End-of-project Evaluation

Project "ENABLE" Philippines

2019

educo

Member of ChildFund Alliance

ACRONYMS

AIP	Annual Investment Plan
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
CDW	Community Development Worker
CF	Community Facilitator
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ENABLE	Ensuring a Nurturing, Accessible and Better Learner's Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LGBT	*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender*
LGU	Local Government Unit
LSP	Life Stage Programming
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
PDET	Positive Discipline for Everyday Teaching
PDQU	Program Development and Quality Unit
PES	Parents' Effectiveness Sessions
PMT	Project Management Team
POA	Plan of Action
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SNP	Supervised Neighborhood Play

Executive summary extracted from document "Revised Final Report - ENABLE End of Project Evaluation" by Anna Rosario Malindog, MEL Consultant, in the Philippines in June 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring a Nurturing, Accessible and Better Learner's Education (ENABLE) was a two-year project of Educo in the Philippines implemented in the *six municipalities* of the Bicol region and that included *Polangui and Libon in Albay; Castilla, Pilar, and Donsol in Sorsogon; and Bato in Camarines Sur*. The project partnered with *132 schools* and *125 barangays/communities* across the six municipalities.

The overall goal of the project was to ensure that *children enjoy their right to education and meaningful participation in safe and protective schools and communities.* The project envisaged seeing its partner municipalities to be continuously transforming communities where children's well-being is promoted, protected and fulfilled by empowering them through education so that they become capable in participating in processes that concern and affect them. It officially commenced on *April 26, 2017*, and ended in *December 2018*.

After 2 years of implementation, project ENABLE underwent evaluation/assessment to reflect retrospectively on the overall performance of the project following established OECD DAC evaluation criteria. **Summative evaluation** was employed to find out whether project ENABLE achieved its goals/objectives and perceived outcomes. It was also utilized to understand the process of change better, what worked, and what did not work for the project.

METHODOLOGY APPLIED

The evaluation employed a qualitative and descriptive approach. The initial step was a desk-review and content analysis of existing literature and resource materials of the project. This was followed by the *fieldwork/visits* that were conducted in the 6 municipalities to supplement, verify, and cross-check the initial desk review findings. Rapid Participatory Resource Appraisal methodologies like *focus group discussions (FGDs)*, *and key informant interviews (KIIs)* were employed in the data gathering. FGDs were conducted with the various stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries, and a FGD with the project team was also conducted.

In the process of analyzing and processing data, **triangulation** was used to foster a comprehensive understanding of the development and implementation of Project ENABLE. In this regard, after the field visits, a *participatory analysis workshop* was conducted, as an initial process of data/information validation. Initial and preliminary findings of the fieldwork were presented in this workshop, both to the stakeholders and to the project management team/staff.

Likewise, **the beneficiary assessment** was used to provide and analyze feedback on the success or failure of the project via regular consultations with the beneficiaries. **Stakeholders' analysis** was also employed, and it provided insights as to the interests, views, and perspectives of the relevant stakeholders and partner agencies/organizations on the project and the project. To complete the triangulation process, the **institutional analysis** was utilized, and it provided insights on how the project management was carried out and, on the effectiveness, and efficiency of Educo in the implementation of the project activities.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Project ENABLE was:

- Very relevant in mainstreaming child rights and child rights' thematic issues and concerns (i.e., education, survival and development, participation, and protection) in the 6 covered municipalities of the project.

- Highly effective in mainstreaming children participation in the governance and management structures/mechanisms of its covered communities and partner-schools.

- Highly effective in paving the way for the creation of safe and protective schools, families, and communities through its heightened campaign on child protection and the roll-out of capacity-building activities like PDET, PES, U4U, and on safe and unsafe touches.

- Relatively effective in creating a conducive learning environment for children through its ECCD/SNP and infrastructure related interventions (i.e., school repairs, the building of classrooms), and provision of learning and reading materials, and school kits.

- Able to achieve almost a 100% completion rate in the delivery of all its project activities within the two-year (2017 and 2018) span of its life and implementation and achieved more or less 85% attendance and participation rate from its target participants in almost all of its activities and roll-outs.

- Coherently aligned and consistent to Educo Philippines' overall objective of building communities where all children enjoy inclusively quality, and transformative education in a safe and enabling environment.

- To a greater extent sustainable because there was a strong sense of ownership on the part of the stakeholders.

ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

Effectiveness

The project was able to achieve a more or less 100% completion rate on the delivery of its major project activities, which signifies that the project was very much effective.

The project team built a constructive and trusting and positive relationship with all project stakeholders/partners.

The project was highly effective in mainstreaming children participation, although it was not able to monitor the level, extent, and degree of children participation other than representation in meetings.

Another indicator of project effectiveness was the fact that child protection standards were always observed, considered, promoted, and enforced in all project activities.

Project ENABLE was also relatively effective in creating a conducive learning environment for children through its infrastructure related interventions

Relevance

Project ENABLE was very relevant in mainstreaming child rights and child rights' thematic issues and concerns, and in addressing the need for children to live, occupy, and be part of a safe and protective community, schools, and families.

The project was also highly relevant in addressing the need for children to be more empowered in being actively involved and participative in the management and governance structures, mechanisms, and processes of their respective communities and schools.

Most importantly, the project was very much relevant in addressing the need and the challenge of creating that sense of concern, empathy, urgency, motivation, and determination among duty bearers to respond to children's issues and concerns through various initiatives and actions that promote, protect, and uphold the well-being of children and children rights.

Efficiency

The principles applied in resource allocation promoted some degree of efficiency, "value for money" and maximization of resources with high return of interest through project impacts. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that project ENABLE, to a considerable extent, is efficient in terms of delivery of project activities on time. Another indication that the project was efficient was because of the efficiency of the project staff in the execution of the project activities.

To note, it is being recommended that in any evaluation/assessment exercise in the future that will be done by Educo, it will be useful to include a thorough analysis of efficiency from the vantage point of budget and expenditures vis-à-vis project activities.

Sustainability

Generally speaking, the activities of project ENABLE in many respects were sustained because they have gained a life of their own, given that they are now, more than less being carried by the project stakeholders and beneficiaries in various forms and formats. The reason behind this is the relatively strong sense of ownership of the stakeholders/beneficiaries of the project.

One of the significant components implemented by project ENABLE that has a high level of sustainability was the ECCD/SNP related initiatives. Another project component that has a high level of probability of being sustained even after project ENABLE has already ended is the roll-out of the capacity building activities in schools. The support to reading program intervention of project ENABLE was also to a greater extent sustained because parents, the communities, and children are now the ones maintaining and continuing the reading program.

Coherence

Project ENABLE was coherent to Educo Philippines' overall objective of building communities where all children enjoy inclusively, quality, and transformative education in a safe and enabling environment. This has been proven by the fact that project ENABLE facilitated activities that educate children about their rights, paved ways of promoting, encouraging, and opening spaces for enhanced children's participation in school governance/management through AIP and SIP, and children's representation and participation at the barangay level through the BCPCs.

Gender

Gender equality was not one of the project deliberate objectives, as evidenced by the fact that there were no specific gender-related actions included in the POAs. Overall, there is very little evidence that gender has been prioritized as a crossing-cutting issue, or LGBT issues are given any visible consideration at all. This further implies that Educo has no apparent gender and LGBT policy guidelines, which further intensifies the tendencies of its projects like ENABLE not to emphasize gender, even if the staff are often personally and professionally committed to the gender concerns and issues. It but imperative for Educo to develop a Gender Policy and Guidelines if it does not have one yet for its projects and the organization as a whole.

Impact

Generally speaking, the project was able to transform the attitude of most parents, teachers, and BCPC members from being passive to a more pro-active actor responsible in ensuring the well-being of children, more specifically in the respecting, fulfilling, and promoting child rights in their respective spheres of influence and domain. Thus, in that sense, the project stakeholders became a supportive force in creating safe and protective communities, schools, and families for children.

Children gained awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities, their protection, the importance of their active participation in schools and the communities were enhanced. They became more responsible for fulfilling tasks assigned to them either by their parents or teachers. They became more compassionate and understanding of the plight of children with disabilities and children from the LGBT sector.

Children were more empowered and gained self-esteem and confidence in the exercise and assertion of their rights. They become more participative in school activities and their respective communities.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICE

Lessons learned

Project Team

- Pre-project/activity is essential for the beneficiaries and stakeholders to have full picture of (a) what the project is all about; (b) what processes are involved; (c) what guidelines and standards to be followed and employed; (c) what are the covered areas; (d) who are the beneficiaries, stakeholders, and implementers, their roles and responsibilities; and (e) when the project will commence and the project timeframe.
- Regular updating/feedbacking and coordination meetings with all concerned partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as all members of the project team and with the upper management of the organization, is essential.
- The participatory process must be observed in the delivery of all project activities.
- The project team should initiate a team building activity before the actual start of the project implementation.

Stakeholders/Beneficiaries

- Simplified training modules are more conducive for CF and easy to deliver for them. This means that training modules of project ENABLE should be simplified.
- Educating parents on child development will help raise better children.
- Some of the parent-participants realized that parenting does not end in providing basic needs to their children. Parents realized that they also have the responsibility to ensure that their children will experience a meaningful childhood in a safe and enabling environment free from harm and abuses.
- Teachers who participated in the PDET training realized that they are practicing PD (Positive Discipline) already in some instances. They need to strengthen their knowledge of it.

- Teachers also realized that the more they engage children in interesting, problem-solving, and decision-making activities, the more they become mature and responsible.
- Teachers deeply realized the importance of child protection, and the need for providing a nurturing and more positive child-friendly environment for children inside the classroom.
- Mental, physical, and work preparations are necessary before delivering roll-out activities especially training-workshops.
- Referral Pathway is a valuable guide and mechanism in reporting child-abuse related cases. Every duty-bear should be familiar and should follow the referral pathway system.

Good practice

- The Project Management Team (PMT), composed of the mayor, focal persons, national related line agencies, children representative(s), parents, school representatives, and LCPC representatives, oversaw the project and served as the counterpart of Educo on the ground concerning project implementation. The presence and the meaningful participation of the PMT in the life of the project ensured and facilitated more responsive communities and stakeholders, solidified the relationship of the project vis-à-vis its partners, and created a strong sense of ownership across stakeholders/beneficiaries.

- The presence and meaningful participation of the Community Facilitators (CFs). The CFs were quite influential and instrumental in facilitating inclusion, involvement, and active participation of the target communities in the activities of the project. The CFs were also instrumental in providing support to the work of the project staff on the ground.

- Life Stage Programming (LSP) is a good practice because it's a direct approach base on the development needs of the children, and it identifies the main actor or impact group per life stage. This approach ensured a complete evaluation of the needs and vulnerabilities of children per life cycle.

- The participatory approach in the delivery of all project activities, which empowered both the communities and individuals.

- The dedication and passion of the project staff, SNP volunteers, CDWs, and CFs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Project initiation

- It is highly recommended that Educo should conduct a baseline study or have baseline data and information prior or during the process of project inception and conceptualization. It is vital that the results of the baseline study should be consolidated in written form, discussed, communicated, and disseminated to all concerned people in the organization especially to the project team for their consumption.

Project planning

- The project Strategy Development process should be more systematic, thorough, and transparent.
- Educo should develop a Gender and LGBT guidelines and policies, training, and support, backed up with specific training in their application and support in their use.
- Educo is highly encouraged to institutionalize and make it a conventional organizational practice the active and direct participation and involvement of the project staff and all possible stakeholders (i.e., PMT) in the planning including possible project changes.

- To ensure the greater participation of the government bodies (i.e., the LGUs and concerned national line agencies), schools, communities, parents, and children, the revival, meaningful, and consistent involvement of the PMT in the life cycle of Educo's projects should be consciously and consistently done and ensured as much as possible.
- Monitoring and evaluation, including developing a monitoring and evaluation plan, must be a constitutive part of every project/program planning and design.
- Projects should have explicit and written project implementing guidelines as much possible that should be discussed and communicated to the project team and the PMT.
- Educo should establish the so-called Work Breakdown Structure. This refers to a hierarchical decomposition of work to be executed by the project staff.
- For every project/program of Educo, it should create a Document Control Plan, which serves as a guide in the physical and electronic management (i.e., storage, archiving, retrieval, tracking, removing, and adding, etc.) of documents throughout the life of the project/program.

Project execution / implementation

- Regular de-briefing and regular project meetings where all concerned project staff together with the PDQU, should be in place.
- Educo should create or come up with a "transition or change management plan" whenever it plans to introduce massive shifts/changes in the priorities, design, or framework of a project/program, especially within the implementation timeframe.
- To ensure the success of institutionalizing successful changes/shifts in the project involves reinforcing them through feedback, rewards, and training. Change management/education sessions for all concerned staff should be developed and conducted to reassure them and neutralize anxiety and fears,
- To sustain the gains and the momentum for carrying the shift or change, there's a need to build a support system for the staff. Each staff member should be offered a Personal Development Interview.
- In the roll-out of project activities, as much as possible, it should be good to always strike a gender balance and a gender inclusive composition of participants between men, women, and the LGBT people/community in all project activities.

Project monitoring and evaluation

- Project monitoring should be done in a systematic, standardized, and routine manner. It is crucial to document learnings that will feed to the improvement of project practice and activities
- To improve the project programming of Educo especially when it comes to projects that are centered on capacity-building (training) like Project ENABLE, the MEAL specialist/officer of the organization should develop or conduct longitudinal study (i.e., longitudinal survey, or panel study), which is a research design that involves repeated observations of the same variables. This is the most effective way of gauging if indeed the project had impacted the lives of the project beneficiaries or not. This was precisely the weakness of the project programming of ENABLE. The project baseline study was not established, and there was no monitoring system in place
- The MEAL system of the project, and Educo, especially in terms of project monitoring, documentation, filing, retrieval, and knowledge management at all levels should be enhanced.
- The conduct of regular project evaluation and monitoring vis-à-vis program evaluation is very crucial and essential for better planning and implementation of project activities, but most importantly, it is critical in finding out whether the project is producing the intended effects.
- It highly is recommended that in any evaluation/assessment exercise in the future that will be done by Educo may it be internally or commissioned with an external evaluator, and it will be useful to include a thorough analysis of efficiency from the vantage point of budget and expenditures vis-à-vis project activities.
- To validate and supplement internal project/program evaluations, there should be an external year-end project evaluation, to say the least, done by an external evaluator if possible.
- Results of project/program evaluation should be written, discussed, and shared to the project/program team

- To improve the project programming of Educo especially when it comes to monitoring and tracking the impact of children's participation, its MEAL should develop monitoring mechanisms and tracking guides/systems that will monitor the level, extent, and degree of children participation other than representation in meetings.

Organisational development

- It is highly encouraged and suggested to Educo to find its niche as an organization based on the field of expertise it had developed and acquired.
- Educo has to put forward human process interventions related to interpersonal relationships and group dynamics like team building.
- Job descriptions, expectations, and capacities of the staff should be assessed thoroughly concerning tasking and assigning of roles and responsibilities to avoid disenfranchisement or alienation between the project staff and his/her assigned roles, responsibilities, and tasks.
- it is indeed imperative for the organization to consider hiring a capacity-building/training specialist(s), who will take charge of the writing and production of training modules/manuals and will lead in the organizing and conducting of capacity-building activities of the organization.
- Educo needs to undergo Organizational Development (OD) exercise to address organizational gaps and issues that cut-across projects/programs in a more holistic manner.
- Given the magnitude of the work, operations, and the considerable number of staff/employees of Educo, it should create, develop, produce, and institutionalize an "Operations Manual."

Project interventions

- It highly recommended to Educo to continue its capacity building activities on RROC.
- Bring the capacity – building activities to far-flung and remote areas instead of asking children to travel to venues or places far from where they live.
- The support to reading program activity of the project was a useful intervention that directly addressed the educational needs of children. Educo should continue this. However, it should shift its focus and targets. Instead of extending reading materials, it will be more helpful, beneficial, and transformative if Educo extends capacity-building interventions that improve the reading comprehension skills of non-readers and slow-learners.
- In conducting children's training and workshops, there should be age segregations.
- it will be excellent and transformative if CBOs will not be left to themselves, but will be capacitated more, providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills they can use in mainstreaming children rights-based activities and interventions in their respective communities.
- Child protection mechanisms and structures both at the barangay level and in schools should be clearly explained to all concerned parties, especially to children (the right-holders), and to all concerned duty-bearers.
- Educo should continue its intervention in incessantly increasing the capacity of LCPCs on the thematic campaign of children' rights and to deepen more their knowledge and skills in mainstreaming children's rights issues and concerns in the various LGU bodies/councils.