International Consultant to undertake the Evaluation of Bring Back Learning Programme in Myanmar

Scope of Work:

The Terms of Reference (ToR) set out the purpose, objectives, methodology and operational modalities for an individual consultancy to evaluate the Bringing Back Learning programme to improve and strengthen its implementation. This evaluation will assess the Bringing Back Learning programme over the entire project period and across different funding, from June 2021 to June 2023. The evaluation shall provide evidence on how the programme has progressed as envisaged initially, whether its processes have effectively contributed to its stated objectives and achieved the intended results during that period. Because an understanding of achievements to date will be necessary to identify how processes contribute to the results. The process evaluation will provide secondary evidence on the Theory of Change, and the extent to which project objectives have been reached. The focus will be on the relevance of the various strategies in meeting the education needs of children in a dual crisis situation.

The consultant hired under this ToR will take a closer look at the processes which have led to the fulfillment/non-fulfillment of the programme objectives. He/she will particularly consider (1) the way each of the involved partners has fulfilled their part of the initiatives obligations as well as (2) how communities and partners have collaborated to reach the project's objectives. Further, the consultant will (3) provide additional qualitative and quantitative evidence of fulfillment/nonfulfillment of the project's objectives.

The primary audiences for this process evaluation are the project's main implementing partners and stakeholders including donors of the project BBL.

Key Questions:

Based on the ToC, the consultant hired under these ToR will take a closer look at the processes which have led to fulfillment/non-fulfilment of the project's objectives. He/she will particularly consider (1) the way each of the involved partners has fulfilled their part of the project's obligations as well as (2) how communities and partners have collaborated to reach the project's objectives. Further, the consultant will (3) provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of fulfillment/nonfulfillment of the project's objectives. The evaluation will comprise of mixed-methods/process-focused part and will be based on the OECD/DAC criteria.[1] Following these criteria, the evaluation will explore the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project. Within the criteria, there will also be an emphasis on gender equality, disability, and other types of social inclusion (GEDSI). Questions related to GEDSI are outlined separately below to add to this emphasis. The process evaluation focuses, as the name implies, on the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency. The goal of the proposed qualitative evaluation is to embed these results into the broader context of the project. For each of the OECD/DAC criteria, key questions are defined below. These key questions define the results that the evaluator is

[1] From the OECD-DAC Criteria for International development evaluation – website
http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

expected to provide. There is no baseline for this programme so this process evaluation will provide evidence for further programming in Myanmar within the criteria of relevance, efficiency, and sustainability, while taking into account (and evaluating from a broader perspective) the provided results on effectiveness and potentially (early) impact. The evaluator is invited to propose (additional) sub-questions to these criteria as he/she sees fit.

Relevance:

- To what extent have the objectives and implementation strategies of the BBL programme been consistent with the requirements of the target groups and country needs?
- Have the implementation strategies been flexible to meet the different situations of communities based on location?
- Have the objectives and implementation strategies of the BBL programme been consistent with Joint Response Framework priorities, as well as partner and donor policies?
- Were the project areas chosen include states that were severely impacted by the conflict and crisis (thematic and geographical)?

Coherence:

- How well does BBL complement and fit with the community level activities to advocate home and community level learning among children?
- Are there overlaps or inconsistencies between different programmes?

Efficiency:

- Was the budget defined adequately ex ante? Did the project budget make adequate provisions for all important goals, e.g., addressing gender and inclusion related specific objectives/activities?
- Were funds and activities delivered in a timely manner? If not, what were the bottlenecks encountered? How do banking issues affect financial disbursement?
- How efficiently have resources (human resources, time, expertise, supplies, transportation, funds etc.) been allocated and used to achieve the projects objectives?
- Did the results achieved justify the costs?
- Could the same results have been attained with fewer resources?
- To what extent do the output and outcomes offset the cost of the chosen inputs?
- How have beneficiaries and target groups been involved in decision making during implementation, and how has feedback been gathered?
- What is the level of involvement of the Community, parents/caregivers, community workers, natural community leaders, local organizations, teachers, community structures, and other stakeholders in the programme to support immediate provision of learning to children and strengthening community resilience for sustaining education services in crisis situation.

Effectiveness and Impact

- Has the project contributed to reengagement of children to learning at community level?

- How well has the BBL initiative addressed the learning crisis coming after COVID-19 and the military takeover period? What are the major factors that have led to achievement or non-achievement of the project's objectives?
- Which of these factors are related to the Theory of Change, including the risks and assumptions associated with it, and which to the implementation of the project (such as procurement and co-financing)?
- Have the programme strategy and programme management been steering towards impact and set up in a way to allow achievement of expected outcomes and impacts?
- Was focus on impacts given during the implementation process?
- What are the key takeaways from the implemented strategies and processes

Sustainability

- Has a realistic and effective exit strategy been developed and applied?
- What evidence exists to suggest that the benefits of the project will be sustained or institutionalized and scaled in the future? Please base the analysis of this based on evidence around the financial, institutional, environmental, technical, and social sustainability.
- To what extent has BBL made progress toward localization as a sustainability strategy?
- What recommendation can the Consultant(s) give in terms of criteria for sustainability?
- What are the key lessons learnt which education sector overall can build on in designing similar projects in the future?
- What are recommendations for future projects, in regard to achieving the Joint Response Framework target

Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion[2]

- To what extent was BBL able to understand the needs related to gender, disability, and other requirements for social inclusion? To what extent did the design and implementation of BBL respond to these needs? (Relevance)
- Have representatives from women's groups, OPDs, and other groups for marginalized communities been involved in understanding the needs and response of BBL? (Relevance)
- Did the project budget make adequate provisions for all important goals, e.g. addressing gender and inclusion related specific objectives/activities? (Efficiency)
- What factors of BBL have worked well to achieve results for girls, and what has worked less well? For children with disabilities? For children from ethnic groups? And other traditionally marginalized populations? (Effectiveness and Impact)
- What evidence exists that any gains toward GEDSI will be sustained? What recommendations are there for future projects for sustainable efforts toward GEDSI? (Sustainability)

Suggested Methodology:

Based on the objectives of the evaluation, this section indicates a possible approach, methods, and processes for the evaluation. Methodological rigor will be given significant consideration in the

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[2] In Myanmar, other types of marginalization to consider include but are not limited to: ethnic minority groups, IDPs, and stateless populations.

assessment of the proposals. Hence consultants are invited to interrogate the approach and methodology proffered in the ToR and improve on it, or propose an approach they deem more appropriate, which should be guided by the UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy (2018) , the United Nations Evaluation Group(UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016) , UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (2014) , UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) , UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards and Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis (2021) and UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards (2017). Moreover, the evaluation should consider throughout issues of equity, gender equality and human rights. In their proposal, consultants should clearly refer to triangulation, sampling plan, ethical considerations (including, ethical clearance) and methodological limitations and mitigation measures. They are encouraged to also demonstrate methodological expertise in evaluating education programmes.

It is expected that the evaluation will employ non-experimental, mixed methods approach drawing on key project documents, the constructed Theory of Change and the monitoring framework for guidance.

The evaluation takes a process evaluation approach with the purpose of informing the potential adjustments in the Programme design and its delivery system. At minimum, the evaluation will draw on the following methods that would allow both processes as well as achievement of results and early impacts to be assessed.

- Desk review of project documents and other relevant data
- Review and analysis of secondary quantitative data;
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs);
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs);
- Case studies of children participating in the project; x Cost-effectiveness analysis;
- Observation of Programme processes;
- Consultant is encouraged to propose alternative quantitative and/or qualitative tools supporting collection of data amongst programme beneficiaries and implementers

The evaluation is expected to be done remotely, though in person data collection will be done by a team of enumerators who will need to be organized/recruited by the team leader. In case the team leader cannot find a team of enumerators, UNICEF can provide details of partners who could support data collection. These would be hired and managed by the evaluation team leader.

The Programme has national coverage. Thus, locations selected for data collection need to be proposed by the consultant, along with a sampling framework and detailed considerations for the selection of the locations. Locations selected should lead to the evaluation considering different contexts/ circumstances of programme implementation. Locations will be finally agreed on with UNICEF.

The data collected should be disaggregated by sex, age, disability, states, etc. where relevant and focus on both the implementers and the rights holders (children and caregivers) and the key informants at central and sub-national levels.

Sampling of KIIs and FGDs should be done in consultation with UNICEF. The evaluation sample should reconsider a balance of criteria such as socioeconomic indicators, remoteness, ethnicities, etc., as well as conditions related to safety and access.

To enrich the analysis, the evaluation will use to the extent possible, quantitative/qualitative data gathered by UNICEF such as donor reports, Quarterly reports from Implementing partners, Annual report 2021 and field monitoring reports

Conventional ethical guidelines are to be followed during the evaluation. Specific reference is made to the revised UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System and UNEG Ethical Guidelines as well as to the UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy, and the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research.

Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis and UNICEF's Evaluation Reporting Standards. In case children or vulnerable populations are expected to be included under the data collection, ethical review from an IRB will be required and will be responsibility of the evaluation team upon approval of the inception report. Good practices not covered therein are also to be followed. Any sensitive issues or concerns should be raised with the evaluation management team as soon as they are identified.

There are several limitations to the evaluation which can hinder the process, notably: (i) disaggregated data may not be available at the local level, or the quality of available data may not be satisfactory; (ii) uncertainty about the possibility to access communities at the time of data collection (iii) reliability of the data collected online. The applicants should discuss the above or other potential limitations (including limitations of proposed methodologies and sampling) in their proposal and further identify during the inception phase. The limitations that could lead to changes in evaluation questions and scope of analysis and mitigation measures should be clearly identified at the inception phase before initiation of data collection. Specific scenarios are expected to be presented in the proposal.

<u>Proposed Timeframe:</u>

5 months including field data collection. An estimated budget has been allocated for this evaluation. As reflected in Table 1, the evaluation has a timeline of four months, from November 2022 to March 2023. Adequate effort should be allocated to the evaluation to ensure timely submission of all deliverables, approximately 17 weeks on the part of the evaluation team.