

MFAT Management Response to Evaluation of End of Project Review of Alternative Pre-Schools in Timor-Leste

About this document

This document describes the programme's response to the evaluation.

Evaluation report title:	End of Project Review of Alternative Pre-Schools in Timor-Leste
File title of final pdf report:	End of Project Review of Alternative Pre-Schools in Timor-Leste
AMS Activity Number:	A11960
Activity Manager:	Augusto Soares / Ali Carlin
Programme:	Timor-Leste
MFAT response approved by:	Tiffany Babington, Unit Manager Global Development
Approved date:	10/08/2017
Evaluation cost to MFAT:	\$0

Approval

Approval of the MFAT Management Response to Evaluation	
Approved by:	
Signature:	Anton Ojala
	Anton Ojala, Divisional Manager, Global Development and Scholarships
Date:	10 August 2017

MFAT Management Response

Evaluation team members

Members of the evaluation team were:

Name	Role
Sandipan Paul	Consultant Evaluator

Key findings/conclusions of the evaluation

The key findings/conclusions of the evaluation are:

- The activity was well contextualised and aligned with Timor-Leste priorities
- The intervention responded to the needs and aspirations of caregivers for pre-school education to prepare their children for school
- The alternative community-based pre-school model represents a low cost model of delivery
- The activity has been successful in developing local leadership and commitment amongst community members
- The project has contributed to giving access to preschool education to children in remote areas, developing a shared understanding of the importance of pre-school amongst community members and improving school readiness for young children in remote locations
- The low cost model allows for further scale up
- The individual family model (also piloted) was shown to have a high cost of delivery

Lessons for MFAT

Lessons that MFAT can take from the evaluation are:

No.	Lesson	Programme response
1	The activity was established as a pilot, to be run for 2 years. UNICEF/MFAT underestimated the amount of time required to fully pilot the activity.	Ensure any future pilots are designed for a sufficient length of time to be able to show impacts.
2	A number of technical lessons were learnt through the pilot	Incorporate these into the design of the new Partnership Fund Activity

No.	Lesson	Programme response
3	<p>In a developing country context the policy environment is often developing at the same time as we are implementing activities. For example, the pilot has contributed to new thinking in the Ministry of Education about approaches to ensuring the policy goal of access to pre-school for 3-5 year olds is affordable. This may impact on our other investment (HANDS) in pre-school education which is focused on the public provision of pre-school.</p>	<p>We need to build in flexibility to ensure activities are able and allowed to change / adapt to new developments.</p>

Recommendations for MFAT

There were no MFAT specific recommendations from the review but we have identified key recommendations / learnings that MFAT should consider for design of future community-based pre-school activities.

No.	Recommendation	Programme response
1	Consider institutionalising mechanisms to absorb Community Based Pre Schools (CBPS) in the public pre-school system. For example through bringing CBPS under monitoring of municipal government (rather than UNICEF)	This will be a key consideration for the design and implementation of the UNICEF Partnership Fund activity (concept recently approved). The new activity will need to work closely with Ministry of Education and our HANDS activity to develop policy options relating to improving access to pre-schools and the extent of Ministry of Education support for CBPS (compared to their support for public pre-schools).
2	Ministry of Education consider defining clear roles and responsibilities for municipal government in terms of managing preschool education	As above.
3	Ministry of Education consider providing CBPS with materials and link facilitator training with in-service teacher training	This will depend on policy decisions taken by MoE in relation to the extent of government support to community based pre-schools.
4	UNICEF consider developing supervision guidelines for implementing organisations to provide feedback to facilitators	UNICEF should work with MoE and HANDS on developing guidelines for CBPS supervision.
5	UNICEF to develop strategies to seek support for CBPS through PNDS (Programa Nacional Desinvolvimento Suku, village development programme)	UNICEF and MoE could advocate for communities to use PNDS for pre-school infrastructure needs. HANDS use of PNDS for playgrounds has usefully established mechanisms for MoE and PNDS to work together.
7	UNICEF develop early learning and development standards linked to pre-school curriculum	This is on-going work for MoE, HANDS and UNICEF.
8	UNICEF to consider developing and providing training for facilitators regarding children with special needs	UNICEF could usefully play a lead role in developing this kind of training not only for CBPS facilitators but for all pre-school teachers.

No.	Recommendation	Programme response
9	UNICEF to track cohort who graduated from CBPS in 2016, up to 8 years old.	We agree with this. Tracking of this cohort should be built into the design of the new Partnership Fund activity.
10	There is a need for more technical support to classroom facilitators	A new activity will assess what is required and how it can be provided. UNICEF should continue to work closely with MoE and HANDS with regard to in-service training approaches to ensure they complement / align as far as appropriate.
11	There is a need to move to a continuous assessment system that is not academic and test based	Agree. it will be important for UNICEF (in coordination with MoE) to continue to work with facilitators to improve assessment approaches.

Further programme response

The findings indicate that a community-based pre-school model may be helpful in meeting Timor-Leste government aspirations for access to pre-school education for 3-5 years olds, particularly in remote rural areas of Timor-Leste. Further support for CBPS will help government identify options and approaches for cost-effective pre-school delivery.

MFAT follow up actions

This table lists actions that MFAT will undertake in response to the findings, lessons and recommendations of the evaluation.

Lesson learned / Recommendation	Action	Who will action	When	Resource Implications
All recommendations / lessons	Take into account during the design and implementation of the follow on Partnership Fund activity approved in June 2017	Design lead / Post / UNICEF	During activity design	Nil for bilateral programme. A four-year, NZ\$2.6m Partnership Fund activity has been approved to proceed to design.

Dissemination plan

The evaluation will be/has been shared with partner organisations, MFAT staff and other stakeholders in the following ways:

No.	Method of dissemination	Responsibility of	When
1	Evaluation report published on New Zealand Aid Programme website	Development Support Officer, DSE	August 2017
2	Evaluation report distributed to stakeholders (note – this is largely completed)	Activity Manager / UNICEF	August 2017

Report Release Checklist

Note: This checklist must be used for all evaluations that will be published in full on MFAT's website. Where the report has been commissioned by a partner organisation and is published on their website, MFAT should simply seek written permission from the partner to provide a link to the published evaluation from our website. Attach a copy of the partner's permission to this MFAT Response to Evaluation template in lieu of this Report Release Checklist.

NAME OF THE REPORT: END OF PROJECT REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE PRE-SCHOOLS IN TIMOR-LESTE

AUTHOR(S): SANDIPAN PAUL

REPORT MONTH AND YEAR: APRIL 2017

All evaluation reports should be able to be publicly released in accordance with the principle of availability (Section 5 of the Official Information Act (OIA)). However, this principle can be overridden if there is 'good reason' (as set out in the OIA) to withhold information. Use this checklist to help you decide if sections in the evaluation report should be withheld.

If any of the answers to these questions is 'yes' then:

- *A hard copy of the report should be marked up with brackets around the information to be withheld, and the OIA section under which the information is to be withheld noted (refer to MFAT Style and Practice Guide OIA Requests)*
- *The PDF copy of the report that is submitted to the Development Support Officer (DSE) for the library and public release will have the withheld information whited out and the reasons for withholding noted in the margins. The following note should be placed in the report: Certain information in this report has been withheld in accordance with the Official Information Act and the grounds for withholding, as at the time of publication, are noted in the margins.*

If you are unsure whether a good reason to withhold exists seek advice from the PDG staff member responsible for OIAs or the MFAT corporate legal team.

OIA Section 6 Conclusive Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that are likely to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Prejudice the security or defence of NZ or NZ's international relations? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of NZ on a basis of confidence by (i) the Government of any other country or (ii) any international organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Prejudice the maintenance of the law? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Endanger the safety of any person? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| e) Damage seriously the NZ economy? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

OIA Section 7 Special Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that are likely to:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| a) Prejudice the security or defence of the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau or the Ross Dependency? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Prejudice relations between the governments of NZ, and governments of the Cook Island and Niue? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

c) Prejudice the international relations of the governments of the Cook Islands or Niue

Yes No

OIA Section 9 Other Reasons: Are there words in the evaluation that need to be withheld to:

(Note: There is need to balance Section 9 grounds for withholding against 'public interest considerations'. Consider the negative consequences from release, and whether or not these consequences are outweighed by the public interest in access to the information.)

- a) Protect the privacy of natural persons? Yes No
- b) Protect trade secrets and commercial positions? Yes No
- c) c)Protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence where release of the information would be likely to i) prejudice the supply of similar information from the same source and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied or (ii) otherwise damage the public interest? Yes No
- d) Avoid prejudice to measures protecting the health or safety of members of the public? Yes No
- e) Avoid prejudice to the substantial economic interests of New Zealand? Yes No
- f) Avoid prejudice to measures that prevent or mitigate material loss to members of the public? Yes No

- a) Maintain the constitutional conventions including the confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials? Yes No
- b) Maintain effective conduct of public affairs through free and frank expressions of opinion and protection from improper pressure or harassment? Yes No
- c) Maintain legal professional privilege? Yes No
- d) Enable a minister department or organisation holding information to carry out commercial activities without prejudice or disadvantage? Yes No
- e) Enable a minister, department or organisation holding the information to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage? Yes No
- f) Prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or advantage? Yes No

Other Reason: Is there any other reason for withholding information?

- If the answer is yes then seek advice from the PDG staff member responsible for OIA or the MFAT corporate legal team. Yes No

RECOMMENDATION

- Withhold selected parts, noting sections of the OIA applying to these in a copy of the report that is filed, and white-ed out in the copy of the report to be forwarded to the Development Support Officer (DSE) for public release and the library
- Release entire report

Signed by Ali Carlin (Activity Manager)

Signed by Tiffany Babington (Unit Manager Global Development)

Date: 10/08/2017