

# **Terms of Reference**

## **Evaluation of the “Child-Friendly Schools” Initiative (2007-2012) in the Republic of Moldova (CEE/CIS Region)**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Child-Friendly Schools Initiative is part of the Equitable Access to Quality Services Programme of the Republic of Moldova Common Country Programme for 2007-2012. It started in 2007 and aims at promoting appropriate policies and standards for inclusive and quality basic education to prepare pupils to acquire skills relevant to global labour markets.

The initiative was designed based on the global CFS concept and findings of the Baseline Study on Basic Education from the Perspective of the CFS to promote the CFS framework as a nation-wide initiative that would vehicle a range of reforms in the basic education sector, acting as an entry point for addressing school level and systemic issues and to shape the policy environment to render it more open to CFS principles and frameworks.

CFS initiatives target the central and local levels the same. Mainstreaming of the principles of the CFS is the main approach, serving as a normative target, guiding policy development and programming, including training and ensuring the improvement of the system documents based on the principles of CFS and for individual schools and communities improving quality through self-assessment, school development planning and management, as well as a way of mobilizing the community around education and child rights.

At the central level the focus was on mainstreaming the principles of CFS in the main policy documents:

- The New Code of Education was developed and has specific provisions on inclusion child centred ness and democratic participation
- The first ever concept/programme on Inclusive Education was developed
- The curricula for primary and secondary school were revised to ensure competency development and child centeredness. Teachers, school administrations, raion departments of education are trained to apply the new school curriculum.
- QBE/CFS standards are developed to ensure the quality of education throughout the process.
- Modules on child centred education for pre-service and in-service training of teachers were developed and are applied in pedagogical faculties and institutions providing in-service training of teachers.

At local level, models of CFS were created to estimate the cost, set new standards and requirements for education services and increase demand of the communities for better quality education services. The CFS models allow promotion of the CFS principles through:

- awareness raising and education on child rights in the schools
- school self-assessment with the participation of children, teachers, parents and other school community members
- on site in-service training of all the teachers of the respective schools and all the teachers of Leova Raion on child centred methodology

The CFS models in five communities serve as sites for field visits of other schools.

### **PURPOSE AND USE OF THE EVALUATION**

1. Assess potential modalities and strategies of the further mainstreaming of the three main principles of the CFS framework: inclusiveness, child centeredness and stakeholders' participation with the view of documenting and disseminating the best practices within the initiative and thus contribute

meaningfully to the Education Sector Reform. This will specifically necessitate an assessment of the sustainability, degree of ownership by concerned governments and actual possibilities existing for the best practices initiated through the CFS initiative to be mainstreamed in the education policies.

2. Make recommendations regarding the future of the CFS Initiative according to the following scenarios: (1) The initiative and principles of CFS can be further mainstreamed in the education systems within a reasonable timeframe, at a cost that is affordable to the Ministry of Education taking into consideration the major structural reform in the system; (2) The initiative and principles of CFS cannot be further mainstreamed in the education systems within a reasonable timeframe, as the cost that is not affordable to Ministry of Education and therefore, it should be phased out.

The main users of the evaluation report will be the concerned government institutions (Ministry of Education, State Chancellery, Raion Departments of Education, Youth and Sports, pedagogical faculties and institutions), implementing partners (State University of Moldova and Step by Step Educational Programme, pedagogical faculties, Institute of Educational Sciences), UNICEF Country Office in Moldova and other stakeholders. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the CFS Initiative will be used for planning of the new programme cycle of the UNICEF Country Office in Moldova for the years 2013 – 2017.

## **SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION**

The main objective of the evaluation will be to measure the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention. The initiative will be evaluated in relation with its external environment, in particular in relation with government plans and with similar approaches or programme interventions tested by other partners.

The scope and focus of the evaluation takes into consideration the following criteria and evaluation questions:

### *Relevance*

- What is the relevance of the CFS in Moldova with regards to four criteria, i.e. availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability of education.
- What is the value of the CFS Initiative in relation to primary stakeholders' needs, national priorities, national and international partners' policies and global references such as human rights and in particular, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Concluding Recommendations of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child made to the Republic of Moldova?
- What is the relevance of the CFS Initiative and its contribution to the Education Reform in the Republic of Moldova?
- What is the contribution of the CFS Initiative to the Education Reform (for MoE, Pedagogical Institutes, other stakeholders such as international development organizations etc.)
- For stakeholders, what is the relevance of the CFS in relation to their involvement in planning and design of the initiative based on their needs and priorities?
- How relevant are the training of teachers, Pedagogical faculties and schools?

### *Effectiveness*

#### *At school level in terms of outcomes for pupils*

- To what extent did the CFS Initiative resulted in: Greater class participation? Freedom to engage in dialogue and opinion exchange? Improved problem solving skills? Improved learning achievements? Improved capacity for relationship building and increased tolerance for difference? Improved self-esteem and improved participation of pupils in their own learning process?

#### *At school level in terms of outcomes for teachers*

- To what extent did the CFS initiative resulted in: Increased satisfaction and comfort of teachers with interactive and participatory teaching methods? Increased effectiveness in keeping pupils, boys and girls, engaged in the learning process and improved academic achievement? Improved capacity to

test and evaluate pupils' learning achievements through unbiased and transparent assessment methods?

*At community level in terms of outcomes for communities and parents*

- To what extent did the CFS initiative (School Improvement initiative) resulted in: Improved school and community relations? Greater involvement from parents in model school governance and management?

*Efficiency*

- How do the actual costs of the CFS Initiative compare to benchmarks for similar initiatives (Ministry of Education staff capacity building, teacher and school principals training, curriculum development or revision)? How do the actual costs of the CFS Initiative fit within the government budget plans over the next 3- years – MTBF.
- What would be the costs for scaling up versus mainstreaming. What would be the most cost-effective way to extend CFS initiative to the new CPD and Education Reform.

*Inclusiveness*

- How much did the CFS Initiative managed to promote inclusion into the education system?
- How much did the CFS Initiative managed to address and respond to the diversity of needs of all students through increased participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent is the CFS Initiative sensitive to cultural, ethnic diversity and gender?
- Is CFS initiative ensuring that students are able to form relationships with, and treat all persons with respect and dignity irrespective of such persons' cultural and ethnic beliefs and orientations, gender?

*Sustainability*

- Has the CFS Initiative been in any way mainstreamed by MoE in the policy documents, school curriculum, education standards, training of teachers, participatory and interactive teaching methods?
- Are there any quantitative or qualitative outcomes that can be measured at national level?
- To what extent has the CFS Initiative complemented and created linkages as well as synergetic or multiplier effect with education projects implemented by other partners?
- Have school principals, inspectors, administrators of education departments at all levels as well as Ministry of Education officials all strongly supported the implementation of the CFS Initiative?
- Are there a political will by MoE/Pedagogical Faculties to bring to scale and mainstream the CFS concept and principles in the education system? How is this reflected in MoE annual and/or long-term programme planning and budgetary allocations?
- What would be the cost implications of further mainstreaming its worthy components in the national education budget?

***In addition to this, the following approaches and issues should be considered:***

*Results-Based Management*

In examining the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes and sustainability of the CFS Initiative, the external evaluation will explore some underlying questions as to how the initiative was designed and is managed and what information stakeholders at different levels have had access to and used to take key decisions in design and implementation.

The evaluation will comment on whether the process was driven by a focus on mainstreaming the principles of the CFS in policy and regulatory framework, curriculum and standards.

*Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming*

The goal of the current Moldova country programme is to support the Government in meeting its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is specifically aimed at ensuring inclusion of all

children, young people and women in the provision of basic education, health and child protection services with their increased and genuine participation.

The evaluation will have to show how the CFS initiative contributed to the:

- inclusion of children, especially the most vulnerable, in the basic education process
- improvement of the capacity of policy makers to provide leadership in the development of policies with focus on most vulnerable
- improvement of the capacity of teachers to provide quality, child centred and inclusive education
- participation of children, girls and boys equally, parents, community representatives in the improvement of the school life.

The evaluation will show how the HR principles and strategies inform the roll-out the CFS initiative.

## **EVALUATION METHODS AND PROCESS**

The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation methodology will be further defined by Evaluation Team.

- Desk Review of all documents related to the CFS initiative and UNICEF Programme of Cooperation implemented in the country concerned by the evaluation: reports and evaluations as listed above, model lessons, teacher guides, students achievements reports etc. The desk review will not be limited to UNICEF documentation but will take the external environment of the education sector into account, and will also include the review of national education plans, NDS, reports and publications produced by the UN, World Bank and the EU, existing analyses of the education sector, evaluations and documentation of similar projects implemented by other partners.
- Field Observations in Moldova where the CFS initiative has been actually implemented at school level: focus discussions with children, review of school records and interviews of principals, teachers, administrators, pupils, parents, and other stakeholders (local NGOs and community-based associations involved in the project). Necessary tools such as focus group guides, interview protocols and questionnaires will be developed. Field observations will be conducted in both CFS and non-CFS schools (controls) in order to establish relevant and unbiased comparisons.
- Meetings and Consultations with education policy makers, planners and administrators (officials from MOE, pedagogical faculties, rational departments of education( as well as donors (World Bank, ADA) and other partners/actors in the field of education (Step by Step Educational Programme, Lumos and others).

## **STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION**

During country visits, local stakeholders - coordinators, specialists from Ministry of Education departments, teachers, principals and pupils, staff from pedagogical faculties, NGOs and other partners working on the initiative will be involved in the evaluation process, in particular at the planning stage as well as during the validation process. Scenarios for focus group discussions, questionnaires and interview sheets will be designed by the Evaluation Team and reviewed by and discussed with the local stakeholders and consultants.

The evaluation team will have meetings with education policy makers and planners and administrators (officials from MoE, pedagogical faculties, etc) as well as with donors (World Bank, ADA) and other partners/actors in the field of education (Step by Step Educational Programme, Lumos and other NGOs).

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<sup>1</sup> UNEG Norms:  
<http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1491>

UNEG Standards:  
<http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1496>

## EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Evaluation team is supposed to be composed from a locally based institution/ consulting firm (Institutional contractor) and one International consultant. The Evaluation Team will in the inception phase develop a detailed methodology and a plan of evaluation. The consultants will use the desk review to get familiar with the policy basis, relevant project documents. Existing information sources are listed in this ToR and will be made available to the consultants.

In view of the purpose, scope, focus of the evaluative work, the evaluation will be conducted by an external consultant with expertise in evaluation of education projects, quality of education, teacher and curriculum development, education policies, formulation of education sector plans, planning of education programmes and coordination of research work.

The International Consultant will be responsible for guiding the evaluation process and the following responsibilities:

- develop the methodology, detailed work plan of the evaluation and tools for conducting the observations in the field to assess the changes induced by the CFS initiative at school level to:
  - teaching and learning environment,
  - curriculum revision,
  - teachers capacity
  - teaching methods,
  - examination and assessment methods,
  - school governance and management,
  - parents, teachers and students participation,
- carry out the desk review
- guide the local consulting firm staff (interviewers, observers) on the application of the tools and data collection in the field and orientation for the cost-efficiency analysis of the initiative
- investigate the potential of the initiative to be scaled up
- assess specific elements and best practices within the CFS initiative to be mainstreamed into government policies
- ensure the oversight and coordination of the entire evaluation
- based on feed-back provided by UNICEF and other stakeholders prepare the final report with key findings, recommendations (including prioritisation of key strategic recommendations<sup>2</sup>) and lessons learned following the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards.
- prepare a summary of the final report
- prepare a presentation in Power Point and two pages of key findings of the evaluation.

In addition, a national consulting firm will be hired by UNICEF Country Offices to assist and support the external consultants before and during their field missions in Moldova and will provide them with relevant information about the respective national education systems.

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### <sup>2</sup> *Prioritization of strategic recommendations*

The following should be clearly stated in the Evaluation report (i) the intended use (how the evaluation process and results will be used and by whom), and (ii) prioritization of key strategic recommendations.

Requirements for effective evaluation recommendations

1. To ensure programmatic and technical relevance, key stakeholders should be consulted during the development of recommendations.
2. The evaluation team should highlight key strategic recommendations, suggesting an appropriate sequencing in the implementation of recommendations whenever possible.
3. Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis.
4. Recommendations should clearly identify the specific operational units/offices/divisions responsible for its implementation. (If this hasn't been done it should be done in the response)

Responsibilities of the national consulting firm:

- Assist in the preparatory work of the appraisal in advance of the arrival of the international expert in Moldova
- Assist the international expert in the design of the methodology and tools, including questionnaires for the interviews;
- Collect and select documents for evaluation and contribute to the desk review;
- Carry out the evaluation activities: focus groups, classroom observations, meetings, etc based on the tools developed by the international consultants and cost-efficiency analysis of the initiative to assess the changes induced by the CFS initiative at school level to: teaching and learning environment, curriculum revision, teachers capacity, teaching methods, examination and assessment methods, school governance and management, parents, teachers and students participation,
- Brief the international experts about key relevant issues of the national education systems;
- Gather relevant information at school level (school records, enrolment and attendance records, dropouts, tests marks and results, inspector records), and organize this information in English;
- Comment on the intermediate and final evaluation reports and provide inputs as appropriate;
- Provide staff with knowledge of the education system and experience in classroom observation and interviewing;
- Provide and organise all logistic support, translation, transportation, meetings, including the validation meeting – 1 day (conference room, translation, coffee break, resolution, minutes of the meeting, mass media coverage, designing of the summary report for placement on the website etc.)
- Accomplish other tasks to assist the international experts as required.

### **Qualifications**

The competencies required from the international consultant will be the following:

- Advanced degree in Educational Sciences
- 8-10 years of professional experience at the national and international level
- Previous experience of research, documentation and evaluation of education projects; 2-3 major publications an asset.
- Ability to work in an international environment; previous experience of working in CEE & CIS countries and knowledge of Romanian or Russian are considered an asset
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills
- Familiarity with UNICEF's mission and mandate an asset
- Fluency in English

The competencies required from the national consultants provided by the institutional contractor are the following:

- University degree in related field
- Technical expertise in the education field
- Experience of conducting project and programme evaluations
- Good communication and presentation skills / ability to express concisely and clearly ideas and concepts in written and oral form
- Experience in working with UN / UNICEF (desired)
- Knowledgeable of UN evaluation policy
- Ability to keep with strict deadlines
- Excellent written and spoken Romanian, fluency in English

### **ACCOUNTABILITIES**

The evaluation will be managed by the UNICEF Country Office, by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Education Officer. The management of the evaluation will include development of the terms of reference, assignment of the evaluation team, liaison between the evaluation team and partners / stakeholders involved, as well as quality assurance of the report.

The Evaluation Team will be responsible for conducting the desk review of the initiative, organizing the technical preparation of the field visits (methodology, tools, scenarios for focus group discussions, questionnaires, interview sheets, observation sheets), and writing the draft and final reports.

The Evaluation Team will take measures and will put mechanisms in place to ensure that the evaluation process was ethical and that stakeholders were protected, and will address any ethical dilemmas or issues that could emerge. These could include an initial process of ethical review of the evaluation design.

The UNICEF Country Offices and MOE will participate in the validation meeting during which the findings and recommendations of the evaluation work will be presented by the external evaluation team. The UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS and UNICEF Moldova Country Office will approve the final product and arrange its dissemination.

### **Tentative Timeframe**

28 August 2011: TOR finalized by Country Office

30 August 2011: Final TOR forwarded to potential institutions/consulting firms for bidding

19 September 2011: Bids/CVs received from potential candidates and institutions/consulting firms

End September: UNICEF Internal process for Institutional Contract preparation

Mid October: Plan, methodology, and technical preparation of the consultancy, including development of evaluation tools (5 working days)

*End October: Evaluation work – Desk Review (6 working days)*

November 2011: *Evaluation work – Field Visit (8 working days + 2 days travel)*

December 2012: *Evaluation work – Draft Evaluation Report prepared in English – 10 working days*

End January 2012 – beginning of February 2012: **Draft Report reviewed by Country Office and shared with Regional Office for review and comments**

Mid February 2012: *Evaluation work – Comments from Country Office and Regional Office incorporated in the draft evaluation report (3 working days)*

End February 2012: *Evaluation work - Validation meeting and Presentation of the draft Evaluation Report – (2 working days + 2 days travel)*

Mid March 2012: *Evaluation work - **Final Report prepared and submitted by the Evaluation Team to UNICEF Country Office in Moldova** – (3 working days)*

April 2012: Final Report translated into local language and designed for placement on the website

April 2012: Final Report disseminated

### **Logistics**

Office space, cars, meeting rooms, translators, interviewers and drivers will be provided by the local partner contracted by UNICEF Country Office (external evaluator is expected to come with his/her own laptop computer).

Any specific information - regarding work schedule considerations, special procedures, for example on relations with press, security, evacuation in emergencies; benefits and arrangements such as insurance; seasonal constraints, travel constraints/conditions and socio-cultural conditions that may influence data collection; reporting requirements apart from products to be delivered (e.g. as accompanying invoices) – will be provided by UNICEF Moldova Country Office.

### **PRODUCT**

By the end of April 2012, the Evaluation Team is expected to provide UNICEF Moldova Office and CEE/CIS Regional Education Advisor with a final evaluation report of 60 pages (maximum) in 3 sections; the first part will be devoted to the evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the CFS Initiative in Moldova; the second part will provide an analysis of sustainability of the of the CFS Initiative and its potential to be scaled up and mainstreamed in the national education systems; and the third part will focus on recommendations for future directions of the initiative. Annexes will provide detailed information collected during field visits (focus discussion reports, summaries of interview sheets, summaries of responses to questionnaires).

**DESCRIPTION OF OFFICIAL TRAVEL INVOLVED**

The international consultant is expected to take two trips to the country. One for a total of 8 days for the training/orientation of the local consulting firm and data collection and the second trip for the validation meeting of the evaluation report. For the mission to Moldova, UNICEF Office in Moldova will issue a Travel Authorization to cover the round trip air fare, DSA for the days in Moldova, and terminal expenses.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Consultant's performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, and quality of the products delivered.

**UNICEF RECOURSE IN THE CASE OF UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE**

In case of unsatisfactory performance the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent 5 days prior to termination. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another selection in order to identify appropriate candidate.