

Mid-term Evaluation (Joint)

**«Promote Quality Education in
Government Primary Schools at Bhaluka»**

Executive Summary extracted from document "Evaluation of the Project «Promoting Quality Education in Govt. Primary Schools at Bhaluka»" prepared by EDUCO in Dhaka - Bangladesh with support of *Keramot Ali (Independent consultant – Educationist)* in April 2018.

Project «Promoting Quality Education in Govt. Primary Schools at Bhaluka» implemented by EDUCO in Bangladesh.

Executive Summary.

Information about the project.

The project that has been evaluated is named "Promote Quality Education in Government Primary Schools at Bhaluka" and has the code BD 1668. It is being implemented in 25 Government Primary Schools -GPS- and related communities from 2012 at Bhaluka, Mymensingh. The goal of the project is that "the children and adolescents enjoy their right to an equitable, transformative and quality education." The intended goal is being contributed through four expected results which are:

- learning sessions are interactive;
- nutrition and hygiene practice is promoted;
- Children, parents and SMCs are active in school activities; and,
- families of the children have alternative income sources. Musament quuntio ssecusci cor aceperunt rem quam quat es derite

The project started with 10 schools in 2012. The number of schools was increased in 2013 with 10 more schools and finally with 5 more schools in 2015. It covers 16,734 direct (children, their parents, teachers, Community Health Volunteer, Livelihood Group members, SMC members) and 10,578 indirect beneficiaries (family members of children).

The objective of the evaluation.

The overall goal of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of Educo's efforts to improve quality education of the government primary schools and provide recommendations for improvement. This evaluation covers the interventions of Educo in 25 GPS and the related communities supported during the period 2012 – 2017. Based on the findings Educo will set the next intervention strategy.

The methodology.

This is a joint mid-term evaluation and it takes place in the middle of the fourth phase of the project. The methodology for evaluating the project has been primarily qualitative and has been carried out in a participatory manner involving the project implementers such as Educo BD, the Government representatives, and the stakeholders as participants such as the children, members of student councils, parents, teachers, local education authority, and representatives from the SMC and community.

A total of 4 schools were selected based on the phases of the support provided: Choto Lohabai, Akalia Para, Dumnighat and Bogajan. The aim was to observe whether any difference existed in terms of effects/impact depending on the years of intervention.

Conclusions by criteria.

Relevance

The project objectives and outcomes are aligned with the national education policy, the Educo's education strategy and strategic plan, and the sustainable development goals. The participants in the project agree about the importance and relevance of the objectives of the project and the activities that have been realised to achieve them. The project logical frame shows a consistent design in form and substance. The strategy is considered relevant by all the stakeholders and the analysis of the evaluation team confirm this relevance even if more intensity is deemed necessary.

In terms of alignment with the main national and international policies and strategies, the project is in line with several objectives, goals and principles of the National Education Policy 2010, especially regarding the strengthening of the quality of education at the pre-primary and primary levels. It contributes as well, to achieve PEDP3 (Third Primary Education Development Program) and at the international level, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 4, specially to achieve the targets 4.1, 4.2 and 4.c.

In terms of project design, it includes a coherent logical framework with an adequate articulation between the activities, outcomes and objectives. Considering the context situation, we can therefore conclude that the designed strategy is relevant and is facing the identified right violation. An area for improvement concerns the gender approach. The evaluation team has found that the gender approach is missing and there is no special awareness about its importance. The attention is given to participation issues (equal participation of men and women) and not to qualitative aspects such as, gender stereotypes, power relationships, biased curriculum and materials, etc.

As conclusion, we can state that the project had a **high relevance**.

Effectiveness

Despite the lack of an effective monitoring framework, the evaluation team has found that within the evaluated period, from 2012 – 2017, the project was able to successfully deliver most of the expected outputs.

Learning sessions are interactive

All the trainings have been done. 101 teachers have received the trainings which were conducted based on government curriculum and needs of the teachers.

Teachers of GPS consider that the trainings were good and necessary but they're not enough to be able to apply the new knowledge in the classroom and they need more. There is no monitoring and support for applying them.

Some schools have serious problem regarding the shortages of teachers and neither the project nor the government addresses inclusive education issues.

Nutrition and hygienic practices are promoted

Tiffin provision is being done according to plan and most of the interviewed groups appreciate Educo's support in this area. Educo begun providing support in this area all along the 6 school days and little by little this provision is being reduced.

Educo put in place a capacity building strategy consisting of vegetable production and cooking abilities- aimed at families so that they can provide homemade nutritional tiffin during non-covered days. Nutritional status of the children is getting better.

Regarding hygienic practices, all the stakeholders agrees sustaining that hygienic practices have been improved.

Children, parents and SMC are active in the school activities

As per government provision all the visited schools have SMC, SC and PTA. The School Management Committee members perceive that the project has adequately identified the needs of the communities and it's aligned with the government priorities.

Orientations sessions have been done with SMC, SC and PTA but not regularly enough to face members renewal, as a result, roles and responsibilities are not that clear for everyone. SMC members are not selected properly.

Some important results have been achieved, especially the ones related to hygiene and cleanliness and also the relationship between children is according to them improved and teacher are more child-friendly.

Families have alternative income sources

The activities are being done according to the plan and follow-up meetings are held regularly every month. 40% out of the total LG groups have been connected to government's services, such as one house one farm programme, resulting in a participation of 940 members. LG are generating incomes and saving and that's especially relevant for women.

As conclusion, we can state that the project had a **medium-high effectiveness**.

Efficiency

The results of the project on various outcome level indicators suggest that the project has achieved its set targets within the planned time and resources. The resources seem adequate to implement the project and their use has been transparent. Financial and administrative procedures are in place and they are rightly followed. The project resources, both human and financial have been used efficiently.

The cost of the project is quite little and it's important to highlight that the most important part of it, is allocated to nutritional support. Excluding salaries, it can be observed that 8 out of 12 million are indeed used in banana and eggs. If Educo Bangladesh wants to achieve a more significant impact it appears clearly that it will be necessary to allocate more resources to this project, especially in terms of capacity building of the various stakeholders.

As conclusion, we can state that the project had a **high efficiency**.

Impact

The project interventions resulted in some positive changes in terms of education, in school, in the communities, as well as among the children and teachers. FGD with teachers, parents and SMC members revealed that the most significant impact has been the improvement of the enrolment, attendance and drop-out reduction of the children. Primary school students' enrolment increased 30% compare to base line in 2011 (1663) to 2018 (2163) in the 10 schools in the first phase.

Regarding more quality aspects, the examination results are good, and the performance has slightly improved. Another significant effect of the project is that awareness has been raised about the importance of education. The relationship between teachers and the families has been improved as well as the relationship with students.

In terms of livelihood, the income generation capacity of the families has been improved thank to the project activities. Related to this, Life Skills Sessions have allowed to the families to change their attitude towards education and to have a more favourable opinion regarding its importance.

Overall quality is nevertheless difficult to achieve considering the project support and as evaluation teams our opinion is that the project hasn't had a significant impact on this aspect. Regarding gender issues, the project hasn't had a significant impact changing gender patterns or in terms of education inclusiveness. That's why as conclusion we can state that the project had **a medium-low impact**.

Sustainability

The project had defined a sustainability strategy based on the consolidation of capacity building activities while educational and nutritional materials provided by Educo were progressively reduced. In evaluation team's opinion this strategy is very appropriate and need to be sustained. The livelihood specialist of Educo estimates that 50% of all families are providing nutritional homemade food to their children.

As conclusion we can state despite stakeholders has less positively assess this aspect, that the strategy for guarantying the sustainability has been well defined but that more intensive support is required, especially in terms of empowerment, school governance structures and LG.

The evaluation team therefore conclude that the **sustainability** of the project is at **medium** level.

Strengths

- Educo has established a strong relationship with all stakeholders at local level.
- The level of acceptance accorded to Educo within the communities is very high
- Through the project intervention both awareness and motivation regarding education and nutrition, of the community members have increased.
- At the Upazila level Educo has a very proactive and motivated team, they're very well-known and appreciated for their activities and results.
- The project has been implemented in a transparent and accountable manner.
- The project is relevant and well designed

Recommendations

- Educo should continue the GPS activities with focusing on capacity development of teachers on interactive teaching learning inside the classroom. Educo need to intensify the activities of the project, it is necessary to implement more trainings, refreshing sessions, government involvement, learning exchanges (with Educo schools).
- Trainings should be scheduled at the beginning of the year and they should be followed up in the classroom by trainers and government officers.
- Educo should conserve the allowances system but in addition to planned trainings other non-paid formative activities should be done. These actions could include: action-research activities, mentoring, learning exchanges, etc.
- Students need more practice to sustain their learning. Educo could develop lesson related practice materials for the children and put in place a continuous assessment system to monitor learning progress.
- Following national curricula, it is important to strengthen competence-based learning which can be as well a valuable strategy to overcome the “teaching to the test” tendency that has been observed by the evaluation team.
- Child protection, inclusiveness and gender approach need to be integrated.
- A comprehensive approach is necessary and to do so Educo need to strength the coordination of the project.
- Regular reporting and monitoring system is required not only at activity level but also at outcome and objective level
- Involvement of the government should be more important. Educo need to work so as to sign a MoU at national level with the Directorate of Primary Education.
- SC, PTA and SMC need more empowerment: have a clear understanding about roles, responsibilities, education, and child rights in general. The project should facilitate their connection with the UEO and local gov.
- Both government and Educo staff should be trained on interactive teaching learning process which remains still challenging. The project need to involve more the Head Teacher.
- In terms of sustainability, the strategy is all right, but need to monitor the actions to know whether the strategy is working or not and why.

Conclusions

Providing support to the low performing government primary schools in remote and poorest areas is itself is a value-added approach for ensuring quality education for the disadvantaged children. Beyond that, the project has achieved very important milestones from the beginning of its activities in 2012. The enrolment and attendance rate have been increased; teachers have improved their capacities to design and implement the learning process; students and schools have pedagogical materials available; students’ academic results are better; both awareness and motivation of the community members have increased regarding to education, health and nutrition; families are aware of the importance of taking part in school governance structures; and, families (especially women) capacity to generate new incomes has been improved.

All over this time, Educo has gained a strong experience and has known to adapt the strategy to context changes while the team was strengthening its capacities and approach. Educo has important strengths based on which it has built a relevant project. We have found nevertheless that this hasn’t been enough to improve significantly the quality of education in the intervention schools which is the last objective

of the project. The evaluation makes in this report 12 specific recommendations to improve the impact of the project in this area. Our final recommendation is Educo to continue carrying out this project by intensifying its actions and considering the recommendations of this reports as lesson learnt to be applied in the next project strategy.