

External Evaluation Report
Of
Decent Employment and Professional Development
for Early Childhood Educators' Project in Nigeria

Submitted by

School for Life

To

BUPL-NUT

NIGERIA

December 2017

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Civil Society in Development	CISU
Development Assistance Committee	DAC
Early Childhood Education	ECE
Key Performance Indicators	KPIs
Nigeria Union of Teachers	NUT
School for Life	SfL
The Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators	BUPL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides findings from the end of the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators' Project Evaluation in Nigeria. The Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators (BUPL) and Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) supported the evaluation process with financial resources from Civil Society in Development (CISU). BUPL-NUT developed the terms of reference. School for Life, a Non-Governmental Organization in Ghana conducted this independent evaluation.

The Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria is a large-scale development project supported by CISU. The participating partners are The Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators (BUPL) and Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT). Originally, the project was designed as a 3-phase project. The first phase focused on Kaduna State and three pilot districts (Zaria, Kafanchan and Kaduna) and has now been completed. The project's commencement date was June 1st 2012 and expected completion date was May 31st 2015. However, due to unforeseen challenges in the project implementation the project was prolonged twice.¹

The Project aimed to demonstrate strengthened commitment and enhanced capacity to provide focused and high quality union services for Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria; develop a concept for ensuring professional training to EC Educators and NUT is actively involved in social dialogue and advocacy, and has initiated cooperation with relevant stakeholders to improve the Early Childhood Education Sector.

Methodology

School for Life as the External Evaluator set up an evaluation team. The evaluation team included a lead consultant to review relevant existing documents and had consultations with key stakeholders of the Project. The lead consultant went further and interviewed the key stakeholders of the Project in Abuja.

The Evaluator focused on assessing the Project based on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria. The evaluation therefore focused on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Project. In addition, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were also developed for quantitative assessment of the Project.

Key Findings

All the three key stakeholders interviewed had a very good and common understanding of the Early Childhood Education concept implemented by NUT.

¹The first 'No cost extension' prolonged from 31st December 2015 to September 1st 2016. The reason for the extension was lack of external audits reports, and thus lack of disbursements of funds for 2015. In August 2016 a second 'No cost extension' took place to 31st December 2017. The reason was that NUT on their own funds and initiative facilitated 'The National Workshop for ECE coordinators in Nigeria.' ECE coordinators from Nigeria's 36 federal states participated.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The evaluation revealed that NUT activities regarding the Project were very appropriate with Early Childhood Education delivery. In collaboration with their counterparts in Ghana, Federal Colleges of Education and the Universities that offer Early Childhood Education courses in Nigeria, NUT worked with some officials from these institutions to take part in ECE training programmes and other activities related to Early Childhood Education.

EFFECTIVENESS

There is very clear evidence that NUT has the capacity in achieving results. The officials of NUT have had their capacities built through workshops, seminars and conferences both locally and internationally. NUT has very good evidence of results achieved and has observable and verifiable indicators with regards to the Project. They have been able to train over 500 Early Childhood Educators from the Private Sector, out of which 100 have being recruited as members of the Nigerian Union of Teachers. However, the organisation needs to improve on coordination of activities among the key officials for effective and efficient implementation of the Project.

EFFICIENCY

As part of its work as a professional body, NUT has succeeded in acting as a central actor in the provision of support for Early Childhood Education to teachers in both private and public schools in Nigeria. This has been as a result of improved staff development programmes within the organisation. NUT has participated in workshops/conferences locally and internationally (Kenya, Benin, Ghana, Denmark and Belgium) and has evidence of being innovative towards achieving good results. NUT has made good use of the expertise of its members without necessarily contracting experts from outside the union but still produced the expected results, thus value for money.

IMPACT

NUT, in the implementation of the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators, supervised the establishment of six Model Early Childhood Centres, two each in Zaria, Kafanchan and Kaduna. In addition, 1,500 Kindergarten centres attached to public schools have been well resourced with Early Childhood materials and equipment by the Government, while over 5,000 private schools are said to have well equipped Early Childhood Centres. Most of these schools now have qualified Early Childhood Educators.

Sustainability of Programme

In order to ensure the sustainability of the Project, NUT has put up structures such as the ECE Taskforces at National, State and District levels. The Taskforces comprise the State Secretaries and Assistant State Secretaries with participation from relevant ECE stakeholders. NUT is capable of continuing with the Project with or without external funding support. However, the

evaluation revealed that a complementary funding support could accelerate and bring about a bigger scale-up of the Project.

Recommendations

Since there is clear evidence of the relevance of the Project, NUT needs to ensure that there is effective coordination of activities among the key stakeholders. Enhancing the communication strategies of NUT and the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators' Project could be an added value.

Quality assurance could also be enhanced if NUT strengthens its ways of sharing information and reflecting on previous performance. Apart from the normal routine meetings that NUT organises, it could also consider having biannual review meetings involving key stakeholders of the Project.

The introduction of new initiatives such as the new Early Childhood Education Programme should be seen as a process and not an event. NUT should consider intensifying its engagement with the Private School Proprietors for them to appreciate the need to allow their teachers to be recruited as members of NUT.

In order to continue with its advocacy drive, NUT needs to develop a data management system to increase its knowledge management. Relevant data on EC Educators, data on students from the Early Childhood Centres and schools could serve as reference points for the documentation of most significant stories for the Project.

Even though NUT has demonstrated its capacity to sustain the Project with or without external support, it will be of significant importance if an external funding support is sought to complement the efforts of NUT.

INTRODUCTION

BUPL-NUT implemented the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators' Project in Kaduna, Nigeria. The Project started in 2008 as a pilot project until 2012 when the National Union of Teachers in Nigeria teamed up with BUPL in Denmark to implement the project on a large scale.

The objectives of the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators Project were as follows:

- NUT demonstrates strengthened commitment and enhanced capacity to provide focused and high quality union services for early childhood educators in Nigeria.
- Develop a concept for ensuring professional training to ECE educators.
- NUT is actively involved in social dialogue and advocacy, and has initiated cooperation with relevant stakeholders to improve the Early Childhood Education sector

The external evaluation of the Project (Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria) took place between 28th November and 1st December 2017.

Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation had the following immediate objectives:

- To find out the extent NUT demonstrates strengthened commitment and enhanced capacity to provide focused and high quality union services for early childhood educators in Nigeria.
- To assess whether NUT has developed a concept for ensuring professional training to ECE educators in Nigeria.
- To find out the extent NUT is actively involved in social dialogue and advocacy, and has initiated cooperation with central stakeholders to improve the ECE sector.

Scope of Work

The evaluation covered the Pilot Districts in Kaduna State. However, since spring 2014, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs discouraged all travels to Kaduna State. Hence, the work was organized as a desk study for 4 days in Abuja.

LIMITATION

The evaluation did not cover the direct beneficiaries (Early Childhood Educators) that could call for more data analysis. In this sense, there was no primary information to establish the impact of

the Project on the part of the direct beneficiaries. This limitation was however beyond the control of the implementers of the Project.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The approach used for the evaluation was mainly a desk study. School for Life did some verification work and studied relevant documents (Project document, LFA, Status reports, workshops reports, etc) of the Project in order to be familiar with the whole concept of the Project. Key stakeholders interviewed in the evaluation were:

1. The National ECE Coordinator and Principal State Secretary (Comrade Adamu Ango);
2. National ECE Assistance (Comrade Josephine James);
3. Kaduna State ECE Coordinator (Debroah Ishaya).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were used alongside some questionnaires for conducting key stakeholders' in-depth individual interviews for the evaluation exercise. The KPIs were based on the evaluation objectives and elements of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria. The Project was therefore assessed to find out its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

THE EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The following evaluation objectives were examined to establish as to what extent they were achieved.

Objective 1: Extent to which NUT has demonstrated strengthened commitment and enhanced capacity to provide focused and high quality union services.

In respect of the above objective, all three key stakeholders interviewed indicated that NUT was able to build the capacity of their staff (Both State secretaries and Assistant State Secretaries) in addition to other senior staff of the Education Department to serve as resource persons for the Project. Apart from having the capacity to train Early childhood Educators, three Assistant State Secretaries were mandated to serve as District Coordinators in the three zones in Kaduna state. The three Coordinators are paid workers of the Union under the Project. The State Assistant Secretaries trained, were also provided with relevant documents such as training manuals, training guides and other materials to support them during training programmes.

According to the key stakeholders interviewed under the above objective, monitoring revealed that most of the early childhood educators in both private and public schools demonstrated their abilities to translate what they learnt from the training they had into practice. They stated that the EC Educators prepared relevant learning materials with their students and even displayed them in their respective classrooms. Pictures of ECE teachers preparing simple teaching and learning

materials and monitoring and situational reports of such demonstrations were shown to the evaluator.

Further, the key stakeholders indicated that they did not only train the EC Educators from the private schools, but they also initiated the process of establishing an association of private schools EC Educators within NUT. According to them, 100 out of 500 EC Educators from the private schools trained, have been recruited as members of the EC Educators' Association within NUT as against 200 per the Project's LFA.

In scoring the Project achievement based on the KPIs results, the overall performance of the Project stands at 85%. Attached is a detailed analysis of the Key Performance Indicators.

Objective 2: Extent to which NUT has developed a concept for ensuring professional training to ECE educators in Nigeria.

Under objective 2, the key stakeholders interviewed indicated that there was already a policy and a curriculum on Early Childhood Education in Nigeria. However, the curriculum had not been distributed to most schools in the country. NUT was therefore able to secure the curriculum and made copies for distribution to schools under the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators Project. According to the key stakeholders, a training manual and guide were developed by NUT to facilitate the training of EC Educators.

With regards to Early childhood educators trained within the Project period, all three persons interviewed indicated that 500 teachers from the beneficiary districts have had their capacities built and are applying the skills learnt in their respective schools. However, the study revealed that only 100 of those trained are being recruited as members of the Early Childhood Educators Association under NUT. Dating back from the start of the Pilot Project till 2016 (2008 to 2016), the NUT officials said 2,780 Early Childhood Educators have been trained. This comprises EC Educators from both public and private schools.

On the issue of strategies used to intensify the integration of the initiative into the school system, all three persons indicated that they adopted the use of continuous in-service training for the Early Childhood Educators in both public and private schools. According to them, they meet regularly with stakeholders to ensure their involvement and commitment in the implementation of the initiative.

As part of strategies to ensure quality control in the implementation of the Project, monitoring taskforces were established at National, State and District levels with participation from relevant ECE Stakeholders in addition to the actions of the National Executive Council. The Taskforce was to monitor activities of the Project and provide relevant information for effective and efficient implementation of the Project.

Objective 3: Extent to which NUT is actively involved in social dialogue and advocacy, and has initiated cooperation with central stakeholders to improve the ECE sector.

According to the NUT officials, series of dialogue session meetings were organised at National, State and District levels with the Proprietors of Private schools to discuss their involvement in the implementation of the Project. They pointed out that the meetings were also used as platforms to sensitize and negotiate with the Proprietors to actively take part in the implementation of the Project. They cited the need for the Proprietors to start issuing appointment letters to their teachers and also allow the teachers to be unionised under NUT. The evaluation revealed that as a result of the advocacy work NUT did, some positive administrative backing at the National, State and District levels were achieved. Both public and private schools heads have realised the need for the integration of ECE in their schools.

About 85% of the Private schools are said to have well equipped Early Childhood Centres within the Project District. The Government has supported about 1,500 public schools to resource their Early Childhood Centres. However, the evaluation revealed that very little work has been done by NUT to effectively engage with the media to support in the advocacy process and publicising the benefits of the Project. The Project District has six Early Childhood Education Model Centres, two each in Kaduna, Zaria and Kafanchan. The continuation and scale up of the Project is therefore likely to bring about the establishment of more ECE Centres in Kaduna State and the other States in Nigeria.

KEY FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings of the evaluation. As specifically indicated in the ToR, the Evaluator used the DAC criteria covering Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability in assessing the Project.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The evaluation revealed that NUT activities regarding the Project were very appropriate with Early Childhood Education delivery. In collaboration with their counterparts in Ghana, Federal Colleges of Education and the Universities that offer Early Childhood Education courses in Nigeria, NUT worked with some officials from these institutions to take part in ECE training programmes and other activities.

Further, NUT has been able to achieve the Project objectives. The objectives met the needs of the Early Childhood Educators, especially those from the Private sector (e.g. Better conditions of service for the ECE teachers in the private schools). Apart from building and reinforcing the capacities of the Early Childhood Educators, NUT has gained legitimacy and trust from the Government, Private school Proprietors and school heads. However, the third objective of the Project (Advocacy: NUT is actively involved in social dialogue and advocacy, and has initiated cooperation with relevant stakeholders to improve the Early Childhood Education sector) has not been satisfactorily achieved. Even though NUT has had some engagement meetings with

relevant stakeholders, much advocacy work needed to have been done by way of involving the media and other relevant stakeholders to widen their scope of advocacy. The team was not able to produce specific documents with regards to advocacy strategies used.

EFFECTIVENESS

There is very clear evidence that NUT has the capacity in achieving results. The officials of NUT have had their capacities built through workshops, seminars and conferences, both locally and internationally. NUT has very good evidence of results achieved and has observable and verifiable indicators with regards to the Project. However, the organisation needed to improve on coordination of activities among the key officials for a more effective and efficient implementation of the Project.

EFFICIENCY

As part of its work as a professional body, NUT has succeeded in acting as a central actor in the provision of support for Early Childhood Education to teachers in both private and public schools in Nigeria. This has been as a result of improved staff development programmes within the organisation. NUT has participated in workshops/conferences locally and internationally (Kenya, Benin, Ghana, Denmark and Belgium) and has evidence of being innovative towards achieving good results.

What NUT has done differently to add more value to the Early Childhood Education Programme is the idea of influencing Early Childhood Educators to meet after school hours to discuss their classroom experiences and matters relating to their conditions of service. This approach helped the Early Childhood Educators to have access to relevant information about the union and mentoring and coaching support from NUT officials. Five of the Early Childhood Educators from the Private schools have become resource persons for the Project. However, there was not enough evidence about the number of review meetings they had.

IMPACT

The Nigeria National Policy on Education (FRN 2012) came out with an Early Childhood Education policy to be mainstreamed into the Educational System of the country, with efforts among others to establish pre-primary sections in existing public schools and encourage both public and private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education. However, this policy is said not to have been enforced by the Ministry of Education and the Education Department of Nigeria.

NUT upon realising this, took up the challenge of ensuring that the Early Childhood Education Policy is enforced in both Private and Public Schools in Nigeria. Nut, in the implementation of the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators, supervised the establishment of six Model Early Childhood Centres, two each in Zaria, Kafanchan and Kaduna. In addition, 1,500 Kindergarten centres attached to public schools have

been well resourced by the Government, while over 5,000 private schools are said to have well equipped Early Childhood Centres. Most of these schools now have qualified Early Childhood Educators who in turn train their peers to become conversant with Early Childhood Education. NUT printed and distributed the Early Childhood Education curriculum to all schools in beneficiary Districts that did not have the curriculum. This has prevented the Early Childhood Educators from doing selective teaching of certain topics as observed in most schools in the country.

Further, the Project has been able to bring about the recruitment and unionisation of 100 Private School Early Childhood Educators within NUT even though this did not meet the target of 200 EC Educators planned to be recruited. The recruited teachers now know the kind of conditions of service (Appointment letters, better salaries, maternity leave for female teachers, etc) they should demand from their Proprietors.

NUT has also succeeded in playing the role of a central actor in the provision of support for Early Childhood Education to teachers in both private and public schools in Nigeria. This puts NUT in a position of not only seen as a pressure group but also as a Civil Society Organisation that is very much interested in contributing to implement educational policies in Nigeria. However, NUT was not able to meet the target of recruiting 200 Early Childhood Educators from the Private Schools as stated in the Logical Frame Work.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

In order to ensure the sustainability of the Project, NUT has put up structures such as the ECE Taskforces at National, State and District levels. The Taskforces comprise the State Secretaries and Assistant State Secretaries with participation from relevant ECE stakeholders. The Taskforces monitor and sensitize Early Childhood Educators on their rights and responsibilities. Coordinators have also been appointed and paid by NUT to oversee the activities of the Early Childhood Educators in the schools. These coordinators have had their capacities built enough to serve as resource persons for the Project.

Sustainability of the Project also depends so much on the availability of standardised tools or materials regarding the effective implementation of the Project. Apart from making the ECE curriculum available to the Early Childhood Educators, NUT has developed an ECE training manual and a guide to ensure the sustainability of the Project. The training material has a Learning through Play approach and makes use of local materials to develop to-cost-low cost teaching learning aids. Both private and public sectors in Education can rely on such materials to enhance their work in Early Childhood Education in their schools.

In addition, NUT believes that it is capable of continuing with the Project with or without external funding support. However, the continuity of the Project by NUT without external funding might compel it to limit its scope of work considering the vast nature of the individual States and Districts.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation exercise examined the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Decent Employment and Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators' Project. The Project has rejuvenated the value of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria, especially in the Project Districts. The impact is very great and if the level of commitment by NUT continues, it would provide other Early Childhood Educators the opportunity to benefit from the Project.

RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the evaluation results, the following recommendations can be considered to address or improve upon the Project in future:

1. NUT should ensure that effective coordination of activities in the implementation process of the Project is enhanced. This can be made possible with increased communication strategies.
2. NUT should consider holding annual or biannual review meetings among the key stakeholders to reflect on lessons learned, challenges and best practices.
3. NUT should intensify its efforts in the unionisation of the Early Childhood Educators in the Private School Sector. This can be done through continuous engagements with the Private School Proprietors considering the importance of the initiative.
4. NUT should ensure that key stakeholders such as the National ECE Coordinator and Principal State Secretary, the National ECE Assistance, the Kaduna State ECE Coordinator and the District Coordinators are given the opportunity to participate in ECE related conferences and workshops, both locally and internationally. This will not only increase their understanding of the ECE concept but also enhance their ability to support EC Educators.
5. NUT should develop a data management system to increase their knowledge management system regarding the Project.
6. BUPL should continue to partner NUT so that other funding support could be solicited to complement the funds generated by NUT in the implementation of the Project in a wider scale.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATION OF DECENT EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN NIGERIA

QUESTIONS FOR OBJECTIVE ONE OF THE ASSESSMENT

(Union Service for Early Childhood Educators: To assess to what extent NUT demonstrates strengthened commitment and enhanced capacity to provide focused and high quality union services for Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria)

1. What has been the mode of capacity development within NUT with regards to the provision of union services to EC Educators?
2. How many NUT staff (the core team) have had their capacities built as resource persons to provide training or relevant services to EC Educators?
3. How often did the NUT Resource Persons (the core team) receive training?
4. What can you say about the launch of the National Seminar?
5. What would you say about the implementation workshop that was carried out?
6. How many ECE Union Service Workshops have you carried out?
7. What would you say about the setting up of an ECE Association within NUT?
8. To what extent is the involvement of the Private Sector in the implementation of ECE Union Services?
9. How many ECE model centres have been initiated in the Pilot Districts?
10. What has been the impact of ECE on the children and the communities?
11. What do you think can be improved upon?

QUESTIONS FOR OBJECTIVE TWO OF THE ASSESSMENT

(Professional Training: To assess whether NUT has developed a concept for ensuring Professional Training to Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria)

1. Is there a training guide or manual that includes the concept for ensuring Professional Training to Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria? If yes, how is it like?
2. How many EC Educators have been trained at:
 - a. National Level? _____
 - b. Kaduna State Level? _____
 - c. Pilot District Level? _____
 - d. Private Sector? _____
3. Who qualifies to be an EC Educator? _____
4. In terms of ensuring full integration of the Programme, to what extent have you worked with other partners? E.g. within the sub-region, especially in the West Africa Programme's Project Advisory Committee meetings? Participation in Regional Seminars with sister trade unions for exchange of experiences?
5. What form of assessment has been put in place to measure outputs?

QUESTIONS FOR OBJECTIVE THREE OF THE ASSESSMENT

(Social Dialogue: To assess to what extent NUT is actively involved in social dialogue and advocacy, and has initiated cooperation with central stakeholders to improve the ECE sector)

1. What is the status of ECE with regards to its inclusion in the Education Curriculum?
2. What efforts have been put in place?
3. Instituting School Based Curriculum seems to be ok. What about cluster or District Based Curriculum?
4. What would you say about the status of implementation of the Programme? (Progress so far as against planned activities).
5. To what extent has NUT been able to hold dialogue meetings with:
 - a. National Executive Committees of School Proprietors' Association?
 - b. Regional Executive Committee of School Proprietors' Association?
 - c. District Executive Committee of School Proprietors' Association?
6. To what extent has NUT been able to dialogue and advocate Colleges of Education for the provision of in-service courses for Early Childhood Educators?
7. What needs to be improved upon?
8. What is the level of parents' involvement?
9. Have you considered the inclusion of the Programme at the Colleges of Education Level?
Explain.
10. To what extent have you been able to engage with the Media? What has been the impact?