



## MFAT Management Response to Evaluation of the Quality Education Programme in Solukhumbu (QEPS), Nepal

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
<p>The Activity needs to (continue to) explore how its engagement with federal/provincial institutions (through MoUs) can enhance alignment between institutions in pursuit of quality education at the local level. An important aspect on this is providing periodic updates / learning to provincial and federal institutions as needed.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Himalayan Trust will do this on an as needed basis. Himilayan Tust Nepal (HTN) worked closely with the federal government and local governments in the current phase. For the new phase, HTN will work closely with federal and local governments and coordinate with provincial government as needed.</p>
<p>Ensure that work in any Local Government (LG) is underpinned by a MoU with that LG setting out roles, responsibilities, and expectations, including in relation to teacher retention and sustainability.</p>	<p><b>Partially agree.</b> HTN will sign more detailed MoU's with the local government in the next phase. However, some issues are more complicated to address, such as retention of teachers (as it is influenced by many factors such as financial and geographic challenges).</p>
<p>LGs need to be supported in coordinating education stakeholders within their area, and an effective coordination and learning mechanism among stakeholders needs to be designed and implemented under the leadership of LGs. This should be led by the local government, but the Quality Education Programme Solukhumbu (QEPS) can encourage and support this.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p><b>Partially Agree.</b> This could be supported and has the potential to be a useful LG capability building and local ownership empowerment intervention.</p> <p>However implementation will be dependent on available resources once the design and budget for the next phase is completed and agreed (therefore partial agreement).</p>

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<sup>1</sup> The evaluation team considers this to be a high priority recommendation which can contribute to enhancing quality education, even beyond QEPS-supported schools. However, it is recognised that this would expand the scope of the QEPS as it currently is, and might therefore also be considered out of scope for a future QEPS.

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<p>Support LGs to develop and implement education-related policies, acts, regulations, procedures, guidelines, and plans with a focus on quality education, child-friendly learning environments, and GEDSI, where appropriate and under the leadership of local government. Areas for specific attention include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Support for the development of a local curriculum, as specified under the existing MoU with the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD).</li> <li>B. If requested support in the development of a performance management mechanism for teachers, so teachers have the right incentives to deliver quality education.</li> </ul>	<p>HTN confirm they are open to support local government's capability building, depending on the interest and needs of the local government partner.</p> <p><b>Disagree (A).</b> Most LG partners where the programme is active have already developed local curriculum, except Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality. HTN offered the support to Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality, however they decided to develop it without external support.</p> <p><b>Partially Agree (B).</b> While government teachers have their own system of performance management, HTN could provide advice to school management committee's and local government. However implementation will be dependent on available resources once the design and budget for the next phase are finalised (therefore partial agreement).</p>
<p>Joint monitoring between the QEPS and LGs during which implementation is monitored and teachers/schools are provided with feedback needs to be further institutionalized.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Joint monitoring has been undertaken in the current phase of the activity and will be continued in the next phase.</p>
<p>A co-funding approach to scholarships should be explored with all LGs in which the Activity will be implemented, building on current good practice.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree.</b> HTN can explore co-funding for Bachelor level scholarship with local government. Final decisions on scholarships will be dependent on available resources once the design and budget for the next phase are finalised (therefore partial agreement).</p>
<p>The Activity design needs to ensure that its training for School Management Committees (SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members reaches all members of these bodies, covering both the roles of their bodies <i>and</i> the QEPS itself.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree.</b> HTN report they increased efforts in the current phase of the activity to be as inclusive as possible of all SMC and PTA members. More engagement could be considered, but will be dependent on available resources once the design and budget for the next phase of the activity is finalised (therefore partial agreement).</p>
<p>Related to the recommendation above, the Activity could help to institutionalise <i>regular</i> meetings between (head) teachers, the SMC, and the PTA.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> HTN have confirmed that they will continue to work to institutionalise regular meetings across all schools in the next phase of the activity.</p>

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(further) Institutionalise the good practice of involving parents in education by maintaining a homework and reading logbook/diary, which needs to be signed by parents.	<p><b>Agree.</b> HTN confirm that the home reading log was used in Literacy Integrated Learning (LIL) schools to good effect in the current phase and will be continued into the next phase of the activity.</p> <p>Additional funding would be needed to expand this to the School-based teacher Training Programme (SBTTP) schools, and will be considered as part of the design and budget for the next phase of the activity.</p>
Ensure that quality education aspects are integrated into School Improvement Plans (SIPs)	<p><b>Agree.</b> This is the core aspect of the QEPS SIP intervention which will be continued in QEPS 3 with other aspects such as disaster response management and climate adaptation.</p>
Develop a mentoring system for teachers at school-level to provide less experienced teachers with feedback and suggestions. Such a system could draw on the Teachers Mentoring Tools developed by CEHRD and can help sustain a culture of continuous feedback and improvement where the Activity and LG are not able to do so.	<p><b>Partially Agree.</b> This would be a positive for the programme and for teacher capability development. Implementation would increase demands on HTN staff capacity and would be dependent on available resources once the design and budget for the next phase of the activity is finalised (therefore partial agreement).</p>
Integrate Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) further into the Activity's training curriculum. Concrete training materials for teachers, SMCs, and PTAs on Safeguarding and GEDSI should be developed, including covering the role of schools in safeguarding and the identification of students with disabilities. The latter could include drawing on the Washington Group short set on functioning <sup>2</sup> to identify the children with disabilities under QEPS.	<p><b>Agree.</b> GEDSI will be incorporated as a cross cutting theme in to next phase of QEPS.</p>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/>

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Planning for sustainability and an exit strategy should be more structurally embedded in the Activity Design and throughout HTN's engagements with schools, LGs, and other stakeholders. This should be underpinned by a shared understanding between HTN, HTNZ, and MFAT on what 'sustainability' means within the context of QEPS.	<b>Agree.</b> MFAT will work with HTNZ to define sustainability in the context of QEPS. HTN and HT will incorporate this into next phase of QEPS Activity Design.
MFAT should clearly outline what its expectations are with regards to New Zealand public support for the Activity and around public diplomacy. These expectations should be proportionate and not lead to an excessive burden which could distract time and resources from the delivery of the Activity. To ensure public diplomacy activities are met, a suitable indicator needs to be incorporated in the Activity's results framework.	<b>Agree.</b> MFAT and HTNZ will ensure shared understanding of expectations for both partners for the next phase of QEPS.
HTNZ should, based on the recommendation above, develop a plan on how it can support MFAT's public support and diplomacy objectives.	<b>Partially agree.</b> MFAT and HTNZ will ensure shared understanding around public diplomacy objectives for the next phase of the activity. Given the scale of the activity, we do not consider the development of a public diplomacy plan by HTNZ to be necessary.
Explore the opportunity to work with volunteers from Nepal and/or New Zealand to support schools in specific areas for capacity building. <sup>3</sup>	<b>Partially agree.</b> The concept has potential, but requires substantial financial and human resources to manage volunteers. HTN, will continue the volunteer (fellowship) programme in computer lab application in schools. Any additional consideration will be dependent on on HTNZ and THN capacity and available resources once the design and budget for the next phase of the activity is finalised (therefore partial agreement).

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<sup>3</sup> The evaluation team is not recommending enlisting volunteers as teachers, as this is a very contentious matter with regards to student safeguarding, trust building/bonding, and sustainability. However, there can be benefits to supporting capacity building through volunteers, e.g., with regards to developing the skills of computer teachers.

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HTN and HTNZ should actively map out (potential) resource partners/donors that can provide resources (financial/material) which can complement/enhance the impact of QEPS funding, for example through the provision of school uniforms. <sup>4</sup> This mapping should be accompanied with a resource mobilization plan. <sup>5</sup>	<b>Agreed.</b> HTN will implement this practice for the next phase of QEPS.
HTN's monitoring systems should be updated to capture data on disability.	<b>Agree.</b> HTNZ and HTN will capture data on disability in next phase of QEPS and develop improved approaches to disability interactions and data gathering.

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<sup>4</sup> HTN is already doing this in some cases (e.g., with school uniforms), and the evaluation recommends they continue and expand this practice.

<sup>5</sup> The core outputs and outcomes of a future QEPS should not be contingent on raising resources from such external donors, but this should be viewed as potential complementary to/enhancement of the QEPS.

