

Educational Environment Improvement Project in Kilinochchi District

Part 1: Evaluation Report

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADE	Assistant Director for Education
IEC	Information, Education and Communication materials
ISA	In-Service Advisor
LMDMU	Learning Material Development Management Unit
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
ML	Multi-level Teaching
PDE	Province Department of Education
SBTD	School-based Teacher Development
SDC	School Development Committee
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEU	Special Education Unit
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
ZEO	Zone Education Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Educational Environment Improvement Project in Kilinochchi District (hereafter: the Project) was funded by KOICA for a total amount of **USD 6,750,000** over the period October 2018 – December 2022. The Project Goal was to enhance learning outcomes in targeted poor-performing schools through both hardware (infrastructure) and software interventions in Kilinochchi district. The primary target of the project was 13 schools and Zone and Province-wide activities were also implemented. The project was managed by UNICEF in coordination with national agencies and implemented by Province and Zone authorities and services and selected civil society organisations, private sector organisations and the University of Jaffna.

The purpose of this evaluation is threefold: (i) To determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project; (ii) To assess cross-cutting issues of equity, gender equality, human rights, environment, and technology (ICT) applied in the project planning and implementation; (iii) To draw recommendations for future anticipated project design and advocacy for scaling up. The evaluation criteria and questions are articulated around four DAC-OECD evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) and one additional cross-cutting issues criteria.

This evaluation report is based on a methodology with strong limitations, as the Sri Lankan firm recruited to conduct the evaluation produced evaluation drafts deemed of insufficient quality by UNICEF. Another consultant was hired to re-write the report based on available data (17 interviews and 21 focus group discussions). The evaluation tools used by the initial team to collect data had significant gaps. Wherever possible, this report draws from the endline studies (general endline and KAP endline) to fill in the gaps. The writer acknowledges that she was involved in some M&E activities of the project (endline study) but was not involved in any activity on the ground.

FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

Overall, the objectives and design of the Project were sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, political economy and capacity conditions in which it took place and the activities were relevant in achieving the project objectives. The project design and activities have contributed to addressing key educational shortcomings in Kilinochchi in terms of infrastructure, teacher quality, dropout rates and learning outcomes. Project activities and inputs were needs-based and relevant to the diverse needs of target schools. The project implementation strategies were relevant to the significant changes that took place throughout implementation due to the pandemic and subsequent economic, political and social crises. Adaptative strategies to respond to the pandemic and economic crisis context were found relevant by local authorities and implementing partners.

EFFECTIVENESS

The project achieved all its indicator targets. The project contributed to:

- Significantly improving the project schools' learning environments (physical environment, equipment, learning materials, hand washing stations), which increased students' safety in school and increased their motivation for learning and participation in physical education.

- Positive changes in terms of increased capacity and adoption of child friendly teaching and learning practices (hands-on an experiential learning, activity-based approaches, improved knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers regarding child-centred practices, improved IT skills, improved support to low performers).
- Positive changes for students (attendance, motivation, learning outcomes, wellbeing), teachers but also principals, School Development Committees, parents, some non-project schools, ADEs and ISAs.
- Improved exam results in the 13 project schools and the Kilinochchi district for the G5 exam and the GCE/OL Exam.

All evaluation stakeholders make clear causal links between project's inputs and outcomes. The project provided several types of inputs that, combined together, contributed to some of the above reported achievements and changes. Key effectiveness strategies included (i) the combination of hard and soft inputs (capacity building and community mobilisation); (ii) the participation of different subject teachers from both primary and secondary schools to capacity building activities, which created a critical mass of trained teachers in schools; and (iii) the consistency of key points and messages conveyed to various target audiences at community, school, zone and province levels.

There were some limitations in the quality assurance approach of the project set up for the capacity building component, which initially planned to rely on existing zonal tools and procedures which were difficult to identify and were further constrained by the pandemic which did not allow for school monitoring visits by zonal staff.

EFFICIENCY

Coordination mechanisms were deemed efficient by UNICEF and education authorities. UNICEF demonstrated efficient resources management strategies, being agile with budget fluctuation and strategic in how to use additional funding generated by the depreciation of the US dollar. The Project was of sufficient duration for all planned activities. Despite some delays for the construction component, the project overall adapted quickly to the time constraints created by the pandemic. UNICEF learned from implementation, as illustrated by the approach to M&E, for which the capacity was strengthened after the baseline to strengthen data collection processes.

SUSTAINABILITY

There is a strong ownership of the project by zonal and provincial authorities. The province and zone offices have taken several steps to ensure sustainability (i) encouraging project schools to share their resources and facilities and to strengthen their school-based professional development activities, (ii) identifying the key elements to put in place to sustain the project, such as monitoring and teacher mentoring, documenting activities; (iii) developing action plans to implement some of the learning from the Korea study tour. Some schools have also: (i) committed to continue some activities with their own funds, (ii) developed maintenance strategies for the equipment received. In addition, the Principals' and ADEs' training modules will be endorsed by the PDE and widely shared across the Province and the teacher training modules, which are owned by Zone offices, will serve for future training events.

Key constraints to sustainability include (i) the overall lack of resources in the context of the economic crisis, (ii) the anticipated costs that will be needed to upgrade and renew the IT equipment overtime, (iii) the absence of parental engagement activities in the provincial and zonal action plans and initial commitments to sustain project outcomes, and (iv) concerns over the capacity of SDCs to take over the community mobilisation component in its entirety.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The project promoted the principle of sustainable environment in the construction component. The Project was relevant to and addressed the various needs of various sub-groups of children, particularly girls, children with disabilities and low performers, but lacked a gender and inclusion lens to develop gender sensitive and disability sensitive implementation strategies. A promising element is the integration of special and inclusive education as one of the 3 objectives in the provincial action plan developed as a follow-up of the Korean study tour.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The main conclusions are:

1. The Project has made a significant contribution to improving access to education and learning outcomes in Kilinochchi.
2. Project results have made and will make a difference for students in one of the poorest districts of Sri Lanka. The project has made significant efforts to sustained activities and results, yet there are some potential constraints on sustainability due to the current economic situation.
3. The Project's relevance has increased throughout implementation due to the unexpected context within which the Project took place, i.e. a global pandemic and a severe national economic, social and political crisis.
4. The Project has modelled a combination of support activities and implementation strategies that have enhanced its overall effectiveness.
5. The Project has paved the way for promising educational developments in the Kilinochchi Zones and Northern Province in future years.
6. UNICEF and the project team have demonstrated adaptability, agility and resilience throughout implementation and have increasingly strived to support system strengthening.
7. The Project's approach to capacity development would have benefited from a stronger theoretical approach in its initial design, encompassing not only individual capacity at school and zone levels but also organisational and institutional capacity to build in sustained capacity change at the onset.
8. Quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring capacities remain a gap at zone level.
9. UNICEF and ZEOs have not fully harnessed the potential of the promising community mobilisation model developed by the Project and which has led to proven results in terms of knowledge and attitudinal changes.
10. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been little improvement in terms of overall social cohesion.

The key lessons learned are:

- Using locally available materials is important for cost-benefit purposes but also for contributing to the local economy and reducing the carbon footprint of the infrastructure developed.
- Multipurpose facilities are appealing to respond to schools needs but are not always fit for purpose.
- Explaining and mediating to schools, communities and building contractors the goals of a project, its innovative infrastructure technical specificities, its environmental impact mitigation requirements and its budget constraints is a time-consuming process.
- Offshore procurement is a time consuming and complex matter due to tax exemption administrative processes.
- The Project benefited from harnessing the potential of local and national expertise, by going the extra mile to identify the right people with the necessary expertise.

- Training teachers the way they are expected to teach students is fundamental, that is using a learner-centred hands-on approach to teacher training.
- It cannot be expected that trained teachers (or staff) are de-facto trainers themselves and able to share their new learning and skills meaningfully with their peers. This requires support.
- Awareness of contextual constraints preventing teachers from implementing their newly acquired knowledge and skills is critical to induce a cultural shift amongst teachers.
- Community engagement for education requires a comprehensive approach, targeting parents, community leaders and groups, and school stakeholders such as SDCs.
- Social cohesion improvement is a complex matter that requires understanding the underlying causes of social division and the psychological processes and psychosocial dynamics involved.
- Strong M&E expertise is required at the onset and throughout implementation for a project of this scope and size.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR UNICEF

1. Strengthen inclusion programming principles in future project design and implementation (gender, disability).
2. Strengthen organisational (structures, processes and procedures, policies and plans, roles and responsibilities) and institutional capacity development (legislation, regulations), such as costing studies to support discussions on sustainability and scale up.
3. Ensure and maximise the re-use and re-purposing of project outputs and materials internally and externally (KAP studies, community mobilisation training materials).
4. Take a leadership role in supporting government authorities nationally and locally to develop and sustain digital environments in schools.
5. Continue to feedback key learning from the project into national strategic programme support and advocacy.

FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

6. Include project models, practices, lessons and recommendations in on-going education reforms and education planning activities.
7. Engage in long-term systemic support to inclusive education.
8. Engage in long-term systemic support to digital learning and ICT in education.

FOR THE ZONE OFFICES AND PROVINCE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

9. Ensure dissemination and sustained use of project outputs and results.
10. Consider re-packaging some of the capacity development courses into online self-paced courses that could be taken on a modular basis by zone staff and teachers.
11. Integrate best practices in infrastructure development from the Project into the Provincial standards and criteria for school buildings.
12. Develop a teacher professional development plan at province and zone level.
13. Develop a province and zone staff professional development plan.
14. Strengthen education quality assurance mechanisms.

FOR SCHOOLS

15. Sustain key project practices (school-based teacher professional development, community engagement, school planning, guidance and counselling...)
16. Develop creative models to pool resources from different schools (equipment, material).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 About this report

This report presents the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations related to the implementation of the *Educational Environment Improvement Project in Kilinochchi District*.

This report consolidates the initial draft evaluation reports researched and authored by Multi-Tech Solutions Ltd based on a rapid review of the qualitative data collected by the evaluation team and other Project data sources.

The Report includes four sections and several annexes:

- Introduction (project context and evaluation methodology);
- Findings (organised under the evaluation criteria Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Cross-cutting issues);
- Conclusions and lessons learned;
- Recommendations.

Annexes present additional information and data, including the evaluation ToRs.

The initial evaluation tools are presented in a separate Appendix to this report.

1.1.2 Project overview

CONTEXT

The Educational Environment Improvement Project in Kilinochchi District (hereafter: the Project) was funded by KOICA for a total amount of **USD 6,750,000** (Programme costs: USD 5,694,444 and Indirect support costs: USD 455,556) over the period October 2018 – December 2022. The total budget includes 600,000 USD added by KOICA in 2020 in response to the pandemic.

Kilinochchi is one of the 5 districts in the Northern Province. When the Project was designed, the Province had the highest Poverty Headcount Index of the country (7.7%) (World Bank, 2015), and Kilinochchi was the poorest district in the country with 18.8% Poverty Headcount Index (Ministry of National Policies, 2016). Kilinochchi was also in the top 5 districts nation-wide with the lowest Gini coefficient (Ministry of National Policies, 2016). In 2019, Kilinochchi had 17.6% of its population vulnerable to poverty, making it one of the top five districts with the highest proportion of population vulnerable to poverty in the country (Ministry of Economy, 2019).¹

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The Project Goal was to enhance learning outcomes in targeted poor-performing schools through both hardware (infrastructure) and software interventions in Kilinochchi district. The main objectives were:

1. To improve the physical learning environment through construction/renovation of classrooms/facilities and equipping of the targeted schools.

¹ using a multidimensional measurement of poverty comprising 10 indicators reflecting the deprivations faced by people at household level

2. To build the capacity of teachers, principals and in-service advisors to provide better quality education services in the targeted schools that promote improved learning outcomes and social cohesion.
3. To increase community awareness on the importance of education and the role of parents as part of the school community.

The Project was amended in 2020 to support an additional objective:

4. To provide a safe environment for and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Project's expected results** were as follows:

- Outcome 1: Children have access to improved physical learning environments and materials in the targeted schools
 - Output 1.1: Enhanced quality of and types of facilities available in the targeted schools
 - Output 1.2: Increased availability and use of quality learning materials in the targeted schools
- Outcome 2: Children benefit from improved teaching and learning approaches adopted by teachers in the targeted schools
 - Output 2.1: Increased capacity of teachers, principals and in- service advisors to use more effective teaching approaches and provide psychosocial support
 - Output 2.2: Increased community awareness on the importance of education and social cohesion
- Outcome 3 (per Amended Agreement signed on 29 June 2020): Children benefit from a safe environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Output 3.1: Safe School Operations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Output 3.2: Increased capacity of teachers, principals and in-service advisors to provide needs-based education during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Project aimed to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 and particularly: (i) target 4.1 (Universal primary and secondary education); (ii) target 4.4 (Relevant skills for decent work); (iii) target 4.5 (Gender equality and inclusion); (iv) target 4.a (Effective learning environments) and. (v) target 4.c (Teachers and educators).

PROJECT COMPONENTS

The Project's main components are summarised below. Components 1 to 3 were included in the initial Project Proposal and Components 4 and 5 were added in the 2020 Amendment Agreement in response of the COVID-pandemic and then in response to the 2022 economic crisis.

Component 1	Support school construction/repair and required supplies and teaching/learning materials in 13 project schools to better ensure children's access to improved physical learning environment and materials
Component 2	Support capacity building of education stakeholders including teachers, principals, and education government officials on key components of inclusive and child-centred teaching/learning
Component 3	Support community awareness raising on 7 thematic areas – education, reading culture, health/nutrition/WASH, ICT and online safety, social cohesion, violence-free schools, and children with disabilities.

Component 4	Support to safe school reopening and operation across the island during the COVID-19 pandemic and capacity building of teachers, school principals and in-service advisors on home-based learning.
Component 5	Provision of emergency education supplies (papers and notebooks) in the Northern Province to ensure continuous learning for children, including the most disadvantaged, amidst the ongoing economic crisis.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The **primary target of the project was 13 schools** in Kilinochchi Education Zone. Following the division of the Kilinochchi Education Zone into Kilinochchi North Education Zone and Kilinochchi South Education Zone, 5 project schools fell under the North Zone and 8 under the South Zone.

Kilinochchi North Zone

- Iyakkachchi Government Tamil Mixed School
- Soranpattu Ceylon Christian Tamil Mixed School
- Pallai Hindu Primary Vidyalayam
- Ramanathapuram East Government Tamil Mixed School
- Piramanthanaru Maha Vidyalayam

Kilinochchi South Zone

- Kilinochchi Hindu Primary Vidyalayam
- St. Theresa's Girls College
- Kanakampikaikulam Government Tamil Mixed School
- Sivapathakalaiyagam Government Tamil Mixed School
- Mulangavil Primary Vidyalayam
- Iranaitivu Roman Catholic Tamil Mixed School
- Kariyalai Nagapaduvan NO -2 Government Tamil Mixed School
- Mukkompan Maha Vidyalayam

In addition, Zone and Province-wide activities have also been implemented. Teachers from non-project schools took part in selected training activities. Additional schools benefited from some materials (learning material and health equipment and materials during the pandemic), support to students' activities and from capacity building interventions for principals and SDC. Professional development activities targeting ADEs, ISAs and other education officials and communities have also benefited non-project schools. To this end, the KOICA project supported a Provincial Capacity Development Strategy, to which KOICA-funded interventions contributed to.

IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The project has been managed by UNICEF Sri Lanka and implemented, in cooperation with the National and Provincial Ministry of Education and National Institute of Education, through:

- Provincial and Zonal Education Authorities (needs assessment, project coordination, teacher training, liaison with schools, monitoring);
- Provincial and Zonal Building Departments (coordination of the construction component, needs assessment, contractor selection, monitoring and compliance with MoE standards);
- Zonal Health and Probation and Childcare Departments (involvement in community mobilisation component for WASH and nutrition and importance of education, involvement in activities related to COVID-19 response such as washing stations, safe school re-opening protocols, etc.);
- Private contractors (particularly building contractors);
- School Development Committees (SDCs), for the community mobilisation component;

- Selected Civil Society Organisations as implementing partners (reading habit and library component, community mobilisation component, teacher training activities, school-based activities, data collection and M&E).

Key project indicators are in Annex 2.

1.1.3 Project implementation context

During the implementation of the KOICA Project there were many important contextual changes. The COVID-19 pandemic hit early 2020, leading to months of school closure for most students. There were attempts of re-opening schools for secondary school students in summer 2020, with mixed success, and primary schools remained closed. A gradual reopening of schools occurred from summer 2021, hindered by teacher strikes and the first signs of an economic crisis, which increased throughout the year and 2022, combined with fuel shortages and very high inflation rates and food price rises. Early 2022 was marked by an economic, social and political crisis, which led to more school closure and disruption. Schools gradually reopened from the June 2022 onwards.

Figure 1 Project and non-project timeline of events



Source: Endline Study

1.2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 Rationale and objectives of the evaluation

This evaluation is intended to unveil the nature of the change that has taken place in 1) access to improved physical learning environments and materials; 2) improved teaching and learning

approaches; and 3) a safe learning environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges/bottlenecks faced in implementation.

The purpose of this evaluation is threefold:

- To determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project.
- To assess cross-cutting issues of equity, gender equality, human rights, environment, and technology (ICT) applied in the project planning and implementation.
- To draw recommendations for future anticipated project design and advocacy for scaling up.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the relevance of the Project in terms of the justification for such an intervention, design and implementation strategy.
- To assess the effectiveness of the Project to what extent the Project has achieved its objectives.
- To assess the efficiency of the implementation process.
- To assess the sustainability of the project intervention on maintaining and scaling up the benefits drawn by the Project.

1.2.2 Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation focuses on the Educational Environment Improvement Project intervention supported by UNICEF in Kilinochchi, Northern Province primarily targeting 13 project schools implemented from October 2018 to December 2022.

1.2.3 Evaluation stakeholders

The main users of the evaluation will be as follows:

- Provincial and Zonal Education Authorities and other line sub-national authorities in Northern Province
- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- UNICEF (Colombo office and Kilinochchi field office)
- School teachers and principals
- KOICA

1.2.4 Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation criteria and questions as per TORs are articulated around four DAC-OECD evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) and one additional cross-cutting issues criteria, as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
Relevance	Q1. How relevant are the Project design, results, and implementation strategies for the context of the Kilinochchi, Northern Province and education systems/policies in Sri Lanka?
	Q2. How relevant are the other key Project activities in achieving the Project objectives, for the targeted children to: 1) access to improved physical learning environments and materials; 2) benefit from improved teaching and learning approaches; and 3) benefit from a safe environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

	Q3. What are the positives and negatives? How could it be improved?
Effectiveness	Q4. To what extent and how has the Project achieved its objectives?
	Q5. What were the major factors influencing the achievement of the Project?
	Q6. To what extent and how has the Project helped improve learning environment in project schools?
	Q7. To what extent and how has the Project supported teachers and educational stakeholders to build capacity for child- friendly teaching/learning and to adopt them in practices?
	Q8. How and what differences have come about for other beneficiaries – education officials, principals, communities, parents, and students?
	Q9. Were there any barriers/negativities surrounding the approach by stakeholders? How were these addressed?
	Q 10. To what extent has the UNICEF facilitation promoted effective working mechanisms amongst the stakeholders of the programme?
	Q 11. How effective were the different governance and quality assurance structures established in the Project intervention? What are the key elements for successful governance and quality assurance?
Efficiency	Q 12. Was the Project managed and coordinated efficiently with relevant stakeholders?
	Q 13. How can the different cost elements be more cost-effective? (see below)
Sustainability	Q 14. To what extent did the Project build on and contribute to build capacities of the existing national, provincial, zonal and local government and its systems in delivering child-centered teaching/learning in primary and secondary education?
	Q 15. How have UNICEF and stakeholders ensured government and school ownership during the Project intervention?
	Q 16. To what extent does the Project and its intervention have a potential for scaling and mainstreaming? Is there political will to support child-centered teaching/learning and improving learning environment in the education system?
	Q 17. To which extent the Project is externally driven and to which extent owned/managed by government. How much of a continuous “external input” does it require (e.g., monitoring, training, provision of materials) and what are the implications and requirements for potentially transitioning to a complete government-run/owned intervention?
	Q 18. What are some of the lessons learned from the Project on scaling up successful pilots or small-scale implementations?
	Q 19. What new capacities within education services or communities have been established or restored?
	Q 20. To what extent the government has sufficient financial and human resources and capacity to keep up the benefits produced by the Project?
	Q 21. To what extent have the stakeholders (PDE, ZDEs, MOE, Schools) undertaken the necessary decisions and course of action to ensure the sustainability of the results of the Project?
Cross-cutting issues	Q 22. To what extent have equity, HRBA, gender equality, environment, technology (ICT) goals and processes been incorporated into the planning and implementation of the project interventions?
	Q 23. To what extent has the Project been effective to advance equitable access and learning?

	Q 24. To what extent did the different groups, including children with disabilities and other most marginalized children, benefit from the Project?
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All questions but Q3 on relevance, which lacks clarity, and Q13 on cost-effectiveness have been investigated under the framework of this evaluation. Looking at alternative cost-effective elements for various project components would have required to investigate infrastructure and equipment procurement, as well as teacher training and school activity costs in light of market prices. Considering the time frame of the evaluation, the team composition and the volatile market prices throughout project implementation due to the pandemic and the economic crisis, it was jointly decided with UNICEF not to investigate further this question.

1.2.5 Evaluation approach and methodology

GENESIS OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

This evaluation report is based on a methodology with strong limitations. The evaluation was conducted in two phases:

- (i) **The recruitment of a Sri Lanka consulting firm to conduct the evaluation (February and April 2023).** The evaluators adopted a qualitative approach for this summative evaluation and collected data in 13 schools in March 2023. A first and second draft evaluation reports were produced, both drafts deemed of insufficient quality by UNICEF, which led to an early contract closure.
- (ii) **The recruitment of an international consultant (May 2023)** to re-analyse existing evaluation data and evidence and produce a new evaluation report.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation report is solely based on documentation review and the review and analysis of data collected by the original evaluation team. Three types of documents and data sources were reviewed and analysed:

1. **Project documents**, including project baseline and endline studies, KAP baseline and KAP endline studies, and project donor reports;
2. The **initial evaluation draft reports**;
3. The **transcripts of key informant interviews** (17 interviews) and **Focus Group Discussions** (21 FGDs) **conducted by the evaluation team** for their first draft reports.

No additional data was collected during the re-writing process. One wrap-up interview, however, was organised with two key UNICEF officers to clarify some aspects of the data collected and to ensure the accuracy of its interpretation.

The original evaluation methodology is summarized in the Box below. More information is available in Annex 5.

Box 1 Original evaluation methodology

The original draft evaluation reports were based on the following data collection methods:

- Documentation review
- Key informant interviews (KII) with key stakeholders and implementing partners (17 KII conducted)
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Zone officials and schools (directors, parents, school committees and teachers) (21 FGDs conducted)
- School case studies (6 conducted)
- School observation checklists to verify the presence and use of infrastructure and equipment supported by the project (13 school checklists).

The original data collection took place from 13 to 17 March 2023.

Two major data sources for this evaluation are the two endline studies conducted for the Project:

- One endline (December 2022) looked at the extent to which the Project had met its objectives and assessed indicator achievement under Impact, Outcomes and Outputs for Outcomes 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1. This endline was based on a mixed-method approach, combining school questionnaires and a teacher survey for the quantitative aspects with focus group discussions with school management, teachers, students, parents and school development committees in 6 schools plus group interviews in the Zone Offices of Kilinochchi North and South with ADEs, ISAs and Zonal management teams for the qualitative aspects.
- The other endline study (December 2022) is a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) endline survey, which was conducted in the 11 catchment GN divisions and the 11 adjoining GN divisions (eight of the catchment GN divisions and nine of the adjoining GN divisions were also surveyed in the baseline KAP survey). The endline survey repeated the baseline survey questionnaires and sampling methodology, and covered 794 children and 833 parents/caregivers (1,627 in total). The KAP survey focused on 7 key areas: Health, WASH and nutrition, the importance of education, reading culture, ICT in education and internet safety, corporal punishment at homes and violence-free schools, social cohesion and children with disabilities.

1.2.6 Data analysis

The document review was underpinned by a mapping to the evaluation criteria and questions.

Data from the original evaluation was treated as qualitative data and re-analysed in light of the evaluation questions through manual open coding looking at thematic threads mapped onto the evaluation criteria and questions.

Data from the original evaluation was triangulated with the endline studies and between respondents and between schools to identify and analyse convergence and divergence of perceptions and opinions.

The document review information and the qualitative data collected by the original evaluation team were examined together, compared and contrasted under each evaluation criteria.

1.2.7 Ethics

The original evaluation team complied with the UN Evaluation Guidelines regarding the involvement of evaluators. Evaluators were independent, impartial, credible, did not have a conflict of interest with the project and were made accountable of the evaluation outputs. In addition, the team abide

by the ethical standards of integrity, respect and beneficence. Interviews and FGDs were conducted with a wide-range of stakeholders, including direct and indirect beneficiaries. Consent forms were read and signed at the beginning of each interview and FGDs. As mentioned above, the contract with the evaluators' company was closed due to failure to meet with the accountability principle as the evaluation outputs were not of sufficient quality.

The writer of the present report is an independent consultant with significant experience as an evaluator of education interventions. In line with the integrity and accountability principles of the UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators, the writer declares that she **was involved to some extent in a few M&E activities of the project under evaluation**. She conducted (i) the analysis and write up of the baseline survey data and report; (ii) the design of the methodology and data collection tools of the endline survey, quality assurance of the data collection process made by a local firm and the write up of the endline study report. She also provided technical inputs into the M&E approach of the project following the shortcomings of the data collection process for the baseline survey. The writer **was not directly involved in Project activities or Project delivery on the ground, nor did she provide any technical inputs on any of the Project outcome themes**.

The writer has tried to the extent possible to minimize the biases she might have about the project. This was done through (i) ensuring that the available original evaluation data was given the same weight to other information sources; (ii) using the opportunity of some prior knowledge of the project regarding M&E to inform solid conclusions and recommendations on this aspect.

The **confidentiality of respondents** has been ensured by removing any information that could track back one comment to an individual respondent. All electronic data transferred to the consultant for this evaluation report writing exercise will be deleted from her computer upon contract closure.

1.3 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the evaluation are as follows:

- The **writer of the present report was not involved in the evaluation design, data collection tools and data collection process** and quality assurance of the primary data collected under the framework of the original evaluation and evaluation draft report;
- Due to the **very limited time available to produce an evaluative report of acceptable quality**, a pragmatic approach has underpinned the documentation review, data analysis and report writing;
- **The evaluation tools used to collect data had significant gaps**. Some evaluation criteria and questions were little or not at all investigated, particularly under relevance, efficiency and sustainability, which resulted in some evaluation questions having little or little triangulated evidence. The data also failed to capture a narrative for the project and the team in a unique implementation context. Wherever possible, this report draws from the endline studies (general endline and KAP endline) to fill in the gaps. One additional interview with key UNICEF staff was also conducted to shed lights on some evaluation questions not addressed by the initial evaluation design.

2 FINDINGS

This section presents the answers to the 24 evaluation questions (EQs) formulated in the TorRs. Some questions were rearranged to make the document more fluid and easier to read.

2.1 RELEVANCE

Relevance of the project design, implementation strategies and results in the context of Kilinochchi, the Northern Province and Sri Lanka education policies (Q1); Relevance of project activities in achieving the project objectives (Q2).

When the Project was being designed, despite a dramatic overall reduction in income poverty since the end of the conflict in 2009 and achieving close to universal enrolment in primary education, Sri Lanka continued to face economic inequalities, with a large proportion of the population vulnerable to poverty, particularly in the North and the East, and educational challenges such as dropout rates, education quality and low learning outcomes.

2.1.1 *Relevance to the Kilinochchi and Northern Province context*

The project design and activities have contributed to addressing key educational shortcomings in Kilinochchi. When the project was designed, the District was continuing to suffer from the consequences of the conflict, including internal population displacement, massive destruction of infrastructure, lack of available qualified teachers and low capacity of education staff.

- Following the war, 41% of schools in the District had **‘very low availability of basic facilities’** according to EMIS 2018 data (Northern Province Provincial Education Department, 2019). Issues commonly raised by schools also included the **absence of materials for ‘practicals’, the lack of labs and rooms** for conducting group activities, and poor toilet conditions and school sanitation which results in girls’ absenteeism during menstruations (Project proposal).
- There was a **general shortage of qualified teachers**, particularly in primary (this was partially addressed by the integration of volunteer teachers into the permanent teaching force), science (21% shortage in 2017), Maths (20% of shortage in 2017) and English (91% in primary and 7% in secondary in 2017).
- Several reports had underlined the **limited professional development opportunities**, particularly in child-centred teaching and learning and pedagogy more broadly, including classroom management, formative assessment and individualised learning for students lagging behind (UNICEF, 2020).
- **Schools** also overall **lacked robust methodologies to address the diversity of students** entering Grade 1, as many do not benefit from preschool education and to support low performers (UNICEF, 2020).
- As in all zones in the Province, school management in Kilinochchi faced several challenges, including **varied competences of school principals and an overall lack of leadership** and capacity to develop, plan for and implement a vision for their school.

Findings from the baseline and endline studies and from interviews and FGDs conducted during the evaluation underline that parents, students and educators all confirm the significant contribution of the Project to addressing key school shortcomings in terms of infrastructure and equipment.

The project was also relevant given the low efficiency of education, including in terms of limited access and low learning outcomes in the District and Province:

- The **dropout rate** before entering Grade 11 was 24.5% in 2015 and 18% in 2016 (Northern Province Provincial Education Department, 2019). This meant that one child out of five was not even entering Grade 11 in the Province. District level data was however unavailable.
- The passing rate for **GCE/OL examination** in Kilinochchi was **significantly below the Northern Province and the national rates**, despite progress between 2016 and 2018. Regarding GCE/AL examination Kilinochchi results were below national average in Physical Science, Engineering and Biosystem Technology in both 2016 and 2018 (Project baseline, 2020).

Findings from the endline study and data collected for the evaluation confirms that all stakeholders, officials and school communities alike, underline the critical importance of the Project in contributing to tackling access and learning issues in the District.

“We did not have adequate and proper buildings to conduct classes. Most of the classrooms were taken under trees. Lack of teaching materials and high-level dropout rates were the problems we had. We did not have an auditorium, no playground. Lack of laboratory facilities, lack of library facilities, lack of learning resources negatively affected students’ learning improvement.” (Evaluation data – School Principal)

“Kilinochchi district was the last area released after the war. We did not have facilities to conduct schools. Closing schools due to pandemic and discontinuity of the learning process were the other challenges we faced. There was a sudden change as a paradigm shift from face-to-face teaching to distance learning. We faced difficulties in providing facilities for distance learning. All teachers were not competent enough to handle technical matters regarding delivering online lessons. Students also faced problems in accessing to follow the lessons.” (Evaluation data - Provincial Director of Education)

“.....teachers may lack understanding of the type of teaching and learning methodologies they can use with children of different abilities. Overall, they may lack understanding, tools and skills to provide self-paced individualized learning, and may not fully be aware of how to scaffold students’ skills so as to support them develop higher level skills, above the ability to recall knowledge and towards the ability to apply, analyze, evaluate and create information and products.” (Baseline Report).

2.1.2 Relevance to the Provincial and national education system and policies

The project was aligned with the Sri Lankan Vision 2025, which aims to transform the country into the hub of the Indian Ocean, with a knowledge-based, highly competitive, social-market economy, through creating an environment where all citizens have the opportunity to achieve higher incomes and better standards of living.

“Sri Lankan Vision 2025 is to improve the education sector. According to the Framework Social infrastructure development is included in the Sri Lankan Vision 2025. The project definitely helped in that way to achieve national objectives” (Evaluation data – DDE FGDs)

The project was relevant at multiple levels of the education system: political, technical and financial. The many systemic reasons for the poor quality of education were tackled by the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) (2018 - 2025). The Project design and activities directly addressed 10 key objectives of the ESDP, including:

- ensuring equal educational opportunities and compulsory free-education by expanding high quality primary and secondary education facilities fully equipped with adequate human and physical resources and to optimize utilization of educational resources;

- addressing inequality issues and ensuring equity in access and participation of students in meaningful learning;
- improving the overall quality, effectiveness and relevance of the education system to improve learning outcomes of students and ensure learning for all at all levels;
- improving the efficiency and accountability and stewardship of general education;
- facilitating to improve 21st century skills of students: transversal skills, social, personal, problem solving, learning skills and communication skills;
- delegating autonomy to the implementation levels;
- strengthening good governance and service delivery;
- improving teacher quality and teacher management system;
- ensuring efficiency, equity and adequacy of resource allocation; and
- paying attention to the cultural identities, ethics and values of the citizens (Source: ESDP, 2018-2025)

The Project also aligned with SDG Goal 4 and built on UNICEF past interventions, particularly the Child-Friendly Approach framework as well as on the previous KOICA-supported programme (2012-2016) which aimed to address main inequalities in education and strengthen social cohesion and psychosocial support in the post-conflict context.

The Project was relevant to the capacity needs of multiple stakeholders across the education system at Province, Zone and school levels. Project activities targeted Zone Education Officials, ADEs and ISAs, school teachers, school principals, School Development Committees and communities. The Project also supported capacity building at Province level by strengthening the capacity of selected decision-makers and by supporting key capacity development areas in the second half of the project, particularly in 2022 when the Province did not receive any government allocation.

The Project contributed UNICEF's expertise in the education sector as a whole, including child-centred teaching and learning, teacher professional development, community mobilisation, policy development and emergency response and provided a holistic perspective to supporting the improvement of the physical learning environment, capacity building of educators and educational administrators, increasing the awareness of the school community and supporting quality education in safe environments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1.3 Relevance of project activities and strategies in achieving the project objectives

"Responding to the priorities and needs of the government, and client of the Project was the key consideration for the success of the Project as well as ensuring its validity." (Evaluation data- KOICA)

The Project activities were relevant to the various needs of different target groups. Capacity development activities addressed both school stakeholders and Zone officials. Awareness raising activities addressed communities, parents and school stakeholders. Specific attention was paid to gender when building Menstrual Hygiene Units in selected schools. Some activities targeted Special Education Unit's teachers to better support children with disabilities. Learners lagging behind were also supported.

Project activities and inputs were needs-based and relevant to the diverse needs of target schools. Schools were selected by education officials. A comprehensive needs assessment for infrastructure, equipment and learning materials was conducted by the authorities jointly with UNICEF, using focus group discussions with teachers, students, parents and the school management. Similarly, the

community mobilisation component was informed by a pre-baseline, to identify the key themes and messages for the community mobilisation, and then a solid needs assessment, which materialised through a KAP Baseline Study, in order to fully understand the characteristics of the catchment areas of the 13 Project schools.

The comprehensive and systematic approach adopted by the project to contribute to education empowerment was an important aspect of the design. Working both in schools and communities, combining hardware and capacity development and supporting interventions for several years has been deemed relevant by PDE, ZEO and school community stakeholders.

The project implementation strategies were relevant to the significant changes in the country and local context due to the pandemic and subsequent economic, political and social crises. Adaptative strategies to respond to the pandemic and economic crisis context were found relevant by local authorities and implementing partners. The Project demonstrated an ability to quickly adapt to remote teaching and learning while also responding to the new equipment and capacity development needs related to the introduction of ICT in schools and remote and online learning, and school health and safety requirements during the pandemic. In addition, UNICEF enhanced its focus on safe and supportive learning environments to address some of the negative impact of the pandemic on children's mental health and wellbeing under the guidance and counselling component. Regarding the community mobilisation component, the online safety theme of the community mobilisation component, for instance, was strongly enhanced following the transition to remote and online learning during the pandemic. Similarly, following reports of increased violence against children during the pandemic lockdowns and throughout the economy crisis, the positive discipline and mobilisation against corporal punishment was strengthened and scaled up. Regarding infrastructure, adaptative strategies included negotiations with the Provincial authorities to obtain authorisations to travel across geographical areas in order to continue the building work. The capacity development component was also adapted and conducted either online, or in a hybrid fashion, so as to enable some in-person events.

"I am satisfied with the strategies followed by the project. Project strategies were helpful in managing pandemic challenges and also flexible. The inputs provided by the project to selected schools were suitable towards the educational development." (Evaluation data – Province Department of Education)

The Project activities were relevant in achieving the project objectives. As summarised in the table below, Project activities directly responded to the planned objectives in terms of infrastructure and equipment improvements, capacity building of school stakeholders and community educational awareness. By combining hard and soft components, including support to community awareness, the Project proposed a holistic approach to addressing complex and overlapping educational challenges. See Table 1 below for more details.

Table 1 Relevance of the activities and strategies in achieving the project objectives

Objectives / Relevance aspects	1. Improve the physical learning environment through construction, renovation of classrooms/facilities and equipping of the targeted schools	2. Build the capacity of teachers, principals, and in-service advisors to provide better quality education services in the targeted schools that promote improved learning outcomes and social cohesion	3. Increase community awareness of the importance of education and the role of parents as part of the school community	4. To provide a safe environment for and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
Relevant activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing infrastructure and equipment addressing <u>access issues</u> (well-designed classrooms, laboratories, science and IT equipment); <u>learning issues</u> (books and teaching and learning materials); and <u>wellbeing issues</u> (counselling rooms, toilets, water, sports equipment, social cohesion music and sports activities, capacity development of teachers on student counselling and wellbeing support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on child-centred pedagogy (multi-level teaching in primary, activity-based teaching in secondary); • Focus on students with learning difficulties and/or special educational needs; • Support across subjects, including sciences, sports and music; • Support to teachers' digital skills; • Support to ISAs and ADEs to provide improved and enhanced capacity support to teachers and schools; • Support to school development committees and school principals to address access, learning, wellbeing, social cohesion and community participation in schools while also strengthening technical, human resources and financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on 7 key themes: (i) Health, Nutrition and WASH, (ii) Importance of education; (iii) Reading culture, (iv) ICT in education and online safety; (v) Corporal punishment at home and violence-free schools, (vi) Social cohesion, (vii) Children with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of hand washing stations and preventive and hygiene materials across the Province • Infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols and promotion • Contribution to the development of a joined Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health booklet on safe school re-opening and school health protocols during the pandemic at Province level • Additional ICT training for school staff to operate online classes and improve communication with students during and beyond the pandemic

		management skills.		
Relevant strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing multiple infrastructure and equipment needs in schools, covering both primary and secondary and all subjects. Focusing on sustainable infrastructure. Swiftly shifting towards and supporting online learning and teachers' digital skills during the pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on both primary and secondary schools; Breadth and depth of teacher capacity development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combination of community activities and home visits/discussions Adapting and strengthening messages to new community and children's health and protection issues arising as a result of the pandemic Use of social media to communicate messages when home visits were not possible due to COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive gap analysis conducted by the PDE Needs-based support Health of students and staff at the heart of the support to minimise COVID-19 risks
Generic adaptive strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget revisions Providing flexibility to contractors and implementing partners throughout the pandemic. 			

"In this [pandemic] situation, project was flexible without changing their goal and changed the strategies to organize the online classes such as purchasing equipment for online learning, create a structure as LMDU at provincial department to produce video lessons by teachers and record in CDs to issue the schools for learning recovery." (Evaluation data – PDE interview)

Overall, the objectives and design of the Project were sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, political economy and capacity conditions in which it took place. The Project addressed the political economy by targeting the Kilinochchi District, it took into consideration environmental issues for the infrastructure component, it focused on equity by addressing the needs of ill-equipped schools and of specific target groups such as students lagging behind in their learning, and it was sensitive to the social context, by addressing social inclusion and to the economic context, by adapting planned interventions to better respond to the economic crisis, such as the focus on school gardens and home gardens in the later part of the Project to address the food crisis. One aspect that was not systematically taken into consideration in the original design was gender programming. This was to some extent addressed during implementation.

"Home gardens and home economics were encouraged by us. Children were trained to make food items using locally available raw materials. Emergency supplies were given. Example, exercise books were given". (Evaluation data – ISAs FGD)

"We faced difficulties in visiting homes. However, we managed to share our messages through social media." (Evaluation data – Implementing partner)

2.2 EFFECTIVENESS

2.2.1 Overall Project achievements

Projects achievements (Q4)

The achievements of the project can be analysed in terms of impact, outcomes and outputs for project schools as articulated in the results framework of the project:

“Actually I could say it’s a complete project. Activities included Infrastructure development, supply of equipment and learning materials as well as the capacity building of the principals, teachers, ISAs and officers and community involvement. This is a complete project and I am satisfied with the project. I can’t say any negative aspects.” (Evaluation data – MoE interview)

“Yes, we aware of the KOICA funded project to the school in Kilinochchi. Which created huge changes in educational level and school environment. Teaching methods were changed. And personality development was observed.” (Teacher FGD from non-project schools)

The **Endline Study**, which looked at all outcomes and outputs but outcome 2.2 on increased community awareness on the importance of social cohesion, **confirmed the achievement of the Project’s objectives**, as all but one indicator were achieved (one was partially achieved at the time of endline completion and fully achieved at the time of the evaluation).

Table 2 Summary of achievements for Impact, outcome and output Indicators from the Endline Study

Impact	Assessment
Indicator 1: % of children who obtained 70 and above marks in Grade 5 Scholarship Examination in targeted schools	Achieved (Baseline: 70%; Endline: 77% in 2021)
Indicator 2: % of children who achieved improved learning outcomes of O/level assessment in targeted schools for secondary level	Achieved (Baseline: 36%; Endline: 74% in 2021)
Outcomes	
Indicator 1.1 # children that have access to quality and child friendly facilities	Achieved Circa 5,000 students, most likely more
Indicator 2.1 % # of targeted schools implementing more inclusive and child-centred teaching and learning approaches adopted by teachers.	Achieved (13 schools)
Outputs	
Indicator 1.1.1 # schools with improved facilities in line with the required needs and as per government standards	Achieved (13 schools)
Indicator 1.1.2# schools that received equipment and materials, including those for children with special needs	Achieved (13 schools)
Indicator 1.2.1 # of schools with quality teaching and learning materials	Achieved (13 schools)
Indicator 2.1.1 # targeted schools with capacity (having the teachers trained) on inclusive and child-centred teaching and learning practices	Achieved (13 schools)
Indicator 2.1.2# education officials that participated in the study tour and have a well-defined action plan	Partially achieved at endline *Achieved (at the time of this evaluation)* (at the time of the endline, action plans were pending approval)
Indicator 2.1.3# of targeted schools that adopted the initiatives to promote psychosocial well-being and social cohesion	Achieved (13 schools)
Indicator 2.1.4 # teachers trained that have increased knowledge and skills on special education teaching methodology for children with disabilities	Achieved

	(25 teachers trained who improved their knowledge, skills and confidence teaching students with SEN)
Indicator 2.1.5# and types of school management committees functioning	Achieved (All schools have a School Education Development Committee (SDC) and a School Management Committee (SMC) that are active and functioning.)

Source: Endline Study

Output 2.2 (Increased community awareness on the importance of education and social cohesion) was explored separately under the KAP study (baseline and endline). Using the 5 indicators under the ‘importance of education’ and ‘social cohesion’ themes of **the KAP study**, we find that:

- despite high baseline values in both catchment and adjoining GN divisions, **results have increased significantly on all indicators in catchment GN divisions**, reaching values higher than 97% on all indicators, and;
- endline values decreased or only very slightly increased in adjoining GN divisions.

Table 3 Summary of Project Key Indicators for the KAP survey on 'importance of education' and 'social cohesion'

Key Project Indicators	Endline KAP results	
	Catchment GN Divisions*	Adjoining GN Divisions
% of parents who understand the significance of continued education for children	Baseline: 89.7% Endline: 97.3% (↗)	Baseline: 83.5% Endline: 84%
% of parents who are aware of the negative consequence to the child for dropping out of school	Baseline: 79% Endline: 98.6% (↗)	Baseline: 84% Endline: 87.3%
% of the parents who affirmed their commitment to support their children’s education for at least 16 years	Baseline: 100% Endline: 100% (→)	Baseline: 99.6% Endline: 93.9%
% of parents who believe that encouraging school-age children to interact more with friends of different backgrounds is beneficial	Baseline: 82.7% Endline: 99% (↗)	Baseline: 89.9% Endline: 88.3%
% of parents who think schools promote social cohesion among children	Baseline: 98.1% Endline: 100% (↗)	Baseline: 97.2% Endline: 91.7%

*sub-divisions with a Project School or part of a catchment area of a Project School. Source: KAP Endline Survey

2.2.2 Learning environments

Achievements regarding Project schools’ learning environments (Q4, Q6, Q8)

All data reviewed for this evaluation confirmed that the Project significantly contributed to improving the project schools’ learning environments (endline study, school observation checklists verifying availability of infrastructure and equipment in project schools, and KII and FGDs conducted for the evaluation). Salient points in terms of Project’s achievements include:

- **Improvement of the physical learning environment in the 13 schools**, with all planned construction and repair work having taking place (classrooms, science labs, computer labs, libraries, Menstrual Health Management units, toilets, water tanks, activity rooms, learning resource centres, reading rooms, play fields, kitchens, stores and teachers’ quarters). Facility design was eco-friendly to some extent, aiming to reduce energy consumption (Endline study);

- **A range of equipment and materials distributed to schools**, including: (i) Multi-Level flashcards for Grades 1, 2 and 3 and teaching and learning materials (200 cards) to support literacy, numeracy, language and science teaching; (ii) a total of 23,837 books (story books, including young children albums and reference books for older children) for primary and secondary school students; (iii) students' desks and chairs; (iv) library shelving; (v) ICT equipment; (vi) musical and sports equipment; (vii) playground equipment; (viii) equipment and materials for Special Education Units (SEUs).
- **High level of satisfaction regarding the improved learning environment from all school stakeholders**, from education officials to children and from the school community (parents). Appreciation of usefulness for students' learning was particularly high for math, ICT and science materials, ML cards, books and sports equipment (Endline study);
- **Regular use of the improved facilities by teachers and students** (Endline study).

"So many facilities and sanitary facilities have given to schools." (Evaluation data- ISA's FGD)

"We were satisfied with the book, ML cards, sports equipment and materials, ICT equipment, teaching and learning materials for science and mathematics. All the materials and equipment from project which was very good quality, attractive and useful to us." (Evaluation data – FGD Teachers)

"I was satisfied with the provision of materials. Infrastructure facilities contained all the facilities. And the materials were of good quality and useful. These materials were helpful to increase practical based learning, activity-based learning and support the interest of student in their studies. The reading habits were encouraged by the books. Materials were also helpful to face the COVID pandemic period." (Evaluation data – ZDE)

"I started to like my school in the last two years when we saw new buildings and facilities given to our school to improve our learning." (Secondary school student, Endline Study)

"Students were in temporary sheds. Now, they are in a classroom situation comfortably seated." (School principal, Endline Study)

"We are satisfied with ML cards, teaching and learning materials for science and mathematics, sports equipment and materials, ICT equipment and special education equipment. They are helpful for studying and increase students' interest in studies." (Evaluation, School Principal)

"Further, in the current situation electricity and electronic facilities are needed for learning. As these inputs were given through the project quality of learning has also improved." (Evaluation data – PDE)

"The learning environment has improved not only by community mobilization programme but also by infrastructure facilities and capacity development programmes of teachers and principals." (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

In addition to the hardware component, some project activities also contributed to the overall improvement of learning environments, particularly activities supporting health promotion and safety during the pandemic and students' and teachers' wellbeing.

"Only after the project intervention there is an awareness about counselling service at school Level. Non project schools' principals and teachers need motivation to implement counselling service in their schools." (Evaluation data- ISA's FGD)

"According to the soft skill program, it was a beneficial activity because when a teacher got a transfer it can be benefit to the non project school also. Teachers became a lovely person to students and parents. Teachers and students were growing by the soft skill program. Students were developed their leadership characters such as waste management, green gardening program. Inclusive education plan was implemented. Teachers followed new methods in the educational activities." (Evaluation data – PDE)

Evidence from both the Endline Study and the evaluation qualitative data shows **that facilities and materials supported by the project contributed to improving access to education**, through:

- **Students having an increased feeling of safety at school** (evaluation data from parents and SDCs' FGDs);
- **Increased student motivation for attending and learning in school.** Evaluation data shows that parents and SDCs have observed that children are motivated for school, arrive on time, enjoy learning and participate more in curriculum activities.
- **Slight improvement in terms of social cohesion and student wellbeing**, based on anecdotal evidence.
- **Sports equipment made students eager to participate in sports activities** (reported by parents in the evaluation data), which contributes to their health, mental fitness and ability to study (according to secondary school students' Endline FGDs);
- **Special educational needs equipment**, teaching and learning aids and teachers' increased capacity in special educational needs has enabled a few children to gradually transition from special education units into regular classes.

"Instead of studying in a packed classroom with less air and light, sitting on damaged chairs or even on the floor now we use new desks and chairs with sufficient ventilation in a comfortable learning environment. The improved learning environment also allowed us to walk through the class, pay attention to individuals, and more importantly to practice student centred learning approaches like activity-based teaching with the support of ICT facilities and reading materials." (Endline Study - Secondary school teacher)

2.2.3 Adoption of child-friendly teaching and learning practices

Achievements regarding the development and adoption of children friendly teaching and learning practices (Q4, Q7, Q8)

"Teachers are performing beyond our expectations." (Evaluation data – ISAs' FGD)

The Endline Study and the evaluation data show that **all stakeholders identify several positive changes in terms of increased capacity and adoption of child friendly teaching and learning practices**:

- New learning materials and equipment have encouraged teachers to **adopt innovative teaching methods and provide more hands-on and experiential learning** for students, particularly in math and science. Education Officials report more activity-based teaching;
- **Teachers and other school stakeholders report a range of diverse child-centred teaching practices adopted throughout the Project**, from practical and activity-based approaches, to extensive use of varied learning materials and ways of presenting and explaining information, to positive discipline;
- **Teachers in all schools report a significant improvement in their knowledge, skills and attitudes related to inclusive and child-centred teaching methodologies and practices.** For instance, teachers' ability to build relationships with students and to engage all students in learning has increased according to the Endline survey. Parents confirmed during the evaluation an improved communication between teachers and students and between teachers and parents;
- **Teachers have significantly improved their IT skills** which helped them to conduct remote classes during the pandemic and to harness the potential of blended learning in regular classes, including the use of visuals and of digital assessment methods;

- **Teachers have improved their ability to support and encourage reading habits** and have introduced reading corners in their class;
- **Teachers and schools' ability to identify and support low performers** and those in need of remedial support has increased.

"Different teaching methods are used by teachers such as practical based teaching, activity-based teaching." (Evaluation, School Principal)

"Teacher –student relationship has changed. Students now enjoy learning and communicate with teachers in a friendly manner." (Evaluation –parents' FGD)

"Teachers are more attentive to their students and informs parents about any changes in the child." (Evaluation –parents' FGD)

"The quality of teaching has improved through teacher training. After quality training of the project, school teachers' delivery has improved compared to non-project school teachers." (Evaluation data-PDE)

"Before the project, chalk and talk method was used by us which wasn't liked by students and some students didn't understand the subject like mathematics, after the project teaching methods were changed to smart board teaching, practical-based teaching, activity-based teaching these methods increased students' interest in studies and changed the attitude of teachers." (Evaluation data – ADEs' FGD)

"Teachers centred learning was changed into student centred learning. Methods of teaching such as activity-based learning and using smart board increased students' interest in studies. Special education students also benefitted from this method of teaching. They were able to use the smart board by themselves easily." (Evaluation data – Teachers' FGD)

Some parents, school management staff and Zone officials, while overall observing progress on teachers' attitude and behaviour, explain that inclusive practices and overall attitudes to the profession requires improvement however.

2.2.4 Changes for beneficiaries

Changes for varied beneficiaries (Q8)

This section summarizes the multiple differences brought about by the project for various stakeholders and investigates impact level changes in terms of learning outcomes for children.

FOR PROJECT SCHOOLS

TEACHERS

Observed changes include:

- Increased knowledge and skills in terms of child-centred teaching and learning methodologies, students' skills development, guidance and counselling and social cohesion building (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Improved attitudes in terms of response to diversity, including ethnic and academic ability diversity;
- Basic knowledge and skills for teachers who have not gone through pre-service teacher training, such as appointed graduates.

"Under the project we organized green houses and home gardening at schools. Basic agriculture training, home gardening training, organic pesticide production and usage are some of the training topics and schools are implementing in a good manner. We have connected the school teachers with

agriculture instructors of the agriculture department in their area for continuous guidance.” (Evaluation data – ISAs’ FGD)

“Extra-curricular activities were increased the bond between teachers and students.” (Evaluation data – ZDE)

“We can easily identify strengths and weaknesses, we supervise with a positive attitude and our monitoring and observation abilities have increased.” (Evaluation data – ADEs’ FGD)

“After the training we are able to identify students’ learning difficulties and implement multi-level teaching with the learning material provided by the project. We have experience in implementing positive classroom management. Quality circle meetings are conducted within each grade and also among all primary teachers to share their experiences. As a model school we are supporting our neighbouring school teachers.” (Evaluation data – Teachers’ FGD)

STUDENTS

- Increased access, learning and skills, and attitudes towards learning (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Improved learning outcomes (see section below for details)
- Improved wellbeing support (response to holistic needs, support to academic and attendance issues, guidance support, health support) (Endline Study);
- Improved participation in the life of the school (Endline Study);
- SEN students benefit from improved teaching practices tailored to their needs and child-centred (Endline Study)
- GCE O/L A/L and Grade 5 students benefited from additional exam preparation support by the ADEs and ISAs and self-learning materials.
- Increased proportion of children eating nutritious food (KAP Endline Study)
- Significant improvements in understanding of online safety, including role of report abuse buttons (KAP Endline Study)

“Awareness programme for career guidance had been conducted for parents at village level with the help of OfERR Ceylon. After this awareness programme 6 drop out students from Ramanathapuram East G.T.M.S. were registered in 13 years continuous education.” (Evaluation Data – ISAs’ FGD)

“We have given instructions to principals, teachers and parents about violence free school and home. After the training we didn’t see the teachers with cane in 13 project school. It’s a worthy outcome of our training.” (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

“The agriculture training provided to students helped them to do home gardening and produce vegetables for their use.” (Evaluation data – ISAs’ FGD)

“There are lot of changes in students’ behaviour. Students are sharing their meals with peers. They are very cooperative and helping each other.” (Evaluation data – Teachers’ FGD)

“Their attitude was changed (positive behaviours). Then student’s interest in studies also increased.” (Evaluation data – Teachers’ FGD)

PRINCIPALS

- Improved management and leadership (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Improved conflict-management skills leading to improved relationships with teachers (Endline Study);
- Better planning and management of resources (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- More effective partnerships and fund raising for school activities (Endline Study);

“We had meetings with each school principal and parents and explained the SDC circulars to them. Principals’ leadership skills and their attitude on social cohesion are changed because of capacity building programmes and other trainings including community mobilization programme. After the project intervention 3 principals accept old students support in school development activities. We trained the parents on social cohesion, communication skills and how to accumulate resources for school development from community.” (Evaluation data – Implementing partner)

“The bond between teachers and principals was developed.” (Evaluation data – PDE)

SDCs

- Improved understanding of role and responsibilities (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Improved communication skills, planning and time management skills, meeting recording, archiving and bookkeeping skills (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Improved understanding and attitudes towards dropout students, students’ perspectives (Endline Study);

“SDC meetings were only organized for school functions and not as regular meetings for school development in most of the schools. Further SDC only maintained accounts properly. The activities such as note taking minutes, submit and get approval in the next meeting were not properly functioned. Now Principals and SDC members work together in school development activities and conduct regular SDC meetings in a proper manner.” (Evaluation data – Implementing partner)

PARENTS

- Changes in attitudes towards education and learning, particularly about the level of education they want their children to achieve (Evaluation data, KAP Endline Survey);
- Increased knowledge about nutrition (KAP Endline Study);
- Increased provision of reading materials and spaces for children (KAP Endline Study);
- Increased reading habits (KAP Endline Study);
- Significant improvements in computer literacy and understanding of online safety, including role of report abuse buttons (KAP Endline Study);
- Improved attitudes regarding anger management, discipline and corporal punishment (KAP Endline Study);
- Increased information from teachers on their children (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Increased involvement and participation in school activities (Endline Study, Evaluation data);
- Slight improvement in attitudes towards diversity and social inclusion (KAP Endline Study).

“I felt is earlier the parents’ vision is up to the grade 9 and 10. They were really satisfied with their children being educated to that level, it was enough and thinking of sending them to work. After this one, they are really interested to go to A/L even if they failed they started to consult about the vocational training available for their child. This shows that they fully realize the importance of education and parents wants to push the children as much as possible more than before.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

“Initially the community wasn’t really linked up except meeting up for sports events and celebrations which were organized on a timely manner. However later on they started to get involve in almost all matters together with the principals.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

FOR NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS

Overall changes reported for non-project schools include:

- Learning materials for teachers and students during the pandemic and to address the learning loss (Evaluation data);

- Some primary and secondary school teachers benefited from the Project's teacher training events and had opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills about child-centred teaching and learning approaches (Evaluation data);
- Some non-project schools benefited from the Project activities conducted in 2022, such as school exhibitions, action research, etc. (Evaluation data);
- Some students benefited from Project's activities such as learning camps, school exhibitions, School Parliament training, etc. (Evaluation data);
- G.C.E. A/L students benefited from Zoom classes and seminars provided by ADEs under the Project (Evaluation data);
- Grade 5 students also benefited from the Project's support to connectivity for online learning (Evaluation data);
- Non-project schools were provided upgraded support by newly trained ADEs and by ISAs' whose capacity was enhanced thanks to Project's activities (Evaluation data).

"Non project schools got some benefits by project." (Evaluation data – ADEs' FGD)

FOR EDUCATION OFFICIALS

ZONE LEVEL

- Improved awareness of innovative teaching methods (Endline Study);
- Enhanced understanding and skills regarding inclusive and child-centred teaching methods (Endline Study; Endline data);
- Improved leadership skills and team building capacities when working with teachers (Endline Study);
- Improved supervision skills, including observation skills and rapid assessment of teachers' strengths and weaknesses;
- Improved capacities to identify students with learning issues (Endline Study);
- Improved IT skills (including video editing skills) and improved use of IT and other teaching equipment and materials (Endline Study);
- Improved understanding of G&C, confidentiality issues and counselling practices (Endline Study);
- Improved understanding of the importance of Civic education and Student Parliament (Endline Study);
- Improved understanding of the importance of community involvement and participation in school activities (Endline Study);

PROVINCE LEVEL

- IT supplies and capacity building in IT and digital technologies to Province staff;
- Improved ICT skills in the ICT unit.

2.2.5 Impact results

In terms of impact, we observe an overall increase of G5 Scholarship Examination pass rates between baseline and endline in project schools:

- **The average success rate to the G5 Exam increased by 5 percentage points across all 13 schools between the 2016-2018 and the 2019-2021 period, from 74% to 79%.**
- **Significant improvement of the average success rate to the OL Exam in Project schools (30 percentage points increase) from 38% for the 2016-2018 period to 68% for the 2019-2021 period.**

There were also improvements in examination results at the level of the Kilinochchi District:

- **Slight increase in Kilinochchi's pass rates for the G5 Exam**, from 73.37% to 73.86% between 2018 and 2020 (note that the national average decreased over the period).
- **Significant increase in Kilinochchi's pass rates for the G.C.E. (O/L) Exam**, from 60.36% in 2018, to 69.27% in 2020 and 74.52% in 2021. In 2021, the success rate was higher in Kilinochchi than in the Northern Province, and almost on par with the island-wide success rate.

Attribution between Project inputs and exam results in Project schools cannot be ascertained. Based on qualitative data, including from schools and education officials, there is, however, evidence that Project activities have contributed to change in the quality of learning environments and teaching and learning practices, which in turn are likely to have positively impacted on exam results. While the triangulation of data shows a link between Project activities and improved learning outcomes, it is not possible to assess the level of change that can be attributed to Project activities, or to certain interventions under the Project.

All stakeholders, from Zone Education Officials, principals to teachers, parents and SDCs reported a direct link between participation in the project and improved learning outcomes for students. There is indicative evidence that some Zone officials have conducted internal analyses on students' exam results, concluding that Project schools had increased their exam results more than non-Project schools.

"The analysis showed that the project school students' performance is increased when compare with non-project school students' performance." (Evaluation data – ZDE).

"After the project intervention students' performance has improved." (Evaluation – parents' FGD)

"After the trainings and capacity development programmes the students and teachers are actively participating in the teaching – learning process, students' competencies were developed and as a result their performance in the exams was improved. We observed the changes in the teaching- learning process at schools." (Evaluation data – PDE)

2.2.6 Project's contribution to observed changes

Project contribution to improved learning environments, child-friendly teaching and learning capacity building and adoption of child-centred teaching practices (Q6, Q7)

"Overall, it was a very successful and very useful informative program. It enhanced their knowledge, skill, attitude and mindset. I'm sure they had a shift in their paradigm." (Zone Director of Education)

The Project provided several types of inputs that, combined together, contributed to some of the above reported achievements and changes. All evaluation stakeholders make clear causal links between project's inputs and outcomes.

- Infrastructure, materials and equipment contributed to the adequacy and **attractiveness** of schools and classrooms.

"These buildings were different from normal buildings. A lot of architectural and structural design was carried. It will create a more student friendly, environmental friendly where child centered learning, and encourage inclusive learning and reading habits." (Evaluation data – PDE)

- Training events and programmes contributed to **enhanced knowledge, skills and attitudes amongst key school stakeholders**: teachers, Principals, SDCs, ISAs/ADEs and other Zone officials.

All stakeholders confirm that teachers' knowledge on child-centred pedagogy and subject matter teaching has increased as a direct result of the KOICA project (Endline Study).

"The training provided by the University of Jaffna is a good one. (Evaluation data – Zone officials)

- Community mobilisation activities contributed to the **increased level of awareness of parents and communities** and to stronger relationships between parents, students and schools.

"Now parents living far away and in difficult area are sending their children to school due to this project intervention, especially due to the community awareness campaign." (Evaluation – Parents/SDCs' FGD)

"Anger management - It has really improved because it is well articulated and well revised module we have. Those modules are trained to the participants. For example when a child is arguing with their parent, instead of hitting the child, how to manage the situation is demonstrated to the parents. They told us that it really helps them. The skills development of the parents on anger management is through case studies." (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

"Community awareness campaign empowers the parents in supporting school development activities." (Evaluation data – Implementing partner)

- Other events and Project activities, such as school camps and the promotion of sports, music (singing in 3 languages), civic education activities, learning activities for all learners including those with learning difficulties and school exhibitions also participated in: (i) strengthening the capacity of school stakeholders, including ISAs/ADEs, (ii) **improving teaching and learning**, (iii) **advancing the perception of schools on social cohesion and inclusion**, and (iv) **supporting community integration**.

"The project utilized the emergency funds to prepare primary and secondary learning materials which helped to improve students at national level exam (G.C.E (O/L))." (Evaluation data – Zone officials)

"Now, mathematics results were increased because of ML card which name was" kanitha siragukal". (Evaluation data- ZDE)

- Improved capacity of school stakeholders contributed to **better functioning institutions, such as SDCs and schools** (improved management, administrative systems and stakeholders' engagement). SDCs have been more active in community awareness. This included the integration of community and parental awareness components in school development plans, building on some of the key messages that were at the core of the community awareness component of the Project, supported by the implementing partner.

"The topics such as social cohesiveness, nutrition foods, and benefits of good communication, leadership skills, importance of reading, cooperation of all and safety usage of smart phones were discussed with us. This programme was also conducted by OfERR Ceylon volunteers in our homes." (Evaluation – SDCs' FGD)

- The Project contributed to **student wellbeing** through improved water and sanitation, support to health measures during the pandemic, school capacity development on Guidance and Counselling, awareness raising seminars for students, the promotion of sports and physical activity, the promotion of positive relationships in schools, and community awareness on health, nutrition and WASH, dropout prevention, online safety and positive discipline. This led to schools' enhanced capacities to organise wellbeing support and guidance and counselling activities, to parents' increased awareness of the importance of safe and nurturing home environment, and to students' increased awareness of self-care and wellbeing.

"Hygiene supplies such as hand washing and hygiene facilities were provided to schools when reopening schools after pandemic. Learning materials were prepared by LMDU to issue schools as CDs. Assessment

was conducted at provincial level to identify students' learning losses. Based on the assessment results learning recovery lessons were prepared to provide schools. Currently we issue exercise books to students and A4 size papers for educational development officers at zonal level as emergency supplies. The emergency supplies were relevant in time of need." (Evaluation data- PDE)

- Lastly, the Project activities had a much **broader reach than the 13 schools**. Some learning materials were distributed in more schools, such as the ML cards, and many non Project school teachers participated in the teacher training activities, refresher courses, and Project activities such as exhibitions and camps. In addition, ISAs and ADEs are in charge of the support of all schools in each Zone: their increased capacity in inclusive child-centred teaching and learning methodologies is likely to have a ripple effect on other schools too. This effect cannot be measured however.

Amongst **the key strategies** that might have strengthened the contribution of inputs to observed results, we find:

- The **combination of hard and soft inputs**, particularly facilities equipment materials and capacity development activities which both address quality education. Endline data shows that all school stakeholders perceive the fact that teachers proposing more practical learning activities at the end of the Project is a direct result from the Project's components relating to equipment and learning materials and training on activity-based teaching and subject-based training.
- The **participation of different subject teachers from both primary and secondary schools** to a wide range of training activities and refresher courses, which provided schools with different strategies to tackle inclusive and child-centred teaching and learning practices, across subjects and across regular class time and extra-curricular activities.
- The **consistency of key points and messages conveyed to various target audiences** such as parents, SDCs, Principals and Zone officials;
- The **provision of activities in different locations**, including schools, communities, and homes.

2.2.7 Effectiveness of implementation

WORKING MECHANISMS

Effectiveness of UNICEF's promotion of effective working mechanisms (Q10)

The Project, through **UNICEF's facilitation**, promoted coordination and participatory approaches across stakeholders at different levels.

UNICEF's facilitation promoted effective working mechanisms across school stakeholders, particularly regarding the participation of SDCs in school planning and the inclusion of community and parent awareness raising in school initiatives. Evaluation data and information from the Endline Survey confirmed that while SDCs' participation in schools has improved, more work remains to be done in some schools on the integration of parental awareness raising within their regular activities.

"In parallel to this community mobilization, we started to strengthen the SDCs. Eventually SDC members also started to travel with [the local implementing partner in charge of community mobilisation] whenever they had time because we repeatedly told them that this component needed to be taken over by them in the future." (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

UNICEF was also instrumental in strengthening the relationship between the Province Education Department and the University of Jaffna, with the establishment of a first Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions to address staff capacity building.

UNICEF, through the Project, facilitated direct coordination between zone officials and the national level. This was done under (i) the capacity development component for Special Educational Unit Teachers, as resource persons were identified through the National Institute of Education; and, (ii) the capacity development component for principals, which was based on the National Competency Framework for School Leadership and Management developed by the National Institute of Education, and adapted by a Tamil-speaker identified by the Provincial authorities.

UNICEF also contributed to effective coordination mechanisms between the North and South Kilinochchi zones following the creation of the two entities. Appointment of ADEs and ISAs to one or the other zone while ensuring balance and representation of all subjects in both zones was key. This resulted in additional subject focal points participating in the Project. In addition, the two zones had to coordinate with UNICEF effectively to ensure smooth implementation of the principals' training and school activities, which contributed to establishing communication and coordination mechanisms between the two zones.

Lastly, **UNICEF played a convening role** when planning for the community mobilisation activities, supporting zone officers **to ensure the participation of a wide range of local experts in the zonal workshops aiming to develop the community mobilisation** activities on the seven themes, including authors, librarians, child protection specialists, health and nutrition specialists, etc.

GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Effectiveness of UNICEF's governance and quality assurance for implementation (Q11)

GOVERNANCE

The Project did not have specific governance structures at the onset but rather adopted a participatory planning approach with the zone office. Following the appointment of a new Zone Director and change in management style, however, **the need for a dedicated governance structure to support planning arose so as to ensure distributed leadership across senior Zone officials for faster decision making. A Steering Committee** comprising the Zonal Director, two Zonal Deputy Directors, and a primary and a science ADE **was established.** This ensured that Projects decisions could be made in the absence of the Zonal Director and actions taken. The Steering Committee also facilitated the communication with the Zone until a direct relationship could be established and approved between the Project and the ADEs directly.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Several quality assurance mechanisms were put in place by the Project for the hardware components. **Needs assessments to identify school needs in terms of construction, equipment and materials were conducted** and led to the creation of construction and procurement packages for primary and secondary schools.

Multiple needs assessments were conducted regarding school constructions, by partner NGOs and by the Provincial authorities. Monitoring and supervision visits took place throughout implementation to follow advancement of the works.

"A needs assessment was done by the department of education collaborate with department of building. All the details were collected from the department of education and building structure were designed by us for teachers and students especially lady teachers and girls and differently abled students". (Evaluation data - Department of Building, Northern Province)

"Department of building took part in supervising, quality control and completion of the project." Evaluation data - Department of Building, Northern Province)

For the infrastructure component, monitoring was jointly done by UNICEF, implementing partners and Zone officials. External Quality Assurance was provided by the Provincial authorities.

For the capacity building component, the Project had originally planned to rely on Zone QA mechanisms, including school visits to provide mentoring support to trained teachers, principals and SDCs, and use this as an opportunity to strengthen existing checklists and QA processes to further contribute to the capacity development objective of the Project. **The Zone QA mechanisms, tools and strategies, however, appeared to be difficult to identify and limited when available. The QA process was also significantly constrained in the field by the high workload of ADEs/ISAs, the pandemic and the economic crisis which limited transportation.** Overall, the recognition of the weakness of QA processes in the Zone is a complex issue.

This resulted in a change of QA strategy for the Project, which then mostly relied on M&E data for assessing the quality of its inputs, through: (i) Pre- and post-teacher training event questionnaires; and (ii) Baseline and Endline data; (iii) SDC pre and post Project assessment and (iv) Principals' pre and post training assessment. This change in strategy had several drawbacks:

- Firstly, monitoring data does not replace QA processes which tend to provide more useful qualitative feedback that can contribute to the improvement of a particular input or activity.
- Secondly, pre and post assessment tools provided limited information on the actual transformation that occurred amongst participants.
- Thirdly, the implementation of these tools was very constrained. The timeliness of their implementation was not always fortuitous, such as the SDC assessment which took place after some the training sessions had already been delivered. The SDC assessment data was also not comparable across schools and was providing little qualitative information that could support programming. The data collection process for principals also suffered issues and had to be re-administrated. The baseline study was not informed by a research framework and suffered poor data collection practices, which only allowed for limited comparison between baseline and endline results.

The Project attempted to overcome some of those issues by working on Zonal checklists' improvement and by considering adding an internal rapid qualitative data collection process in schools in 2021 to take stock of progress and identify areas for improvement for the remainder of the Project. Those attempts unfortunately failed due to the division of the Zone into two entities, and the political, social and economic situations which did not allow data collection in Project schools.

2.2.8 Enabling and hindering factors to achievements and implementation

Factors influencing and hindering Project achievements and governance (Q5, Q9, Q11)

This section presents the main enabling and hindering factors that have affected the Project's processes and results.

ENABLING FACTORS

PREVIOUS INITIATIVES

A first enabling factor was **UNICEF's experience in the Northern Province, education expertise and strong relationships with the Province Education Department and Zone Offices**. UNICEF had been supporting education quality, social cohesion, child protection, child health and nutrition and education system strengthening in the Province for many years. UNICEF had a sound knowledge of

the main educational issues in the Province, including in Kilinochchi. A 2018-2019 education bottleneck participatory assessment had also resulted in gaining clarity over key constraints to education quality in schools and steps to overcome them. This work indirectly fed into UNICEF's overall support strategy for the capacity building component of the Project.

The Project was also built on lessons learned from two previous KOICA projects: (i) the 2011-2014 'Project for the Construction of Schools in Kilinochchi District (USD 5 million), managed by UNOPS, and (ii) the 2012-2016 'Project on Human Development through Quality Education' (USD 2 million), managed by UNICEF.

UNICEF's experience, presence on the ground and previous initiatives including the implementation of KOICA projects helped lay the groundwork for the Project and set it up for success.

NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL PROGRAMMING

The Project supported existing national, provincial and zonal educational programmes and enhanced their reach and quality. The School-based Management approach, for instance, is overall supported by the Programme for School Improvement in Sri Lanka. Under this programme, School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Management Teams are supported to make decisions about school development alongside with other school stakeholders. School development plans, distributed leadership and participatory school planning were concepts that the MoE was keen to promote further. The Project's capacity building component built on such approach by supporting school principals with key leadership and management skills and strengthening the SDCs. With principals and SDCs having clear roles as per the School-based Management approach adopted nationally, the Project's outcomes were amplified while also guaranteed sustainability (see section on sustainability below).

Similarly, the Project has built on the long tradition of Sri Lankan schools of supporting low performers in a bid to increase exam results for their schools by providing a few training events on teaching children with learning difficulties. In addition, due to the pandemic, the Ministry of Education has encouraged and supported remedial learning activities. The project supported those efforts directly through remedial learning support, contributing funding to printing learning materials for remedial teaching, and ensuring that KOICA-supported school activities would target low performers. Lastly, provincial and Kilinochchi Zone's efforts focused on addressing the learning loss of students post pandemic. The Project enabled seminars for A/L students for both Project and non-Project schools.

The Project also embraced support for citizenship education, a key pillar from the Education Sector Plan.

"Good citizen concept was introduced under the Peace value education theme of MOE. We have trained teachers in this topic. They are introducing this concept through civics and geography subjects from grade 6-11. We conducted good citizens' camps for students at Gr 10-13 at school level. This activity is continuing at school level. These activities are monitored by zones through monitoring forms which are filled by school in term basis and send to zones." (Evaluation data- ISAs)

ACTIONS OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The Project's results were also complemented by other stakeholders' actions outside of the Project. This was particularly the case during the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but not only. For instance, the implementing partner Room to Read was working with the Primary Unit of the MoE on reading culture improvement and reading skills and prepared a handbook to support schools, which complemented the Project's activities.

“We collaboratively work with Primary unit of MOE to improve reading culture and reading skills at primary level and prepare a handbook for this. This handbook is given to schools. Some of the ISAs from Kilinochchi received the training regarding reading room. This training was also similar to the Room to Read training of the Project. With the cooperation of these trained ISAs, Zones can organize training for teachers. It will be helpful for them.” (Evaluation data – Room to Read)

POLITICAL WILL

A key enabling factor was the willingness of the MoE and PDE to support the continuation of Project activities as best as possible during the pandemic, particularly the construction and training components.

“During the pandemic we couldn’t arrange capacity building programs however with the support from the zonal office we were able to come to an agreement and conduct some programs with smaller numbers and social distancing.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

“We got approval from government agents and help from authorities to travel from out of the district to Kilinochchi premises.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

STAKEHOLDERS’ INVOLVEMENT

The work of education authorities provided an enabling environment for Project activities to be successful while also supporting the overall Province and Zone’s education priorities.

The Provincial focus on improving teaching methodologies, in line with Project activities, enabled a broader reach of the Project’s key messages in terms of child-centred teaching practices.

“At provincial level we are making effort to implement child friendly learning environment and providing self-learning experiences to students, as it is an important component to develop competencies. We are trying to move from teacher centered methodology to student centered learning. In primary cycle, we trained teachers to identify students’ level, divide each unit into different steps and prepare worksheets for each step to learn according to students’ capacity, and train teachers and provide facilities to introduce group learning in the classroom Therefore, at some extent we introduced child centered learning through the project. We had given instructions regarding this methodology and techniques to all schools in Kilinochchi district.” (Evaluation data – PDE)

The work of ISAs and ADEs, their regular support to schools in particular, yielded positive results. By providing additional support to Project schools to follow-up on capacity development activities and to strengthen the messages from training events, ISAs and ADEs have contributed to enhanced pedagogical practices.

“The role of ADEs/ISAs in regularly visiting them and monitoring their school activities have also contributed to adopt child-centred methods, to practice teaching, particularly the remedial learning for the slow performs in their schools”. (Evaluation data - ISAs and ADEs FGD)

Similarly, evaluation and endline data show that teachers trained under the Project shared their learning with colleagues, which has contributed to increasing the reach of teachers informed by the key principles of child-centred teaching and learning practices and to creating a critical mass of teachers more aware of how best to support students’ learning.

UNICEF’S FLEXIBILITY

A key enabling factor during the pandemic and economic crisis was **UNICEF’s flexibility in terms of disbursement of funds and instalments of contractors’ invoices**. When both government and contractors encountered cash flow issues, the Project was able to continue to support activities, for which partners and contractors could continue to be paid. By enabling partners to invoice after each

major activity as opposed to a combination of several activities, UNICEF's contributed to overcoming partners' and contractors' cashflow issues.

HINDERING FACTORS

EXTERNAL FACTORS: PANDEMIC AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

The pandemic, economic and political situation hampered project implementation and the quality or effectiveness of some project activities, particularly those related to training and capacity development events.

Community mobilisation activities were disturbed by the physical and geographical restrictions.

"Earlier our thought was to have a participatory training with involving and playing together using participatory tools. But later on, we converted everything to a preaching style since they weren't allowed to touch / play anything. Only at the later stage they were allowed to mingle with children and parents and I felt that it was a major challenge." (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

The planned capacity development activities aimed to strengthen the outputs of early training events from 2010 and 2020, particularly related to the 2019 and early 2020 teacher training events, and to anchor new practices in classrooms and schools could not take place due to school closure and online learning modalities.

"We planned this project in 2020 and planned to conduct training for all primary teachers and selected secondary school teachers who were involved with library management from 13 schools, distribute books to these schools and monitor their practice at classroom level at some extent. Even though we had the above objectives due to pandemic we couldn't be able to do all these activities which we planned. Based on our designed objectives we cannot say project has been successful in our part. However, in that difficult situation in our partnership of the project, we trained the teachers in some of our design objectives." (Evaluation data- Room to Read)

Delays occurred in construction too.

"Construction activities were done during the pandemic period; however, the work was delayed by lockdown. We needed lots of adjustment according to the emergency situation. School activities are opening and closing during the pandemic period is a big challenge to us." (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

Implementing partners had to multiply efforts to mobilise teachers, parents and students for activities when transportation was involved. Travel restrictions due to the pandemic, fuel or political crisis also limited the amount of physical monitoring of project activities, such as school visits from ZEOs, UNICEF or partner NGO staff. The capacity development of education officials was constrained by the fuel costs:

"Initially they plan to accommodate 30 participants and due to this fuel crisis only 21 participants were able to complete the training program." (Evaluation data – University of Jaffna)

Travel restrictions also hampered the overall vision of the Project for social cohesion support as children were not able to travel to other districts.

"At the beginning of this project our aim was to mingle Kilinochchi which has only Tamil speaking children with other district try to understand their culture - bit of upper level cohesion. After the COVID it became impossible topic since they couldn't go to other districts." (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

The economic crisis did not only affect transportation of all Project stakeholders and school communities, parents and children, it also reduced some of the positive effects of the Project.

In construction, materials and cost of building and repairs were significantly impacted by the rising costs and the breakup of the supply chain.

“Repairing parts were affected by the economic crisis. And everything was raised in price. We had to adjust everything to finish the project.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

The reading habits support activities were also hampered by the costs of living, limiting parents’ ability to buy books and reading materials for home use.

“Earlier the parents committed during our session to buy books for their children and to the schools as presents. But at later stage during economic crisis the parents were unable to buy books for their own children. So the reading culture when it comes to spending for adolescents it’s not well established, but the practice is there.” (Evaluation data – Room to Read)

Students’ participation in school was also constrained by the crisis, due to transportation costs and the need to contribute to the livelihood of the families.

“Due to the economic crisis, students are supporting parents for family income. This cause to irregular attendance of students and later it will turn as dropouts. If the economic crisis continue for coming years education inputs will reduce and quality of education will fall.” (Evaluation data – PDE)

Community mobilisation activities in the area of food nutrition were also impacted, and required the Project to adapt implementation strategies:

“So we actually had gone through the curriculum and choose the food pyramid as a decision making for the parents to include all the food groups. But the reality after the economic crisis, the parents couldn’t able to fulfil all the food groups to be included in their regular patterns. They started and practiced for a while and then suddenly it stopped. Again, we re-strategized and had to go to the families and identify locally available foods in the food groups and chose to spend for the ones that are not available in the surroundings so that they can buy it from the shops because of the cost increase. Those two are major unexpected challenges we had to adopt.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

EXTERNAL FACTORS: SYSTEMS AND CULTURE

Among the system-level constraints that have hindered implementation or results, we find:

- **Changes of senior managers at zonal level.** The arrival of a new Zonal Director at the beginning of the Project after schools and main activities had been identified, resulted in a halt in implementation as the new Director needed to understand and re-approved the rationale for and selection of both schools and activities.
- **Teacher turnover.** Some trained teachers were nominated in non-project schools over the years and new teachers came in, which slightly reduced the overall proportion of teachers’ trained overtime in the project schools. This factor hinders the sustainability of results as when fewer teachers are acquainted with particular methodologies, their use in school might decrease. Another challenge, identified by ISAs/ADEs is the **limited time that schools have in their timetable for teachers to share their experience and learning** from training events.
- **Workload affecting participation in training,** as it was the case for some ADEs, and ability to implement new knowledge and skills in the workplace, as underlined by a few teachers.

“We have changed a lot. Due to the work load we are unable to implement what we have learned properly.” (Soranpattu CCTMS)

- **Availability of learning materials, particularly reading materials, in Tamil.**
- **Responsibility lines between the Province and Zonal Office regarding constructions** resulted in some delays, as contractors were managed by Province officers who had no opportunity to come on site, while zone officers on site had no authority over contractors.

“Infrastructure development was directly under the Provincial department. However, the problems had to be solved by the building engineer at the zonal office. Provincial authorities were unable to visit the

school. We had to solve the problems and we didn't have the authority to involve. Therefore, contractors from big companies didn't obey or accept our guidance. It created a conflict with contractors and zonal office. The conflicts between principals and contractors were continued until the end. Contractors follow the provincial department decisions and it's delayed the building work. We faced difficulties only in infrastructure development and not in other areas of the project." (Evaluation data – Zonal Office)

"It is very difficult to find children books in Tamil in Sri Lanka. Very few Tamil books were available. So we need to import from Tamil Nadu, India. We prepared a list of books and submitted to books distributors who are importing books from India. Some books were not available in India." (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

Other constraints pertained to social and cultural norms, including:

- **Challenges in reaching out fathers for the anger management campaign and awareness raising activities linked to corporal punishment and positive discipline**, due to the complexities of organising activities in the evening when fathers are back from work.
- **The complexity of social cohesion issues**, which vary from district to district and community to community and require strong research insights to inform programming. Several stakeholders confirm that little achievement has been made by the Project in terms of social cohesion improvement.

"We then started to look at what are the cohesion problems they have within their community. Then we thought that cast will come as a key component but it wasn't like in Jaffna. The children voiced out their major obstacle is their parents and even some teachers who stopped them talking to their own classmates, if they are boys and girls. We concentrated on that kind of social cohesion." (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

- **Teachers' attitudes are anchored in social norms and negatively impacted by the socio-economic context**, which a project cannot tackle on its own.

"More time is needed to change teachers' attitude. External factors such as economic and social status, family dynamic and political and economic situation of the country also have an impact on attitude. When the external factors have changed teachers' attitude will also be changed. There is a different in peoples' attitude before and after the war, pandemic and economic situations. We try our best to change teacher's attitude through the project but we couldn't achieve it. Teachers need continuous support in the implementation of the learned aspects after the project." (Evaluation data – Provincial Department of Education)

"Social cohesion is not much improved." (Evaluation data – Provincial Department of Education)

"We had to focus attention on the impact of the war especially among parents. One component of the project was promoting psychosocial well-being which has given a good experience to the society to overcome the difficulties due to war. However, currently it takes a new dimension due to economic crisis and drug usage which we have to consider. At Kilinochchi there is no need to promote social cohesion among races. There are not many differences among people in economic status. Social cohesion among cast and religion has improved as a result of the community awareness campaign. We need to face these new challenges with the lessons learned through the project." (Evaluation data – Provincial Department of Education)

- One teacher attitude that the endline survey singled out as not being changed is the one related to how teachers think about inclusion and support to those lagging behind academically. Teachers continue to think that classes with students from different academic abilities AND low performers in class are the most common challenge factors to improve child-centred methods and new ways of teaching in schools. Most teachers look at the student as the problem as

opposed to the system as being able to equip them with the skills to deal with diversity in the classroom. This mindset remains a barrier to inclusive mindsets in schools and to inclusive approach.

- Another social norm that might have limited some of the project's work on guidance and counselling and psychosocial support is the **understanding, by some schools of G&C as 'moral counselling'** with a focus on social and moral values, and a way to 'bring back students on the right track', particularly irregular attendees or smokers (endline study), while G&C has a broader remit encompassing wellbeing support too.

CAPACITY

Lastly, several capacity challenges or constraints have hindered project implementation or limited the project outcomes:

- **Resource capacities have constrained the improvement of the learning environment**, including: (i) **internet connectivity** throughout the pandemic, as the Project could only do so much in terms of support for an issue which requires long term infrastructure development planning that goes beyond the involvement of education stakeholders; (ii) **resources for storage, maintenance and repair** of materials and equipment in project schools.

"But we don't have proper storing facilities to keep the equipment." (Evaluation data – parents)

"We have library books and other learning materials but we do not have proper storage facilities for the equipment. (Evaluation data – Teachers' FGDs)

- **Resource capacities have constrained the reach of certain activities.** For instance, only selected parents took part in the anger management training under the community mobilisation component, as not all households could be included. There is an expectation that parents will share what they learned with others, but no real system in place for them to do so.

"Unfortunately [the anger management training] is not a household level activity. We improved the selected parents in every location and we expect those parents to start the dialogue in the community." (Evaluation data – implementation partner)

- **Teachers' training and professional development capacities have not been sufficiently developed to enable teachers to take on a role of trainer or mentor**, which overall reduces the chance of teachers undertaking training events in their school or neighbouring schools.

"The capability of teachers to train other school teachers is questionable." (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

- **Teachers' digital skills.** Despite training under the framework of the project and significant progress in digital skills as per the endline survey results, some teachers continue to face issues with IT, not least senior teachers for whom ICT equipment use is a real novelty. The endline study also underlined teachers' limited ability to identify online educational resources.

"Teachers need more training to use ICT equipment." (Evaluation data – SDCs' FGD)

- A shortcoming identified by ISAs and Senior management of ZEOs is **the lack of systematic capacity development of ISAs**, which limited their ability to follow up on teacher training events with mentoring and coaching visits in schools.
- Another constraint is the **capacity of parents to participate in school events and meetings.** Parents' lack of time, due to work and livelihood activities hinders their participation in school. In some sectors, such as the garment sector, parental leave from work to attend education related matters is not allowed.

“Their participation (parents) in school activities is very low due to their work.” (Evaluation data – SDCs’ FGD)

2.3 EFFICIENCY

This section briefly discusses efficiency. Findings are limited due to the fact that this evaluation criteria was little investigated during the initial evaluation activities.

Management and coordination efficiency (Q12)

COORDINATION

Coordination mechanisms were deemed efficient by UNICEF and education authorities. Face-to-face meetings were quickly replaced by online meetings and online coordination mechanisms during the pandemic. Face-to-face meetings resumed fully in 2022. UNICEF maintained a fast communication to stay agile and be able to quickly troubleshoot so as the project could be implemented smoothly.

In addition, **the Project created a collaborative culture that fostered supportive relationships between implementing partners and Zone and Provincial officials**, as illustrated in the quotes below, which strengthen the efficiency of coordination on the ground.

“We have to appreciate the support provided to purchase and deliver the books at Kilinochchi. The Kilinochchi Zonal offices and the field officers were very supportive in the difficult situation to issue the books to schools.” (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

“We worked together with all relevant government departments and volunteers related to 7 themes.” (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

“The PDE actively participated, with the DDE of ICT and Technology and the DDE of science, who were all basically very supportive and they provided very useful insights of the process and all of this helped us to draft the manual.” (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Information from UNICEF indicates that **financial resources were discussed many times and re-allocated** as the pandemic and economic crisis affected the overall amount of funds available due to the dollar depreciation, the increased costs due to inflation and the changes in implementation strategies, particularly regarding the capacity building component which had to be re-modelled to accommodate the travel and gathering restrictions. UNICEF ensured that the local government provided sufficient funds to the support of school snack and milk costs. UNICEF also maximised the use of the additional funds by strengthening activities at school level in 2022 and by supporting additional activities at the Provincial level.

The decision to support Provincial level activities was informed by the context in Kilinochchi and concerns over the capacity of the Zones to conduct more activities without additional staff and to absorb more funds. By supporting activities at Province level, particularly regarding ICT training, the creation of online learning resources and the twining of classes across schools to address teacher shortages by providing online classes in some schools, the Project: (i) built on its efforts to support schools and teachers with digital development skills and adaptation to online teaching, (ii) capitalised on the Korean study tour which inspired decision makers in various education delivery modalities, (iii) responded to the pandemic and post campaign pandemic shifts in education delivery in particular through increased online hybrid and blended learning, and (iv) ensured that the funds would be absorbed.

TIMELINESS

Without the pandemic, the **Project was of sufficient duration to be able to accommodate all planned activities**, including constructions and capacity development.

The construction component was delayed at the beginning due to the need to secure the land for school extensions and to find contractors that would understand some of the child and eco-friendly principles the project wanted to make. While further delays occurred due to the pandemic and the economic crisis, all buildings were completed by the end of the Project.

“For the designing stage, progress went very slow because some of the concept was new thing for the building department. But after designing and verifying with all relevant technical professionals then we had started the implementation.” (Evaluation data - Province official)

The Project adapted to the time constraints created by the pandemic. Firstly, priorities were reassessed so as to be able to timely respond to new needs, particularly in the area of health and safety and ICT and online learning. Secondly, some activities benefited from being put on hold under the COVID restrictions to provide more time for preparation. This was the case for the community mobilisation component, which used the extra time to link Zone officials with Colombo technical staff, and to prepare a robust KAP baseline survey that would provide scientific and quality evidence. With rich data on target communities, the Project was able to develop relevant indicators and implement tailored campaigns activities.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project encountered several issues regarding monitoring and evaluation at the beginning of the project, due to some weaknesses in the initial M&E design at proposal stage and low capacity of implementing partners in designing, collecting, storing and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. Once identified, these issues were swiftly acted upon by UNICEF, who recruited additional M&E staff and learned lessons from the challenging baseline study process to inform future data collection activities and on-going monitoring.

2.4 SUSTAINABILITY

This section presents several elements that speak to the sustainability of Project outcomes and leverage of capacities built.

2.4.1 Capacity building of education system and services at national and local levels

Capacity building of existing national, provincial, zonal and local government and its systems in delivering child-centred teaching/learning (Q14, Q19)

The Project contributed to establishing some capacities for key actors across the system as mentioned in section 2.2.4, with improved knowledge, skills and attitudes towards education quality, particularly child-centred teaching and learning methodologies, students' wellbeing, stakeholder engagement and relationships building, and educational management, from digital skills to communication and planning skills.

Capacity activities primarily focused on individual capacities and to some extent organisational capacities, mostly at school level, where procedures and clarity over roles, of the SDC in particular, were addressed. The Project did not aim to strengthen the organizational capacity holistically at zonal or provincial level, despite some steps being observed in that direction, such as:

- **The creation of the Learning Material Development Management Unit (LMDMU)** in the Northern Province was greatly supported by the Project, which is a contribution to improved organisational capacity for the Province to provide e-learning tools to schools and teachers.
- **The specific capacity development programme for ADEs**, although a parallel programme was absent for the ISAs who only improved their competences through participating in Project activities, including teacher training activities which contributed to their improved understanding of child-centred teaching and learning methodologies.
- **Zones were also equipped with materials** to be able to carry out their work in schools.

“We got a greenhouse, sprinkler, and agriculture-related equipment. For the agricultural materials, logbook was maintained by us. For the ICT, we got E-learning related equipment such as pen drives, smart boards, and network facilities, so we had a hardware technical team for the technical equipment maintenance. For the maintenance of mathematics and primary equipment, cupboards were not enough, but we were sharing space and maintained it. But we didn’t have enough space for protection. All the details of equipment had to be uploaded to the inventory.” (Evaluation data – ADEs’ FGD)

- **Some coordination and referral systems have been strengthened**, for instance, related to students’ psychosocial support, guidance and counselling:

“For example, for counselling we trained all teachers. Now teachers are able to identify students who need counselling and support them. If they cannot handle the situation, they inform me, and I visit the school or do the necessary, or refer to doctors.” (Evaluation data – ISAs’ FGD)

Schools, however, through capacity interventions for teachers, principals, SDCs and parents, have benefited from a multi-stakeholder capacity strengthening approach, which resulted in improved SDC’s involvement and better relationships across school stakeholders.

The strong ICT support provided by the Project at Province and school level is definitely contributing to increasing students’ access to educational resources and to classes for which teachers are lacking, particularly at secondary level. The initial support to the LMDM Unit and the IT training of education officials and educators and IT equipment support has the potential to significantly change the way students are taught in the Province and to reduce discrepancies in terms of access to quality education.

“The Project created sustainable structures such as introduction of the flip classroom approach in 13 schools, created the LMDMU unit in the province, piloted digitally twining classroom to solve teacher shortage problem in some subjects. Capacity development of principals, teachers and education officers are continuously improving the quality of education at Kilinochchi district.” (Evaluation data- PDE)

The Project overall significantly contributed to the capacity of the system to understand and experiment the delivery of child-centred teaching/learning in primary and secondary education.

While capacity activities were significantly hampered by the pandemic, and new processes could not necessarily be established at school or community level for teachers and parents to act as strong agents of change in their environments, a sufficient number of stakeholders at provincial, zonal and school levels have been improving understanding, skills and to some extent attitudes, to support the delivery of quality in Project schools and beyond. Maintaining an enabling working environment for new skills application and continuous support to applying the newly gained skills and understanding will be critical in the short and medium term.

2.4.2 Ownership

Government and school ownership (Q15, Q17)

There is strong evidence pointing towards a significant ownership of the Project by zonal and provincial authorities. All respondents at Province and Zone levels underline their active participation in the Project throughout implementation.

“As a Zonal Director of Education my role was implementing the project and monitoring the educational development activities. My supervision, guidance and monitoring of the educational development activities was helpful in successfully implementing the project.” (Evaluation data – Zone officer)

“I was involved in the activities related to organizing the inputs for the project such as organizing training, coordinating with other institutions (MOE, UNICEF, Chief Secretary Office, and Provincial Ministry of Education) getting permissions from the institutions/MOE and facilitate the project implementation.” (Evaluation data – Province Officer)

“For [the community mobilisation component], for example for the seven teams, a special focal person was appointed by the zone who was supposed to lead. The initial training was coordinated by them for capacity building. While the programme was progressing the [implementing partner] had to inform the zonal directors and relevant ADEs and ISAs about what was really going on on the ground.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

The Project did not impose uptake of external or alien concepts or materials. Rather, it focused on providing provincial and zonal officers with opportunities to develop training and learning materials in line with the objectives of the Project that would also enhance their capacity to do their job better. It also broadened the expert based across fields, by drawing on the capacity of national experts.

“Basically, technical part of content and design of the learning materials fully relies on the capacity of the zonal office.” (Evaluation data – Zone officer)

“The selection of printed materials was done by provincial director and ISAs.” (Evaluation data – Zone officer)

“When it came to province also these zonal colleagues and relevant experts at provincial level were also connected. Like for nutrition there is a health staff at the provincial level to overview all the health programmes in Northern Province. He was also involved in the curriculum development and time to time zone will update the province what’s going on. Provincially we carried out reviews, under the chairmanship of chief secretary and under PDE at provincial level. Through that they were well informed about what was going on and they reviewed the outcome and questioned and asked to improve.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

Due to the decentralised nature of the education system, the involvement of the national government and MoE was minimal, yet present so as to ensure smooth implementation. The MoE was involved in the infrastructure component, providing guidance and monitoring, and in supporting capacity building where necessary.

“It’s pretty much joint work national, provincial and zonal level. Ministry of education involved to oversee the project coordinate with KOICA and UNICEF. PDE and NIE joint with us gave big support us.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

“Provincial department really plays an active role throughout the process. Ministry of education provides comprehensive support for the requirements. They did some monitoring part and provided us with a report. NIE supported in capacity building programs.” (Evaluation data – Zone officer)

“We were coordinating at national level. We mainly shared information regarding the progress of the project within the institutions like KOICKA, UNICEF and Treasury through the Policy and Planning and Monitoring and Performance Review branches of MOE and also with the Provincial and Zonal offices.” (Evaluation data – MoE, Colombo)

There is also evidence of school ownership, although schools did not play as bigger role in the coordination of Project activities. Their eagerness to participate and to share their experience was noted by several respondents.

“Principals were able to support us in this project. After principals' capacity building program, I can see the changes of their management. Definitely, there were many changes in their leadership skills.”
(Evaluation data – Zone officer)

“We got the needed support from the school community during the construction project.” (Evaluation data - Ministry of Education)

2.4.3 Steps towards sustainability and scalability

Potential for mainstreaming and scaling-up (Q16, Q17, Q18, Q21)

SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALABILITY STEPS

Project's stakeholders have taken a number of sustainability steps to continue project activities, sustain some the project outcomes and mainstream and expand some of the good practices gained during the Project.

A BROADER REACH THAN THE 13 PROJECT SCHOOLS FROM THE ONSET

Firstly, the Project had a broader outreach than only the 13 project schools, as teachers from other schools benefited from the capacity building component and school activities implemented throughout 2022. This has created a wider base for child-centred practices and change, which will be continuously supported by Province and Zone activities in the future.

“Non- project schools are also introducing student –centred teaching learning process where ever possible with the help of ADEs and ISAs.” (Evaluation data – Province Officers)

In addition, the Province's capacity development plan developed in the later phase of the Project enabled additional capacity building activities on IT and e-learning, at scale, with a critical mass of teachers, ISAs and CRT instructors being trained.

“We selected 5 teachers from each school and trained them to use technology to deliver their lessons. We prepared 13 modules with the help of Zonal staff to train teachers. Each zone prepared one module then 13 modules were put together as a presentation. These modules were shared with 13 zones for teacher training. ISAs, CRT instructors and senior teachers, altogether 65 people from 13 zones were trained as trainers in turn they trained teachers. Out of 12,000 teachers 1,050 teachers from 13 zones were trained at CRT centres. Main topic of this training is how to use e- resources to the teaching-learning process. The trained teachers help others in their school to learn these skills. It was a successful training and very much helpful to implement integrate ICT skills to implement student centred teaching and learning.” (Evaluation data – Province Officer)

Building on the provincial work of the LMDM Unit, the Province has multiplied the channels by which schools could access learning materials developed offline, to ensure greater use of the materials.

“We also copied these lessons in CD and sent to schools and CRT centers. It is useful to cover the learning loss in covid period and also help students to learn subjects when they do not have teachers for these subjects. We are still continuing this activity with the provincial fund.” (Evaluation data- PDE officer)

The Action Research activities, which have benefited both project and non-project schools, when completed, will have their results widely shared and discussed across the two zones and at province level.

Secondly, Province and Zone Offices have taken certain steps to ensure sustainability of the Project outcomes:

- **Zone authorities have encouraged project schools to share their resources and activities with neighbouring schools** to support other students and teachers' access to quality facilities and equipment and to share their approaches and learning on child-centred teaching and learning environments and practices.

"These 13 schools should be seen as a model school. Definitely need to share their facilities and resources which were obtained from the project to their neighbourhood school and encourage them. 13 schools have invited the neighbourhood school to participate all the activities such as exhibition and etc." (Evaluation data – Zone officer)

- **Several project activities or outcomes have continued to be implemented and supported by zonal staff**, including quality circles and whatsapp groups for teacher professional development, support to G&C in schools, and support to school ICT equipment maintenance.

"Subject wise, quality circles are continuing in big schools. Divisional level subject quality circles are maintained. There are 5 ICT teachers in 13 project schools. They are providing ICT training to other teachers in their school. Subject wise, whatsapp groups were created to share information among teachers. We are continuing carrier guidance programmes in schools. We have a zonal level computer service center to provide ICT service to schools to maintain ICT equipment." (Evaluation data – ISAs)

"We are supporting teachers to implement what they have learned knowledge and skills through capacity building programmes." (Evaluation data- ISAs)

"Zonal officers and ISAs are continuously monitoring the outcomes and supporting the schools to sustain these outcomes." (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

- **Zone authorities have also encouraged schools to strengthen the use of their school-based professional development activities**, particularly the quality circles, to maximise the learning and practice on child centered teaching learning methodologies.

"We plan to implement the best practices of project schools in other schools. For this purpose, we have already trained non- project school subject teachers. A good example is in primary through the activity of "Let's act and enjoy" children learned sports skills. We are continuously providing this practice to non-project schools children at zonal level. We also continuously introduced activity based student camps for primary classes in non- project schools, which is one of the best practice in project schools. In secondary, we are planning to implement science camps in non-project schools with the help of NGOs. We are also continuously conducting student camps to introduce manuals for practical based knowledge and skills of science and maths for Gr 10 & 11 students as a preparation for national exam." (Evaluation data – Zone officers)

- **Zone authorities have identified key elements to ensure the sustainability of the Project, including:** (i) strengthening the monitoring and mentoring of teachers, (ii) ensuring the documentation of action research activities, and (iii) facilitating sharing good practices across all zone schools. An operational plan will be submitted to UNICEF by each zone to that effect before August.

"Project schools want to change as a resource center. Maintaining special rooms for every subject. It will increase students' interest in studies. Arranging a competition between schools. We were planning to introduce mathematics laboratory to develop mathematics knowledge." (Evaluation data – ADEs)

“The ADEs and ISAs are trained by University of Jaffna and they should continue to share the acquired knowledge and skills from the training with others officers. We plan and monitor this process of knowledge sharing among principals, teachers and educational officers to sustain the project outcomes.” (Evaluation data – Province officer)

- **The Province and the two Zones developed actions plans following their study visit in Korea,** which were finalised in January 2023, and have started being implemented.

Table 4 Objectives of the provincial and zonal action plans developed under the Project as a follow-up from the Korean study tour.

Province Plan	Kilinochchi North Plan	Kilinochchi South Plan
Objectives: 1. Establish and strengthen the flipped learning concepts in schools – 13 ZEOs – 3 to 5 years 2. Moderate the existing teacher network to increase learning sharing 3. Strengthen Special Education and Inclusive Education. Geographical scope: 13 Zone Education Offices Timeline: 3 to 5 years	Objectives: 1. To implement flipped learning concept in two schools as pilot (Primary and secondary) 2. To empower the ICT skills of teachers 3. To implement blended learning concept in corporate with flipped learning 4. To strengthen the special education (inclusive education) unit in two schools Geographical scope: Kilinochchi North – selected schools/teachers Timeline: 2023	Objectives: Improve the quality of teaching learning process through flipped classroom technique (Short term) Geographical scope: Kilinochchi South (i) 3 schools, then (ii) Cluster schools Timeline: Short and longer term, date unspecified.

“We have planned and implemented action plans to sustain the project outcomes.” (Evaluation data – ZDE)

“Twin classes were piloted in the Jaffna Zone. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to students to teach subjects for which they do not have teachers.” (Evaluation data – PDE Officer)

“We plan the following activities to introduce the best practices to other schools: (i) utilize the trained persons as resource persons to share their experience with other schools, (ii) visit the project schools to get experience in child friendly and inclusive child centred learning and teaching, (iii) create awareness of good practices of project schools at provincial and zonal level.” (Evaluation data – PDE)

- **Zonal staff has maintained learning sharing practices by continuing to use the What’sApp groups developed under the Project,** such as the Jaffna University What’sApp group for trained ADEs, or subject What’sApp groups from the project teacher training activities.

SCHOOLS’ STEPS TO SUSTAINED RESULTS

Thirdly, schools have also taken some steps towards sustained results:

- **Teachers are continuing to use and experiment with their newly gained knowledge and skills.**

“You can see in this Project a lot of capacity building programs for teachers (...). Teachers can teach other students [in the future] beyond the beneficiary students from the Project, so [stakeholders] can, I think, verify this project’s impact after this project as well.” (Evaluation data – KOICA)

- **Schools have developed maintenance strategies for the infrastructure and equipment received:**

“They maintain the infrastructure through some kind of maintenance schedule with the help of available human resources. Some of the schools has good support from the old student committee.” (Evaluation data – ISAs)

“We used environmentally friendly materials for construction such as, wire cut bricks for the walls, clay type’s roof was used for roofing, wall covering and ceiling, and these materials took low maintenance.” (Evaluation data – Province officer)

- **Some schools will continue some project school activities** such as exhibitions, participation in competitions and camps based on own funds.

“The action is, at the end of the project we repeatedly go and discuss together with the parents, principals and SDCs about reiterating the [campaign] messages after [the project ends]. In the endline KAP survey (...) we found that all principals are on top of it. (...) We think with the principals as leaders, the sustainability will go on because these messages are well received by the principals and SDCs. That was our plan also to make them talk about it continuously in their community.” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

Lastly, zonal staff’s capacity building under the Project will also contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of this sustained school support. The teacher training modules developed under the Project are owned by Zone officials who will be able to use them again as required. Moreover, the Principals’ and ADEs’ training modules will be endorsed by the PDE and widely shared across the Province.

“The ADEs’ training benefits ALL schools for the Zone in the future. One more thing we have also provided training on the strategic planning and how to prepare strategic plan and action plans.” (Evaluation data – Jaffna University)

“They [ADEs] can use all these skills in their work. In addition, we expect them to work as TOTs. So they can conduct the training program for principals, teachers and other officers in the Northern Province or zonal offices so they can serve as resource persons. In addition as I said earlier they are invited for many programs conducted by the schools. Most of the school programs one of the officials was invited by schools. They know a lot of things about psychosocial skills and motivation and leadership skills. So they can provide the best speech to the audience and motivate school principals, teachers and students.” (Evaluation data – Jaffna University)

GOVERNMENT’S CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALE UP

Sustainability conditions (Q20)

Despite the encouraging steps towards sustainability identified above, the availability of financial, human and time resources at Province (and national) level is a potential constraint to ensuring the medium-term sustainability of project outcomes and scale up. Key constraints include:

- **Resources-constrained context.** An assessment of national and local governments’ resources was not doable under the scope of this evaluation. Sri Lanka is currently operating in a very complex economic and political environment. For instance, there was no annual education allocation from central to decentralised levels in 2022, jeopardizing a range of education services in the Provinces.

“Nowadays government fund allocation is very low. We can make changes through projects compare to government allocation. Parental income is also low to provide their children educational needs such as nutrition food, school uniform and learning materials. Socio- economic status of the community is gradually declining. This has an impact on students’ learning and behaviour. Due to this, school culture and changes made by the projects will face challenges. We are aware of the situation and plan to overcome these challenges by providing support to schools to sustain and improve project outcomes.”

(Evaluation data – Province officer)

- **However, the local government’s motivation for effective cost-cutting strategies** to address key deterrent to education quality, particularly teacher shortage in remote areas and for some subjects at secondary level, **is extremely high**. To this end, some of the later Provincial level activities supported by the Project such as the twin and flip classrooms approach are likely to be prioritised for implementation in future years.
- **Schools’ financial capacity to maintain buildings is low**. While some avenues have been identified in the short term, there is a risk that provincial and zonal resources will not be able to cover the costs should the economic crisis continues.

“We were introduced solar power unit. They can reduce the use of electricity bill cost. These savings can be used for some maintenance activities of infrastructure.” (Evaluation data)

“Schools need financial support to maintain and sustain the facilities provided by the project. Annual government fund allocation is not enough for education in these days. We instruct principals that get financial support from internal business community, well-wishers and old students associations to maintain the physical resources. If the economy crisis continues this mechanism is also not much helpful for the purpose. We encourage the parental support to maintain the school environment.” (Evaluation data – Province officer)

- **There are severe concerns, to date, about the education system and the governments’ financial capacity to support connectivity and IT equipment upgrade** in the medium term.

“When we want the schools to pay for the internet, for some rural schools, it will be a burden. How that can be arranged or supported, this sustainability after the project period, is also something we need to see / consider. Even the devices will expire after three years, warranty will end. Then how will the schools continue this? (Evaluation data – implementing partner)

- **The absence of parental engagement activities in the provincial and zonal action plans and initial commitments to sustain project outcomes**. This is due to accountability lines and responsibility issues that Zones do not feel they can bear alone, as parental engagement and community mobilisation cover a range of non-educational related aspects that are also the responsibility of other stakeholders, including health and social services, the DS Office and other government and civil society stakeholders.
- **There are concerns over the capacity of SDCs to take over the community mobilisation component in its entirety**. While some elements might be sustained, it is unlikely that members will have the capacity to use and administer all training and IEC materials developed under the component. In addition, without the support from zone offices and other stakeholders in community mobilisation, there is little chance that non catchment area communities will benefit from a spill over from the project in terms of community mobilisation on key thematic areas.

2.5 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

This section briefly summarizes the extent to which the Project has addressed equity and cross-cutting issues and benefited the most marginalized.

EQUITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Considerations for equity and cross-cutting issues (Q22)

The Project was being developed as the United Nations was finalising the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) agenda.

As indicated in the Relevance section (2.1), **the rationale for implementing the Project in Kilinochchi District was to provide support to a very poor post-war district of Sri Lanka facing significant educational challenges** in terms of infrastructure, attendance and learning outcomes.

The Project was relevant to and addressed the various needs of various sub-groups of children and included, from the onset, a focus on: (i) **children with disabilities** through the provision of materials for Special Education Units and the training of SEU teachers, (ii) **girls**, with the inclusion of menstrual hygiene units in schools and the provision of Menstrual Hygiene Management in schools and communities, (iii) **the most marginalised boys and girls**, through the social cohesion component, with a focus on living together and provision of psychosocial and academic support to students in needs. However, there is no indication that children with disabilities were particularly supported in participating equally in all Project activities. However, overall, there were no gender-specific or inclusion specific implementation strategies in the project set-up.

The needs assessments collected both gender and disability disaggregated data.

The Project also **promoted the principle of sustainable environment in the construction component** by (i) using sustainable materials, (iii) adopting building designs that facilitated air circulation, (iii) embedding solar panels and using materials aiming to reduce heat absorption to reduce demands on electricity.

The Project, from the onset, intended to support ICT in education to a certain extent. With COVID and shifts in education delivery modalities, the Project quickly adapted to **make ICT in education and improvement of teachers' and local education authorities' digital skills a priority**. This aspect has been mainstreamed in project schools, zones and the Province through equipment provision, capacity development support, and support to the organisational capacity of the Province to identify and share e-learning materials to be used online and offline for teachers to improve their ICT skills and for teachers and students to inform teaching and learning practices.

EQUITY RESULTS

Project's benefits to children with disabilities and other marginalized children (Q24)

The Project benefitted:

- **Girls**, with some specific outputs addressing girls, such as the MHM facilities.

"For the lady teachers and girls, they provided MHM disposable facilities in washrooms." (Evaluation data, implementing partners)

- **Children with disabilities** in the 13 project schools, through materials and improved teaching, as well as the construction of disabled toilets.

“The special education units in 3 schools were repaired, equipment and learning resources were provided and teachers were trained by resource persons from the MOE’s special education unit in Colombo. We are satisfied with special education unit development and training activities.” (Evaluation data – Zone officer)

- **Marginalised children such as dropout students:**

“Awareness programme for carrier guidance had been conducted for parents at village level with the help of OfERR Ceylon [Project Implementing Partner]. After this awareness programme, 6 drop out students from Ramanathapuram East G.T.M.S. were registered in 13 years continuous education.” (Evaluation data – ISAs)

- **Low performers.** There have been indirect project benefits to the most marginalised children following teachers’ improved knowledge and attitudes towards the inclusion of ALL children in the classroom. The endline study reveals that teachers and schools have improved their practices regarding the identification and support of low performing students. Schools’ and teachers’ abilities to identify and support low performers is a key component of an inclusive school that responds to the diverse learning needs of ALL learners. Data from the Endline Study demonstrate a broad understanding of how to support low performers, which goes beyond the provision of extra classes and extra materials, which most schools already did before the project. Some schools were able to articulate a sophisticated approach for identifying students lagging behind and planning support across subjects, as well as working with parents to support low performers’ learning improvement. This is done in varied and creative ways, from meetings to home visits, to parent seminars to asking parents to attend classes so as to support their children to learn.

“A teacher visits their homes to teach a group of slow learners and similarly, some teachers stay in the school to conduct evening classes for the low performers” (Endline study - Primary school student)

“The teachers conduct evening classes, morning classes and night classes to help students lagging in studies” (Endline study - Secondary school student)

“I learnt to identify a low performer and approach students with different learning capabilities” (Endline study - Secondary school teacher)

Project’s contribution to advancing equitable access to education and learning (Q23)

UNICEF respondents underlined the fact that gender inequalities in education were little appreciated by school stakeholders before the Project. The KAP survey analysis and discussions in schools and communities, including on attendance rates and dropout cases, and looking at gender discrepancies in terms of access to materials such as books, computers, computer labs, science labs and competitions outside of the school premises, revealed the existence of some gender inequalities in terms of access to education, sometimes to the disadvantage of girls, sometimes of boys. This awareness is a small contribution in project schools, to advancing equitable access to education.

“In the later stage when we asked for some children for consultations, the schools started to send boys and girls together. Earlier they chose to send boys to send Zone since it was easier as no-one has to come with them [chaperone].” (Evaluation data – UNICEF)

“Gender disparities are still observed but less drastic than at baseline point, sometimes to the disadvantage of boys (e.g. Kn/ Ramanathapuram East GTMS or Kn/ Iyakkachi GTMS), sometimes of girls (e.g. Kn/Soranpattu CCTMS, Kn/St Theresa Girls’ College).” (Endline Study)

Another key point is the **integration of special and inclusive education as one of the 3 objectives in the provincial action plan** developed as a follow-up of the Korean study tour. The plan aims to

create a Province Resource Team for special and inclusion education which will be in charge of developing an action plan for strengthening special education in each zone and provide support to teachers and schools. This is a direct contribution of the Project to advancing special and inclusive education at system level. However, as mentioned in the Endline study and earlier in this report, the overall concept of inclusive education appears to remain not fully understood in a system that continues to promote special education units.

3 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Drawing from the findings above, this section presents the evaluation conclusions and lessons learned.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

1. The Project has made a significant contribution to improving access to education and learning outcomes in Kilinochchi. Schools' learning environments have been drastically improved in the 13 schools, there is evidence of teachers adopting innovative teaching methods, of principals improving their management and leadership skills, of SDCs being more functional and of improved school-parents' relationships. Learning outcomes have improved in Project schools and in the district for both the G5 Scholarship exam and the G.C.E/O.L. exam. The Project has significantly contributed to these outcomes by providing a significant amount of facilities, equipment and learning materials in the 13 Project schools, by supporting the set up and provision of remote or hybrid instruction delivery throughout and beyond the pandemic, by capacitating teachers on subject related, particularly foundational skills and science related subjects, and on key pedagogical aspects of child-centred teaching and learning methodologies, by supporting students' wellbeing and skills development, by engaging parents and communities and by strengthening the capacity of key zone and province staff. The Project achieved all its objectives and met all its indicator targets.

2. Project results have made and will make a difference for students in one of the poorest districts of Sri Lanka. The project has made significant efforts to sustained activities and results, yet there are some potential constraints on sustainability due to the current economic situation of the country. Many cohorts of students will continue to enjoy improved facilities and equipment. Education authorities at Province and Zone levels have also demonstrated a strong appropriation of the project's processes, content and results, and demonstrated political will and some steps towards sustaining some project activities and results. The capacity of some officials has been enhanced which should support this process. Project schools have seen their organisational capacities increased, which is an enabling factor, although they are subject to principal and teacher turnover, which puts them at risk of losing both knowledge and momentum in the medium term. With support from UNICEF, both Province and Zone officers are currently working on operational plans to ensure that the necessary conditions are in place for sustaining project outcomes in terms of (i) school support and guidance, (ii) teacher monitoring and mentoring, (iii) sharing of Project materials, outputs and good practices, (iv) sustaining school-based activities and twin classrooms to address teacher shortages, and (v) implementing the key activities of their Korean study tour follow-up action plans. Limited funds available to finance the Sri Lanka education system following the economic crisis is however a possible risk to sustainability.

3. The Project's relevance has increased throughout implementation due to the unexpected context within which the Project took place, i.e. a global pandemic and a severe national

economic, social and political crisis. The pandemic and economic crises have significantly impacted the entire population of Sri Lanka, but particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, including children and adolescents. The objectives of the Project, to contribute to improved education access and learning outcomes, have been more than relevant throughout those challenging times. The Project's contribution to IT equipment and digital skills' training for teachers and local officials was particularly relevant to addressing school closures. Its focus on guidance and counselling and psychosocial support enabled relevant activities to be implemented aiming to address some of the negative consequences of the crises on livelihood, nutrition, mental health and wellbeing. The Project also provided relevant support to the Zones in their attempt to address learning loss and to support the identification and support of low performers and students affected by the many disruptions to their education. Without such a Project already established when the pandemic hit, it is likely that the education services and outcomes of Kilinochchi district would have been significantly affected.

4. The Project has modelled a combination of support activities and implementation strategies that have enhanced its overall effectiveness. The Project combined a significant hardware component (infrastructure, equipment and learning materials) with: (i) a capacity development component focused on strengthening teachers' capacities, principals' capacities, SDCs' capacities and to some degree zone officers' capacities, and (ii) a community mobilisation component aiming at raising parental and community awareness on children's health, education and protection related topics. These three components have mutually reinforced each other. A few implementation strategies have been critical to this process, including: (i) responding to the full education spectrum, from primary to upper secondary, across subjects, including core subjects, science subjects and creative subjects, which enabled to train a critical mass of teachers on child-centred teaching methodologies, (ii) aligning Project aims with national, Provincial and Zonal education objectives and programming priorities, (iii) promoting consistent messages to various target audiences from parents to SDCs, Principals, Teachers, Zone and Province officers in various locations, and (iv) ensuring strong Zonal and Provincial ownership from the onset.

"We can cover all the parts of education. This project conveys to us about the focus should be overall. This is an example for the future projects." (Evaluation data – ZDE)

5. The Project has paved the way for promising educational developments in the Kilinochchi Zones and Northern Province in future years. The Project has led to partnerships that could be harnessed further in the future, such as the collaboration with the University of Jaffna for capacity building of SLEAs, or with the National Institute of Education and Colombo MoE's Unit working on Special and Inclusive Education. The Project also contributed to strong coordination mechanisms across the two Kilinochchi Zones and zonal and provincial levels, and demonstrated the relevance of wide consultation and bringing in diverse expertise when tackling education and students' support holistically. The Project significantly contributed to advancing the use of digital learning materials and ICT in education, supporting the creation, capacity building and activities of the provincial LMDMU which has the potential to provide cost-effective strategies for teachers' digital skills upgrading, to respond to major teacher shortages through the support of twin classes and to strengthen blended learning and student self-paced learning in the future. The Project's legacy has the potential to re-invigorate the approach to School-based Professional Teacher Development (SBPTD) by supporting schools to maintain school-based and cluster-based quality circles and by further engaging ADEs and ISAs in supporting those and in increasing teachers' mentoring and reflective practices.

6. UNICEF and the project team have demonstrated adaptability, agility and resilience throughout implementation and have increasingly strived to support system strengthening. UNICEF and the project team have constantly adapted, fine-tuned and improved both interventions and working practices based on the operational context and informal lesson learning from implementation. UNICEF has notably reinforced its system strengthening approach during implementation to support a wider range of stakeholders across the system at Zone and Province levels so as to maximise project results and to increase sustainability and chances of replication or scale up, despite the many external hindering factors at play throughout implementation. UNICEF has also strengthened its approach to M&E despite challenges due to limited data collection processes and quality assurance mechanisms in Zones and capacity issues of some implementing partners.

7. The Project's approach to capacity development would have benefited from a stronger theoretical approach in its initial design, encompassing not only individual capacity at school and zone levels but also organisational and institutional capacity to build in sustained capacity change at the onset. The evaluation has identified several risks to sustainability, particularly resources constraints, whether financial, human or time related. The economic crisis and uncertainty regarding both national and provincial funding to the education system as well as the heavy administrative burden and workload of zonal staff are likely to impact on how much support the system will be able to provide to schools to maintain facilities and equipment, and how much support ADEs and ISAs in particular will be able to provide to teachers to sustained and continuously improve their child-centred teaching and learning practices. A holistic approach to capacity development spanning individual, organisational and institutional capacity would have strengthened further the Project's outcomes by improving the enabling environment within which school, zone and province staff operate and interact.

8. Quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring capacities remain a gap a zone level.

Misconceptions about the importance, type and quality processes of quality assurance mechanisms remain, within a work culture that supports summative rather than formative approaches to quality assurance and little use monitoring data in feedback loops to improve programming and service delivery. While the Project has attempted to address some of those issues, the implementation context, with the pandemic and fuel crisis, coupled with the work culture, the inadequacy of existing tools, and the absence of a specific capacity building component for ISAs have been obstacles to the development of new tools, practices and processes that put reflective practices, mentoring and the provision of constructive feedback to principals and teachers at the core of QA. Despite the existence of checklists and monitoring activities being included in zonal work plans, due to workload and lack of awareness, monitoring and QA overall remain a weak point in ZEOs.

9. UNICEF and ZEOs have not fully harnessed the potential of the promising community mobilisation model developed by the Project and which has led to proven results in terms of knowledge and attitudinal changes. Two major reports, providing robust evidence on knowledge, attitudes and practices in communities were produced under the Project (KAP baseline and endline reports) and have hardly been used within and beyond UNICEF and implementing partners. Communication materials (IEC) and training modules were developed drawing from diverse expertise within and beyond the participating Zones and Province. Yet, the evaluation finds that the community mobilisation component is the most at risk of not being capitalized upon as no significant step has been taken to ensure that materials and approaches would continue to be supported and built on. The comprehensive nature and complexity of community mobilisation for education access and quality would require the engagement of various sectors and stakeholders beyond the education sector. Securing such engagement and commitment alongside existing organisational

responsibility and accountability lines is a complex matter that appears to have been little addressed by the Project when planning for sustainability. This is a missed opportunity.

10. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been little improvement in terms of overall social cohesion. Although the KAP study reports some improvements related to understanding and respect for diversity, some of the social cohesion activities initially planned by the project (such as Music and Sports for social cohesion), appeared not to have been fully implemented or have a limited impact on social cohesion and positive relationships between students of various background (Endline study). The Project shifted its focus on positive relationships in schools between students and amongst school staff. School Parliament activities also contributed to this new focus under the social cohesion aim of the Project. Social and power dynamics are complex matters that require a thorough understanding and multiple entry point interventions over time beyond the scope of a single project to bring about change at societal level. Gender dynamics are part of such social dynamics. They have not been systematically addressed throughout the project from the onset of implementation as a gender lens to support the development of gender sensitive and disability sensitive implementation strategies was lacking.

3.2 LESSONS LEARNED

Below are some lessons learned harnessed during the evaluation process. These do not repeat, but rather complement, the comprehensive lessons identified in the Endline Study, which also provide useful insights into what UNICEF and implementing partners have learned throughout implementation that can support future programming.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT

1. Using locally available materials is important for cost-benefit purposes but also for contributing to the local economy and reducing the carbon footprint of the infrastructure developed.

2. Multipurpose facilities are appealing to respond to schools needs but are not always fit for purpose. The Project introduced in a few schools multipurpose buildings that can be used as auditoriums and also multiple classrooms with the use of dividers. Dividers do not however provide sufficient sound insulation to enable more than one classroom to operate at the same time.

3. Explaining and mediating to schools, communities and building contractors the goals of a project, its innovative infrastructure technical specificities, its environmental impact mitigation requirements and its budget constraints is a time-consuming process that needs to be built into the project activities, planned and budgeted for.

4. Offshore procurement is a time consuming and complex matter due to tax exemption administrative processes. With a full procurement cycle lasting up to six months, starting any offshore procurement early is critical for materials to be used by beneficiaries as soon as possible.

CAPACITY BUILDING

5. The Project benefited from harnessing the potential of local and national expertise, by going the extra mile to identify the right people with the necessary expertise. The capacity of experts for teacher training on child-centred teaching and learning methodologies and inclusive practices and for training ADEs is critical and might take time to secure within and outside the Province.

6. Training teachers the way they are expected to teach students is fundamental, that is using a learner-centred hands-on approach to teacher training. Adopting a ‘trainee-centred’ approach and including a lot of practical activities and reflective practices in the training sessions of the Project

was a key success factor of the capacity building component. Similarly, recognising the value of face-to-face interactions in training is critical, where participants are more involved, more creative and also have the opportunity to build networks.

7. It cannot be expected that trained teachers (or staff) are de-facto trainers and able to share their new learning and skills meaningfully with their peers. This requires building into training programmes and events some activities: (i) to support teachers to understand the specificities of adult learning and capacity development, and (i) to equip teachers with the necessary skills for peer knowledge sharing and training. The use of flipped classes in teacher training sessions is one example of how to do so.

8. Awareness of contextual constraints preventing teachers from implementing their newly acquired knowledge and skills is critical to induce a cultural shift amongst teachers. This requires an in-depth understanding of teachers', students', parents' and education officers' beliefs around inclusive and child-centred teaching practices, perceived confidence and capacity and readiness to change. It also requires untangling the role of school leadership and management in supporting pedagogical transformation in schools. Lastly, it requires capacity building programmes to include a reflection on those contextual constraints and invite training participants to mobilise their collective intelligence to anticipate how to overcome potential obstacles.

SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

9. Community engagement for education requires a comprehensive approach, targeting parents, community leaders and groups, and school stakeholders such as SDCs. Combining activities taking place in households, in communal community spaces and in schools has proven a useful strategy. Devising sustainable strategies for the take up of community engagement activities is often challenging as community engagement activities require time, interventions at different and flexible hours, and the involvement of a wide range of sectoral stakeholders from government and civil society.

10. Social cohesion improvement is a complex matter that requires understanding the underlying causes of social division and the psychological processes and psychosocial dynamics involved. Working on inequalities can be an entry point to social cohesion work. By inviting stakeholders and communities to reflect on inequalities of access, use and benefits of resources, issues of social dynamics and power structures might arise, which can then be built on to support mindset and attitudinal change.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

11. Strong M&E expertise is required at the onset and throughout implementation for a project of this scope and size. With strong results framework and an overarching and comprehensive M&E approach at the onset, a project can ensure that all relevant data can be collected at baseline and endline, and that useful monitoring information feeds into project improvement throughout implementation. Recruiting competent firms and individuals to conduct M&E activities and ensuring that contractors embed their MEL activities into robust analytical frameworks that are jointly discussed and validated with all project staff during inception is also key.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below build on the findings, conclusions and lessons learned from this evaluation.

4.1 FOR UNICEF

PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Strengthen inclusion programming principles in future project design and implementation, particularly gender and disability to better reflect the organisation's commitment to gender equality and the Leave No One Behind United Nations agenda. This might include greater considerations to gender and inclusion lenses, gender and inclusion analyses, sex and disability disaggregated data, and gender and inclusion implementation strategies. This would also contribute to providing additional entry points to address social cohesion holistically (see Conclusion 10).

2. Strengthen organisational (structures, processes and procedures, policies and plans, roles and responsibilities) and institutional capacity development (legislation, regulations), such as costing studies to support discussions on sustainability and scale up. The project initial design focused mostly on individual capacity (see Conclusions 6 and 7). A design contributing from the onset to improving the organisational and institutional environments within which individuals are expected to apply their new knowledge and skills would have a strong value added for system strengthening. Costing studies alongside major project of this type would generate unit costs for the main project components. With unit costs on infrastructure, equipment, IT, learning materials, community mobilisation activities, training costs, school-based and Zone-based activities and Zone-based activities such as camps and exhibitions, UNICEF can better support national and local authorities with planning and budgeting for sustained results (see Conclusion 2).

CAPITALISING ON PROJECT OUTPUTS

3. Ensure and maximise the re-use and re-purposing of project outputs and materials internally and externally. This includes the methodologies of and learning from the KAP studies and training materials, particularly the IEC materials developed under the project for the community mobilisation component. This might entail strategies to ensure greater visibility of materials internally, a participatory multi-section approach to decide on how best to capitalise on those, and ensuring that the materials are presented in a package that could easily be shared with interested parties. Advocacy for national and provincial authorities to share the IEC materials online would be required. The community mobilisation model would itself benefit from being adequately documented by UNICEF in a brief booklet for dissemination within and across UNICEF offices and partners (see Conclusion 8).

INFORMING FUTURE PROGRAMMING

4. Take a leadership role in supporting government authorities nationally and locally to develop and sustain digital environments in schools. The pandemic accelerated the take up of digital learning and the IT equipment of schools. There are significant costs and capacity issues to ensure that connectivity and equipment will be available, maintained, used, upgraded and that schools will develop supportive digital eco-systems for digital and blended learning practices to flourish and support inclusive relevant pedagogical practices. UNICEF can build on its global experience with digital learning to support national stakeholders in this endeavour (see Conclusion 5).

5. Continue to feedback key learning from the project into national strategic programme support and advocacy. The project generated useful learning on key issues such as infrastructure development, teacher professional development, capacity building needs at zonal and provincial level, quality assurance mechanisms for quality education, child-centred teaching and learning practices, guidance and counselling, career guidance, school management, and inclusive education. UNICEF should capitalise on this experience and continue to ensure that the project's lessons learned will be reflected in programming and advocacy at the national level in the short and medium term (see Conclusions 1, 2 and 8).

4.2 FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (CENTRAL LEVEL)

6. Include project models, practices, lessons and recommendations in on-going education reforms and education planning activities. This spans from strategies for equipment prioritisation and infrastructure building to zonal capacity building, quality assurance mechanisms in education, supporting teachers adopting child-centred teaching and learning methodologies and, overall, embracing inclusive education practices and ethos in all Sri Lankan schools (see Conclusions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

7. Engage in long-term systemic support to inclusive education, building on some of the initiatives currently supported by UNICEF, to contribute to an enabling legislative environment, attitudinal change around social norms, embedding inclusive education principles and practice in pre-service and in-service teacher training and in whole-school approaches. Support to attitudinal change would be key in contributing to schools' understanding that diversity of learners is a reality that enriches pedagogical practices.' Inclusive practices would be complemented by extra support to guidance and counselling in schools for educators to be better equipped to tackle the various needs of students. (see Conclusions 1, 10).

8. Engage in long-term systemic support to digital learning and ICT in education, building on some of the initiatives currently supported by UNICEF, by developing frameworks, regulations and other system-level documents that would support Province, Zones and schools to respond to the digital learning challenges lying ahead of them, including digital competences frameworks for education staff and teachers, upgrading of teacher training policies to ensure the inclusion of digital skills and digital and blended learning pedagogy in both pre and in-service training, regulations and guidance for accessibility of IT materials for students with disabilities, policy and regulatory frameworks and guidance regarding internet security, data privacy and confidentiality, and partnership development for upgrading IT equipment in schools (see Conclusion 5).

4.3 FOR PROVINCIAL AND ZONAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

9. Ensure dissemination and sustained use of project outputs and results. This will require the endorsement of teacher, ADE and principal's training modules and clear accountability mechanisms for the action plans and operational plans currently being finalised at zone and province level to enhance the sustainability of project's outputs (see Conclusions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

10. Consider re-packaging some of the capacity development courses into online self-paced courses that could be taken on a modular basis by zone staff and teachers. Such courses should be accredited and feed into local professional development strategies (see Conclusions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8)

11. Integrate best practices in infrastructure development from the Project into the Provincial standards and criteria for school buildings (see Conclusion 1).

12. Develop a teacher professional development plan at province and zone level that would integrate some of the key topics of training from the Project as well as clear strategies for professional development that go beyond training and include school-based teacher professional development practices as well as a teacher mentoring scheme (see Conclusions 7, 8).

13. Develop a province and zone staff professional development plan that would ensure that all personnel, including ISAs, have equal opportunities to professional development and that would address some of the priorities identified in the Project in terms of (i) teacher professional development support, SBTD, school-based management, mentoring practices, action research support and quality assurance mechanisms; (ii) training providers, which can include national experts or local experts, including from academic institutions such as Jaffna university; (iii) cost-effective professional development strategies, including hybrid and online modalities and digital badging as well as 'on the job' professional development opportunities, particularly for ADEs and ISAs (see Conclusions 7, 8).

14. Strengthen education quality assurance mechanisms, by conducting a review of existing tools, practices, and roles, by identifying gaps and areas for improvement, and by developing simple tools and procedures that could support education quality, equity and efficiency (see Conclusion 8).

4.4 FOR PROJECT SCHOOLS

15. Sustain key project practices, particularly those related to school-based teacher professional development practices, community engagement, comprehensive school planning, guidance and counselling and project resource sharing with neighbouring schools (see Conclusions 1,2,3,4,5,8).

16. Develop creative models to pool resources, equipment and materials from different schools together to maximise usage by teachers and students in regular classes or one-off events such as remedial learning days, learning camps, etc. (see Conclusion 5).

"Time to time there is a gradual improvement. When we support the improvement, it will be accelerated." (Province Department of Education)

Annex 1. ToRs

SRI LANKA COUNTRY OFFICE - TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FINAL EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN SRI LANKA

Requesting Section: Education Programme

Background

Kilinochchi district in Sri Lanka continues to suffer from the consequences of the 30-year conflict that ended in 2009. At the end of the conflict, the entire population in the area had been displaced to adjoining districts and only returned to the area between 2011 and 2013. Massive infrastructure destruction meant the returning population had to rebuild their lives from scratch. There continue to be large infrastructure needs regarding social services such as health and education.

According to EMIS 2018 data, 41% of schools in the district had 'very low availability of basic facilities' (Northern Province Provincial Education Department, 2019). There was a shortage of qualified teachers in science (21% shortage in 2017), math (20% of shortage in 2017) and English (91% in primary and 7% in secondary in 2017). The persistent infrastructure gaps in education, coupled with a lack of available qualified teachers, created formidable challenges in providing quality education for the children and young people living in the area.

This has contributed to much lower learning outcomes than the other Northern districts and the rest of the country. Data from the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (O/L) examination revealed that the passing rate in Kilinochchi is significantly below the Northern Province and the national rates, despite progress between 2016 and 2018. Regarding the Advanced Level (A/L) examination, Kilinochchi results were below national average in Physical Science, Engineering and Biosystem Technology in both 2016 and 2018.

The low learning outcomes have contributed to broader socio-economic difficulties. A large percentage of adolescents drop out of school following failure during O/L exams at the age of 16 without any opportunities for further technical or vocational training and very few job opportunities beyond day-to-day jobs or employment in the public or informal sector. These young people remember the conflict and its devastating impact on their friends and families. Many of them suffer from depression and anxiety which have translated into alcohol, drug and substance abuse, violence, and suicides.

On the premise that education plays a key role in tackling the multitude of challenges described above, UNICEF has been implementing the 'Educational Environment Improvement Project in Kilinochchi District' funded by KOICA. The Project aims to close Kilinochchi's learning gap to the rest of the country and provide a better future for the children and young people in the area through a comprehensive integrated approach of hard and software interventions.

The Project timeframe is October 2018 to December 2022 and the total budget is USD 6.75 million, including USD 600,000 for COVID-19 support, which was added in mid-2020. The Project was developed in line with the objectives of the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) (2018 - 2025), directly addresses SDG Goal 4, aligns with UNICEF Country Programme Document. The Project aims:

1. To improve the physical learning environment through construction, renovation of classrooms/facilities and equipping of the targeted schools;
2. To build the capacity of teachers, principals, and in-service advisors to provide better quality education services in the targeted schools that promote improved learning outcomes and social cohesion; and
3. To increase community awareness of the importance of education and the role of parents as part of the school community.

The implementation of this Project took place at the respective schools in divisions and zones. Hence, the responsibility of implementation rested mainly with school principals and teachers, with support from Divisional Directors, Zonal Directors and the Provincial Director of Education. At the national level, the Ministry of Education and National Institute of Education officials participated in the planning process and undertook periodic monitoring of the implementation of the activities. A wide range of local stakeholders from civil society and the private sector also supported the implementation.

Whilst the Project covers the entire Northern Province, it targets primarily 13 schools and aims to reach 5,051 students (2,646 from primary and 2,405 from secondary), 215 teachers and principals, school development committees, parents and Assistant Directors of Education (ADEs) and In-Service Advisors (ISAs) from the Kilinochchi Zone. Some activities have also benefitted non-project schoolteachers in the Northern province.

The Project outcomes and outputs are set as follows:

Outcome 1: Children have access to improved physical learning environments and materials in the targeted schools

- Output 1.1: Enhanced quality of and types of facilities available in the targeted schools
- Output 1.2: Increased availability and use of quality learning materials in the targeted schools

Outcome 2: Children benefit from improved teaching and learning approaches adopted by teachers in the targeted schools

- Output 2.1: Increased capacity of teachers, principals and in-service advisors to use more effective teaching approaches and provide psychosocial support
- Output 2.2: Increased community awareness on the importance of education and social cohesion

Outcome 3 (per Amended Agreement signed on 29 June 2020): Children benefit from a safe environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Output 3.1: Safe School Operations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- Output 3.2: Increased capacity of teachers, principals and in-service advisors to provide needs-based education during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Project faced numerous implementation challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing political and economic crisis. These have led to a prolonged period of nationwide lockdown and school closures, as well as severely compromised schools' operational capacity due to fuel shortage, long-hour power-cuts, inflated prices of essential educational commodities. Hence, many of the originally planned activities were required to be adjusted frequently to ensure the Project continuity and as a result, some of the activities were initiated in a late stage of the Project.

Among the following main components of the Project, the component number 4 was added during the COVID-19 pandemic with additional support from KOICA (the above-mentioned USD 600,000) relevant to Outcome 3, since the global pandemic challenged continuous learning for all students in Sri Lanka with a series of lockdowns and school closures. Also, the emergency education supplies (number 5) were provided to address the priority needs of the ongoing economic crisis in the country which was experienced throughout 2022.

1. Support school construction/repair and required supplies and teaching/learning materials in 13 project schools to better ensure children's access to improved physical learning environment and materials
2. Support capacity building of education stakeholders including teachers, principals, and education government officials on key components of inclusive and child-centred teaching/learning

3. Support community awareness raising on 7 thematic areas – education, reading culture, health/nutrition/WASH, ICT and online safety, social cohesion, violence-free schools, and children with disabilities
4. Support to safe school reopening and operation across the island during the COVID-19 pandemic and capacity building of teachers, school principals and in-service advisors on home-based learning
5. Provision of emergency education supplies (papers and notebooks) in the Northern Province to ensure continuous learning for children, including the most disadvantaged, amidst the ongoing economic crisis

Despite the continuously challenging environment of the Project throughout the entire period, the Project achieved key results as follows:

1. More than 5,000 students from 13 project schools have access to improved physical learning environments and materials such as new classrooms, science labs, computer labs, libraries, overhead water tanks and toilets with menstrual hygiene management and water supply. Students also have access to an improved playing field with sports equipment and playground sets.
2. All 13 project schools have received quality learning materials on multi-level learning, mathematics, language and environmental-related activities (ERA), special education, and books.
3. Both primary and secondary teachers from all 13 project schools and non-project schools in Kilinochchi received the capacity building training on all identified components of inclusive and child-centred teaching/learning such as multi-level teaching, second national language learning, environment-related areas, learning with difficulties, activity-based learning on math, science and technical studies, ICT skills development, reading habit improvement, and library management. Teachers were also trained on psychosocial support, positive discipline, and social cohesion.
4. More than 1,900 e-lessons developed for primary and secondary students as well as the operational guideline for digitally twinning classrooms.
5. 25 special education teachers in Kilinochchi were trained to work with children with intellectual disabilities and autism through training organized by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education.
6. School committee members including principals of 13 project schools participated in training on bookkeeping, report writing, and empowerment programme for school improvement.
7. School development committees agreed to further engage in community awareness activities under their school development plans.
8. More than 2,281,000 students benefitted from safe learning environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through implementing safe school operational guidelines. More than 600 teachers and principals from 13 project schools and education officials from the Northern province were trained on digital teaching and learning materials.
9. Papers for printing test sheets and other educational materials (17,000 A4, 1,700 A3) and 290,000 exercise books were provided in the Northern province as emergency supplies to ensure continuous learning for children, including the most disadvantaged, amidst the ongoing economic crisis.

The baseline report and KAP survey report are in place. The rapid baseline report presents the analysis of data mostly collected through school questionnaires and pre-training questionnaires administered to teachers before participating in Project interventions. The KAP survey report offers a comprehensive understanding of the above-mentioned 7 selected themes promoted through the awareness raising component of the Project, through quantitative and qualitative surveys. The endline and KAP endline survey reports are being finalized and will be shared with the selected institution/consultancy once ready. The findings of these exercises will provide the most updated results on the Project.

The currently available documents are the Project document, the logical framework, the Year 3 and 4 annual progress reports, the baseline KAP survey report, and the baseline survey report. Key documents are available via a link where resource material and general communications with bidders will be placed: [KEY DOCUMENTS LINK.](#)

The intended utilization of the evaluation is to generate substantive evidence and lessons learned on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project, to assess equity, gender equality, human rights-based approach, environment, technologies (ICT) applied in the Project planning and implementation, and to document good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for future anticipated project design and advocacy for scaling up. The

prospective users of the evaluation will be the Sri Lanka national and sub-national education authorities in Northern Province, schoolteachers and principals, UNICEF and KOICA.

UNICEF Sri Lanka is seeking an experienced and qualified institution to enter a service contract to conduct the final evaluation of the UNICEF's Educational Environment Improvement Project in Sri Lanka funded by KOICA. The evaluation will be conducted in full compliance with the UNEG norms and standards, including United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, 2016 UNEG Ethical Guideline 2020 UNICEF 2021 Procedure on Ethics to conduct Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations.

Ethical considerations - The UNEG Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations shall apply to all stages of the evaluation. Where the evaluation involves the participation of members of vulnerable groups, evaluators must be aware of and comply with legal codes governing interviewing vulnerable groups and the required ethical clearances obtained beforehand.

Objectives and Purpose

This evaluation is intended to unveil the nature of the change that has taken place in 1) access to improved physical learning environments and materials; 2) improved teaching and learning approaches; and 3) a safe learning environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges/bottlenecks faced in implementation. Comparing with the baseline studies will provide further insights. The results from this exercise will be utilized to enable any adjustment/redirection that may be necessary for future interventions and to strengthen and inform the discussions and programmes on improving learning environment and enhancing child-centred teaching/learning planned in Kilinochchi, Northern province.

The overall purposes of this summative evaluation are:

- To determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project
- To assess cross-cutting issues of equity, gender equality, human rights, environment, and technology (ICT) applied in the project planning and implementation
- To draw recommendations for future anticipated project design and advocacy for scaling up

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the **relevance** of the Project in terms of the justification for such an intervention, design and implementation strategy
- To assess the **effectiveness** of the Project to what extent the Project has achieved its objectives
- To assess the **efficiency** of the implementation process
- To assess the **sustainability** of the project intervention on maintaining and scaling up the benefits drawn by the Project.

The main users of the evaluation will be as follows.

- Provincial and Zonal Education Authorities and other line sub-national authorities in Northern Province
- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- UNICEF (Colombo office and Kilinochchi field office)
- School teachers and principals
- KOICA

Those key stakeholders will be engaged through participatory evaluation methodologies (which will be further determined at the inception phase)

1. Scope of Evaluation:

The evaluation will focus on the Educational Environment Improvement Project intervention **supported by UNICEF in Kilinochchi, Northern Province primarily targeting 13 project schools** (9 target schools and 4 model schools) implemented **from October 2018 to December 2022**.

The evaluation will focus on the following:

- Regulatory Framework, including relevant policies, plans, strategic and legal documents
- Implementation period of the Project: October 2018 – December 2022
- Sub-sector: Primary and secondary education (13 project schools)
- Geographical scope: Kilinochchi, Northern Province
- Interventions: All related Project interventions and references – including: construction/refurbishment of schools, educational materials/furniture/equipment, teacher training curriculum contents, materials and delivery mechanism including ICT-based learning, planning and monitoring mechanism, monitoring reports, awareness and capacity building of stakeholders etc.

The suggested stakeholders to be surveyed include (to be finalized at the inception phase):

- Central level: MoE
- Sub-national level: Provincial MoE, PDE, In-Service Advisors (ISAs), Zonal Education Offices (under provincial office), Department of Building of Northern Province
- School and community level: teachers, school principals, parents
- UNICEF: Colombo office and Kilinochchi field office
- NGO implementing partners (OfERR Ceylon, Room to Read, and Yarl IT Hub)
- University of Jaffna

2. Project Locations: Kilinochchi, Northern Province

3. Estimated Duration of Contract:

Start date: January 2023

End date: April 2023 (non-negotiable)

4. Supervisor/Management:

- Supervisor/Approving Authority of the contract: Chief of Education (UNICEF Sri Lanka Country Office)
- Evaluation Manager: Statistics and Monitoring Specialist (UNICEF Sri Lanka Country Office)
- Overall day-to-day management: International Consultant (UNICEF Sri Lanka Country Office)
- Field operation in the Northern Province: Education Officer and National Consultant (UNICEF Sri Lanka, Northern Province field)
- In the event that on-site quality assurance is needed when the supervisor cannot be present, the QA role in the field may be delegated to the Education Officer/National Consultant of the UNICEF Country Office based in the Northern Province.
- Once the draft report is produced, the QA will need to be done by the UNICEF Regional Office (RO) before the report is finalised.
- Evaluation Reference Group (ERG): An ERG will be created for quality assurance and support for the evaluation. The ERG will engage members from MoE, provincial and zonal authorities and UNICEF (Sri Lanka Country Office). The reference group will be chaired by the evaluation manager and assists her/him in monitoring and supervising the evaluation, including: discussing and clearing the TOR, sharing available information, validating the evaluation question, commenting on draft reports, assisting with feedback on the findings and making recommendations. Each key milestones of the evaluation will be closely consulted and seek advice and technical support from RO Evaluation Advisor /Specialist. A full TOR of the ERG will be drafted.

5. Description of assignment:

The evaluation needs to generate substantive evidence and knowledge on the results and impact of the Project in Kilinochchi, Northern province. The assessment will focus on the Project intervention **supported by UNICEF in Kilinochchi, Northern Province** targeting **13 project schools** (9 target schools and 4 model schools) implemented **from October 2018 to December 2022**.

The evaluation criteria to be used will be the standards OECD-DAC covering relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Below are a set of sub-questions that are required to be answered for each evaluation criteria.

➤ **RELEVANCE**

- How relevant are the Project design, results, and implementation strategies for the context of the Kilinochchi, Northern Province and education systems/policies in Sri Lanka?
- How relevant are the other key Project activities in achieving the Project objectives, for the targeted children to: 1) access to improved physical learning environments and materials; 2) benefit from improved teaching and learning approaches; and 3) benefit from a safe environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- What are the positives and negatives? How could it be improved?

➤ **EFFECTIVENESS**

To what extent and how has the Project **achieved its objectives**?

- What were the major factors influencing the achievement of the Project?
- To what extent and how has the Project helped improve learning environment in project schools?
- To what extent and how has the Project supported teachers and educational stakeholders to build capacity for child-friendly teaching/learning and to adopt them in practices?
- How and what differences have come about for other beneficiaries – education officials, principals, communities, parents, and students?
- Were there any barriers/negativities surrounding the approach by stakeholders? How were these addressed?

To what extent has the UNICEF facilitation promoted **effective working mechanisms** amongst the stakeholders of the programme?

- How effective were the different governance and quality assurance structures established in the Project intervention? What are the key elements for successful governance and quality assurance?

➤ **EFFICIENCY**

- Was the Project managed and coordinated efficiently with relevant stakeholders?
- How can the different cost elements be more cost-effective?

➤ **SUSTAINABILITY**

- To what extent did the Project build on and contribute to build capacities of the existing national, provincial, zonal and local government and its systems in delivering child-centred teaching/learning in primary and secondary education?
- To what extent does the Project and its intervention have a potential for scaling and mainstreaming? Is there political will to support child-centred teaching/learning and improving learning environment in the education system?
- To which extent the Project is externally driven and to which extent owned/managed by government. How much of a continuous “external input” does it require (e.g. monitoring, training, provision of materials) and what are the implications and requirements for potentially transitioning to a complete government-run/owned intervention?
- What are some of the lessons learned from the Project on scaling up successful pilots or small-scale implementations?
- What new capacities within education services or communities have been established or restored?
- To what extent the government has sufficient financial and human resources and capacity to keep up the benefits produced by the Project?

- To what extent have the stakeholders (PDE, ZDEs, MOE, Schools) undertaken the necessary decisions and course of action to ensure the sustainability of the results of the Project?
- How have UNICEF and stakeholders ensured government and school ownership during the Project intervention?

➤ **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

- To what extent have equity, HRBA, gender equality, environment, technology (ICT) goals and processes been incorporated into the planning and implementation of the project interventions?
- To what extent has the Project been effective to advance equitable access and learning?
- To what extent did the different groups, including children with disabilities and other most marginalised children, benefit from the Project?

6. Proposed Methodology

Bidders are required to present their best ideas as part of the technical proposal. The quality and relevance of the methodology section will, together with the quality of the proposed team, determine whether a bidder is deemed technically qualified. Bidders should display the ability to identify, conceptualize, and manage a range of methods to answer the evaluation questions.

The following is intended to offer useful information on actual or potential resources and limits.

- It is proposed to carry out the evaluation in four phases: i) Inception ii) Data collection iii) Analysis and reporting iv) Knowledge dissemination.
- For the bid, the bidders are requested to provide a detailed technical proposal. The technical proposal should present (not limited to) a detailed strategy for collecting and analyzing data, comprising both primary and secondary data and utilizing both qualitative and quantitative tools. The methodological design has to be included in the technical proposal including: a sampling strategy, the target groups, the sample size and analytical framework; and a detailed work plan. The proposed methodology in the technical proposal of the successful bidder will be discussed and refined at the inception phase. In the case of primary data collection, interviews will cover (but not limited to this list) the key stakeholders that includes central and sub-national authorities, school and community level stakeholders, UNICEF and implementing partners. The primary data collection will include both Key informant interviews and focus group discussions as needed.
- Key suggested variables include (not limited to): pre- and post-comparison of project schools; grades; typologies of schools and teachers; variations in the implementation, and governance and quality assurance mechanism. These variables will be further defined during the inception phase.
- An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established consisting of key stakeholders in the education system who can provide inputs into the methodology. ERG will also provide quality assurance of the products at key milestones throughout the evaluation.
- Data should be disaggregated by relevant criteria (wherever possible): age, grade, gender, marginalized and vulnerable groups, etc. All findings to the largest possible extent be triangulated (use of three or more sources of information to verify and substantiate an assessment) and validated.
- Before finalizing the report, a participatory validation workshop should be organized, during which main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation will be discussed, validated and finalized. This will also be the opportunity to receive clarifications and/or request additional information to fill in data gaps before the final report is drafted.
- In preparing the evaluation report, the findings should be evidence-based and should have clear references to the source. The conclusions and recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis, be relevant and realistic and presented in a comprehensive manner that makes the information easy to understand by the intended audience. The final report in hard and electronic copies should be in standard

format for printing. A PowerPoint presentation highlighting the key components of the final report should also be presented.

- Level of effort: As part of the technical bid, bidders are required to list the expected level of effort [in person days] to be supplied by the team members. This will help the review panel determine if sufficient effort is being committed to the methods that are described in the methodology section.
- Following the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards and to the GEROS Quality Assessment System the structure of the final evaluation report will include the following sections.
 - Acknowledgements
 - Abbreviations
 - Executive summary (must serve as a stand-alone summary on its own)
 - Background
 - Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope
 - Evaluation methodology and limitations
 - Evaluation findings based on DCA criteria
 - Evaluation conclusion and lessons learnt
 - Recommendations
- The length of the evaluation report (excluding the annexes specified below) should be between 40-60 pages. The report needs to be written in line with the UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards ([link](#)).
- In addition, the final report should contain the following annexes (*to be finalized during the Inception Phase*):
 - Terms of Reference for the evaluation
 - Evaluation tools
 - List of meetings/interviews/focus groups discuss etc. conducted
 - Names of Key stakeholders interviewed
 - Records of interviews and focus group discussions etc.
 - Photos taken during field missions of interventions
 - List of documents reviewed
 - Any other relevant material
- The evaluation will be guided by commonly accepted evaluation norms, standards and approaches. Specifically, the evaluation should be guided by the UNEG guiding framework methodology. It will ensure *utility* (ownership by stakeholders), *feasibility* (political viability and cost-effectiveness), *propriety* (impartiality, respect for rights of stakeholders, cultural sensitivity) and *accuracy* (adequate information). UNICEF's *Evaluation Report Standards*² should be followed when preparing the evaluation report.
- The final evaluation report will be with all annexes both in softcopy and hardcopy format incorporating feedback and comments from UNICEF and ERG, along with specific, simple and achievable recommendations for future policy and programmatic improvement to be made by the government, as well as specific recommendations for UNICEF's assistance to address the key issues highlighted through the evaluation results.
- The final report should conform to the UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards and will be evaluated using the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System Evaluation Report Quality Assessment Rating tool. More details on this are available [here](#).
- Ethical considerations - This evaluation will be held to the highest standards employed by UNICEF for the conduct of evaluations and research. Special measures will be put in place to ensure that the evaluation process is ethical and that the participants in the evaluation process can openly express their opinion. The sources of information will be protected and known only to the evaluator(s). The Evaluation Team will ensure ethical conduct in data generation. Specific attention should be paid to issues specifically relating to:

2 <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/607>

- Harm and benefits.
- Informed consent.
- Privacy and confidentiality; and
- Conflict of interest of the evaluation informants.
- The UNEG Code of Conduct³ and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations⁴ shall apply to all stages of the evaluation. Where the evaluation involves the participation of members of vulnerable groups, children in particular, evaluators must be aware of and comply with legal codes governing interviewing children and young people. Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. Evaluators must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source so that the relevant individuals are protected from reprisals.

Timeframe: The contract will start in January 2023. While the contract will last till April 2023 to fully complete all the tasks, the final report will need to be ready by 15 April 2023.

Key Activity	Deliverables/End Product	Time Frame (From date of contract award)
Phase I – Inception		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive literature review and preliminary discussions with the UNICEF/ERG on project approach, theories, and activities of the project 	Literature review and preliminary discussions	One week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detailed Inception Report describing initial findings based on the literature review, the evaluation methodology, draft set of tools, detailed work plan, roles and responsibilities of each team member and the outline of the final report 	Inception Report	One week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-test and finalize the tools (both in English and translated into Tamil) 	Finalized tools	One week
Phase II – Data Collection		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection 	Data collection conducted	Two weeks
Phase III – Analysis and Reporting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis and develop a first draft report for UNICEF comments 	First draft report	Two weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate comments and produce updated draft for validation by UNICEF/ERG 	Updated draft report incorporating the comments	One week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validate the updated draft, incorporate validation comments and prepare a final report 	Validation and final report	One week
Phase IV – Knowledge Dissemination		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the PowerPoint Presentation and summarized knowledge products in English (Tamil translation will be done by UNICEF afterwards) 	PPT and Knowledge products	One week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the Evaluation findings/ recommendations at a UNICEF organised event. 	One day event	One day
		10 weeks

³ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

⁴ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

Estimated cost:

Payment schedule will be as follows:

First payment: 30%, upon completion of Phase I

Second Payment: 30%, upon completion of Phase II

Third payment: 40%, upon full completion of all Phases (Phase 1 to Phase IV)

7. Reporting Requirements:

- Quality assurance: every stage of the evaluation process will be subjected to review and clearance by UNICEF. Clearance will be required by the ERG at selected key milestones to be specified in the ERG TOR. The evaluation team would also need to maintain audit trails and meeting minutes etc.
- Weekly updates and touch base meetings – the contracting agency should share weekly updates of activities taken place to UNICEF and as required organize touch base meetings to discuss any issues/concerns to ensure the evaluation progress in line with the expected requirements and timeline.
- Adhere to UNICEF's Reporting Standards - The service providers are required to adhere to UNICEF Evaluation Reporting Standards which will be shared during the inception phase.

8. Qualification or specialized knowledge/experience required for the assignment:

- This contract will be awarded to an institution and not to an individual or team of individuals not sponsored by an institution. Should be a legal entity with a valid Business Registration Certificate.
- A consortium of 2 or more institutions may make a joint bid. In this case there must be a lead institution named that will be the sole point of contact with UNICEF for contract management purposes.
- At least one team member must have a history of working in Sri Lanka. If a consortium, at least one partner must have a history of working in the country.
- At least ten years of related experience as an institution. Has a proven record of undertaking qualitative and quantitative research and assessments with reputed organizations, governments, giving details of jobs undertaken and completed, name of the organizations with their contact numbers, duration, coverage of such survey work, etc.
- Has experience in high-quality education evaluation, data collection, research and analysis and delivering support services.
- Is a qualified and experienced institution with multi-disciplinary team of consultants (could be a blend of both international and national) with experience in designing and conducting evaluation for primary and secondary education.

Team Leader

A team leader must be named. She/he will direct all parts of the effort. The leader will be the person accountable in the organization's name to UNICEF. The leader will coordinate and supervise the work all teams or persons of the organization in their contributing roles. She/he will ensure the quality of the process, outputs, methodology and timely delivery of all products. The team leader will take direct responsibility for all deliverables being of satisfactory quality. The leader will ensure that the deliverables emerge in a timely fashion as a result of an in-depth analytic process as well as ongoing consultation with the organizers of the regional consultation and the steering committee.

The key qualifications of the Team Leader include:

- At least ten years of professional experience in evaluations/research/analytic review exercises, preferably in education, with evidence of understanding global standards, theories, models and methods related to evaluations and research.
- Well experienced in the field of primary and secondary education focused on child-centred teaching-learning and student-friendly learning environment. Strong familiarity with the socio-cultural context of South Asia and the issues facing education in the region as an advantage.

- Proven experience in designing, leading and conducting evidence syntheses that involve a range of source materials. To include familiarity with the types of evidence that arise when examining the issues of this consultancy.
- Advocacy and social engagement skills necessary for dealing with technical experts, implementing partners, and education leaders that will be consulted.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English required.
- Demonstrated ability to supervise a team of co-workers.

Other Team Member(s) should have the following qualifications:

- Team member(s) should have Master's degrees in Education, Sociology, Economics, Social Sciences, Statistics or a related field (CVs required).
- Each member should have extensive experience in programme evaluation (5 or more years), at least one of the evaluations being related to primary/secondary education. Provision of sample work is required.
- Experience in the use of participatory appraisal techniques in data collection, sensitive to gender issues.
- Strong familiarity with the international literature and issues related to child-centred teaching-learning in primary and secondary education.
- The team member(s) should have excellent writing and communication skills in English and Tamil (Reference and production of sample work required), and preferably have team members who are native Tamil speakers with sufficient experience in conducting focus group discussions in all settings.
- Background knowledge on UNICEF work in education and expertise in results- and human rights-based programme management will be an advantage.

9. Conditions:

- The end product and all outputs pertaining to this assignment remains the exclusive property of UNICEF SLCO and will not be used in any form by the institution without prior agreement.
- The contract will include all costs to be incurred and UNICEF will not be liable to pay any charges extraneous to the contract value.

Annex 2. KEY PROJECT INDICATORS

Summary of the project indicators:

IMPACT	
Indicator 1	% of children who obtained 70 and above marks in Grade 5 Scholarship Examination in targeted schools
Indicator 2	% of children who achieved improved learning outcomes of O/level assessment in targeted school for secondary level
OUTCOMES	
Outcome 1	Children have access to improved physical learning environments and materials in the targeted schools
Indicator 1.1	# children that have access to quality and child friendly facilities
Outcome 2:	Children benefit from improved teaching and learning approaches adopted by teachers in the targeted schools
Indicator 2.1	% children reached through programmes that aim to support more effective learning
Outcome 3: (per Amended Agreement signed on 29 June 2020):	Children benefit from a safe environment and quality education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
OUTPUTS	
Output 1.1	Enhanced quality of and types of facilities available in the targeted schools
Indicator 1.1.1	# schools with improved facilities in line with the required needs and as per government standards
Indicator 1.1.2	# schools that received equipment and materials, including those for children with special needs
Activity 1.1.1	Construction/renovation of new classrooms and facilities
Activity 1.1.2	Provision of furniture and equipment, including special education equipment
Output 1.2	Increased availability and use of quality teaching and learning materials in the targeted schools
Indicator 1.2.1	# of schools with quality teaching and learning materials
Activity 1.2.1	Provision of learning and reading materials for students
Activity 1.2.2	Provision of resource materials for teachers
Output 2.1	Increased capacity of teachers, principals and in-service advisors to use more effective teaching approaches and provide psychosocial support # of targeted schools implementing more inclusive and child-centred teaching and learning approaches adopted by teachers
Indicator 2.1.1	# targeted schools with capacity (having the teachers trained) on inclusive and child-centred teaching and learning practices
Indicator 2.1.2	# education officials that participated in the study tour and have a well-defined action plan
Indicator 2.1.3	# of targeted schools that adopted the initiatives to promote psychosocial well-being and social cohesion
Indicator 2.1.4	# teachers trained that have increased knowledge and skills on special education teaching methodology for children with disabilities
Indicator 2.1.5	# and types of school management committees functioning

Activity 2.1.1:	Capacity building of teachers and ISAs on effective child centered teaching approaches
Activity 2.1.2:	Conduct of a study trip for local education officials from provincial and zonal levels
Activity 2.1.3:	Capacity building of teachers and ISAs on psychosocial support, positive disciplining and career guidance
Activity 2.1.4:	Capacity building of teachers and ISAs on inclusive teaching methods
Activity 2.1.5	Capacity building of principals on school management to promote a child friendly and peaceful learning environment
Output 2.2:	Increased community awareness on the importance of education and social cohesion
Indicator 2.2.1	2.2.1: # of school development committees participating in and implementing community awareness programmes
Activity 2.2.1:	Conduct of community level awareness programmes
Activity 2.2.2	Strengthen parental participation in school development initiatives

Source: Project Documents and Project Monitoring Framework, June 2019

For the community mobilisation component (Output 2.2), additional indicators were defined during the KAP baseline study:

Key project indicators

Thematic area	Key project indicators (parents)	Key project indicators (children)
Health/Nutrition/WASH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents/caregivers who are aware of the nutritious value of different types of food • % of parents/caregivers who prepare nutritious food that are tasty and easily cooked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of girls and boys who are aware of the nutritious value of different types of food • % of girls and boys who consume nutritious foods that are tasty and easily cooked
Importance of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who understand the significance of continued education for children • % of parents who are aware of the negative consequence to the child for dropping out of school • % of the parents who affirmed their commitment to support their children's education for at least 16 years 	
Reading culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who provide children reading materials and reading space at home • % of parents who read at home regularly in the past 7 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of girls and boys who say their parents provide them reading materials and reading space at home • % girls and boys who say they regularly read at home in the past 7 days
ICT in education and online safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who are computer literate • % of parents who have explained to children rules of online safety • % of parents who know how to keep children safe online (report abuse buttons) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of girls and boys who say they know online risks • % of girls and boys who say they know how to use internet security features (report abuse buttons) • % of girls and boys who say they know how to use internet security

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who know how to keep children safe online (social networking sites privacy settings) • % of parents who feel that children should be encouraged to develop their ICT skills 	features (social networking sites privacy settings)
Corporal punishment at homes and violence-free schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who talk to children to discipline them • % of parents who disapprove of corporal punishment for children • % of parents who are aware of the harmful consequences of corporal punishment for children 	
Social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who believe that encouraging school-age children to interact more with friends of different backgrounds is beneficial • % of parents who think schools promote social cohesion among children 	
Children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parents who agree that children with disabilities should be engaged in learning/education • % of parents who agree that children with disabilities should attend school 	

Source: KAP Baseline Study

Annex 3. PROJECT SCHOOL PROFILES

The information provided below is extracted from the Endline Study Report.

INTRODUCTION

All the 13 target schools provide primary education. Four of the schools only provide teaching at the primary level. Nine schools provide teaching at lower secondary level (GCE/O.L.) and three schools cater for the GCE/A.L. level. Three of the schools have special education units.

STUDENT AND TEACHER POPULATION

Table 5 presents data on the school teacher population in the 13 project schools. At baseline, the total population was 320, at endline, 313. The number of primary teachers dropped over the past 4 years from 121 to 101, while the number of secondary school teachers slightly increased from 199 to 206.

Table 6 presents data on the school student population. **At baseline, the student population of the project schools was 5,111 in total (2019) and dropped to 4,309 at endline (2022).** The greatest reduction is found in children of secondary school age. 16 children with Special Educational Needs were enrolled in regular classes in 2022 and 18 in Special Educational Units. There are three hypotheses for the reduction in enrolment in project schools: (i) the population growth has been neutral or negative in recent years in the Northern Province, which might impact on the overall number of school-age children; (ii) there is anecdotal evidence that parents have removed their children from far-away schools to the benefit of local schools to avoid costly commutes due to the fuel crisis, which might have affected enrolment, particularly in some secondary schools; (iii) increased dropout due to months of distance and online learning and the economic crisis which might have put pressure on the poorest families and the education of their children.

Table 5 Number of teachers by education level and disability

SCHOOLS	NO OF TEACHERS								
	Primary			Secondary			Total		
	Baseline	2021	2022	Baseline	2021	2022	Baseline	2021	2022
Hn/Palai Hindu Primary Vid	11	12	12	0	0	0	11	12	12
Kn/Soranpattu CCTMS	4	4	4	0	0	0	4	4	4
Kn/ Iyakkachi GTMS	7	5	3	14	24	22	21	29	25
Kn/Sivapathakalyaham GTMS	9	9	6	18	20	19	27	29	25
Kn/ Kn/Kilihindu Primary Vid	23	24	19	0	0	0	23	24	19
Kn/St' Theresa Girls' college	13	12	11	38	35	39	51	47	50
Kn/Kanakambikaikulam GTMS	6	5	7	18	20	11	24	25	18
Kn/Mulankavil Primary	14	12	12	0	0	0	14	12	12
Kn/ Iranaithivu RCTMS	6	6	6	15	21	23	21	27	29
Kn/karyalai Nagapaduwan-no2	4	6	6	12	14	12	16	20	18
Kn/Mutkompan MV	9	10	8	25	26	25	34	36	33
Kn/Piramananthanaru MV	6	5	6	33	28	28	39	33	34
Kn/ Ramanathapuram East	9	8	7	26	23	27	35	31	34
TOTAL	121	109	101	199	211	206	320	329	313

Table 6 Student population by education level, sex and disability or Special Educational Needs (SEN)

SCHOOLS	EDUCATION LEVELS				NO OF STUDENTS									No of children with disabilities	NO of SEN students in regular classes		NO SEN students in SEU	
	1-5	6-11	AL	SEU	Baseline			2021			2022			Baseline	2021	2022	2021	2022
					Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	T	T	T	T	T
Hn/Palai Hindu Primary Vid	✓				158	151	309	301	0	301	286	0	286	0	0	0		
Kn/Soranpattu CCTMS	✓				13	10	23	30	0	30	29	0	29	1	0	0		
Kn/ Iyakkachi GTMS	✓	✓		✓	122	117	239	80	142	222	80	138	218	9	2	4	6	5
Kn/Sivapathakalyaham GTMS*	✓	✓			234	210	444	160	256	416	130	246	376	2	0	0		
Kn/ Kn/Kilihindu Primary Vid	✓				232	237	469	405	0	405	370	0	370	2	0	0		
Kn/St' Theresa Girls' College *	✓	✓	✓	✓	127	766	893	212	563	775	199	373	572	10	5	3	6	6
Kn/Kanakambikaikulam GTMS	✓	✓			167	141	308	100	165	265	88	174	262	4	3	3		
Kn/Mulankavil Primary	✓				161	163	324	277	NA	277	260	NA	260	5	1	1		
Kn/ Iranaithivu RCTMS	✓	✓			209	194	403	199	189	388	169	149	318	3	1	?		
Kn/karyalai Nagapaduwan-no2 GTMS	✓	✓			81	82	163	74	107	181	71	113	184	2	0	0		
Kn/Mutkompan MV	✓	✓	✓		269	219	488	139	314	453	148	348	496	6	5	5		
Kn/Piramananthanaru MV*	✓	✓	✓	✓	266	254	520	120	381	501	101	384	485	20	0	0	7	7
Kn/ Ramanathapuram East GTMS	✓	✓			256	272	528	141	327	468	137	316	453	2	3	0		
TOTAL	13	9	3	3	2295	2816	5111	2238	2444	4682	2068	2241	4309	66	20	16	19	18

* Schools with a Special Education Unit.

Annex 4. KEY ENDLINE STUDIES DATA

INFORMING THE EVALUATION

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Table 7 Grade 5 Examination pass rate (above 70%), by school, 2016-2021

Schools	2016	2017	2018	Average 16-18	2019	2020	2021	Average 19-21
Hn/Palai Hindu Primary Vid	77%	78%	71%	75%	-	86%	79%	82%
Kn/Soranpattu CCTMS	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	100%	100%
Kn/ Iyakkachi GTMS	89%	50%	60%	66%	-	73%	77%	75%
Kn/Sivapathakalyaham GTMS	43%	58%	47%	49%	55%	58%	57%	57%
Kn/ Kn/Kilihindu Primary Vid	80%	67%	87%	78%	93%	83%	89%	88%
Kn/St' Theresa Girls' College	82%	79%	86%	82%	89%	75%	79%	81%
Kn/Kanakambikaikulam GTMS	86%	79%	64%	76%	81%	88%	94%	88%
Kn/Mulankavil Primary	79%	68%	82%	76%	95%	86%	90%	90%
Kn/ Iranaithivu RCTMS	58%	43%	53%	52%	87%	25%	53%	55%
Kn/karyalai Nagapaduwan-no2 GTMS	50%	69%	86%	69%	94%	60%	65%	73%
Kn/Mutkompan MV	82%	63%	65%	70%	69%	62%	59%	63%
Kn/Piramananthanaru MV	92%	90%	95%	92%	-	97%	77%	87%
Kn/ Ramanathapuram East GTMS	76%	60%	74%	70%	-	78%	85%	82%
Total	77%	70%	75%	74%	83%	75%	77%	79%

Source: Zone Offices for Kilinochchi North and South.

Table 8 G.C.E. / O.L. Examination pass rate (qualified for GCE/AL), by school, 2016-2021

Schools	2016	2017	2018	Average 16-18	2019	2020	2021	Average 19-21
Hn/Palai Hindu Primary Vid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kn/Soranpattu CCTMS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kn/ Iyakkachi GTMS	32%	32%	50%	38%	-	31%	92%	62%
Kn/Sivapathakalyaham GTMS	16%	16%	29%	20%	45%	68%	68%	60%
Kn/ Kn/Kilihindu Primary Vid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kn/St' Theresa Girls' College	85%	70%	81%	79%	95%	74%	68%	79%
Kn/Kanakambikaikulam GTMS	39%	33%	44%	39%	95%	77%	71%	81%
Kn/Mulankavil Primary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kn/ Iranaithivu RCTMS	9%	22%	17%	16%	50%	38%	33%	40%
Kn/karyalai Nagapaduwan-no2 GTMS	-	-	-	-	-	100%	86%	62%
Kn/Mutkompan MV	28%	19%	43%	30%	49%	77%	77%	68%
Kn/Piramananthanaru MV	42%	66%	61%	56%	-	49%	94%	72%
Kn/ Ramanathapuram East GTMS	18%	28%	42%	29%	-	50%	73%	62%
Total	34%	36%	46%	38%	67%	63%	74%	68%

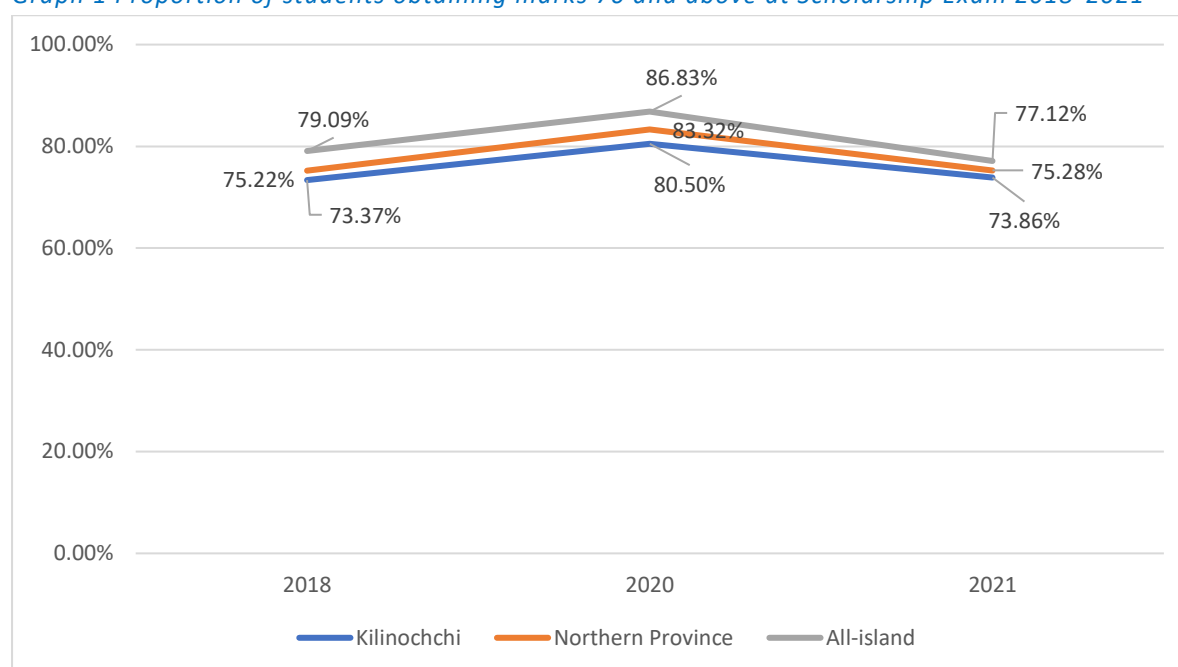
Source: Zone Offices for Kilinochchi North and South.

Table 9 G.C.E. / A.L. Examination pass rate, by school, 2016-2021

Schools	2016	2017	2018	Average 16-18	2019	2020	2021	Average 19-21
Kn/St' Theresa Girls' College	80%	79%	66%	75%	66%	89%	52%	69%
Kn/Mutkompan MV	50%	90%	78%	73%	62%	0%*	55%	39%
Kn/Piramananthanaru MV	75%	86%	61%	74%		83%	56%	70%
Total	68%	85%	68%	74%	64%	57%	54%	59%

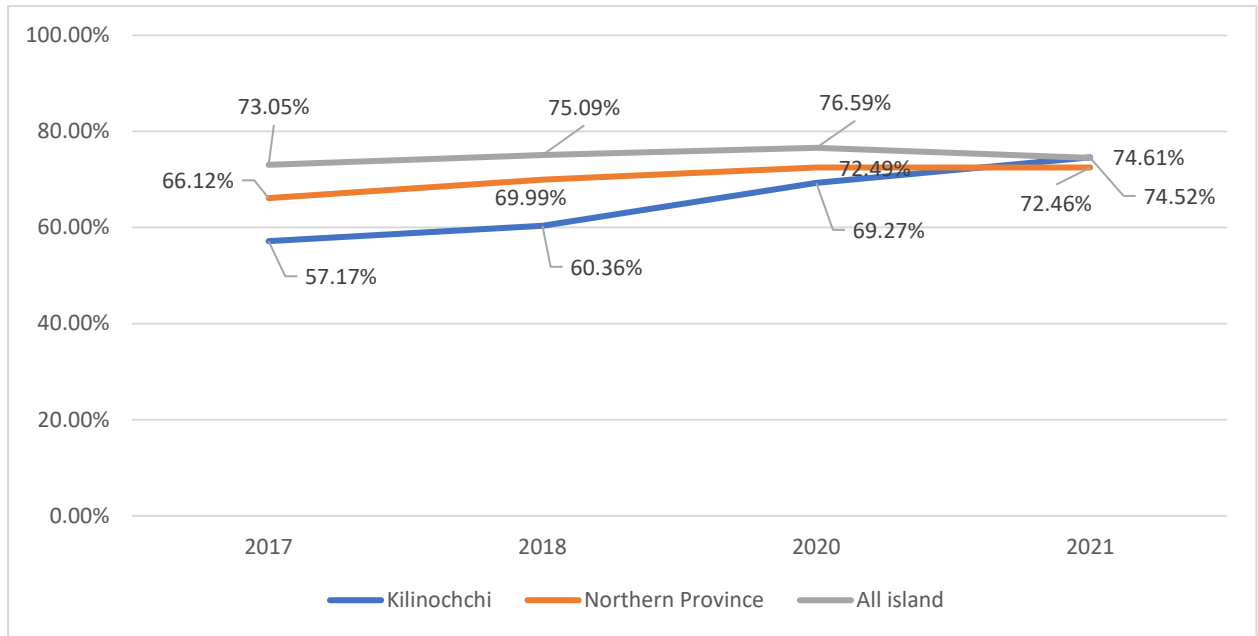
Source: Zone Offices for Kilinochchi North and South. * Note that this is based on only 1 student sitting and failing the exam.

Graph 1 Proportion of students obtaining marks 70 and above at Scholarship Exam 2018-2021



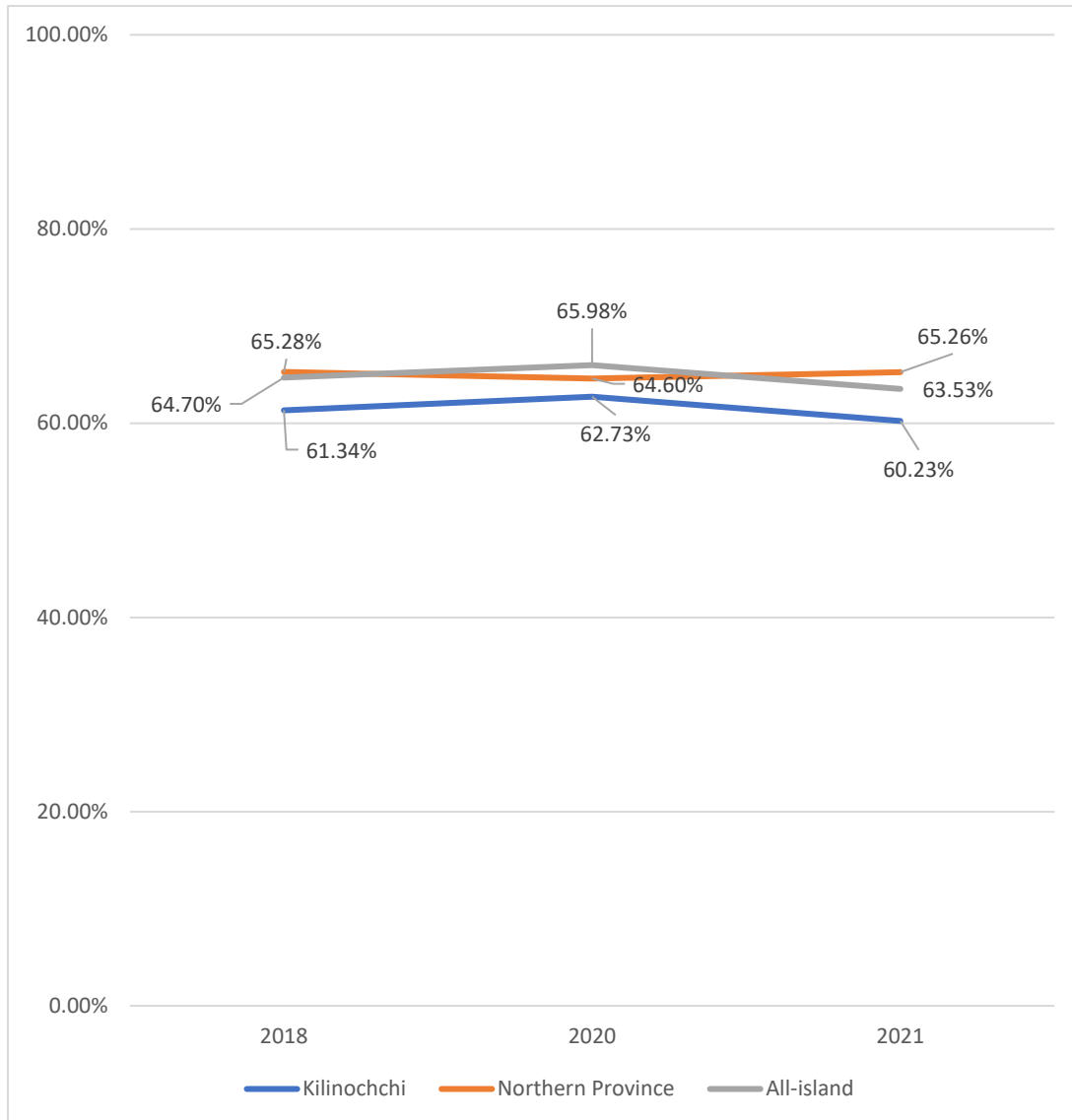
Source: Department of Examination of Sri Lanka (2021) Grade 5 Scholarship Examination 2021 – Performance of Candidates.

Graph 2 Proportion of students passing the CGE/OL Exam (qualified for GCE/AL), 2017-2021



Source: Department of Examination of Sri Lanka (2021) G.C.E. (O/L) Examination 2021 – Performance of Candidates.

Graph 3 Proportion of students passing the CGE (A/L) Exam 2018-2021



Source: Department of Examination of Sri Lanka, G.C.E. (A/L) Examination – Performance of Candidates, 2018, 2020, 2021

Annex 5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE INITIAL METHODOLOGY

The information below is extracted from the draft evaluation reports from the original evaluation team:

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews of key stakeholders and officials to obtain first-hand knowledge and information on the relevant subject of interest. Key informants are selected based on the data that is required to be collected to meet the needs of the client. The interviews were conducted by administering -semi-structured questions, relying on a list of the areas to be discussed. The interviews were conducted either in Tamil or in English by two consultants who are conversant in Tamil and English. The time taken for each KII was 45 to 60 minutes. Data collected from all KIIs were translated and transcribed.

Table 10 Key Informant List

Informant for the KII		Number of KII
Director of Ministry of Education: Tamil branch		1
Provincial Director of Education: Northern Province		1
Additional provincial director of education		1
Zonal Directors of Education: Kilinochchi North and Kilinochchi South		2
Representative from Department of Building of Northern Province and Director of School Work		2
UNICEF: Kilinochchi and Colombo		2
UNICEF	Community Awareness Component	1
	Construction and Refurbishment	1
	Supply	1
	School level activities and overall support	1
KOICA		1
NGO and implementing partners:	OfERR Ceylon	1
	Room to Read	1
	University of Jaffna	1
	Yarl IT Hub	1
Total		18

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs)

These discussions helped informants like teachers, parents, and school development committees to express their ideas and inputs required for the evaluation of the project. Moreover, it helped the consultant team to penetrate the group and get knowledge on each aspect related to the study.

A total number of **21 FGDs** were conducted from 13th March to 17th March 2023 with the participation of principals, teachers, parents, school development committees, and in-service advisors to bring out their own reflections, ideas, notions, and attitudes toward the targeted illustrations of the project. Each Focused Group Discussion included a selected group of around 10 –

12 participants in order to develop group interactions by allowing participants to build off their answers.

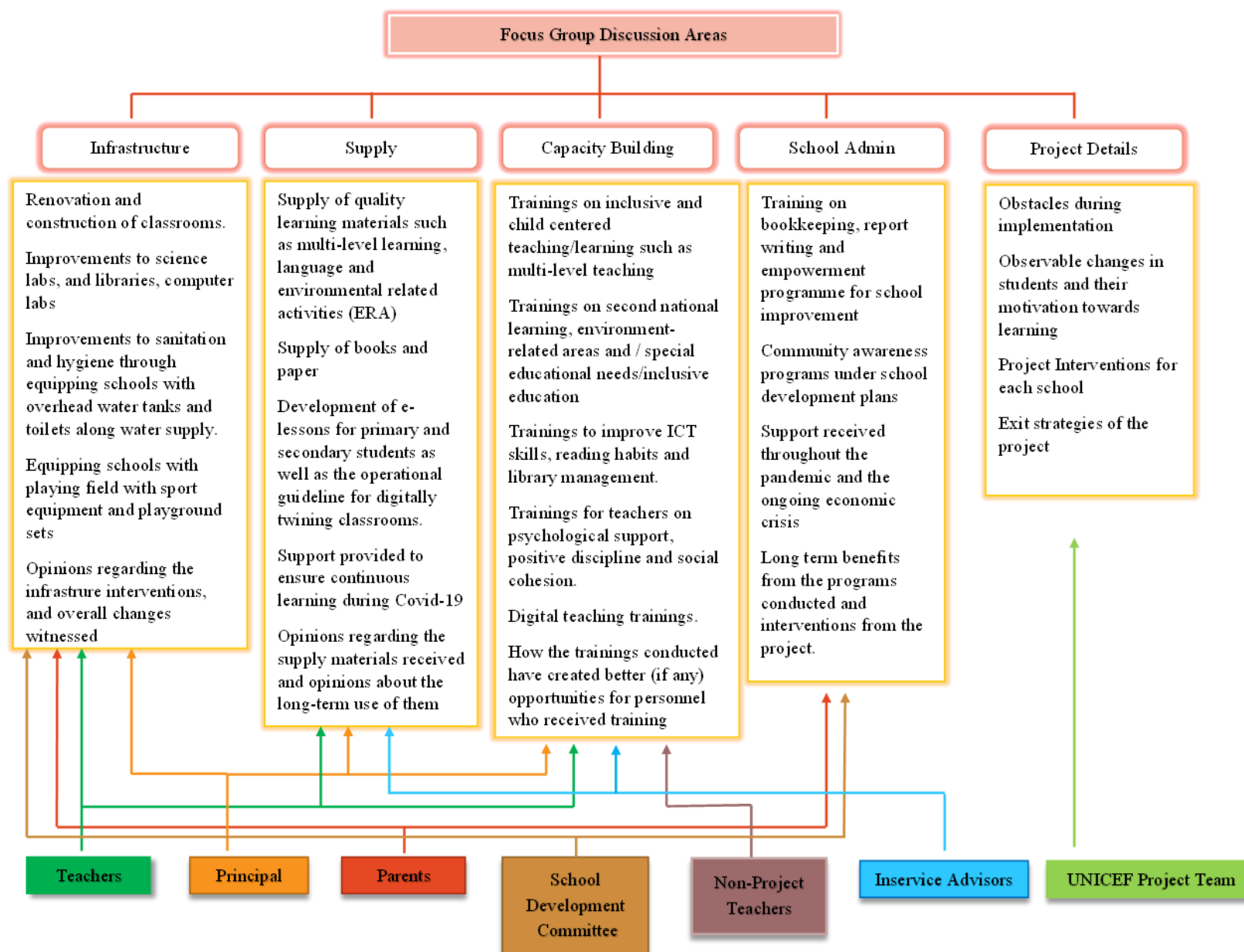
For a **parents and school development committee FGD**, the president and the secretary of the committee of each school were included along with 5-8 other parents of that relevant school. The FGDs for teachers and parents were held within the respective schools, and other FGDs were held in the South Zonal Director's Office.

FGDs were conducted in Tamil by two consultants who are conversant in Tamil and English and two assistants who were also conversant in Tamil. The assistants helped in note-taking to make the consultants' work easier. The time taken for each FGD was 45 to 60 minutes. Data collected from all FGDs were translated and transcribed. Each FGD was conducted in a disturbance-free location which is most convenient for all the parties involved. In order to complete all the FGDs within the given time frame, arrangements were made to hold two parallel FGDs at the same time. FGDs were scheduled to be conducted within four days (from March 13th to 17th). However, it is noteworthy to state that the third day of the week, 15th Wednesday, was misspent as there was a teachers' strike in the country. FGDs scheduled for Wednesday had to be postponed to the next day.

Table 11 Focus Group Discussion List

Target Group	Location	No of FGD	Total
DDEs (Deputy Directors of Education)	PDE-NP	1 (4-5 ppl)	1
Principals	Kilinochchi North and South	1 (6-8 ppl)	1
Teachers	6 Selected Schools	If a selected school is primary level, 1 FGD with primary teachers. If a selected school is secondary, 2 FGD (1 with primary and 1 with secondary teachers)	10
Parents and School Development Committee	6 Selected Schools	6	6
Non-Project School Teachers		1	1
ADEs	Zonal Level (6-10 zones)	1 (7-10ppl)	1
In-Service Advisors	Zonal Level (6-10 zones)	1 (7-10ppl)	1
Total			21

DISCUSSION AREAS



OBSERVATION – CHECKLIST

An observation schedule and a checklist were used to collect data on the provision of infrastructure facilities. Two consultants of the team interviewed principals of 13 schools and filled out the observation schedule. Thereafter, they visited the newly constructed buildings, furniture, and learning resources and observed them for evaluation

CASE STUDIES

Case studies have been developed with the aim to observe, interact and understand the activities as a whole. The advantage of using case studies is that it allows to obtain an in-depth understanding and establish a credible platform required for the evaluation. The case studies were developed along with the checklist from the field visits and observations as well as data collected from the FGDs.

The case studies were developed by selecting schools based on the school type provided: 1AB, IC, Type II, and Type III along with its location.

Table 12 Case Study List

Type Of School	Location	No of Case Studies	Total case studies	School Name
1 AB	Kilinochchi South	1	1	St. Theresa Girls School
1 C	Kilinochchi South	1	1	Mukkopam Primary Vidyalam
Type II	Kilinochchi North	1	2	Iyakkachchi GTMS
	Kilinochchi South	1		Kanakampikaikulam GTMS
Type III	Kilinochchi North	1	2	Soranpattu CCTMS
	Kilinochchi South	1		Kilinochchi Hindu Primary Vidyalayam
Total			6	

Annex 6. LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Informant for the KII		Number of KII	Name of Interviewed Personnel	Date of Interview
Director of Ministry of Education: Tamil branch		1	Ms. Nalini Alalasunderam	21 st March
Provincial Director of Education: Northern Province		1	Mr. T. John Quintuss	11 th March
Additional provincial director of education		1	Mr. K. J. Bratley	7 th March
Zonal Directors of Education: Kilinochchi North		1	Mr. A. Sivanarulrajah	10 th March
Zonal Directors of Education: Kilinochchi South		1	Mr. C. Kamalarajan	10 th March
Representative from Department of Building of Northern Province		1	Eng. K. Eswararajah	21 st March
Director of School Work		1	Eng. Mrs. Apirmy Vithyaparan	20 th March
UNICEF: Kilinochchi		1	Ms. Karthi Sabaratnam	8 th March
UNICEF: Colombo		1	Ms. Takaho Fukami	17 th March
UNICEF	Community Awareness Component	1	Ms. Radika Sivakumaran	18 th March
	Construction and Refurbishment	1	Mr. Anthonypillai Nimaladas	20 th March
	School level activities and overall support	1	Ms. Usitha Rajeevan	21 st March
KOICA		1	Ms. Kim Hyun Jeong	22 nd March
			Mr. Kim Do Yun	
NGO and implementing partners:	OfERR Ceylon	1	Mr. Sutharsan	7 th March
	Room to Read	1	Mr. Arumugam Selvendran	17 th March
	University of Jaffna	1	Dr. R. Vijayakumaran	8 th March
	Yarl IT Hub	1	Mr. Sarveswaran K	9 th March
Total		17		

Source: Draft Evaluation Report