in the next quarter. The project officers of Plan usually engage in the quarterly meetings of the project districts in order to master the project implementation progress.

Owing to a quite complete system of monitoring and reporting, the project indicators have sufficiently been measured and the problems have timely been addressed. The interviews, observations in the field trip and the annual progress reports indicate that the monitoring system has provided the valuable information that have effectively supported the project management and authentically pointed out the problems for improvements. The information collected from the monitoring have been processed and necessary adjustments have been made in the project activity plan. For example, when the locality did not fully understand how to identify MSC, the project organized a training on this issue. Or the difficulty in the initiatives' implementation, the project held up the sharing and learning workshop so that teachers could sort out their respective difficulties, etc.

4. Risk management:

The project has developed the risk management framework when it has been implemented in a very effective manner. In this framework, 18 types of risks have been put into the risk management table of the project. Corresponding to these risks, the project managers assessed the degree of risks, analysed the potential risks arisen in the project implementation and put forward the timely responsive solutions. Particularly, the project has clearly identified the roles and responsibilities of concerned stakeholders of the risk management. The risk management framework has yearly been updated.

However, only Plan project officers engaged in the development of risk management framework and conducted this management while the local partners including PMBs at the different levels have not taken part in this work. There has been very few evidences about the effective adoption of the risk management. Consequently, the project risks remain existing.

5. Conclusions:

The project management structure has been well-designed with the sufficient representation, transparency and accountability and empowerment of the concerned stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries of the project such as community people, parents, teachers and volunteers. The project management has been conducted from the provincial to the district, commune and village levels with clear regulations on the roles and responsibilities of concerned stakeholders. After three year implementation, the project management system shows its effectiveness when it developed a low cost project management mechanism owing to the incorporation of the project activities into those of the different sectors and government agencies, particularly the line management mechanism. However, some shortcomings remain existing in the project management. These shortcomings are related to the ownership, responsibility and autonomy of local partners that significantly affect the outputs of the project as well as the achieved mid-term and long-term outcomes. As such, the project needs to improve the ownership, responsibility and autonomy of concerned partners.

The project management method and approach enhance the participation of different stakeholders in planning, monitoring and evaluation, technical supports at the different levels, particularly at the district, commune and village levels. The direct beneficiaries have opportunities of raising their needs for the project planning; participating in the development of the M&E indicators of the project activities. It can be seen that the project management model has been well-operated at the grassroots level. However, it needs further improvements at the provincial level.

The project management board with the existing members and operational manner proves to be competent in managing the quality and progress of the project. The community has been mobilized to actively participate in all the project activities. The information and issues about the project implementation have been timely shared owing to the effective operation of the M&E network at the different levels with the participation of concerned stakeholders, particularly community based monitoring.

The necessary improvements for the effective project management lie in: the leading and monitoring roles of the provincial people's committee in the project activities, the proper functions, roles and responsibilities of concerned stakeholders as regulated in the provincial project management structure (the provincial technical support team); proper and consistent understanding of guidelines and process of some project activities; the monitoring and evaluation at the grassroots level.

These issues need to be soon discussed and sorted out because they directly affect the project progress and the achievement of the mid-term and long-term project outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Some major conclusions can be made as follows:

- The project achieved the positive outputs and outcomes after its three-year implementation, notably those from the interventions related to the capacity building.
- Some delayed activities need to be accelerated so as to mitigate the adverse impacts on the achieved results of the project, specifically the preschool infrastructure construction and the provision of indoor and outdoor equipment for preschools, the replication of parenting groups to communes outside the project areas, and the establishment of ECCD network at the provincial level.
- With the current progress, it can be foreseen that the project hardly completes the delayed activities and secure the quality of the planned outcomes/results.
- The project interventions and its achieved outcomes are of high relevance though the project sustainability needs to be strengthened in the coming time.
- The project management is well-operated at the grassroots level (commune and village) despite a great improvement needed at the provincial level.
- The leading roles of the provincial people's committee should be promoted in the monitoring and timely solving of the arisen problems in the project implementation. The ownership, autonomy and sense of responsibility need to be fostered for the local partners. These are the decisive factors of securing the achievement of the expected results and the sustainability of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General recommendations:

1. A roadmap of enhancing the quality and replicating the achieved results of the project should be developed. By the time of this mid-term review, some good results of the project have been replicated despite some conditions needed for securing its sustainability in the coming time. The project is coming to the end so a schedule of fostering the sustainability and the replication of the achieved project results needs to be prepared as soon as possible.
2. The practicing proportion needs to be increased so that the behaviour changes of the concerned stakeholders can be obtained. Although the project has significantly upgraded the awareness and the knowledge of the participating stakeholders, the adoption of these acquired knowledge remains very limited. Therefore, the project should enhance the practicing opportunities in order to bring about the changes in behaviour and attitude of its target groups.
3. The delayed activities need to be accelerated in order to ensure the achievement of the planned indicators and objectives. If the current project progress is maintained, the project will hardly complete the activities and attain the objectives as scheduled in the project plan. Hence, the project duration should be reviewed by the concerned partners and be extended if necessary so as to secure the accomplishment and the sustainability of the project.

Specific recommendations

1. Project planning

The participation and responsibility of the concerned stakeholders in the project planning should be promoted: the project planning needs the participation of the different partners including: PMB, Plan and the technical support team so that the cooperation among these partners can smoothly, closely be fostered in the project implementation.

2. Project implementation

2.1. The leading and monitoring in a more effective and timely manner of the provincial people's committee need to be strengthened in order to quickly sort out the problems arisen in the project implementation.

Upon the request of the provincial people's committee, the provincial PMB has maintained the regular reporting of the project activities to the provincial people's committee, and often received its feedback about the project reports. However, the project needs the leading and monitoring of the provincial people's committee in a more timely and effective manner in order to solve the emerging problems of the project implementation that the provincial PMB cannot deal with. In practice, the provincial people's committee has not directly taken part in the provincial PMB. Instead, it has authorized DOET as the project coordinating agency of the project implementation. As a result, the coordination among the peer organizations/institutions like Women's Union, Youth's Union, Department of Health and DOET often encounters many challenges. For example, the delay in approving the

replication of parenting groups in communes outside the project areas that has been proposed by the provincial Women's Union in March 2015 has occurred for a long time. Until now DOET has not yet approved this replication. It is believed that the leading role of the provincial people's committee in coordinating these concerned partners and the provincial advocacy events will facilitate and accelerate the project implementation.

2.2. DOET needs to undertake its responsibility of cooperation and coordination in the project implementation as authorized by the provincial people's committee.

Despite being authorized by the provincial people's committee, DOET has not adequately undertaken their authority and responsibility of coordinating and cooperating the different sectors and organizations/institutions in the project implementation. Remarkably, the cooperation and coordination of DOET with Plan in Gia Lai, the Teacher Training College, Women's Union and Youth's Union should further be fostered in the coming time so that DOET's ownership and autonomy of the project management will be enhanced.

2.3. A mechanism of promoting the leading roles and the active participation of PMB and the technical support team at the provincial level should be established.

* The members of the provincial technical support team have participated in the project activities if invited. In fact, they have not actively and fully taken part in the project activities. Hence, the technical support team has not promoted their technical assistance and leading roles as expected. The project needs to develop a responsibility binding mechanism for the members of PMB and technical support team. For example, each officer is in charge of the project activities in a project commune. This possibly forces the members of PMB and the technical support team at the provincial level to actively arrange their time to take part in the project activities such as TOTs, material development, roll-out trainings, etc. Additionally, the local partners should also contribute their managed budget to the project activities. For instance, a certain proportion of the budget managed by DOET should be allocated for the material development. As such, this will effectively foster their ownership, autonomy and responsibility for the project activities.

* The provincial technical support team should timely be updated with the detailed monthly activity plan of the project so that they can actively arrange time to provide their technical supports to the project activities. They should be involved in the review and approval process of the project plans. So, apart from PMB members, the technical support team should also receive the project documents, plans and reports so as to secure the relevance of the participating target groups and incorporation of the project activities into the government programs/regular assignments of the State institutions.

2.4. The human resource of the project should be sufficient and stable; the timely practical solutions in response to the risks of human resource should actively be prepared

* In the remaining period, the vacant positions of the project including educational officer, community officer, M&E officer should successfully be recruited and stabilized. The sufficient human resource has been assessed to be an important factor that directly affects the project progress and quality. The project should reconsider the requirements for the recruited positions in order to ensure their relevance to the local context and human resource. If the recruitment fails to have the candidate suitable for all the set requirements, the project should prioritize the essential ones in order to make use of the human resource at spot. For example, regarding the position of educational officer, the requirements include knowledge of education, monitoring and technical support skills and communication in English language. In practice, the majority of the local candidates may have very good knowledge of education and M&E, technical support skills while facing a great constraint of English language.

* In addition, the project should diversify the recruitment advertisements. For instance, the recruitment should widely be advertised via the mass media in both English and Vietnamese languages. And attractive salary and benefits may induce the qualified candidates who can fully satisfy the important requirements of the recruited positions.

* The core members who engage in the roll-out training courses and technical supports should be ensured to be “sufficient” and “suitable”. The representatives of women’s union, youth’s union and health center at the district and commune levels should be eligible for being core members. The assignment of core members to the roll-out trainings in the different sectors should secure the relevance of their expertise and strength. Specifically, the health officers need to be responsible for the trainings and technical supports related to health and childcares while youth’s union officers take the responsibility of play and learning activities, etc. This human resource deployment promotes the roles and responsibility of local officers of different sectors of the project activities.

* Effective measures of stabilizing volunteers of the community groups and teachers of schools should be strengthened. For example, strong commitments and supports of local authorities and line management agencies of stable human resources for the community groups and schools should be gained.

2.5. The capacity building for core members and volunteers continues to be enhanced and the development of these target groups aims at upgrading the quality of community groups’ meetings and teaching and learning at the preschool and primary levels.

* When the roll-out trainings have been organized in schools, the capacity building, knowledge and skills of the core officers of schools and community groups need to be strengthened. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the training courses, the project should:

- Promote the technical supports of the provincial/district experts to the training courses.
- The training time needs to be adjusted: the timing of the training courses should be schedule on two days of the weekend. This ensures the full participation of the local officers when they are not occupied with their government assignments/tasks. The project should secure the balance of the permanent work and the project tasks for the government officers. It shall make school administrators and teachers and officers of mass organizations and local authorities comfortable and relieved. On the other hand, the roll-out training schedule of varied schools should be developed at the different time so that BOET experts can arrange their time to monitor and provide technical supports to all schools.

* The project ought to enhance the capacity building for commune core officers: this target group should be further trained on the monitoring and evaluation of the community groups’ meetings and provision of technical supports in an effective manner, cooperation among the members of commune core team in terms of supporting volunteers to facilitate the groups’ meetings and to solve emerging problems. For example, the number of participants in the groups’ meetings outnumbered and a large number of children accompanied their parents to the parenting groups’ meetings. This challenged the volunteers to effectively facilitate the groups’ meetings.

Additionally, the project should improve the capacity for budget planning of community initiatives for commune core officers. At present, in some communes, local officers do not know how to make budget planning. As a consequence, community initiatives have not effectively been implemented. Moreover, the observations of the groups’ meetings showed that the commune core members had a poor capability of Bahna language so they did not effectively function their monitoring and technical support roles. The project should implement the interventions on reducing the language barriers so that this target group could

play effective roles of monitoring and providing technical supports as expected in the project design.

* The capacity of volunteers needs to be upgraded: volunteers should further be trained on child caring and education, stimulation of child development, communication, reflection and facilitation skills, presentation skills, review and assessment skills of the groups' meetings and translation skills, diversification and organization of play activities. The observations of the parenting groups with children aged 0-3 revealed that there were not many interaction activities between mothers and children in order to develop the language for children. Particularly, the communication between volunteers and parents remains very limited. In general, volunteers has not effectively guided parents how to develop language for children through joint-activities in the groups' meetings. The monitoring and direct technical supports for volunteers should be fostered in the coming time so that they are able to deal with the emerging difficulties.

* The school administrators and teachers need to receive more in-service trainings on multi-grade teaching method/skills and classroom organization, production of teaching tools and games from local materials, communication and working skills with minority children, initiative development and implementation, classroom management, implementation of new preschool curriculum, etc.

* A core competent group should be developed in order to take responsibility of monitoring and technical supports in the project areas. Additionally, some core members outside the project areas should also be trained so as to replicate the effective project interventions. The project should also take the proposal of DOET of Gia Lai province on the development of a provincial core team into consideration so as to replicate the good models of the project.

2.6. A peer learning and sharing mechanism should be established and promoted among teachers, schools, volunteers in community, among districts and communes of the project.

The teachers, volunteers, administrators and commune core members reflected that they would need more opportunities of learning and sharing about the professional knowledge and skills, learning from the good practices of individuals and schools, and making study tours of good models of the project interventions. This significantly consolidates and expands the project results. Hence, the project should set up a mechanism of learning and sharing for teachers, volunteers and commune/district core officers (immediately those of schools/communes/districts in the project areas and subsequently those in the non-project areas). ‘

2.7. The consultant recruitments should dramatically be improved in planning sufficient time for the recruitment, expanding and developing the sources of consultants.

* Relevant and qualified consultants should actively be approached. The recruitment should be planned early and its terms of reference needs to be developed before a sufficient duration so as to successfully select qualified consultant(s) and conduct the planned project activities as scheduled.

* The project needs to address the difficulties in the consultant recruitment and put forward the practical solutions. This review process should offer opportunities of reflection and sharing for the consultants who ever worked for the project.

* The project should not use only one consultant for the preschool education so as to avoid the potential risks such as: discontinuity of the consultant, the training materials developed on a sole perspective of this individual consultant, etc. One of the possible reasons for the slow provision of the materials in this component might be the project's utilization of one consultant for its interventions. Therefore, the project should make full use of the locally competent core members who have been trained by the project. This also significantly

contributes to the improvement of the project's sustainability and avoids the dependence on one national consultant.

* Moreover, the project should develop a database of consultants. On this basis, the project directly accesses to qualified and relevant consultants. If the suitable consultants cannot be recruited, the project activities should be conducted by Plan's national specialists in order to ensure the progress of the project implementation.

2.8. Effective solutions for the delayed project activities should be elaborated

* The delayed activities mainly fall in the preschool education and policy environment components. Plan should coordinate the meetings among the donors, Plan in Hanoi and Gia Lai and provincial people's committee of Gia Lai province, the provincial PMB and technical support team, the district PMBs and commune core officers so as to address the practical solutions. A responsibility based binding mechanism needs to be set up and the assessment of the responsibility fulfillment should be made on the periodical basis. The assessment results should be used as one the criteria for assessing the annual performance of these officers.

DOET needs to accelerate the following project activities:

- Provision of indoor and outdoor play and learning equipment;
- Review, feedback and approval of some submitted activities, for example, supports for preschools to upgrade infrastructures and to purchase equipment (teaching and learning equipment, tools and materials, etc) (with the estimated budget of around 50 million VND/school); roll-out training on replicating the community groups in the non-project areas proposed by the provincial women's union, financial supports (20 million VND/primary school) for repairs and purchase of equipments of libraries, the establishment of the provincial ECCD network, etc.

* The donors need to timely give their feedback on the proposal of local partners, for example, the bidding results of the provision of indoor and outdoor play equipment for 84 preschools, etc.

2.9. The selection, review and payment procedures of community and school initiatives need to have improved: the guidelines on the process and the requirements of the initiative implementation should be developed and strictly followed.

* The selection, approval of initiatives submitted by community groups and schools need to more quickly and timely be made so that the implementation of the approved initiatives follows their proposed schedules.

* The payment procedures of the monitoring visits should be simplified. In fact, the monitoring allowances are quite low while the complicated and cumbersome payment procedures likely discouraged local partners to prepare the payment claim documents. Therefore, many local partners did not claim their allowances after their monitoring visits.

* The budget transfer for the parenting groups from the provincial level to the grassroots ones should be improved in order to secure the budget disbursement schedule of the project's annual plan.

2.10. The project activities should further be incorporated into the programs of the government mass organizations, local authorities and community.

To be specific, the parenting groups' activities should be incorporated into the activities/programs of women's union and health centers. And the entertainment and extra-curricular activities for children should be integrated with the programs/activities of Youth's Union, etc.

2.11. Community groups should strongly be supported with the fund-raising activities in order to secure the practicing conditions for the initiative implementation and make use of the local available resources.

The project needs to enhance the supports for the parenting groups of developing and implementing their initiatives, particularly the income-generating initiatives and livelihood ones for people. This is considered as a foundation for the establishment of self-managed community funds so as to ensure the financial sources for maintaining and developing the successful models of the project after it ends.

2.12. The awareness of school administrators and teachers of their autonomy in the material development should be improved.

The project compiled the guiding material on adjusting the teaching contents to be relevant to the local contexts, the characteristics of ethnic minority children. Also it conducted the training courses on building capacity for school administrators and teachers. It has been expected from the project that school administrators and teachers could flexibly adopt the trained contents and method into practice. Teachers and school managers should flexibly address and apply the adjustments of curriculum and instructional contents on the basis of each child in class and school. So the project only guides how to make relevant adjustments while it cannot give out any specific materials in the face of diversified teaching process and different children. However, it was responded by teachers and school managers that they were looking for a specific material on the adjustment of curriculum and instructional contents. Therefore, the project needs to have interventions on improving awareness of autonomy, and flexibility of school administrators and teachers in terms of the development of a guiding material on locally relevant instructional adjustments.

2.13. The ECCD network at the provincial level needs to be promoted. The established network enhances the participation and supports of local partners at the different levels (including the provincial, district and commune) when the project results are shared with local and international organizations, colleagues and educators.

3. Monitoring and evaluation:

3.1. The monitoring and technical assistance of the provincial/district technical support teams for the schools and community groups need to be strengthened.

The monitoring and technical supports for schools and community groups need to be fostered in order to secure the effectiveness of the adoption of the trained knowledge and skills to the teaching and learning practices in schools. Notably, the participation of the district health center and youth's union ensures the consistent line management of the project activities and government tasks at the different levels.

The strong monitoring and technical supports help to ensure the quality of the implemented activities. In practice, there have been only one specialist of BOET for each project components (specifically, preschool education, primary education and non-formal education) and one officer of each mass organizations for its professional specializing sector. As a result, the monitoring and technical support workforce should be fostered by mobilizing the participation of core teachers and administrators who have good experience and competence. Additionally, the leading and monitoring of the provincial technical support team on the periodical basis helps to timely, effectively provide technical supports for the community groups and schools. Particularly, the leading of preschool education section of DOET of Gia Lai province, and the participation of the teacher training college of Gia Lai province and good experienced preschool teachers should be promoted in order to timely provide technical

supports and sort out the difficulties of preschool teachers and managers during the project implementation.

3.2. The quality of monitoring and evaluation should gradually be improved and the monitoring and technical support procedures of core members need to closely be followed. The human resource deployment and coordination plan of commune core members should be prepared in order to enable volunteers to effectively facilitate the groups' meetings.

The monitoring and technical supports of core officers at the different levels, particularly the commune level should greatly be strengthened. The monitoring should focus more on the observations and qualitative feedback rather than only on the number of participants. Moreover, core officers should have a sharing and feedback meeting with volunteers after the groups' meetings in which they would provide their professional comments to volunteers in order to improve the quality of the groups' next meetings.

3.3. The learning and sharing mechanism and cross-vists among teachers of schools, among volunteers of community groups, and among the project districts and communes should be developed and conducted.

* The monitoring and technical supports need to be enhanced in the next years of the project. At present, the project effectively provided the training courses in schools and community. Nevertheless, the monitoring and technical supports for schools and community groups should be further fostered so as to ensure the effectiveness of adopting the trained contents to the teaching and learning practice and community groups' meetings.

* Owing to the inadequate human resources of the mass organizations and the educational sector at the different levels, the peer monitoring and technical supports among teachers, volunteers, schools, community groups in the project districts and communes need to be strengthened. On the one hand, the learning and sharing and peer-monitoring among teachers and volunteers, schools, community groups promote the technical sports and peer-learning. On the other hand, this work timely encourages the participating stakeholders of the project.

3.4. The quality of monitoring and technical supports of Plan's officers in Gia Lai of the project activities at the grassroots level should be improved.

The technical supports and monitoring given by Plan's officer in Gia Lai should be improved because of the insufficient and unstable human resources of the project. Particularly, the monitoring officers need to have professional knowledge and skills when they are in charge of monitoring preschool and primary education.

Plan International Viet Nam should have effective human resource recruitment plan so as to ensure all the vacant positions to be filled and the monitoring and technical supports for community groups and schools to timely be undertaken. For example, educational officer needs to be recruited because this position has been vacant for a quite long time (approximately 1 year). The project manager had to take over the work of this vacant position. And this has adversely affected the effectiveness of the project implementation.

Additionally, all the positions filled will enable Plan officers to more frequently travel to the project sites and work with volunteers to organize the information communication education events so that the community can well understand the purposes of the project. On this basis, community people may more actively participate in the project activities.

3.5. The professional specializing workshops for each project components at the school and community levels should periodically be organized.

Apart from the annual project review workshop at the district level, the professional specializing workshops for each project components at the school level should be held up

with an aim of promoting the professional exchange and sharing among schools. This will create opportunity for the grassroots officers to review the project activities and develop effective working plans for each project components.

4. Risk management:

4.1. Capacity building and participation of the members of the project management boards in terms of the project risk forecast and management should be promoted

The project has developed a good risk management framework for the project implementation. And this framework has frequently been updated. However, the project risk forecast and management have primarily been conducted by the officers of Plan International Viet Nam without the participation of the members of PMBs. Hence, the capacity and participation of the members of PMBs in the project risk forecast and management should be enhanced in the coming time so as to secure the project's effective replication and high sustainability.

4.2. The effective adoption of the measures of risk management into practice should be promoted

Although the project has the updated risk management framework, the evidences shows that some risks of the project remain existing. Therefore, the measures of risk management should effectively be adopted.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Analysis table of the implementation progress of the project's outputs after 3 years

Appendix B: Analysis table of of the implementation progress of the project's outcomes after 3 years

Appendix C: Table of technical and financial supports over the project's outputs

Appendix A: Analysis table of implementation progress of the project's outputs after 3 years

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
1.1.1: A culturally relevant parenting curriculum is developed and available	* 01 study on viewpoint and reality of children care of ethnic minority people * 01 manual and guideline on formation and development of parent groups of 0-8 year-old children;		* 01 study on viewpoint and reality of children care of ethnic minority people * 01 manual and guideline on formation and development of parent groups of 0-8 year-old children;		Completed in 2014	
1.1.2: Culturally relevant parent group models are developed and functioning	* 40 district-level core early childhood development (ECD) officers and 120 core officers/volunteers of parent groups in the project communes are trained in 6 training workshop on early childhood development; * In 2014, 14 parent groups of 0-8 year-old children were formed and implemented, for example, improvements in parents' awareness and practice of early childhood		* 40 ECD officers and 126 volunteers are trained in 11 core training classes and 42 extended training classes * 21 parent groups are operated and 247 parents practice trained knowledge in real life	Until 2016, parent groups will be formed and put into operation in all districts	- Completed and exceeded the set plan: * Number of volunteers: 6; number of training classes: 5 core training and 42 extended training * Number of parent groups: 7 - Not implemented: scaling up community model in non-project communes	The DoET has not signed the contract of scaling up community model with Women's Union

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
	development. Until 2016, parent groups will be formed and conducted in all districts					
1.2.1: The network of early childhood care and development (ECCD) officers/volunteers is set up and functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Training for ECCD officers * 160 core ECCD officers are trained in 5 ECCD workshops * 1 guiding book for ECCD officers, 4 posters on ECCD, and 2 guiding books for parents are developed 	<p>Additional sets of materias are developed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -01 guideline on how to play and make toys for children -01 reference material for play and read child group; -01 reference material for volunteers in charge of play and language development child group (0-3 year-old); -01 “Stick and Stone” manual was compiled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 40 ECD officers and 126 volunteers are trained in 11 core training classes and 42 extended training classes * 02 manuals (the manual on child developmental milestones was compiled, curriculum guidance) and 4 posters were printed and used 		Completed and exceed indicator included in the plan	

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
1.3.1: Community-based early stimulation initiatives for under three year children are established and functioning	Until 2016, 28 play groups for infants and children (0-3 year olds) will be set up and operated effectively	Until 2016, 14 play groups for infants and children (0-3 years old) will be set up and operated	14 play groups for infants and children (0-3 years old) will be set up with 355 parents and 393 children		Completed	
1.3.2: Community-based early stimulation initiatives for children aged 4-11 are established and functioning	In 2014, 14 play groups for children aged 4-14 were set up and operated effectively; 28 play groups until 2016	Until 2016, 42 play and read child groups will be set up	28 play and read child groups will be set up with 1158 children	14 play and read child groups	Completed	
2.1.1: Infrastructure of kindergartens is upgraded/ newly built to ensure friendly environment for children	* 04 national-level schools are built * 16 classes in satellite campuses are built, having enough toilets, playgrounds and fences	05 main schools are built (01 school located outside 4 project districts) 16 satellite classes are built (unchanged)	Building of 5 main schools and 18 new satellite campuses was approved by donor and in initial implementation phase. 18 satellite campuses decreased to 17 ones by the donor's acceptance	05 main schools are built (school located outside 4 project districts) 16 satellite classes are built	Much delayed, not completed	- Wrong selection of locations - Design is not matchable with the donor's standard - Limited participation, supervision and collaboration of stakeholders

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
			because Kbang district project management board (PMB) proposed to combine the campus in Kta Village and the one in Cheng (Kroong commune of Kbang district – distance of 2 villages is 120m)			- Although construction consultant provided timely technical assessment and consultancy for provincial PMB on procurement process and strict regulations in accordance with Bidding Law, local area didn't comply with. Therefore, bidding documents had been revised for many times and bidding steps had been re-implemented.
2.1.2: Culturally relevant indoor and outdoor tools and facilities for playing-based	* 80 sets of materias and indoor toys are provided * 20 outdoor playing equipments are set up * 100% of teachers at	* 84 sets of materials and outdoor playing equipments are set up for 06	* Portfolio of new facilities purchased for learning is approved and under the bidding process	* 84 sets of materials and outdoor playing equipments are set up for 06 main	Much delayed, not completed	construction of schools has not been implemented yet

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
learning activities are provided	<p>project schools made and used learning materials from available local material sources regularly and effectively</p> <p>* 40 core preschool teachers of province/districts and 120 preschool teachers are trained in 8 training classes</p> <p>* Until 2016, all priority kindergartens of 4 project districts will effectively use learning and playing materials (indoors and outdoors) suitable for child ages and local culture.</p>	<p>main schools and 78 satellite campuses (2 schools in 2 non-project communes of 4 districts are equipped with toys/materials)</p> <p>* 100% of teachers at project schools make and use learning materials from local materials effectively and regularly</p>	<p>* 89% of teachers at project schools make and use learning support tools from local material sources</p>	<p>schools and 78 satellite campuses (2 schools in 2 non-project communes of 4 districts are equipped with toys/materials)</p> <p>* Increase the rate of teachers making and using teaching aids from local materials from 89% to 100%</p>		
2.2.1: Contextualised preschool materials and teaching practices that promote learning through play in the mother tongue and the	<p>* 2 sets of contextualised guidelines on teaching practices suitable for local reality based on national curriculum for children aged 3-4-5 for Bahnar and J'rai people.</p> <p>* 2 sets of materials for children's activities are</p>	<p>* 01 set of guideline on teaching practices suitable for local context of Bahnar people</p> <p>* 01 set of reference learning material</p>	<p>* 01 set of guideline on teaching practices suitable for local context of Bahnar people was developed and prepared for printing</p> <p>* 01 set of reference material was</p>		Đã hoàn thành theo chỉ số điều chỉnh	

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
transition to Vietnamese language are aligned with the transition to the early years of primary school	adapted to be used for new national curriculum contextualised for Bahnar and J'rai people.	for Bahna children	developed and being finalized			
2.2.2: In-service training and school-based capacity building for teachers and school managers are conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 40 provincial level core teachers and 120 core preschool teachers are trained in 17 training courses * 120 preschool managers and trained officers participated in 4 training courses * 500 teachers showed that they benefited from professional development activities of teaching in the class at school and school cluster levels (application of training knowledge into reality). * 10 experience sharing workshops * 7 schools demonstrated in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 31 provincial/district level core officers and 167 teachers and managers fully participated in 14 training courses. * Unchanged * 14 experience sharing workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 31 provincial/district level core officers and 167 teachers and managers fully participated in 14 training courses. (Year 1: 5; Year 2:1, Year 3:8) * 216 teachers from 41 non-project schools are trained by the project * 14 experience sharing workshops (Year 2: 4; Year 3:10) * 52 school initiatives are implemented at 9 	* Increase the number of teachers benefiting from professional development activities at school and school cluster level from 216 to 500	Completed as per adjusted indicators. Some indicators exceeded the set target.	

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
	7 selected communes of 4 project districts implementing school initiatives successfully	* 9 selected kindergartens of 4 project districts implementing school initiatives successfully	kindergartens (Year 2:14; Year 3: 38) * 131/145 preschool teachers apply new preschool education curriculum.			
2.2.3: Qualitative resources are available for professional development for preschool teachers and managers	* 7 equipment packages for professional development activities are handed over * Books and reference materias are provided based on need assessment * Teacher Manual is published * Number of training manual is published * Teaching manual is used effectively in the class	9 equipment packages for professional development activities are handed over	Technical guideline is complied with development of typical model at 2 selected kindergartens	9 equipment packages for professional development activities are handed over * Books and reference materias are provided based on need assessment * Teacher Manual is published * Number of training manual is published * Teaching manual is used effectively in the class	Not competed as planned	- Plan has not recruited consultant for material compilation. - Material compilation needs much time; a prolonging process leads to delay in fund settlement.

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
3.1.1 School-led and child-friendly initiatives to enhance the school learning environment are undertaken	<p>* 40 core teachers and 120 teachers directly teaching are trained in 6 training courses on child-friendly class initiatives towards a class environment stimulating children better</p> <p>* 30 librarians participate in 4 training courses on child-friendly school</p> <p>* 7 schools demonstrate in 7 priority communes of 4 project districts implementing child-friendly mobile library initiative to access all satellite campuses.</p> <p>* 120 teachers involve in 2 training courses on child-friendly class initiatives towards a class environment stimulating children better.</p>	<p>* 31 core teachers and 220 teachers directly teaching are trained in 6 training courses on child-friendly class initiatives towards a class environment stimulating children better</p> <p>* 56 librarians participate in 4 training courses on child-friendly school</p> <p>* 9 schools demonstrate in 7 priority communes of 4 project districts implementing child-friendly mobile library initiative to access all satellite</p>	<p>* 31 core teachers participate in 5 core training classes (year 1:2; year 2:1; year 3:2)</p> <p>220 teachers are trained in 29 extended training classes (year 1: 7; year 2: 22)</p> <p>* 158 librarians/school managers of 52 schools of 4 project districts are trained on management and operation of friendly libraries</p> <p>* 09 child-friendly libraries are operated in 9 main schools</p> <p>* 40 friendly library corners are built in project's satellite campuses</p> <p>* 03 workshops on sharing school initiatives are</p>	<p>* 56 librarians participate in 4 training courses on child-friendly school</p> <p>* Number of school initiatives implemented</p>	<p>Completed as per adjusted indicator</p>	

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
		campuses * it is necessary to review because the partner is afraid of feasibility and sustainability	organized in year 3 (01 provincial workshop & 02 district workshops) * 51 school initiatives are implemented at 9 schools (year 2:18; year 3: 33)			
3.2.1 Adapted materials compiled by teachers meet needs of ethnic minority students in the first grades of primary education level are conducted	* 1 teacher manual on teaching materials suitable for local situation for Grade 1, and 1 teacher manual for Grade 2 (especially Maths and Vietnamese language)	* 01 guideline on adapting teaching contents (for Grades 1 & 2: Maths, Vietnamese language and Nature-Society)	01 guideline on adapting teaching contents was compiled		Completed	
3.2.2 Principals and teachers of early grade students are trained and mentored in culturally	* 40 core teachers and 120 teachers directly teaching participated in 19 training courses, and they gained much benefits from such training (applying training knowledge in practice)	* 31 core teachers and 220 teachers directly teaching participated in 19 training courses	* 31 core teachers participate in 13 core training classes (Year 1: 4; Year 2:5; Year 3:4) 220 teachers directly teaching participated	* 01 HT chia sẻ kinh nghiệm được tổ chức * Các lớp của 9 trường TH hoạt động đổi mới tại trường	Completed as per adjusted indicator	

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
<p>appropriate child-centered methodologies relevant to the transition period, including groups of schools</p>	<p>* 6 workshops on experience sharing are organized * 14 classes demonstrating renovation activities at primary schools in ethnic minority areas</p>	<p>* Unchanged * All classes of 9 primary schools participate in renovated activities at primary schools in ethnic minority areas</p>	<p>in 82 extended training classes (year 1:28; year 2:20; year 3: 34) * 05 workshops on experience sharing are organized (year 2: 4; year 3: 1) * 4 pilot schools/4 project districts applied new professional teacher meeting (PTM) and PTM has been scaled up in other schools * 01 guideline on teaching Vietnamese language as a second language and 252 copies have been distributed to teachers/managers of project schools. * 97 Grade 1-2 teachers actively apply active</p>			

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
			teaching method in the class			
4.1.1: Systematic collection of experiential lessons from other ECD projects having impacts on this project in Vietnam and in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reference and advocacy materials are translated based on annual needs * 3 domestic study tours and 1 study tour in NZ and/or Australia * 4 meetings among partners and policy-makers 	<p>Unchanged</p> <p>3 domestic study tours and 1 study tour in NZ</p>	3 domestic study tours and 1 study tour in NZ were organized in year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reference and advocacy materials are translated based on annual needs * 4 meetings among partners and policy-makers 	Not completed as per the planned indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because DoET officers were busy, the workshop on launching ECED network at the provincial level. - Workshop organization procedure must be approved by provincial PC. The PMB is afraid of procedures and applying for permission from provincial competent agencies.
4.1.2: Study activities complemented with project and evidence-based documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 study initiatives * 1 time-based study for 4 years * 1 mid-term evaluation * 1 end-of-term evaluation * 4 audits in 4 years 	4 initiatives on project intervention model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 01 longitudinal study is being deployed * 01 study on preschool education intervention is being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 initiatives on project intervention model 1 audit 1 final evaluation 	Being implemented but delayed compared to the planned target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Such activities are conducted for a long time - Capacity and time of consultants

Output	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for remaining time	Evaluation of achievement compared to planned indicator	Reason for evaluation & suggestion
			completed * 01 mid-term evaluation is being finalized * 03 annual audits			influence performance progress
4.2.1: ECCD Networks and alliances are established at provincial and national levels	* 1 national-level ECCD network * 1 provincial-level ECCD network		Regular meetings of the national-level ECCD network	* Maintain operation of the national-level ECCD network * 1 provincial-level ECCD network	Delayed against the schedule * 1 provincial-level ECCD network	- Local officers are busy - The PMB is afraid of procedures for getting permission from provincial competent agencies
4.2.2: Effective evidence-based advocacy on ECD and integrated ECD initiatives are implemented	* 5 workshops on disseminating information of access, initiatives and results of project at national and provincial levels		02 national-level workshop and forum 09 policy advocacy workshops were held in 7 project communes 05 advocacy workshops were organized in 04 districts	3 national-level workshops and forums	Completed as planned	

Appendix B: Analysis table of implementation progress of the project's outcomes after 3 years

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
Short-term outcomes						
1.1. Improved knowledge and practice of parents/caregivers in ECD.	<p>Output 1.1.1</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> Excluding a few activities demonstrating health and nutrition, parents of under 8 years old children have never approached culturally relevant education initiatives of parenting knowledge</p> <p><u>Objective:</u></p> <p>In 2014, parents in 21 villages participated in parenting groups</p> <p>Until 2016, parenting groups will be set up in non-project communes of project districts.</p>		774 parents involve in 21 parenting groups in project communes	Until 2016, parenting groups will be set up in non-project communes of project districts	<p>Planned indicator achieved</p> <p>However, scaling up community model in non-project communes has not been deployed</p>	Approved by DoET, the contract on scaling up community model in non-project communes with Women's Union has not been signed
1.2. Enhanced community-based supports for parents/caregivers in ECD	<p>Output 1.2.1</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> ECD network of disadvantaged communities is poor in terms of quantity and quality (accurate number will be provided later after training need assessment)</p>		ECD network (126		Vượt chỉ số đặt ra trong kế hoạch	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
	<p><u>Objective:</u> Increase 40% of number of ECD officers, those with good capacity of communication, behaviour change and consultancy Output 1.2.2</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> No clear evidence for the fact that community-based initiatives were successfully conducted to improve ECD</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Parenting groups in each village of project areas implement successfully at least 2 community-based initiatives (demonstrative model of sanitation and clean water, nutritious garden, rainy water archive ...)</p>		<p>volunteers) operating 63 groups in 7 communes 65% of volunteers have good capacity of communication, behaviour change and consultancy for parents</p> <p>In total, 27 community initiatives are implemented (year 1: 5 and year 2: 22)</p>	<p><u>Objective:</u> Parenting groups in each village of project areas implement successfully at least 2 community-based initiatives (demonstrative model of sanitation and clean water, nutritious garden, rainy water archive ...)</p>	<p>Delayed compared with the planned indicator, 57 remaining initiatives for the rest of project's time</p>	<p>- Initiative approval procedures are complicated and experiencing many levels. - Capacity of writing initiatives of local staff is limited, they cannot forecast risks, and estimate cost suitably</p>
1.3 Strengthened capacity of communities for	<p>Outputs 1.3.1 và 1.3.2</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> Communities lack technical assistance to develop early stimulation</p>					

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
establishing, managing or supporting community based early stimulation and learning initiatives	and learning initiatives. <u>Objective:</u> - 160 core ECD officers and members of core groups will participate in 5 workshops on ECD and demonstration skill. - Each play group in village for children (aged 0-3) and elder ones (aged 4-14) distributed 1 manual and 1 guiding book.		- 40 core officers, 160 volunteers attend 11 core training classes and 42 extended training classes - 02 sets of materials are compiled and distributed to play child groups (aged 0-3) 05 materials are compiled and distributed to play and read child groups (aged 4-11)		Exceeded the planned indicator	
2.1 Improved child-friendly pre-school infrastructure in ethnic minority communes	Output 2.1.1 Survey: About 70% of preschool children are learning in not good conditions Objective: Increase % of children accessing appropriate infrastructure and learning facilities to 5%		Construction package for 5 main schools and 18 satellite campuses has been approved and conducted Portfolio of purchased facilities has been approved and prepared for bidding		Delayed much against the planned indicator	- Lack of stakeholders' real participation - Not comply with and respect ideas of construction consultant - Much time is needed for document revision and

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
						submission of documents for many times
2.2 Improved capacity for preschool teachers and preschool managers to implement child-centred preschool programs relevant to ethnic minority children, including a dedicated school readiness program for 5 year old	<p>Output 2.2.1 <u>Survey:</u> Children have never accessed contextualized national curriculum which is culturally relevant. <u>Objective:</u> In 2014, 50% of Bahnar children in 7 pilot communes of 4 project districts wil learn contextualized preschool curriculum. In 2016, at least 50% of Bahnar and J'rai children of all communes of 4 project districts will learn learning materials adapted suitably for Bahnar and J'rai people.</p> <p>Output 2.2.2 <u>Survey:</u> Provincial and district –level core teachers have limited capacity of training and supervision <u>Objective:</u> 70% of core teachers of project districts prove their capacity of</p>		<p>100% of Bahna children in project schools learn adapted curriculum</p> <p>96% of core teachers of project districts prove capacity of training and supervising preschool teachers</p>		<p>Exceeded the planned indicator</p> <p>Exceeded the planned indicator</p>	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
	<p>training and supervising preschool teachers and managers effectively.</p> <p>Output 2.2.3</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> A limited number of teachers with observed learning period showed that they could update curriculum suitably for local context and applied child-centered method to get high-quality teaching</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> in 2014, all core teachers in model classes in 7 selected communes of 4 project districts will prove that they can apply successfully initiatives in teaching and learning. Until 2016, 40% of teachers in all communes of 4 project districts can do so.</p> <p>Output 2.2.4</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> All project schools have needs for improving capacity of managers and leaders in training, supervising and supporting</p>		<p>and managers effectively</p> <p>89% of preschool teachers apply active teaching method matching with national curriculum in Bahna context</p> <p>84% of school</p>		<p>Exceeded the planned indicator</p> <p>Exceeded the planned indicator</p>	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
	<p>teachers. <u>Objective:</u> Managers and leaders of all schools in priority communes have capacity and implement initiatives to help teachers apply and practice quality teaching, adapted suitably for ethnic minority children.</p>		<p>managers at project schools provide effective support to apply active teaching method with national curriculum in ethnic minority context</p>			
<p>3.1. Enhanced child-friendly and stimulating environment at school for young ethnic minority children, including transition from mother tongue learning to Vietnamese as the language of instruction</p>	<p>Output 3.1.1 <u>Survey:</u> Primary schools have no child-friendly classes <u>Objective:</u> In 2014, all model classes in 7 selected communes of 4 project districts showed successful application of child-friendly classes and socio-emotional environment. Until 2016, 40% of number of classes of all communes of 4 project districts can do so. Output 3.1.2 <u>Survey:</u> Libraries of primary schools operate ineffectively and they cannot approach satellite</p>		<p>83% of classes have child-friendly socio-emotional environment</p> <p>100% of main</p>		<p>Exceeded the planned indicator</p> <p>Exceeded the</p>	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
	campuses. <u>Objective:</u> In 2014, all schools of 7 communes in 4 project districts conduct successfully mobile library initiative. Until 2016, 40% of number of schools in all communes of 4 priority districts can do so.		schools have active child-friendly. 78% of satellite campuses have active mobile child-friendly libraries		planned indicator	
3.2. Improved capacity of teachers and school managers to develop adapted materials and utilize teaching methodologies relevant to early grade students, especially Maths and Vietnamese language	<p>Output 3.2.1</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> Few teachers having learning periods observed can adapt materials suitably for local reality</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> All project schools in 7 communes of 4 project districts are provided with adapted materials, especially Maths and Vietnamese language and language development material suitable for local situation (in mother tongue and Vietnamese)</p> <p>Output 3.2.2</p> <p><u>Survey:</u> Few teachers having learning periods</p>		<p>All project schools apply adapted curriculum</p> <p>Guideline on teaching Vietnamese as a second language are compiled and distributed to schools</p> <p>96% of core teachers at project schools</p>	<p>Increase the number of core teachers applying active teaching method in</p>	<p>Not be provided with material on adapted curriculum</p> <p>Completed as per the planned indicator</p> <p>Not completed</p>	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
	<p>observed showed that they could apply child-centered method appropriate to ethnic minority children.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> In 2014, all core teachers in demonstration classes of 7 communes in 4 project districts applied child-centered method appropriate to ethnic minority children. In 2016, this method will be deployed in all communes.</p>		<p>apply active teaching method in national curriculum contextualized for Bahna people.</p> <p>09 primary schools are provided with teaching aids and classrooms at satellite campuses are upgraded</p>	<p>national curriculum contextualized for Bahna people from 96% to 100%</p>		
<p>4.1. A growing evidence base for importance of ECD is enhanced through study, M&E and documentation</p>	<p>Output 4.1.1 No pre-determining number</p>		<p>01 mid-term evaluation is being finalized 01 longitudinal study with 2 workshops on tool development 01 preschool education intervention study I being completed 01 training on the most meaningful change such as supervision tool</p>		<p>Not completed</p>	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
4.2. Increased awareness of policy makers on ECD and the importance of integrated ECD initiatives	<p>Output 4.2.1 Survey: Lack of a comprehensive policy framework on ECD integration. ECD intervention plan at the provincial and district levels lacks cooperative mechanism</p> <p>Objective: 100% of managers and core officers at ECD-related agencies at provincial and district levels show improvement in awareness of ECD's importance and ECD integration to create changes in policy and fund allocation in crucial sectors</p>		100% of core officers at district, commune and village levels participate in communication and ECD dialogue events	100% of managers and core officers at ECD-related agencies at provincial and district levels of the project show improvement in awareness of ECD's importance and ECD integration to create changes in policy and fund allocation in crucial sectors	Changes in policy and fund allocation in crucial sectors has not been achieved as scheduled	<p>- DOET officers are busy, the workshop on policy advocacy at the provincial level has not been organized</p> <p>- PMB is afraid of procedures and application for permission for organization of this workshop from competent agencies</p>
Mid-term outcomes						
1. Improved young children's development status, with a focus on 0-3, through enhanced	<p>Output 1.1 Survey: 90% of interviewed parents didn't practice nutritious care and active hygiene for children; child development stimulation</p>					

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
support from community-based care and early stimulation initiatives in targeted communities	was not concerned much by parents. Objective: all parents involved in ECD initiatives show their understanding of main elements influencing child development and active practice Output 1.2 Survey: no initiatives promoting active child development was applied in the community. Mục tiêu: Khoảng 700 trẻ em từ 0-8 tuổi được tiếp cận với các sáng kiến dựa vào cộng đồng và hưởng lợi từ các sáng kiến này.	Unchanged Nearly 2477 children aged 0-8 access community-based initiatives and benefit from such initiatives	55% of parents practice ECD through caring and stimulating child development in the initial period 2477 children participate in child groups	All parents involved in ECD initiatives show their understanding of main elements influencing child development and active practice	Reached average level against the planned indicator Exceeded the planned indicator	- Improvement in knowledge and skill of guiding practice for volunteers are needed - Enhanced supervision and technical assistance of parents' practice at village level
2. All children aged 3-5 participate in quality and culturally appropriate formal or non-formal early learning opportunities,	Output 2.1 Survey: 90% of 5 year-old children and 64% of children aged 3-5 go to school Objective: 100% of 5 year-old children and 85% of children aged 3-4 have chances to access formal and non-formal education.	100% of 5 year-old children and 95% of children aged 3-4 have chances to access formal and non-formal education (actual situation of 7 communes.	100% of 5 year-old children and 95% of children aged 3-4 have chances to access formal preschool education.		Exceeded the planned indicator Exceeded the planned indicator	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
including a dedicated school readiness program for 5 year olds	<p>Output 2.2 Survey: About 50% of surveyed 5 year-old children didn't reach important development milestones for learning at primary education level. Objective: 90% of children reach at least 80% of important milestones, especially necessary school readiness skills before they enter primary school</p>	<p>Based on this result, the project will maintain and expand the achievement in other areas). 99% of children reach at least 80% of important milestones, especially necessary school readiness skills before they enter primary school (this is actual result. Based on this result, the project will maintain and expand the achievement in other areas)</p>	<p>99% of 5 year-old children reach at least 80% of development milestones, especially skills of school readiness</p>			
3. Improved quality of pre-school to primary school transition	<p>Output 3.1 Survey: Surveyed schools have high % of Grade 1 and 2 children who didn't meet</p>					

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
of children aged 6-8 in ethnic minority areas, especially presented through results of Maths and Vietnamese language.	minimum standards (About 28.6% for Maths and 54.4% for Vietnamese language) Objective: Number of Grade 1 and 2 children have Maths and Vietnamese language results improved at 85% and 60%, respectively at all project schools. No drop-out children and those who have never gone to school.	Rate of Grade 1 and 2 children have improved results (90% for Maths and 89% for Vietnamese language) at all project schools	Rate of Grade 1 and 2 children have improved results (90% for Maths and 89% for Vietnamese language) at all project schools		Completed as per the planned indicator	
4. An improved and more integrated policy environment related to ECD	Survey: no specific pre-determining number 4.1 Evidence of integrated relevant ECD policy and programs at the national and provincial levels 4.2 Number of project's initiatives are applied by the provincial authority	ECD issues and mechanism of collaboration with stakeholders are integrated in socio-economic development plan in project areas	Not identified at current time	ECD issues and mechanism of collaboration with stakeholders are integrated in socio-economic development plan in project areas	Not completed	
Long-term outcome						
Young children's development status, with a focus on 0-8 years old group	Output 1 Survey: Parents didn't practice activities at home to promote child development.					

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
<p>in Gia Lai province, especially ethnic minority children in most disadvantaged areas is improved and maintained</p>	<p>Objective: Parents involved in ECD activities prove their changes in practice main elements influencing child development</p> <p>Output 2 Survey: Net enrolment rate of primary education level is less than 95% in some project communes</p> <p>Objective: Net enrolment rate in all project schools will meet primary education universalization requirement for 6 year-old children (95%)</p> <p>Output 3 Survey: 28.6% of children in project communes doing tests based on knowledge and skill standards (survey study) didn't meet Maths requirement and 54.4% didn't meet Vietnamese language requirement</p> <p>Objective: Decrease the number of children not meeting minimum</p>		<p>55% parents participate in ECD through caring and stimulating child development</p> <p>Enrolment rate of 99% in project areas</p> <p>94% of Grade 2 children meet minimum Maths requirement of national curriculum</p> <p>89% Grade 2 children meet minimum Vietnamese</p>	<p>Objective: Decrease the number of children not meeting minimum knowledge and skill requirements to 5% for Maths and 10% for Vietnamese language (end-of-project evaluation)</p>	<p>Reached average level against the planned indicator</p> <p>Exceeded the planned indicator</p> <p>Completed as planned as of mid-term project review</p>	

Outcomes	Survey indicator and project objective	Adjusted indicator	Performed indicator after 3 years of project implementation	Targeted indicator for the remaining time	Evaluation of achievement	Reason for evaluation
	knowledge and skill requirements to 5% for Maths and 10% for Vietnamese language (end-of-project evaluation)		language requirement of national curriculum			

Appendix C: Table of technical supports and financial resources over the project's outputs

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
Component 1 - Community				
<p>Output 1: <i>A culturally relevant parenting curriculum is developed and available</i></p>	<p>Program and project officers of Plan; HR and technical assistance (TA) of Women's Union at all levels, DoET, partners from research institutes and experts from community and external consultants; direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>Technical experts of Plan Hanoi and project officers of Plan Gia Lai play crucial role in materia compilation. TA officers at all levels (province, district, commune) of agencies and organizations such as Women's Union, heath and education units ...and beneficiaries reading and providing comments</p>	<p>Project's financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan</p>	<p>Only disbursed fund from Plan No fund from DoET and stakeholders</p>
<p>Output 2: <i>Culturally appropriate parenting group initiatives are established and functioning effectively.</i></p>	<p>Program and project officers of Plan; HR and technical assistance (TA) of Women's Union at all levels, DoET, partners from research</p>	<p>* Program and project officers of Plan participate actively but supervisors and technical assistance officers cannot participate regularly due to lack of HR. * Most of provincial staff and TA officers don't get involved. * District HR and TA resources include participation of Women's Union and BoET, but no involvement of Youth</p>	<p>Project's financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan, of which: * Fund of Plan: core training and consultant</p>	<p>Project's funds are implemented as planned, specifically: * Fund of Plan: core training and consultant</p>

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
	institutes and experts from community and external consultants; direct beneficiaries	<p>Union and Health Unit.</p> <p>* Communal HR and TA resources include active participation of Women’s Union, schools, youth union, health unit and communal authorities.</p> <p>Village-level HR and direct beneficiaries actively participate.</p>	<p>recruitment.</p> <p>* Fund of DoET: extended training, maintenance of group activities, practice of training knowledge and skills, and event organization in local areas</p>	<p>recruitment.</p> <p>* Fund of DoET: extended training, maintenance of group activities, practice of training knowledge and skills, and event organization in local areas</p>
Output 3: <i>ECD officer/volunteer networks are set up and functioning</i>	<p>Program and project officers of Plan; HR and technical assistance (TA) of Women’s Union at all levels, DoET, partners from research institutes and experts from community and</p>	<p>* Program and project officers of Plan participate actively but supervisors and technical assistance officers cannot participate regularly due to lack of HR.</p> <p>* Most of provincial staff and TA officers don’t get involved.</p> <p>* District HR and TA resources include participation of Women’s Union and BoET, but no involvement of Youth Union and Health Unit.</p> <p>* Communal HR and TA resources include active</p>	<p>Project’s financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan, of which:</p> <p>* Fund of Plan: core training and consultant recruitment.</p> <p>* Fund of DoET:</p>	<p>Project’s funds are implemented as planned, specifically:</p> <p>* Fund of Plan: core training and consultant recruitment.</p> <p>* Fund of DoET:</p>

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
	external consultants; direct beneficiaries	participation of Women's Union, schools, youth union, health unit and communal authorities. Village-level HR and direct beneficiaries actively participate	extended training, support for volunteers and organization of communication events in local areas	extended training, support for volunteers and organization of communication events in local areas
Output 4: <i>Community-based early stimulation initiatives for under three year children established and functioning effectively</i>	Program and project officers of Plan; HR and technical assistance (TA) of Women's Union at all levels, DoET, partners from research institutes and experts from community and external consultants; direct beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Program and project officers of Plan actively participate in core training, supervision and TA with extended training. However, supervision and support for groups are not regular due to insufficient HR. * Plan is responsible for compilation and printing of guidelines for play groups without participation of local officers. * Nearly no participation of provincial HR and TA staff. * District HR and TA resources include participation of Women's Union and BoET, but no involvement of Youth Union and Health Unit. * Communal HR and TA resources include active participation of Women's Union, schools, youth union, health unit and communal authorities. 	Project's financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan, specifically: * Fund of Plan: core training, material compilation and printing, consultant recruitment. * Fund of DoET: extended training, support for	Project's financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan, specifically: * Fund of Plan: core training, material compilation and printing, consultant recruitment. * Fund of DoET: extended training,

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
		Village-level HR and direct beneficiaries actively participate.	activities of play child group	support for activities of play child group.
Output 5: <i>Community-based stimulation initiatives for children aged 4 to 11 years established and functioning effectively</i>	Program and project officers of Plan; HR and technical assistance (TA) of Women's Union at all levels, DoET, partners from research institutes and experts from community and external consultants; direct beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Program and project officers of Plan actively participate in core training, supervision and TA with extended training. However, supervision and support for groups are not regular due to insufficient HR. * Plan is responsible for compilation and printing of 4 sets of guidelines for play groups without participation of local officers. * Nearly no participation of provincial HR and TA staff. * District HR and TA resources include participation of Women's Union and BoET, but no involvement of Youth Union and Health Unit. * Communal HR and TA resources include active participation of Women's Union, schools, youth union, health unit and communal authorities. <p>Village-level HR and direct beneficiaries actively participate.</p>	<p>Project's financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fund of Plan: core training, material compilation and printing, consultant recruitment. * Fund of DoET: extended training, support for activities of play child group 	<p>Project's financial resources are managed by DoET and Plan, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fund of Plan: core training, material compilation and printing, consultant recruitment. * Fund of DoET: extended training, support for activities of play child group

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
Component 2 – Preschool education				
Output 1: <i>Newly built/upgraded child friendly infrastructure is provided to ensure child-friendly environment</i>	Construction consultant of Plan; DoET officers, project officers of Plan; direct beneficiaries	DoEt officers decide selection of locations, school survey, design and construction; implementation of bid invitation activities... Due to lack of project officers in the initial period, participation of Plan’s construction consultant; there were no project officers of Plan. In 2013, Plan officers involved in re-survey, construction design and cost estimate...but participation is limited Direct beneficiaries did not have chances to actually participate in this process.	Project fund managed by DoET;	Project fund managed by DoET; and Plan’s fund starts from year 2 of the project
Output 2: <i>Provision of indoor and outdoor toys and facilities fo learning activities through culturally relevant playing</i>	DoET officers, project officers of Plan; direct beneficiaries	DoET officers played a crucial role Project officers of Plan participated as supervisors Direct beneficiaries did not have chances to actually participate	Project fund managed by DoET;	Project fund managed by DoET; and Plan’s fund starts from year 2 of the project
Output 3: <i>Contextualized preschool materials and teaching practices that promote</i>	MoET, DoET, BoET, teacher training colleges and core teachers; Department	Education program and project officers of Plan played crucial role in material compilation activity with consultants from appropriate research institutes.	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan;

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
<i>learning through play in the mother tongue and the transition to Vietnamese language are aligned with the transition to the early years of primary school.</i>	of Culture-Tourism-Sport; village patriarchs in the communities; parents; education program and project officers of Plan; partners from research institutes	Participation of MoET??? DoET, Department of Culture-Tourism-Sport, BoET appraised and provided comments on the set of materials. Teacher Training colleges (TTCs) and core teachers had chances to provide opinions in the material compilation process. Village patriarchs in the communities didn't have chances to get involved in this process.		
Output 4: <i>Quality in-service training and preschool-based capacity building for teachers and preschool managers is conducted.</i>	MoET, DoET, BoET, teacher training colleges, partner research institutes, core teachers at provincial and district levels; national consultants	Consultants from MOET provided in-service training courses for preschool teachers and managers. DoET and TTCs involved in training courses. BoET played an important role in direction and extended training for schools Core teachers at provincial and district levels played main role in extended training.	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan; and fund managed by DoET
Output 5: <i>Qualitative resources are available for professional development for teachers and preschool managers..</i>	MoET, DoET, BoET, teacher training colleges, partner research institutes, core teachers at provincial and district levels; national consultants	No involvement of MoET DoET, BoET played important role in approving and financing initiatives, but participated in appraisal of compiling Bahna materials TTCs didn't have chances to participate. Plan officers conducted material compilation process with consultancy from national consultants of suitable institutes, TA and approval of initiatives with DoET.	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan; and fund managed by DoET;

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
		Core teachers at provincial and district levels actively participated in training/guiding teachers at schools to develop and implement initiatives and comment on compiled materials		
Component 3 – Primary education				
Output 1: <i>School-led and child-friendly initiatives to enhance the school learning environment are undertaken.</i>	MoET, DoET, BoET, teacher training colleges, partner research institutes, core teachers at provincial and district levels; national consultants; direct beneficiaries	DoET approved initiatives BoET approved initiatives, supervised, provided TA for implementation of initiatives Plan directed development and deployment of initiatives, approved and supervised initiative implementation Core teachers at provincial and district levels guided and supported teachers at schools how to write and implement initiatives Teachers at schools wrote and conducted initiatives	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan and DoET;
Output 2: <i>Compiled and adapted materials responsive to ethnic minority students' needs in early grades are available</i>	MoET, DoET, BoET, partner research institutes, parents, village patriarchs, core teachers at provincial and district levels; national consultants	DoET, and BoET provided comments on the set of materials; Plan officers and consultants of suitable research institutes implemented material compilation Core teachers at provincial, district and school levels provided opinions on the set of materials	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan;

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
Output 3: <i>Principals and teachers of early grade students trained and mentored in culturally appropriate child-centered methodologies relevant to the transition period, including through school cluster system</i>	MoET, DoET, BoET, teacher training colleges, partner research institutes, core teachers at provincial and district levels; national consultants; direct beneficiaries	DoET, TTCs participated in provincial-level training BoET involved in core training and cooperated with core officers at extended training schools Plan and consultants from research institutes organized core training and supervised extended training process Core teachers at provincial, and district levels involved in extended training	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan and DoET;
Component 4 – Policy environment				
Output 1: <i>Systematic capturing of lessons learnt from other ECD project in Vietnam and the region influencing the project</i>	New Zealand Aid Program; Plan Vietnam; Plan Australia and partner research institutes	New Zealand Aid Program; Plan Vietnam; Plan Australia and partner research institutes	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan;
Output 2: <i>Research activities are complemented with project and evidence based documentation</i>	New Zealand Aid Program; Plan Vietnam; Plan Australia, international consultants and partner research institutes	New Zealand Aid Program; Plan Vietnam; Plan Australia, international consultants and partner research institutes	Project fund managed by Plan;	Project fund managed by Plan and DoET;

Outputs	Technical supports		Financial resources	
	Planned	Actual implementation	Planned	Actual disbursement
Output 3: <i>ECD Networks and alliances are established at provincial and national levels</i>		Plan Vietnam, Provincial Project Management Board		
Output 4: <i>Effective evidence-based advocacy on ECD and integrated ECD initiatives are implemented</i>		Plan Vietnam, Project Management Boards at all levels		Project fund managed by Plan and DoET;