

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Vacancy N° LGCR/15/001**

**Terms of Reference**

**Individual consultancy: Evaluation of Community Pre-School (CPS) Modality**

**Closing Date: Friday 13 February 2015**

**1. Background and Justification**

International research shows that i) access to preschool and early learning improves a child's developmental readiness and capacity for learning throughout life and ii) that there is a high long term investment return from for nations providing quality early childhood learning – as high also \$7 for each \$1 invested.

Results from a study carried out by Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and UNICEF (2007-2010) show that exposure to early learning has positive effects on a child's education, particularly in terms of right age entry to primary schooling.

A Study by the NGO Education Partnership on "The Impact of Preschools on Early Childhood Education in Cambodia" also highlighted as positive learning outcomes: the ability to interact effectively, superior ability in expression and organize ideas, improved study performance at primary school level and positive personal hygiene behavior.

In spite of the above, 2014 estimates show that only one in three children (or 33%), between the age of 3 and 5 years in Cambodia, access and benefit from some form of early learning or pre-school opportunity. This is off the mark from the Royal Government of Cambodia's Education for All target which aims to see 50 per cent of children in this age group accessing preschool programmes by 2015.

Prior to the first commune council election and establishment in 2002, the UNICEF's Community Action for Child Rights/Seth Koma programme provided support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to establish community-based child care classes with technical inputs from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). This included training of educators, provision of teaching materials and encouragement of technical staff from provincial and district education departments to monitor the child care classes. Based on decentralized Village Action Plans (VAPs) - 693 child care classes were set up, benefiting to 13,946 (of which 7,459 girls) children (aged 3-5 years old) in 117 communes. These classes enabled young mothers and adolescent girls to attend 604 literacy classes and at the same time get involved in income generating activities.

Following the Mid Term Review of UNICEF's Programme in 2003, the Seth Koma intervention shifted its focus from village to commune level. Six Provinces (Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Oddar Meanchey, Stung Treng) were targeted out of twenty four provinces. This shift was aimed at ensuring better integration of child rights in Cambodia's ambitious decentralization reform through support to a number of community based services. At this point, the programme also changed its name to Local Governance for Child Rights (LGCR) programme.

In 2005, UNICEF hired a consultant to develop a resource package comprising: i - a guide for social service delivery by Communes (rural) and Sangkats (municipality) , detailing the process of establishing a Community Preschool; ii – a training manual on running a Community Preschool; iii - a pocket sized booklet for Commune/Sangkat leaders; and; iv - lesson plans for the training of trainers. The consult was also to support subnational administration and commune councils and commune committees for women and children. Commune councils and commune committee members were to be supported to locally finance and manage child care classes into community preschools (CPS). The aim of this modality was to ensure the sustainability of CPS. The overall CPS goal was to increase the learning and developmental opportunities for pre-school age children (3-5 years old), decrease primary school drop-out rates and improve grade 1 age 6 enrollment and school performance. Thereafter, community-based child care classes were transformed to CPS and UNICEF decided to continue its financial and technical support throughout the Country Programme cycles 2006-2010/2011 - 2015.

By 2012 the number of children aged 3-5 accessing UNICEF-supported CPS amounted to 28,339 (14,932 girls, representing 52%) enrolled in 1,282 community preschools in 320 communes in 12 provinces (Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Mondulakiri, Oddar Meanchey, Preah Sihanouk, Prey Veng, Rattanakiri, Siem Reap, Stung Treng and Svay Rieng). The management of the schools was supported with funding from UNICEF which also provided technical support to the National Committee for Democratic Development and the Ministry of Interior to strengthen capacity of local commune councils and Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) to ensure the day-to-day operations of community preschools.

Information gathered from a validation exercise in 2012 and monitoring visits to CPS indicated a number of capacity gaps mainly involving: (a) challenges with the facilitation/management of CPS (from planning, identification of educators, contract management, monitoring, reporting, to evaluation and supporting mechanisms) and; (b) disconnects between technical assistance, guidance and support provided by the technical working group at national level (MoI, MoEYS, MoWA), to the provincial and district line departments, and to the commune councils and commune committees for women and children (CCWC).

In 2013 UNICEF underwent another mid-term review of its Country Programme. As a result, a decision to refocus the geographical coverage of the Seth Koma programme was undertaken. The Programme was then expected to focus in 2014, on 101 communes and 1,073 CPS over a total of 2,309. UNICEF as one of the key players of the Programme is interested in generating evidence from the experience of the implementation of the Programme. Specifically UNICEF in close collaboration with MoI and MoEYS intends to learn what has worked well and what hasn't, to inform development of Cambodian government plans and UNICEF support to CPS in the future.

## **2. Purpose and objectives of the assignment**

Purpose: Findings, recommendations and lessons from this evaluation will be used to support the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to identify and implement strategies for enhancing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of Community Pre-School under government system. Evaluation findings will also inform the development of UNICEF's forthcoming Country Programme Document (CDP) 2016-2018 on its support strategies for CPS.

The primary users of this evaluation will be concerned ministries (MoEYS, MOI, MoWA,), UNICEF Cambodia, and other key partners (civil society and development partners) who implement and fund community pre-schools in the decentralized context of Cambodia's sub national administration. Lessons learned will also be shared with sub national administrations (province and district levels) as well as commune councils to enhance integration and monitoring of CPS in existing plans.

Objectives: The evaluation has five primary objectives:

1. To assess appropriateness, quality and effectiveness of the current CPS modality in terms of promoting access to early learning programme and development outcomes – especially for disadvantaged children aged 3-5;
2. To identify the key determinants for functionalization of CPS (enabling factors, barriers, and bottlenecks) and opportunities that strengthen the CPS implementation and learning quality;
3. Analyze the sustainability potential of the CPS modality to be implemented under the full ownership of Commune Councils, both administratively and financially, in the context of the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development;
4. To analyze the potential of CPS as an entry point for inter-sectoral ECCD services such as health, nutrition and hygiene to promote holistic child development outcomes and social inclusion at the Commune level;
5. To assess the relevance and efficiency of the current UNICEF's support for CPS and distill recommendations and lessons to inform strategies for the new CPD 2016-18.

### **3. Evaluation scope**

The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of CPS modality in the context of Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D).

Geographically the evaluation will cover an optimal 15% of a total 2,300 CPS across 12 provinces using either randomized or purposive samples for key informants interviews and focus group discussions. The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner – involving key stakeholders (e.g. government, civil society organizations and beneficiary groups) in all phases of the evaluation. The evaluation should also consider intervention sites via versa control groups for comparison purposes.

The evaluation will be retrospective and cover the period of 2005 to 2014 in which CPS have been supported by UNICEF. Given the closure and limited functionality of a number of CPS in the past year, the evaluation should further analyze bottlenecks and barriers and opportunities to strengthen CPS implementation in the future.

### **4. Evaluation questions**

Key evaluation questions are clustered according to the evaluation criteria provided below. This initial list will be further refined and unfolded by the selected consultant and included in the inception report following desk review of key documents.

#### **Relevance**

- To what extent has CPS addressed the needs of the most disadvantaged children aged 3-5 in terms of the access to quality ECE?
- How relevant is UNICEF's support for CPS through Communes in the context of Decentralization and Deconcentration and other national strategies (NSDP)?

- Degree to which CPS contributed as an entry point for the inter-sectoral ECCD services encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene to promote holistic child development outcomes in light of the National Action Plan for ECCD?

### **Efficiency**

- How efficient is the current CPS administrative system in terms of the technical and financial support for teachers and school operation?
- In what ways and to what extent the costs incurred to implement CPS have justify the result on child development achieved through CPS?

### **Effectiveness**

- To what extent has CPS interventions achieved its set goal to increase the learning and developmental opportunities for preschool age children (3-5)?
- To what extent does the current CPS has contributed to teacher capacity, improved curriculum, activities, and teaching materials?
- What are the enabling and constraining factors that influence the effectiveness of the CPS?
- Degree to which CPS was effective in strengthening Commune Councils capacity to deliver social services at the community level?
- To what extent has CPS programme contributed to improving the development outcomes and school readiness of children?
- Are there unintended results either positive or negative?

### **Sustainability**

- What are the key bottlenecks on obtaining sustainability of CPS?
- What are the possible solutions for CPS to be integrated and implemented under the full ownership of the government, both financially and administratively?
- To what extent has UNICEF's support through Communes contributed to enhancing sustainability of CPS?
- To what extent has UNICEF's support been internalized and/or replicated by the government to address the needs in the areas where UNICEF has not supported?
- What lessons can be learned from the past experience to ensure full government ownership and funding in the continuation/ discontinuation and/or expansion of the CPS modality?

### **Impact**

- Is there evidence on the extent to which CPS may have contributed to a better quality of life of children and their families?
- Has UNICEF support to CPS in the context of strengthening local administration capacity for social service delivery for children, had any impact onto the actual social delivery in terms of budgets and implementation of commune led social service initiatives?

## 5. Methodology

In consultation with the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation Reference Group the selected consultant will develop an inception report which will include, among other things a full methodological proposal. Methods to be used should include key informants interview as well as focus group discussions with UNICEF staff and relevant stakeholders at national and sub national levels; other tools and methods can be proposed as deemed appropriate. It is expected that selected consultant will perform the following tasks in three main phases:

- **Phase 1:** Inception – conduct desk review and develop the inception report to further refine and unfold key elements of the TOR, namely (a) objectives, expected results, timeframe and related field work, (b) evaluation questions and methodology (c) and work plan for the assignment
- **Phase 2:** Data collection and analysis – conduct field visits, interviews, meetings, data analysis and draft report preparation in line with UNEG Report Standard. The consultant will be required to hire data collection assistants and translators to complete this task and must include associated costs in the proposal and budget for this assignment.
- **Phase 3:** Report – (i) deliver a half-day validation workshop on draft findings conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned, and (ii) finalization of the evaluation report

Note that a consultant responding to this recruitment will be requested to indicate in their proposals where the three phases of work should be conducted, i.e. Phnom Penh, provinces or both. Proposals should also address how field data collection and analysis will be managed. Financial proposals will be submitted by the consultants by breaking down costs such as fees, travel, sub contracts and other necessary expenses.

## 6. Deliverables

Phase	Deliverable	Duration	Due date
<b>1. Inception</b>	Inception report with methodological approach and work-plan	10 days	March 2015
<b>2. Data collection and analysis</b>	Draft report	40 days	April 2015
<b>3. Finalization of report</b>	Validation workshop and final report	10 days	May 2015

## 7. Duration of contract

The expected duration of the consultancy is 60 working days, starting first quarter of 2015. The final report is expected by quarter two 2015, at the latest in order to inform continued programming for CPS and ECCD for 2016 and beyond.

## 8. Official Travel

The consultancy will be a combination of home and Cambodia based. Work time in Phnom Penh (20 days) as well as travel to field locations in selected provinces (30 days) will be required. The consultant will be provided with an office space and access to the internet and telephone. Consultants will be required to bring own laptop, camera and other necessary devices.

## 9. Payment Schedule:

The payment will be made in 3 installments:

- 30% First payment made upon delivery and approval of inception report
- 40% Second payment made upon delivery and approval of draft evaluation report
- 30% Third payment upon delivery and approval of final evaluation report

## 10. Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Qualifications of consultant to be contracted: Advanced Degree in Social Sciences, International Development, or similar. Excellent communication and presentation skills; and strong analytical and writing skills.
- Work experience of consultant to be contracted: Minimum 5 years of experience leading or conducting similar evaluations. At least 8 years of experience working with programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Knowledge of / or working experience from Cambodia is an advantage. Knowledge of and experience with UN norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system, a must.
- Experience in developing and applying methodological tools for programme evaluations, notably qualitative and participatory methods
- Language: Fluent in English with excellent verbal and writing skills. Knowledge of Khmer is not mandatory but will be considered an advantage.
- Technical Competencies required for this consultancy: Communication; Drive for results; Working with people; Research and statistics, analyzing, Global and strategic thinking
- Ability to work in diverse and multi-cultural environments
- Ability to work independently with minimum supervision
- Good understanding of Cambodia national development strategies, Rectangular Strategy Phase III, National Strategic Development Plan, Sector plans as well as Decentralization and Deconcentration

## 11. Supervisor:

The consultant will be supervised by the Chief of Local Governance for Child Rights, UNICEF Cambodia who will act as the Evaluation Manager. The Evaluation manager will oversee the entire evaluation process and will guide and facilitate the assignment on behalf of UNICEF. The Evaluation Manager, with the support from the Reference Group (RG), will ensure compliance of the evaluation with the TOR and with the Norms and Standards for UN Evaluation. The evaluation manager will also ensure that the deliverables are at the agreed standards. However, the selected consultant will be expected to work independently, with minimum supervision.

## 12. Reference Group:

The reference group will be comprised of internal UNICEF concerned staff, Chief of Education, Education Specialist (ECD), M&E Officers and Community Development Specialist, Planning Specialist, Regional Evaluation Advisor as well as technical level professional from involved ministries such as MoI, MoYES and MoWA. The reference group will advise the evaluation manager on key milestones/ steps during the course

of the evaluation, including definition of scope, recruitment, review of deliverables, and key decision points that may arise.

### 13. Proposal submission

Applications shall be submitted to [cbdhrvacancies@unicef.org](mailto:cbdhrvacancies@unicef.org) before the deadline containing the following required documentation:

1. **Technical Proposal:** Consultant shall prepare a proposal in response to the ToR, ensuring that the purpose, objectives, scope, criteria and deliverables of the assessment are addressed. Draft work plan and timeline for the assessment should be included. The Technical Proposal shall also include updated CV and Personal History Forms (P11) of the consultant, and copies of 2 assessments performed previously by the consultant.
  
2. **Financial Proposal:** Offer with cost breakdown: Consultancy fees, international (economy class) and internal travel costs, Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) and required translations and other costs. The Financial Proposal shall be submitted in a separate file, clearly named Financial Proposal. No financial information should be contained in the Technical Proposal.

If relevant, travel expenses shall be based on the most direct route and economy fare. Quotations for business class fare, full economy fare or any other preferential fare shall not be considered.

The maximum allowed Daily Subsistence Allowance for Phnom Penh is USD 132/day (only applicable for consultants residing outside of Cambodia) and USD45/day for provinces to cover lodging, meals, and any other costs. Consultants can offer a more competitive DSA rate. DSA shall be adjusted to actual days upon signature of Contract. Consultants shall provide Financial Proposals using the format provided below:

Item	Description	Unit Measure	of	Unit Cost (USD)	Quantity	Total Cost
<b>1</b>	<b>Fee</b>					
	Fee for consultant to complete deliverables as per ToR	Days			60	
<b>2</b>	<b>Daily Subsistence Allowance (if non-resident in Phnom Penh)</b>					
	Phnom Penh	Days			20	
	Provinces	Days			30	
<b>3</b>	<b>Travel Expenses (if applicable)</b>					
	Economy flight ticket (detail itinerary) and visa	Return				
<b>4</b>	<b>Other Costs</b>					
	Local evaluation assistants/ translators					
	<b>Total in USD</b>					

## 14. Evaluation Criteria

A two stage procedure shall be utilized in evaluating the applications received in accordance to the below criteria, with evaluation of the technical proposal being completed prior to any price proposal being compared. Submitted applications shall be assessed using Cumulative Analysis Method. Technical proposals should attain a minimum of 50 points to qualify and to be considered:

### a) Technical proposals (Maximum technical score: 70 points)

1. Overall Response: Maximum 10 points
  - Understanding of scope, objectives and completeness and coherence of response
  - Overall match between the ToR requirements and proposal
  
2. Proposed Methodology and Approach: Maximum 20 points
  - Quality of proposed approach/methodology
  - Quality of proposed Implementation Plan, i.e. how the consultant will undertake each task, and maintenance of project schedules;
  
3. Technical Capacity: Maximum 40 points
  - Range and depth of experience with similar assessments
  - Knowledge of the latest developments in the field of evaluation within the context of UN supported technical assistance,
  - Knowledge of early childhood care and development
  - Knowledge of the cultural, socio-economic and political context in Cambodia
  - Strong analytical skills and qualitative and/or quantitative statistical data processing applications
  - Excellent communication, report writing and presentation skills

### b) Financial Proposal (Maximum Financial Score: 30 points)

The maximum number of points shall be allotted to the lowest Financial Proposal that is opened /evaluated and compared among those technical qualified candidates who have attained a minimum 50 points in the technical evaluation. Other Financial Proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price.

## 15. Contract Award

The consultancy shall be awarded to the consultant obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores, after passing a verification interview.

UNICEF shall sign a lump sum Contract including all costs specified in the Financial Proposal.