

**“Evaluation of the Processes, Impact and Future Strategies of the Child-Friendly
School Programme”**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background The UNICEF/MOEYS Child Friendly/Gender Sensitive School Initiative began in 2000 as a pilot within the EBEP-I and was intended to explore the viability of the child-friendly school (CFS) approach to improving access, persistence and quality in Cambodian Primary schools. A 2005 external evaluation confirmed the viability of the approach as a framework to promote education equality and quality goals, but concluded also that progress was fragile. Recommendations to consolidate and institutionalize CFS principles and create a comprehensive CFS education “system” were pursued in EBEP-II, raising the CFS profile and enabling the Ministry to finalize a CFS Policy in late 2007.

Evaluation Purpose Following a broadly ethnographic design based on qualitative data collected through open-ended interviews with a cross-section of Ministry, school and development partner stakeholders, the evaluation looked for and assessed evidence of change resulting from CFS interventions with respect to: validity of assumptions; relevance of approaches; quality of performance and scope of results; possible programmatic changes to ensure accelerated results and long term strategies for future development; and potential for sustained and extended CFS action toward further national mainstreaming.

Results of CFS Initiatives Three levels of results were considered, defined as observed or perceived changes in policy, attitudes, knowledge or practice, as reported from the perspectives of CFS implementers and observers:

a) Principal Outputs of CFS interventions:

- proclamation of the CFS Policy and Master Plan
- Core Activity guidelines and manuals written/disseminated to education officers and teachers as part of the CFS Package, now Master Plan.
- essential “how to” information acquired by those responsible for creating the child-friendly school: directors, teachers, students and communities.
- slow but steady increase in right-age enrolment in many UNICEF-supported schools

b) Principal Outcomes of CFS interventions:

- proclaimed readiness of the MOEYS to claim ownership of the CFS innovation
- expressions of ownership, albeit more tentative, at school level
- wider, more diverse application of the CFS framework and Dimensions by a growing number of development partners, in multiple provinces.

c) Impacts of CFS interventions:

- no visible results are identified. There has been neither sufficient time nor sufficiently sustained and focused action for this level of change to become evident, CFS activities spread across six lightly implemented Dimensions.

While results are modest, they are understandable. Quantitative change in terms of improved efficiency, and certainly effectiveness, require long-term, comprehensive and consistent action to consolidate trends tied to CFS interventions. This scope of action has not yet been generated, limited by generally weak implementation capacity and highly challenging school environments.

The Ministry at national level has taken a fairly centralized approach to directing application of CFS activities. This is proving effective in delivering a great deal of information about CFS activities and steps to apply them into a large number of hands in a relatively short period of time. However, the guidance has tended to be generalized and unidirectional, rather than tailored and interactive. As such, it has been weak in recognizing and accommodating variability in school contexts and accounting for local level uncertainty as to the rationale of interventions and how to implement the steps. This is leading to adoption of new procedures with respect to school management and teaching, but without necessarily changing actual thinking and behaviour.

Monitoring of results at school level, considered fundamental to effective CFS action in putting responsibility for enabling inclusion and quality into schools and communities, continues to be challenging in terms of what data to collect; on what basis and by whom; and how to analyze and transform them into action. As a result, there has been little formative monitoring of inputs to improve school environments or teaching behaviour; or of the differences these are making to participation and learning outcomes.

→ Important steps in this area are being taken, however, many of them building on groundwork of the UNICEF/KAPE collaboration in EBEP-I to develop tools for school self-monitoring. The Ministry's School Self-Assessment manual, the CFS Survey Reports of UNICEF-supported schools, and assessment grids developed by CESSP, ESCUP and several NGOs have generally complemented one another. All are expected eventually to be integrated around an SSA core and used in/by schools to inform planning and resource allocation, track changes consequent to CFS action, and build local ownership.

Expanded EBEP-II Coverage The doubling and trebling of CFS schools in UNICEF-supported provinces since 2005 has led, in addition to a heavier workload, to an increased portfolio of weak schools under EBEP-II responsibility, a much less direct relationship with those schools and communities, and a diminution of assurance on the part of some officers of the nature and quality of mentoring messages being delivered through counterpart intermediaries. Two risks are implied in these changes: of UNICEF losing its comparative advantage of having its "foot on the ground" inform its "voice at the policy table"; and of its becoming more a manager of paper rather than a facilitator of people and ideas.

→ More positively, by including weak schools, UNICEF is able to counter criticisms of EBEP-I that it failed to reach the most vulnerable children. Also, since coverage now reflects the national norm, any progress made is a more realistic indicator of what a child-friendly approach can and cannot do; as such, lessons learned should prove more valuable to CFS mainstreaming.

Status of CFS Dimensions The Dimensions continue to provide useful categories for organizing thinking about what a CFS school should be and taking initial action to make it happen. However, while consistently addressed, specific activities within each Dimension are not appreciably changing; the categories are not evolving as more complex or comprehensive expressions of a CFS school nor are they being used as tools for analysis and monitoring.

Dimension 1: Inclusion is proving a tenuous concept. Enrolment is the almost sole focus of activity, and results here are limited in their ability to show sustained change or motivate continued action. Its measure is ephemeral in the context of high grade 1-3 repetition and dropout, and will not be especially meaningful until high rates, including for marginal children, become stable without annual campaigns and unsustainable incentives.

→ School mapping continues to provide good potential for pushing the scope of inclusive action further, but needs to be elaborated as a tool, and local users better trained in its use, if it is to move from being a rudimentary snap-shot of school age children to analyze causes, consequences and solutions to exclusion.

Dimension 2: There is broad consensus that better teaching is the "heart" of CFS. Poor learning outcomes continue as the norm; progress to improve teaching quality is complicated by weak trainers and cascade delivery. As learners, the teachers bring a very limited professional base of the fundamentals of pedagogy and child development; many equate child-centred teaching as content-dependent "teacher-free" teaching; few are confident in their ability to tailor teaching methods to learning outcomes.

→ Two interventions, inclusion of CFS modules in the PTTC programme and the Effective Teaching and Learning manual, have laid a good base on which a more child-centred teaching environment can build. Progress, however, will require the delivery modalities of both to be

redesigned: for CFS concepts to be fully integrated as the lens in a more practicum-based TTD curriculum in the first case; and a move away from cascaded sessions and a stronger link with the teachers in their classrooms in the second.

Dimension 3: Improved hygiene, school grounds and clean water continue as main areas of action; the WFP breakfast component remains for many the most significant input. School staff and School Support Committees confirm their continued commitment to the activities, but in the context of a relatively passive dependence on external resources. Critically, protection continues to be a significant gap in work under this Dimension.

Dimension 4: Recent statistics report progress on some efficiency indicators for girls; gender-focused seminars and training continue. However, equality of women's participation in the education system continues to be limited, support at national level seen by some as "more for public display" than real change. School Support membership tends to be skewed in favour of men. However, girls' participation in schools is better, including as Student Council members.

Dimension 5: As an interlocutory mechanism linking school and community the SSC appears fairly weak. Across different school environments and passage of time, much the same activities continue year-year, with little evidence of analysis or readiness to challenge socio-economic pressures on school stability as CFS environments.

→ Student Councils, more formalized under the CFS Policy, present as self-confident contributors to their schools: enthusiastic, motivated and articulate about what they are doing and the changes they are making.

Dimension 6: Action here is the key to any CFS success in Cambodia in formally recognizing the necessary symmetry and mutual responsibility between supply and demand: the willingness and ability of the education system to provide resources to enable CFS changes; and of schools to request and make effective use of those resources. Positive action by the Ministry, supported by EBEP-II and other CFS-related programmes, has been critical to development of the CFS Policy. Its capacity to be proactive in setting the quality, scope and outcomes parameters of future CFS action, and strategies for ensuring fidelity to these, will be crucial to CFS mainstreaming.

→ The Master Plan Matrix is a first step in this agenda setting; development partners are beginning to align their programming with that. Critical debates continue around the appropriateness of a single nation-wide CFS application modality and ranking the child-friendliness of schools, but indications are good of a gradual acceptance of local diversity and use of school assessments to monitor progressive change.

Internal Ministry coordination will be a critical challenge over the 5-year Master Plan period; joint analysis, common work planning, shared application of authority continue to be weak. Technical working groups are expected to help work around traditional "stove-pipe" decision-making and routinized practices, but continue generally to work in segmented ways.

→ A potentially significant innovation has been creation of District Training and Monitoring Teams. Comprised of DOE, school Directors and TGL, they are intended to pursue a holistic approach to facilitating and tracking action in and across Dimensions. A long-term, incremental capacity development programme to consolidate their learning and institutionalize the mechanism will be key to assuring their effectiveness in CFS mainstreaming.

Human Resource Capacity for CFS As a holistic "inclusion and quality" education reform initiative in a relatively young system, CFS has been challenged by weak professional management, pedagogical and analytical capacities at all levels, especially schools and districts. Nation-wide application of the CFS Policy and mainstreaming CFS principles and practice are making the consolidation and institutionalization of these capacities more complicated and urgent. Greater numbers of capable individuals are coming into the system and being trained, but do not

yet form a critical mass of expertise, nor are there yet communication channels and norms of collaborative learning to help create one.

CFS mainstreaming implies for the system as a whole, therefore, a very steep learning curve. It will mean considerably increased attention to generating knowledge, attitudes and skills specifically geared to guiding institutional change; and creating supportive learning structures to underpin them. Both the Policy and Plan are limited, however, in not articulating a strategic human resource and institutional capacity development plan.

This gap will be critical to address in the immediate term, through policy and programme interventions that move the Ministry forward as a learning organization: all training initiatives designed to address the specific learning needs of officers and teachers on-the-job, over the long-term; create a CFS-enabling “culture of inquiry”: those responsible for CFS Policy application at all levels supported in continually testing “what works”; and enable continuous CFS-oriented assessment within schools: gradually improving the ability of directors, teachers, students and community to gauge CFS readiness and progress, and to plan steps for becoming progressively more child-friendly.

Advancing the CFS Concept as Policy CFS remains a “concept in progress”. From a child rights base, NGOs are moving furthest in stressing its roots in children and families as “agents” in setting and managing a school -based learning outcomes agenda. From the same base, UNICEF/EBEP is less changing the organizational paradigm as advancing CFS as a different moral compass for ESSP, and recently FTI, discussion. There is evidence of considerable mutual learning and adaptation among both, happening within an increasingly open environment of exchange, cooperation and collaboration.

→ The Ministry has benefited from this, presented not with a fixed, take-it-or-leave-it “package”, but a fairly accessible conceptual framework, buttressed by a set of increasingly better proven methodological and activity alternatives, that have enabled it to make its own accommodations and set its own policy course. Together with the Master Plan, the CFS Policy has consolidated the concept as currently understood and agreed by most advocates. As such, it has constituted a potentially “corner-turning” event for the education sector overall.

As a national strategy in support of MDG, EFA and ESP targets, however, the CFS Policy has effectively raised the bar with respect to Ministry and development agency responsibility for enabling broadly-based participation. The risk now is that its launching will be interpreted as implementation and CFS action may stop or slow. There is already some evidence of this. Mainstreaming will require immediate action against assumptions that next steps will be simply a matter of course, by creating, monitoring and continuously adapting CFS-enabling conditions at all decision-points in the system.

Questions are being raised as to the official position of the CFS Policy relative to the MDG, EFA/NPA, ESP/ESSP and now FTI: how, as a uniquely rights-based framework, CFS principles of action will move beyond the education periphery to challenge systemic impediments to reform. A strong overarching “change management” body responsible for guiding and asserting CFS Policy implementation toward answering this question is a necessary condition for CFS mainstreaming. The precise function of the CFS Steering Committee in this regard is not yet confirmed.

Conclusions CFS action has moved forward since 2005, contributing to a sense of optimism that the framework, now Policy, will be sustained and extended. The optimism is guarded, however. Comprehensive, consistent and ultimately school-based implementation of the kinds of intervention needed to establish the fundamentals of inclusion and quality learning outcomes are far from assured. The authoritative capacity required for such action i.e. self-confident understanding of the concept and control over its practice, remains largely confined to senior policy-makers, programme managers and development partners. A major challenge of the next

five years will be to rectify the tension between CFS “in theory” and CFS “in practice” created by this discontinuity.

CFS mainstreaming will be determined by the Ministry’s ability to act from the top, while not being top-down: to facilitate a system-wide process of clarifying CFS as a holistic education change innovation; consolidate new learning on an individual basis; and institutionalize change through interactive communication and evidence-based action. It will require action to strengthen attitudes valuing inclusion and learning quality; capacities for problem analysis and negotiation of priorities; application of a “CFS lens” to all child-related policies, education programmes and school interventions; progressively more systematic and genuine decentralization of CFS action; and action making teachers and teaching the centre point of CFS Policy and Master Plan implementation.

Recommendations

A] For Ministry, UNICEF and development partner implementation of the CFS Policy and mainstreaming of CFS Principles

1. Mainstream CFS action at senior policy level

Confirm the CFS Policy Implementation Oversight Mechanism

- Review, agree and confirm the mechanism
- Establish and disseminate clear terms of reference.

Bring the unique child-rights voice of CFS to all high-level policy decision-making

- Clarify, confirm and ensure appropriate coordination of the CFS Policy with EFA/NPA, ESP/ESSP and FTI
- Elaborate and confirm the status of EFA-based mechanisms such as the CEFAC, GWG with respect to CFS
- Move CFS from the periphery to act on persistent hard-core challenges

Work to establish a “culture of inquiry” throughout the CFS Policy environment

- Create a climate legitimizing evidence-based reflection and open feedback
- Develop and apply a “mainstreaming” RBM framework

Foster internal communication and integration in all CFS planning, action and monitoring

- Make explicit the importance of trying and testing co-operative CFS action.
- Provide technical support to enable joint development of operational plans
- Include guidance for “step-wise increments” in coordination
- Ensure sanctioned time for working through these activities; identify and remove formal and informal impediments to open negotiation and sharing

Strengthen local demand for CFS Policy mainstreaming

- Work to decentralize ownership of CFS action to schools, communities
- Extend the parameters of the CFS Policy to incorporate a broad range of policy and programme initiatives.
- Promote the CFS Policy as a catalyst to extend the meaning and application of “child friendliness” through new and adapted activity and collaboration.

2. Make Dimension 2 the focal point of the CFS agenda until 2011

Prioritize coherent, system-wide and adequately resourced action on teacher upgrading

- Concentrate resources for training and manual revision on those enabling teachers to develop as self-directed professionals
- Develop, cost and initiate action on a revised TTD/PTTC curriculum that fully integrates CFS principles of practice

- Create and initiate a regular programme of joint PTTC and Application School professional development built on child-centred teaching principles
- Develop a medium-term programme of professional development for PTTC instructors based on child-rights principles and child-centred practice

Redesign ETL in-service training to begin from where teachers are

- Provide ETL training that is learner-centred, activity-based and mentored, emphasizing opportunities to analyze, challenge and explore
- Reformulate the current high-speed, pre-scheduled ETL/TTM coverage by allowing teachers a greater role in deciding what they want to learn and when

Revitalize action-research based development of core learning support methods

- Analyze the relevance, viability and current use of existing teaching tools, test new ones
- Develop auxiliary ETL materials tailored to teachers on the basis of their feedback on the current materials
- Pursue the UNESCO suggestion of elaborating the ETL manual through a series of booklets built on the ILFE Toolkit

3. Create openings for consolidating individual CFS learning

Strengthen training for CFS implementation to enable behaviour change

- Review and revise the format of all training activities to incorporate adult learner-centred methods and opportunities for participant input
- Attach to all training, especially TTM, specific plans and resources for follow-up, on-the-job application
- Ensure capacities of those responsible to “make the cascade model work” in adult education, participatory planning/monitoring and HRD strategic planning.
- Encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for their professional progress on ETL by tying training attendance fees to results

Strengthen effectiveness of Master Plan manuals as learning tools for behaviour change

- Develop complementary materials for the current five manuals
- Develop activity-based on-site training programmes for each manual

4. Create openings for institutionalizing CFS-oriented change

Consolidate and rationalize all aspects of school-based data management and analysis

- Develop a compendium of core and ancillary data as an overall data base for monitoring school progress in each Dimension and school as a CFS “whole”
- Link this compendium to training and guidance on the range of school monitoring tools and data bases currently in use, and where each fits.
- Establish a systematic programme of training, follow up and monitoring for all schools focused on why and how to collect, analyze and use data.
- Revisit the idea of only one SSA tool, to consider instead development of several SSA-linked tools for specific purposes, users and types of data.
- Maintain school CFS ranking as a way to tailor input and encourage continuous progress, but assure it is jointly set, evidence-based and monitorable.

Include in all core CFS mechanisms and initiatives specific *sustainability strategies*

- Train DTMT in both substantive areas and capacities to work as a team, plan strategically, observe classrooms and provide effective feedback.
- Collaborate with DTMT and client schools to track its activities, problems and strengths, and agree on its core mandate and methods of action.
- Include in all innovations time/resources for sustaining their evolution as CFS tools and identifying their potential for integration and wide-scale application.

- Recognize “communication of innovation” as a field of expertise and experience with considerable potential for guiding the mainstreaming process

Create processes and mechanisms for sustaining mutual learning across the system

- Explore options and experience for developing networks, associations and twinning/mentoring arrangements
- Identify and mobilize CFS “champions” as advocates and peer mentors within their respective education communities: school Directors, teachers, DTMT, TGL
- Promote bottom-up sharing of human resources, innovation and best practices by mapping and distributing examples of CFS expertise, tools and practices

5. Begin medium-long term action to build a strong CFS-enabling environment

Develop a human resource development strategy for MOEYS professional upgrading

- Undertake a capacity mapping of available and missing CFS-relevant knowledge and skills among staff
- Explore experiences of regional CFS-oriented education ministries to develop a Ministry-wide strategy for building a CFS professional skills base
- Support Departments and responsibility centres to design their own shorter-term HRD plans tailored to context-specific needs, resources and work

Ensure that all Teacher Training and Curriculum Materials are CFS-consistent

- Review all curriculum and textbooks with respect to CFS principles and approaches
- Create a joint PED, TTD and PRD working group to manage and oversee its application and evolve an action plan for revising and rewriting

Initiate a strategy for creating an indigenous base of education professionals

- Identify successful experience and best practices in the region for building a domestic base of academic and research professionals in education
- Explore options and opportunities for long and medium term HRD strategies through individual scholarships and Masters/PhD programme development

B] UNICEF-specific Recommendations

1. Reconsider the logic and reconfigure the design of EBEP-II

a) Integrate into a new Project 1 the substantive and capacity focuses of the three current Projects toward enabling UNICEF to provide more strategic and coherent capacity-oriented support to CFS Policy implementation and mainstreaming;

b) Reformulate a new Project 2 to strengthen UNICEF’s anchor in field-based innovation, thus reinvigorating the analysis and testing aspects of CFSI under EBEP-I and incorporating the intent of Project 3.

Rationale The current 3-way division of EBEP-I responsibility functioned initially well in an environment where an equally intense and consistent focus was needed at the policy and field ends of the sector spectrum. The distinction between policy-making and implementation capacity at the national level, and the changes expected at school level, is no longer necessary, or necessarily helpful. Mainstreaming implies the Ministry managing the technical substance and fiscal implications of the CFS Policy in conjunction with ESP/ESSP and FTI; and building internal capacities for different forms of coordinated planning, application and accountability. At the same time, UNICEF/EBEP-II needs to re-establish the comparative advantage of a direct anchor in the field strengthening its capacity to speak with authority at the policy table

Implications The two new Projects would work interactively and in tandem, rather than in parallel as the current three projects have tended to do. There would a reorientation of the current conception of CFS expansion away from wide-scale disbursal of its human and financial resources and toward pushing more deeply into substantive analysis and application of the CFS concept. The work of both Project teams would become more integrated and better rationalized.

2. Strengthen internal capacities to support actions in Dimensions 6 and 2

- Make these the focal points for the remainder of the EBEP-II period
- Strengthen internal capacities for Dimension 2 and 6 support by:
 - o increasing the share of funding allocated
 - o using the facilitative “adult learning” capacities of UNICEF staff more effectively;
 - o exploring options for sustained partnership with other CFS-related expertise
 - o extending the reach of EBEP-II ETL support through networking

3. Build a “CFS culture of inquiry” within EBEP-II

- Acknowledge that UNICEF support to CFS mainstreaming requires *self-correcting learning*, by testing innovations, analyzing implementation and evaluating results
- Develop a modest, but appropriately targeted and resourced “research plan of action” to develop a viable evidence-base for the value and methods of CFS intervention practice.

Guidance to Readers

In attempting to explain the complex nature of the CFS initiative as it is changing and being implemented in Cambodia, the evaluation is somewhat lengthy. It is hoped that the many summary bullets and sub-headings will assist in helping readers follow the logic of the presentation. In addition, some of the data and analysis has been presented in somewhat more summary form in the body of the text itself, with the longer discussion of data underlying these provided as annexes. For those not able to read the full text, however, the following sections, along with the Executive Summary, are probably the most useful:

I	Background of the CFS Initiative
III	Results of the CFS Interventions
IV	Explaining Progress on CFS Results
V	Assessment at School Level
VII	Status of the CFS Dimensions
IX	Conclusions
X	Recommendations

I BACKGROUND OF THE CFS INITIATIVE IN EBEP-II

The Child Friendly and Gender Sensitive School Initiative (CFSI) began on a pilot basis in 2001 through the collaboration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS), UNICEF and Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) to explore the viability of the approach to improving access, persistence and quality in Cambodian Primary schools.

Gaining higher profile through the Expanded Basic Education Programme 2001-05 (EBEP-I), CFS activities gradually expanded to include work in all six UNICEF-supported provinces, plus one in which KAPE was active¹; and to involve a growing array of advocacy, training and materials development interventions at national, provincial and, especially, district/school levels. By mid-2005, links were also being made with some Provincial Teacher Training Colleges (PTTC) through the introduction of CFS modules concerned especially with child-centred and critical thinking teaching methods.

As input to the EBEP-II preparations, a 2005 external evaluation confirmed the soundness of the child-friendly school approach that was evolving through MOEYS, UNICEF and KAPE interventions, as well as those of NGOs such as World Education, SCN and CARE; and that the CFS concept was beginning to be established as a viable framework through which to promote national equality and quality goals, including those of the ESP/ESSP and EFA/NPA. Specifically, that evaluation concluded that

- *the terminology of the child-friendly school* as an accessible, healthy, safe and attractive environment for children was becoming observably better recognized and accepted by all levels of stakeholders;
- *the underlying CFS concept of the school* as rights-based, inclusive, child-seeking and effective for children's learning was becoming better understood by a core of senior policy-makers and technical officers at central and some provincial levels; and
- *the scope of change implied by CFS* with respect to policy, attitudes, behaviour and systems coordination was gradually being more clearly articulated in operational terms.

By 2005, then, the CFS concept was seen as becoming more:

- *integrative*, encouraging both education service deliverers and recipients to see the six Dimensions² as necessarily reinforcing of, and developing in tandem with, one another;

¹ Kg Speu, Kg Thom, Oddar Meanchey, Prey Veng, Steung Treng, Svay Rieng; and Kg Cham

² **Proactively inclusive**, seeking out and enabling participation of all children and with special focus on marginalized groups who may be disadvantaged due to things such as ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status or disabilities; **effective academically and relevant** to children's needs for life and livelihood knowledge and skills; **healthy, safe and protective** of children's emotional, psychological and physical well-being; **gender-responsive** in creating environments and capacities fostering equality; **actively enabling of stakeholder participation** - student, family and community in all aspects of school policy, management and support to children; and **supported through enabling policies, methods, and guidelines** to more effectively utilise available structures and resources.

- *holistic*, accepting that each school, and all those involved in and with it, needed to confirm itself as being “on the way” to becoming child-friendly in philosophy, intent and behaviour; and
- *organic*, recognizing that no school would ever be 100% child-friendly, but must be continually and purposively evolving in that direction.

The 2005 evaluation also concluded, however, that all of this progress was fragile. While there was evidence of “child-friendliness” being reflected in education reform conversations, it was less evident in Ministry and classroom practice. Evaluation recommendations, therefore, focused on the need for strategic and sustained action aimed at consolidating and institutionalizing the principles of the CFS to create a more comprehensive CFS education “system”. Indicators of progress would include:

- *involvement of all levels of the Primary School system*, including Ministry policy and programming, through evidence of their CFS-related actions aimed at improving school accessibility and quality;
- *ownership of the CFS innovation among all stakeholders*, through evidence of their increasing understanding of the “thinking behind” CFS concepts, materials and activities, and their readiness to promote, negotiate and adapt CFS within their own contexts;
- *institutionalization of the CFS principles and priorities of action*, through observable and progressive evidence of their integration into all MOEYS structures and functions in ways that produce real changes in responsibilities, thinking and behaviour; and
- *coherent, consistent and results-oriented monitoring*, through evidence that outcome data, based on measurable, mutually agreed and user-oriented indicators, were being generated, analyzed and shared in ways that improved policy and practice.

While the recommendations were oriented toward the medium to long-term, and to all CFS collaboration between MOEYS and its development partners, EBEP-II began to reflect them immediately. As a result, since 2005, UNICEF and the Ministry have made progress on the above indicators. Interventions were extended to cover at present 75% of schools in the six UNICEF-supported provinces. Further, the Ministry has now finalized development of its National CFS Policy declaring CFS principles to be applicable in 70% of all Primary Schools nation-wide and begun to implement its Master Plan toward this end.

Based on both of these advances, and as the rest of this evaluation attempts to show in its discussion of results and conclusions, the *status of the CFS innovation has evolved fairly significantly since 2005*, moving from donor-led pilot, through serving as a general frame of reference for the Ministry in recognizing rights-based education, to its now official proclamation as a Child-Friendly School Policy, anchored by a 5-year (2007-11) Master Plan³.

³ The two documents were officially launched for implementation on April 28/08.

II PURPOSE, APPROACH AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

Purpose Building on the 2005 conclusions, the purpose of the evaluation was “to assess the CFS initiative according to the key questions of the MTR⁴ and in relation to the project proposal submitted to SIDA in 2005”. Within this broad framework, it was to collect and analyze data in terms of:

- “the validity of assumptions, relevance of approaches, quality of performance and scope of (EBEP-II) results;
- possible programmatic changes (to) ensure accelerated results during the remaining two years of the programme cycle, as well as on long term strategies for future developments;
- potential for sustained and extended (CFS) action; and
- ways forward toward further national mainstreaming⁵.

Recognizing CFS as a multi-dimensional concept operationalized through its six Dimensions⁶, the evaluation also assessed progress within each of these as the “parts” expected to bring about the greater CFS “whole”.

Approach The evaluation followed a broadly ethnographic design, based on primarily qualitative data collected through open-ended interviews with a range of education stakeholders. These were elaborated and supplemented through analysis of documents from UNICEF, MOEYS and development partners⁷, as well as relevant statistical records.

The analysis of these data focuses on evidence of change resulting from CFS interventions under EBEP-II and work of MOEYS and the education sector generally.

To a limited extent, the analysis also attempts to gauge the implications of UNICEF’s decision to expand the reach of the CFS programme in its six supported provinces. Taken at the behest of the Ministry and SIDA, this was a not insignificant decision. The number of schools doubled and trebled in the different provinces, while human and financial resources remained the same. While it is too early to reach a definitive conclusion as to the full impact of the expansion, it has led to certain adaptations that the evaluation considers important to explore and discuss.

In-field Data Collection⁸ Taking into account the broad scope of the CFS initiative, the evaluation includes data drawn from, or that attempt to reflect:

⁴ How UNICEF can most effectively: improve service delivery in a decentralised context; structure actions to mainstream the CFS strategy; partner in the new aid environment and use its field experience to influence national strategies and policies; and, through the education programme, influence national policy and build sector capacity.

⁵ Evaluation TORS 2008: 2

⁶ See Footnote 2

⁷ See Bibliography Annex 3

⁸ See complete list of interviews and site visits in Annex 2

- the large number and range of stakeholders involved: Provincial and District Offices of Education (POE, DOE) and 1,311 schools in six provinces; two implementing and three supporting Ministry Departments; several coordinating bodies at national and local levels; parallel national policy-related agencies and structures; and various development partners; and
- the contents of the initiative itself: activities initiated under the six CFS Dimensions; several longstanding and new delivery mechanisms; and a growing list of tools and manuals.

Over a 4-week fieldwork period, data were collected through:

- 23 individual interviews with UNICEF, MOEYS and development partner officers;
- 3 group interviews with the PED and TTD⁹ Technical Working Groups (two separately and one jointly);
- Field visits to 4 UNICEF-supported provinces that included
 - interviews with teachers, students, Directors and School Support Committee members from 8 Primary Schools;
 - group interviews with 4 DTMT¹⁰ and one Provincial CFS Working Group (CFS/WG);
 - a joint interview with the Director and Deputy of one PTTC¹¹ and teaching staff of its Application School; and
 - observation of/interviews with teachers during a Thursday Technical meeting (TTM).

End of Mission Activities Many of the preliminary conclusions of the evaluation were discussed in a joint meeting with the PED and TTD Technical Working Groups in the final week of the mission, the main purpose of which was to generate feedback to clarify, elaborate, confirm and correct the data. A somewhat truncated meeting with the CFS Steering Committee was held on the final day, aimed at clarifying the role and priorities of the Steering Committee in managing the changes implied by the CFS Policy.

Ethics of the Evaluation In all cases, application of *evaluation ethics* was ensured. All site visits were agreed as far as possible ahead of time with the offices and schools involved; permission was sought from anyone interviewed or who participated in a focus group; participation in all cases was voluntary; and file materials were treated as confidential unless allowed by participants to be treated otherwise.

Limitations of the Evaluation There were no major constraints to the evaluation. A break in the fieldwork caused by the 3-day Khmer New Year allowed time to draw together the data from the first week of interviews and document analysis into a realistic Workplan. The final schedule of interviews and site visits allowed for the perspectives of most if not all major stakeholders and stakeholder groups to be reflected.

⁹ Primary Education Department; Teacher Training Department

¹⁰ District Training and Monitoring Team

¹¹ Provincial Teacher Training College

Validity and completeness of the data collection were facilitated through regular contact with UNICEF officers to take stock of progress, confirm site visits and make any changes needed to the schedule or general approach.

Language was not a limitation insofar as interpreters were contracted by UNICEF for most of the interviews where respondents were not comfortable in English. UNICEF officers in Phnom Penh and the provinces provided further clarification on particular CFS terminology related to programme details.

Note: The present tense is used for the most part through the report, reflecting the views expressed and the assessment of the situation at the time data were collected, and the report written.

III RESULTS OF THE CFS INITIATIVE

The evaluation recognizes that CFS actions taken and progress made by EBEP-I and other donor and NGO programmes since 2000 have directly influenced the results realized through implementation of EBEP-II activities since 2005. Many, if not most, of the progress made in the past 2-3 years has, in fact, been built on or continued from innovations developed and interventions made earlier¹².

The results discussed in this section, however, are intended to reflect those changes in policy, attitudes, knowledge or practice that have been observed or perceived by CFS implementers and associated observers as important over the recent period of CFS application. In terms of CFS overall and of its six Dimensions, three types of results were reported and are considered here: Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts.

a) The most numerous results have been Outputs. These were *first level changes*, important and sometimes necessary to begin the change process, but not sufficient in themselves to ensure or sustain it. → *Mainstreaming CFS will require that each of these Outputs is now followed up, reinforced and extended in order to consolidate the learning and institutionalize the changes they reflect.*

1. The most important Output to date has been the proclamation of the CFS Policy and Master Plan.

Both were developed through a lengthy series of investments in time, resources and effort on the part of the Ministry, UNICEF and other partners and aimed at introducing new thinking into the education reform discussion with respect to child rights. In this sense, launching the documents has represented a major “call to action” for the whole of the education community → *The onus now falls particularly to senior policy levels to mobilize the whole of the sector in moving the Policy commitment “from paper to practice”.*

2. Key Outputs, especially over the last year, have been Core Activity guidelines and manuals written and disseminated to education officers and teachers as part of the CFS Package and now Master Plan.

These materials have been gradually forming the foundation of the Ministry’s operational definition of what it expects to see implemented under the CFS Policy/Master Plan in terms of each Dimension. So far, they have covered issues ranging from procedures for creating student councils and DTMT, to guidance on enhancing the hygiene, health and nutrition of students and conducting school mapping exercises in support of inclusion. Particularly significant among these have been (i) the Effective Teaching and Learning Record Book, providing teachers access to basic child-centred and critical thinking

¹² For example, the readiness and capacity of the Ministry to take ownership of CFS through a Policy and Master Plan have clearly -- and legitimately -- evolved over many more than two years. Equally, the various manuals, especially the ETL, are “next generations” of work done by UNICEF/KAPE, WE, SCN and other agencies prior to EBEP-II. The fruits of these earlier efforts are what is being recognized now.

approaches; and (ii) the School-Self Assessment Guide - though still somewhat contentious, a nevertheless potentially vital tool for formative CFS-oriented school management → *It will be important that priority is given now to refining and extending all of these manuals by working with relevant stakeholders to enable their consistent application, monitor their effects and adapt them as needed.*

- 3. Through these materials, together with the training to facilitate their use, many of those ultimately responsible for creating the child-friendly school (school managers, teachers, students and communities) have increased their knowledge of what CFS is in practice.**

Much of the school-level activity under the child-friendly label so far has been delivered through occasional interventions from the outside. While the information in these new manuals is still fairly basic in terms of general awareness as to what child-friendly practice is expected to mean and guidance on the steps to take in implementing activities, the fact of their being in the hands of users, in reasonably straightforward language, has been a critical step in moving responsibility for action to implementers. They have begun to provide the basics of a shared CFS vocabulary and confirmed the importance the Ministry places on working to create a different kind of school environment → *This is an essential precondition to deeper changes “down the road”, and needs now to be followed-up through systematic HRD arrangements for on-the-job training and/or mentoring.*

- 4. Linked to CFS through school mapping and annual enrolment campaigns, there has been a slow but steady increase in right-age enrolment in many UNICEF-supported schools.**

This has been an important year-on-year improvement (80% in 2001 to 85% in 2007), and reflected a change both in parents' readiness to send children at age 6 to school and in the readiness of the schools and their Support Committees to take responsibility for enabling this to happen. However, the strength of this result has been mitigated by the facts that the same kind of campaign has to be conducted every year, and that drop-out rates in most schools have continued to be high. Right-age enrolment will be a sustainable success when it becomes a norm, not just the result of annual mobilization; and when enrolled children stay in school and move progressively forward → *This will require concerted work to broaden the scope and depth of action in Dimensions 1 and 2, as now the priority Dimensions of CFS in Cambodia.*

b) Less numerous, but considerably more important, have been the Outcome level results realized through the CFS interventions. These have been the *substantive changes* expected to endure and, ultimately, to “mainstream” the CFS initiative because they involve people and institutions internalizing the new ideas, attitudes and values, not simply becoming aware of or informed about them.

1. The most significant Outcome realized over the last several years of CFS activity has been the proclaimed readiness of the MOEYS, through its senior officers, to claim ownership of the CFS innovation.

The evaluation found broad agreement inside the Ministry itself and among development partners that the Ministry has taken on responsibility for guiding the direction and application of CFS with respect to what it will look like in Cambodia. The CFS Policy and Master Plan are widely noted as the most visible expressions of this commitment to ownership. Made most publicly evident in the April 28/08 Policy launching, the Ministry has officially endorsed the core principles of the child-friendly “Metrei Children School” programme:

“Firstly, all children must be provided with access to schooling; secondly, study must be effective; thirdly, there must be care and protection of children’s health and safety.... Gender exclusion issues must be resolved and families must be encouraged to enroll their children...” Excellency Im Sethy, Secretary of State, quoted in the Mekong Daily, April 29/08

As noted by one senior officer in the General Education Directorate, the Policy and Plan reflect the way in which the Ministry “operationalizes Education for All, every year step-by step. It will be a burden, but the Master Plan specifically is a good working tool with indicators that will allow us to compare what we said we would do with what we actually do”.

The value of this new CFS status is recognized especially by those NGOs with a long history of working with the framework and so a high stake in seeing it becoming stabilized within the Ministry. According to one, the “biggest change over the past year has been the commitment of MOEYS leadership to CFS as a mainstream programme for improving quality, one with now a nation-wide orientation”. Another concurred: “NGOs don’t have to push as much now, because we know we are working toward the same goals; we are more in a state of consolidation because we have clear direction from the Ministry...”.

Of particular significance, the strong expression of ownership provides the potential for growing the CFS “from the inside”, chiefly from within the Primary Education community, but also within the education development community as a whole. → *The existence of a Policy now means that CFS advocates can and must “make the case” that all policy and programme decisions have to be consistent with CFS principles; and all interventions have to demonstrate how they will enhance inclusion, effectiveness, health, security and participation. It also means that each Department must be encouraged to act both on its own and in coordination with one another to ensure coherent and collective policy and resource decisions that are “on the same CFS Policy path”.*

Significant from a wider education and development perspective, the CFS Policy has introduced the option of “specific activities”¹³, initiatives aimed expressly to “assist schools in addressing the particular challenges they face” (geographic, problems of access, family situations). Further, the listed activities of the Master Plan have been presented not as the definition of CFS *per se*, but rather as a way of “explaining” or operationalizing the concept.

¹³ Now limited to mobile teachers to reach isolated groups of children; guidelines on arrangements at schools for itinerant students and bilingual education (MOEYS 2007/a: 8)

In both ways, the door has been left open to the principle of tailoring, a core principle for CFS because it ensures that the situation of each child is taken into account when planning and implementing learning opportunities. → *It will be important that the principle of tailoring continue guide action in expanding the parameters of CFS within each Dimension, especially toward ensuring inclusion of those children who are not yet in school because they are “hard to reach”¹⁴. Although the CFS Policy requires “Core Activities” to be implemented by all schools, these activities should be allowed to be interpreted flexibly, and stakeholders helped to develop the capacity and self-confidence to do so.*

2. Expressions of ownership, though still fairly tentative, constitute a critical change also at school level: among staff, students and SSC members.

When asked to differentiate the respective roles of the MOEYS and UNICEF in supporting CFS, most local stakeholders were fairly clear that the Ministry was responsible for the actions happening; UNICEF simply paid for them. On the positive side, the way in which this differentiation was expressed suggests a commitment to continuing child-friendly activities because these are in some way their own, “even if UNICEF stops funding them”.

Less positively, but not unreasonably, this commitment was limited. If UNICEF stops the funding, they will probably continue the activities but “more slowly and less deeply” because Ministry funding “will be too small and come too late” → *It will be important that the Ministry and development partners keep in mind this still conditional buy-in as they decide CFS expenditures under FTI. Now largely earmarked for school construction, serious consideration will need to be given to support for perhaps less tangible actions e.g. on school meals, on in-class teacher support and on community outreach in order to build local ownership and sustain substantive CFS application.*

3. A third important Outcome has been the wider and more diverse application of the CFS framework and Dimensions by a growing number of development partners and in multiple provinces.

These initiatives have been key in confirming the potential for a permanent rise in the status and reach of CFS concepts and action. ESCUP, CESSP, World Education, KAPE, VSO, SCN and most recently the FTI have all variously adapted and incorporated significant aspects of CFS principles and practices into the rationales, designs, methods and activities of their projects.

Within the context of aid harmonization, it is also significant that many of these initiatives have been adapted from or undertaken in collaboration with the EBEP → *The challenge for UNICEF in this now much more vibrant and diverse CFS community will be to maintain its comparative advantage as a well-financed and flexible donor-cum-implementer, one with both local and national reach. The recommendation of EBEP-II reconfiguration suggests one means by which this might be done.*

¹⁴ Eventually, this could include interventions related to Lower Secondary and/or out-of-school children

c) There have continued to be no visible Impact level results. As noted by the SAT 2008 Review, “the impact of the introduction of the CFS approach ... is not yet visible...indicators related to repetition and dropout rates, to learner achievement scores and even to intake and enrolment rates remain generally below target”¹⁵.

This is not a surprising finding. Impacts are long-term changes in a system, sector or society that advance the overall development of the country. In the case of CFS, they have consistently been aligned with the targets of the MDG, EFA and ESP with respect to significant and sustained improvement in rates of enrolment, persistence, progression and, somewhat less precisely, quality of learning outcomes. The CFS Policy broadens these expectations even further, including the intention to ensure the “implementation of Child Rights which are universally recognized” and “applying successfully a decentralization system”¹⁶.

Understood in this way, it is not unexpected that CFS interventions have not yet realized Impacts. Even taking 2000 and EBEP-I as the baseline of CFS intervention¹⁷, there has been neither sufficient time nor sufficiently sustained and focused action for such changes to become evident. Discussed in more detail in the following sections, the basic reasons are fairly clear.

i) CFS inputs and actions have been modest:

- spread across six Dimensions in a very small percentage of schools;
- relatively narrow in scope and light-handed in application in each; and
- especially under-developed in Dimension 2, the “heart of CFS”, with respect to good quality, comprehensive and sustained teacher-centred interventions.

ii) CFS interventions have built on a very fragile base:

- weak professional capacities of teachers, school Directors and District oversight bodies “going in”;
- large numbers of schools incomplete, inaccessible and lacking in basic pedagogical materials; and
- a strongly centralized bureaucratic culture impeding development of the kind of local autonomy needed to set and manage CFS priorities.

Based on both of these, expecting to achieve changes in inclusion (access) and effectiveness (learning outcomes) that might be reflected in significantly changed national efficiency rates is unrealistic. → *That said, progressive Outcome-level changes in both of these indicators of child-friendliness will need soon to become more evident, in at least some UNICEF-supported CFS schools and will need be proactively sought out if the CFS Policy is to gain any sustained traction.*

The Marshall Study Detailed data on CFS learning outcomes have not yet been collected on a major scale. A first attempt to do so was the recent study contracted by UNICEF to compare the learning outcomes of CFS and non-CFS schools on the basis of a CESSP national survey of grades 3 and 6 evaluations. The results of the comparison were at once promising and disconcerting. The different sets of statistical analyses

¹⁵ SAT 2008: 4

¹⁶ MOEYS. 2007/a:1

¹⁷ The MOEYS tended to use the end of 2007 and the production of the CFS Policy and Master Plan drafts as its official CFS start date.

showed on the one hand that “CFS schools are having a significant impact on student learning”, while on the other that “there is no significant impact of CFS, once controlling for basic background differences” -- CFS schools tended to be in better off communities, for example.

As Marshall noted, contradicting results are “frustrating ...from a policymaking standpoint, for the simple reason that there is no way of choosing which set of results is correct”. His final conclusion was a conservative one: that the “overall flavour of the results suggests that CFS has not had an impact on student learning”¹⁸.

Validating EBEP-II Assumptions

Along with results, the evaluation was asked to assess the validity of the assumptions underlying EBEP-II. Two types were identified: *situational*, those existing or “to be created” conditions considered necessary to enable CFS interventions to be implemented effectively and produce results; and *explanatory*, those underlying cause-and-effect relationships believed to make CFS relevant, appropriate and sustainable. Detailed in Annex 6, a few key points of the analysis are summarized here:

- The core assumption that the same inputs and conditions as EBEP-I would enable UNICEF/MOEYS to rapidly expand the number of schools, sustain progress, catalyze change and maintain consistency sufficient to protect the integrity of the CFS concept was validated to only a very limited degree.
- The assumption that UNICEF would be able to mobilize CFS action by catalyzing MOEYS and external resources via a “communication for change” strategy was reasonably well validated: Ministry collaboration and development partner cooperation is facilitating broad application of CFS principles and practice.
- The assumption that CFS could maintain its initial scope and intensity and build local ownership is not being validated, the concept is at risk of overly superficial, top-down application due to expansion and overly centralized management.
- Two key explanatory assumptions about how and why people and systems change [e.g. that they do so because ideas are presented as “right” or actions are directed, and that CFS interventions can stop once people are made aware] are not being validated. Consistent follow-up of all learning, typically “on-the-job”, is a necessary condition to consolidating change.

¹⁸ Marshall 2008/b: 19

IV EXPLAINING PROGRESS ON CFS RESULTS

Summarizing briefly the previous discussion, progress with respect to CFS results has been mixed. On the one side, there have been a number of important Outputs:

More training and materials have introduced to more people the notion of child-friendliness and ways to act on the six Dimensions. Improved school hygiene and nutrition, more attractive school grounds and a greater awareness of gender equality have appeared to make children and teachers more comfortable in the school environment and ready to engage in learning. More teachers have a better sense of kinds of teaching methods to which they should be striving.

At the same time, the significance of these results in terms of CFS sustainably and mainstreaming has been mitigated by limited progress on realizing deeper, more qualitative and consolidated changes in actual behaviour.

Child-centred learning has not been implemented to any meaningful extent, and substantially better learning outcomes have not been produced. Community involvement in schools has remained relatively peripheral. CFS principles have not yet become widely evident in the practice of education policy making, programme development or school management.

Elaborating some of the points made earlier, several inter-related factors are associated with, and to some degree explain, the limited scope of change produced so far:

- i. The CFS innovation has been evident in education conversations for some seven years, but actually running in UNICEF as a reasonably well resourced and coherent programme for closer to four, and even then in relatively few schools.
- ii. CFS interventions to date have been relatively non-intensive both at classroom level to facilitate changes in teaching behaviour, and with families to overcome the low status given education in general. Without more intensity, improvements to school infrastructure, health and hygiene, while important in creating enabling learning environments, have been insufficient to strengthen learning outcomes.
- iii. Notable progress was made through the UNICEF/KAPE collaboration to provide direct, intensive and consistent pedagogical expertise to schools, and to monitor results with them. However, this was too limited in reach and duration to be sustained; action to integrate lessons into the system have not yet been taken.
- iv. Quantitative change in terms of improved effectiveness e.g. reduced drop out and repetition rates, and increased rates of progression/completion require long-term, comprehensive and consistent action to confirm and sustain trends tied to specific CFS interventions. This scope of action has not yet been generated, although the CFS Policy and Plan have laid the ground for it.
- v. There have been no reliable baselines or benchmarks established at school level from which the scope and significance of any changes might be assessed and, from that, new and remedial actions mobilized either by Dimension or for the CFS initiative as a whole. It has been difficult to plan and sustain concerted forward action without a base from which to catalyze more strongly committed,

intense and focused action. The Menu analysis process in EBEP-I began to do this, but has in general fallen into disuse with expansion.

- vi. CFS has been a scattered rather than concentrated intervention, delivered through multiple often small-scale activities, influenced by the variable capacities of its many implementers and the idiosyncrasies of its varying school contexts. Without knowing more of the nature and scope of these inputs and settings, it has been difficult even at provincial, let alone national, level to explain what has worked, what has failed, how various factors have interacted to influence progress and, on the basis of all of these, to adapt actions accordingly.
- vii. There has been a tendency to over-estimate progress on the basis of completed activities e.g. training provided and materials produced; and then to stop at this point without consolidating the learning, cumulatively building from each activity, and challenging each to achieve something more. As discussed under Section VII with respect to Dimensions, repeating the same small activity “pieces” year by year has been insufficient to produce the kind of sustained, meaningful change needed to create a “whole” CFS school.
- viii. Finally, the unavoidable reality is that the capacity starting point for creating child-friendly schools and Ministry environments remains low. The CFS Policy and Master Plan create the official directive for CFS to happen, but cannot *cause* it to happen without, year by year, more of those responsible for implementing CFS throughout the system becoming ready and able to act on all of its Dimensions.

In this respect, there are **two potential and inter-related threats to progress** on consolidating and mainstreaming higher-level Outcomes:

- As noted above, there is a risk that as a process of facilitated change CFS implementation may stop too soon → *It will be critical that interactive, bottom-up participation of schools and local education offices is sufficiently supported to allow them to establish a solid base of understanding and permanent ownership.*
- At the same time, there is a risk that as an official policy CFS implementation might be pushed too quickly → *It will be critical that no school is required to take actions or apply specific standards before it is ready or in ways that may not be appropriate to its situation or that of its community.*

Both of these risks are exacerbated at the moment by the centralized approach being taken to direct application of the Policy and Plan. While the directed approach is proving fairly effective in enabling the Ministry to put a great deal of information about CFS and the steps needed to apply it into a large number of hands in a short period of time, it is tending to create new structures and procedures without changing how people actually think and behave.

Centrally-generated guidance is also failing to allow for tailoring, limiting the variations in school infrastructure and human resources, and in the socio-economic situation and school experience of communities, to be accommodated. It is also insufficiently accounting for the fact that, while many key stakeholders can say in general what a child-friendly school is, most remain highly uncertain as to how to make it happen.

→ It is critical that all directives, guidelines and manuals used to delegate responsibility for action to Provincial and District Offices and schools give them sufficient time to negotiate what the Policy and Plan means to them. National level offices need to provide local education offices, school managers or teachers both the time and support they need to “learn-by-doing” and couple recommended actions with facilitated on-the-job training.

These weaknesses in approach are already becoming clear to the Ministry, and an important step has been taken to address them in its decision to pause the further production of manuals anticipated in the Master Plan (25 manuals over the three year period). This is a significant step for a system with very few materials. *→ It will be important that the professional time and resources expected to be freed-up by this decision now be turned into actions aimed specifically at following up and extending implementation of those materials already in place.*

Monitoring of results at school level is a fundamental condition of effective CFS action. It recognizes that responsibility for creating and monitoring inclusion and quality rests ultimately at this level. However, it has also proven a constant challenge in terms of knowing what data to collect; of collecting and analyzing them on a regular basis; and of acting on the information generated.

The problem is that CFS interventions do not have single, easily isolatable effects because they envision “a transformation of the entire learning environment”¹⁹. They focus broadly on the whole range of factors affecting children’s learning: teaching methods, materials, school climate, school-community relations.

In trying to disentangle these inputs and their results, the CFS framework recognizes that the best and most useful assessments need to be responsive, interactive and iterative, and that they need to be done through progressive, on-site analysis by those directly involved: Directors, teachers, District offices, students themselves. While clearly sound in principle, however, this approach to CFS assessment is also proving a challenge to apply. → *There is a general consensus that:*

- *schools need to do more formative monitoring of all inputs aimed at improving their environments and teaching behaviour and of results such as inclusion and learning outcomes;*
- *teachers need more support in the continuous assessment of children’s learning in order to inform their own practice, including diagnostic use of learner portfolios;*
- *schools and Districts need to encourage the regular collection and analysis of informal data, including links between things like student test results or attendance patterns and their participation in school breakfast programmes or better hygiene practices.*

In responding to the first draft of this evaluation, UNICEF put a number of key “linkage” questions on the table that had not been addressed: Was there evidence of Dimension 5-empowered children becoming better learners; of increased community ownership having an impact on quality of teaching; of friendlier school environments improving teaching quality? These questions still cannot be addressed; there were no data. Questions seeking to explore such linkages were asked, but answered only speculatively because formative school-based analyses such as these are not being done → *A key role for UNICEF under a reconfigured Project 2 will be to encourage and assist schools and MOEYS to think and act in these terms.*

As noted earlier, it should not be expected that CFS interventions so far might have had a major influence on statistics such as national or even provincial drop out and repetition rates. However, the recommendation of SAT that “the right balance” be maintained “between quantitative and qualitative studies when it comes to assessing the results of the CFS programme” still holds. → *It should be possible for at least some CFS schools to demonstrate, on an incremental basis over a 1-2 year period, whether grade scores*

¹⁹ Marshall 2008/b: 2

have improved or “positive results” have been produced in “learners’ attitudes and behaviour patterns” in relation to the actions taken²⁰.

That said, important steps in this direction have been taken, much of them building directly on the groundwork laid by the UNICEF/KAPE collaboration in EBEP-I in developing tools for school self-monitoring. The PED School Evaluation tool and Inspectorate’s School Self-Assessment guide have been most prominent in this respect. Unfortunately, confusion in the competitive development of these tools has resulted in an unnecessary drain on resources, good will and opportunities for synergy with other development partner tools; and thus to a slow-down in provision to schools of a technically sound and coherent self-review mechanism.

Nevertheless, the intention is sound. To be used in and by schools to inform their school improvement planning, better focus resource requests and their allocation, and track changes consequent to CFS action, a well-functioning SSA instrument will serve a fundamental role in building local ownership and sustaining the CFS initiative → *Toward this end, it is crucial that the Ministry, backed by all implicated development partners, reconfirm and enforce as soon as possible the decision on one SSA tool and, from there, establish procedures for systematically training school Directors in its use.*

Neither version of the SSA had, at the time of the evaluation, been fully assessed in-use i.e. in terms of its accessibility and benefit to schools as an instrument in support of their own CFS development needs. → *It will be important to put in place a well-supported monitoring system to track the effectiveness of the SSA as a self-learning, self-correcting and formative planning tool for all schools as well as the Ministry overall. In this respect, several “usability” criteria will be important to apply in both its management and monitoring:*

- *feasibility* - that it is useable by all schools, and especially those with limited human resources;
- *cost-effectiveness* - that it answers the questions school managers and teachers are actually asking about their progress on CFS dimensions;
- *consistency and quality of data* - that it produce valid and reliable information specifically within each school and, on a selective basis, across schools; and
- *symmetry with user capacity* - that schools can control its usefulness, especially with respect to interpreting results into improved practice.

Also, the completion of the School Monitoring and Inspection Policy will be key in moving the SSA tool forward. Aimed both at consolidating all inspection functions of the MOEYS into a common framework, and at instilling a “culture of formative oversight” into that function, → *implementation of this Policy needs to be strongly supported through the FTI with adequate resources for both its management and monitoring.*

²⁰ SAT 2007:10

VI EXPANSION OF EBEP-II COVERAGE

The evaluation TORS did not expressly ask for an analysis of the implementation or results of the decision to expand UNICEF coverage in its supported provinces. However, given that this decision has affected, and presumably will continue to affect, what UNICEF and the Ministry accomplish over the life of the project, it merits comment.

The expansion has been completed in all six provinces. At a minimum, it has doubled the number of schools included; in the case of Kg Speu and Stung Treng it has trebled the number, and in Odtar Meanchey increased it six-fold. All of these are significant increments, given that UNICEF's human resources have stayed the same. Provincial Officers in each province report a much heavier workload.

Besides greater numbers, an additional change has been in the type of school now supported. Following POE requests in several provinces, UNICEF Offices have begun to cover complete school clusters, not just selected stronger schools within them. This has meant broadening support from somewhat easier "CFS-ready" schools, those more able to realize targeted results, to include many more schools with very weak starting bases requiring more labour-intensive inputs and able to show only slower, if any, progress.

There are some positives. Support to weaker schools has allowed UNICEF to counter criticisms from some development partners that EBEP-I failed to reach the most vulnerable in taking the "easy route" to school improvement. Also, support to weaker schools means that UNICEF schools now reflect the national norm. Any progress they do make through CFS interventions will now be more realistic; any lessons learned about what makes a child-friendly approach effective or not will be more valid; and UNICEF guidance in both respects will be more valuable for CFS Policy mainstreaming.

There are also concerns. One of the most visible, and for UNICEF Officers worrisome, has been a much less direct relationship with the schools and communities: many fewer observations "on the ground" through less frequent visits and less interactive communication. In one case, the percent of schools visited on a regular basis has dropped from 85% "to maybe 45-50%".

Besides having less knowledge of what is happening in schools, the knowledge Officers do have is now more "mediated" through several layers of counterpart perspectives, and many which are "very weak" in terms of analytical depth. Like the MOEYS itself, UNICEF Officers have become less confident in what they "know" and more dependent on what they are unsure of.

For most, this has meant a diminution in their assurance as to the quality and relevance of their mentoring messages as they become more often mediated by others whose interpretations, priorities, levels of expertise and commitment may not always be clear. According to one UNICEF Officer, like traditional "whispering game", messages going into multi-person communication chains channels are not necessarily the ones coming out. "Sometimes we suggest a lion, and at the end, it comes out a cat".

Though not expressly stated, one risk implied for UNICEF is losing the comparative advantage it had in EBEP-I of a simultaneous "foot on the ground" and a voice at the policy table. With more schools more superficially understood, and less time interacting with communities and DOE and POE, opportunities for incrementally seeing and talking

through the day-to-day problems and successes of CFS action have been fewer. In consequence, UNICEF/Phnom Penh has, presumably, less of the kind of concrete evidence from first-hand experience to bring to senior policy-makers and implementing Departments, evidence often pivotal to convincing action.

There are also implied in-house risks for UNICEF: of becoming more a manager of paper rather than a facilitator of people and ideas; of a weaker ability to anchor its policy decisions in its experience of the field; or of limiting its accountability by being less able to take direct monitoring responsibility for expected Outcomes.

These risks are being mitigated. Provincial Officers appear to exercise a fair degree of discretion in how the expansion of their respective programmes will proceed. While CFS-supported activities tend to be similar in all cases, specific activities do reflect adaptations based on context and their assessment of best options. For example,

Prey Veng support to all DTMT and TTM, not just those in officially supported schools, as a means of developing a critical mass of capacity and commitment; and its inclusion of PTTC managers and instructors in DTMT, as a means of promoting exchange between teaching theory and practice, and a stronger CFS presence in the PTTC curriculum.

Kg Thom's decision, having found it difficult to be "listened to without data", to focus on working with local counterparts to become "more evidence-based" through small scale research on specific questions of concern to the programme e.g. use of UNICEF-supplied materials.

All provinces efforts to make greater efforts to serve as a bridge between local and national levels, concerned with what many perceive as an increased centralization of CFS initiative since the production, in 2007, of the "green book" of prescribed activities and "*fewer links between policy and implementation*" with the shift away from support to school-based initiatives.

Though not expressly pilots, and certainly not dramatic, any such initiatives involving adaptations in CFS implementation obviously have potential to produce insights into how progress can be fostered. → *In this, they represent useful lessons for UNICEF, MOEYS and development partners in overall efforts to "go to scale" and so warrant systematic tracking and analysis.*²¹

²¹ As suggested in the recommendation to UNICEF to reconfigure Project 2.

VII STATUS OF THE CFS DIMENSIONS

*Introduction*²² The CFS Dimensions, especially the five school-based ones, continue to provide a useful set of categories for helping people at all levels to organize their thinking about what a CFS school should be, and to take initial action in making it happen. They continue to be widely recognized, accepted as valid and considered as the shared responsibility of all stakeholders: communities, teachers, Directors, Ministry.

Appropriate and important activities continue to be supported under the Dimensions. As a result, more children are in school and participate in more activities that reinforce their understanding of both their rights and their responsibilities as learners. More classrooms and schools are better organized, more attractive and, in many cases, cleaner and healthier. All of these are no doubt contributing to a stronger potential for improved learning outcomes by creating key enabling conditions.

However, while these are necessary first steps, they are not sufficient. Actions within each Dimension have not changed appreciably since the 2005 evaluation with respect to what is being done, and there was little evidence of substantial improvements in any of Dimensions, especially inclusion or quality of learning²³. → *Each Dimension needs gradually to evolve: to become broader, deeper and more aggressive in reaching the unreached and tackling the still prevailing impediments to children's learning and progression. Schools and communities need to look in a more integrated way across the Dimensions to assess if and how they are together making the school as a whole child-friendly.*

The physical mapping of communities, followed by relatively random household visits and annual enrolment campaigns, are bringing in many children. However, they are not proving sufficient to bring in those 10-15% with disabilities or marginalized by cultural biases, language, unstable or abusive families, endemic poverty. None of the schools visited indicated expanding the mapping or looking for alternative strategies to reach these children.

Children with school feeding programmes and better hygiene are reported to be healthier; anecdotal evidence is that they are attending class more regularly and paying fuller attention to lessons. In this sense, they are more ready for learning. There are not yet conclusive data to suggest they are actually learning better, however. Rather, the Standardized Learning Achievement Survey indicates that they are not. Are there different health, security, psycho-social or gender constraints to children's learning that are not yet being recognized?

Comprehensive and sustained inclusion and learning are the core issues of the EFA, ESP and EBEP-II. Both goals continue to show persistently limited progress in terms of the three core challenges of low survival rates; poor mastery over basic literacy, numeracy and critical thinking; and the still-excluded 10-15% "hard to reach". Because logic suggests actions being taken in support of the Dimensions should have made an

²² References here are to Dimensions 1-5. D-6 is largely beyond school and community reach.

²³ All of the DOE, POE and school staff interviewed, despite the clearly different conditions and people involved across the four provinces used exactly the same language to explain what each Dimension meant; all were doing much the same activities. This suggests a still-limited control over the ideas underlying these categories insofar as there is no evidence of their being tailored to the specific situation of the communities and children involved.

observable, perhaps significant, difference in each of these, the question needs to be asked why → *At least in part, the answer needs to be looked for in terms of the quality, sufficiency and scope of those actions:*

- *Have they been sound technically in addressing the real needs and conditions of under-served children and schools?*
- *Have they gone far enough to change systemic impediments to inclusion and learning in a serious and sustained way?*
- *Have they included all aspects of the constraints to children's participation and learning children been identified and addressed?*

Based on the data from schools, the Ministry and development partners, the answer to the first question is "probably yes", and to the last two, "probably not". This is problematic for two reasons. First, successful actions, those producing real and important changes in inclusion and learning outcomes, are maybe being missed because no one is monitoring incremental "results chain" impacts²⁴. Second, unsuccessful or inadequate actions are invariably wasting financial and human resources at all levels.

Implementation of the Dimensions now falls under the training and monitoring responsibilities of the DTMT. → *As its role evolves, a key task of this mechanism should be to help schools to ask and answer each of the above questions, for each Dimension, and in a progressively more comprehensive way; from this, to extend the interpretation and activities of each Dimension as appropriate; and, in a collective way, to assess whether they are enabling more children to attend school and to learn.*

UNICEF, too, should be involved in this. Toward this end a main recommendation of the evaluation is that it reconfigure the structure of EBEP-II to create project 2 to specifically focus on innovation development and trialling, to explore with schools and communities what more is required in each Dimension to better service inclusion and learning goals, what pedagogical or management behaviours, activities or materials might work better than others, and how best to integrate these into the Ministry's overall CFS Policy implementation.

In this respect, it is important to note that reduction in repetition rates for Grade 1 in all six UNICEF-supported provinces between 2003/4 and 2005/6 has been attributed to the School Readiness Programme, an innovative intervention developed and piloted by UNICEF and KAPE. While not officially a CFS initiative, the SRP linked directly with theories and methods of the Critical Thinking Taxonomy being introduced to Primary teachers through CFS Dimension 2 and proving particularly successful in generating teachers' enthusiasm for improving their practice. They subsequently influenced ETL materials. They are precisely the kinds of innovative, somewhat risk-taking but crucial actions needed to push the parameters of all Dimensions.

²⁴ See Annex 4

Dimension 1: *Proactively inclusive, seeking out and enabling participation of all children and with special focus on marginalized groups who may be disadvantaged due to things such as ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status or disabilities*²⁵

Inclusion itself continues to prove a tenuous concept to assess, in part because the other Dimensions tend to define their own tasks and assess their own success in terms of it. Thus, the status of hygiene facilities (D-3), treatment of girls (D-4) and availability of learning materials (D-2) have all been used as either cause and/or effect of drawing children in or keeping them out. Without its own clear criteria for planning and monitoring action, Dimension 1 has become less useful as a “way in” to the CFS concept.

Dimension 1 has also been weakened because its almost sole unique determinant of success has been access defined in terms of enrolment. Enrolment is clearly a critical issue to address, of course, and progress here has been reasonably good. There are two problems in using it as almost the only definition of inclusion, however. First, it is a fairly ephemeral measure in the context of high grade 1-3 repetition and dropout; a short-term event. And second, it will not be very meaningful until high enrolment rates, including for marginal children, become stable without the benefit of annual campaigns and unsustainable special incentives.

The assessment of inclusion expressly as a CFS Dimension is also complicated by the fact that the Ministry and various development partners, including UNICEF, tend to address the different causes of exclusion each through its particular label and then to develop separate sets of activities and, in some cases, policies for each.

Thus, for example, significant attention (including by UNICEF under project 3) has been given to strengthening awareness and school-based action in support of children with disabilities; the recent proclamation of the “Policy for Children with Disabilities” has been a significant step forward in this respect. Similarly, a large number of activities are on-going in various other areas of exclusion related to poverty, socio-cultural marginalization and language. Several of these have also resulted in policy pronouncements. A number of people also refer to an Inclusive Education Policy which, though not actually reviewed, is understood to incorporate all forms of exclusion and cover the provision of education to out of school children in nonformal education arrangements.

All forms of exclusion obviously warrant significant Ministry and development partner support irrespective of label; any developmentally sound action taken to redress exclusion and promote participation by all children in both school and learning is important and necessary → *Strengthening the value and impact of action under CFS Dimension 1 as a tool for inclusion will require systematically bringing this myriad of conditions causing exclusion under the common conceptual umbrella of CFS and using this to guide and monitor coordinated, consistent and cumulative practice and results.*

School Mapping The most significant activity currently being implemented under Dimension 1 with the potential for making a significant contribution to elaborating the scope and importance of action on inclusion is school mapping.

Developed by a committee made up of MOEYS, UNICEF, SCN and KAPE, coordinated by the SSC under the authority of school Director and implemented by Village-based School Networks, the maps are intended to “get all necessary information regarding

²⁵ Quoted from the Evaluation TORS

children not able to go to school”: those who drop out or are excluded by poverty, disability, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, being from a minority or without a family. By identifying these children, schools and communities are expected to take steps “ensuring that they are able to access schooling on time and their education is stabilized.”²⁶

Much of this potential has yet to be realized. Schools and SSC, in general, lack capacities for more than basic statistical analysis. Teams follow Ministry guidelines, and these are reasonably clear as to the mechanics of the survey. However, they are limited in not explaining the concept of exclusion very well -- how it works and how to move from the data to analyze causes, consequences and solutions tailored to the community. → *Most maps appear not to vary year to year or to have a sense of moving forward. They would be much stronger as inclusion tools if subsequent maps elaborated and deepened earlier ones, and if they were linked to other governance activities.*

The term “stabilized” used in the Dimension 1 Manual is a key one to note in terms of broadening the value of the maps in that it implies the idea of seeking out vulnerable children all the time, throughout their school years not just at the moment of enrolment. → *To make best use of this concept, MOEYS and UNICEF will need to help parents, schools and excluded children themselves to use the mapping exercise in a more continuous, interactive and iterative way than is currently the case, and to develop for each school and community an increasingly realistic and comprehensive understanding of the causes of exclusion and how to tailor actions to address them.*

Dimension 2: Effective academically and relevant to children’s needs for life and livelihood knowledge and skills

There is broad consensus that, for Cambodia, Dimension 2 must be at the top of the CFS agenda. While enrolments are going up, albeit not universally so, children in large numbers are still suffering from poor learning outcomes, repetition and dropping out. According to one senior policy-maker, D-2 action “is the heart of CFS, not school mapping or student councils”. SAT agreed, noting that in the context of rapid expansion, “it will be crucial not to get carried away from (the) central focus” of changing classroom behaviour; “sooner or later, all components of the system will have to be adapted and be brought in line with this fundamental change”²⁷.

At the same time, progress in this Dimension is acknowledged to be the most complex to achieve effectively; that “although the theory of how to do it is there” the risk is in “its implementation”. There are several reasons for this.

- Unlike the activities of other Dimensions, improving the interaction between teachers and students cannot fundamentally be managed from the outside; changed by supplying resources or materials. For teaching to become “child-friendly” requires creating appropriate ways of helping teachers (i) to see value in challenging the substance of their own ideas, beliefs and behaviours with respect children’s learning; (ii) to recognize their ability to affect that learning; and (iii) to work through the process of acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to do both of these - and apply the results into their practice.

²⁶ MOEYS 2007b:10

²⁷ SAT 2007: 9

- At the same time, teachers are the people in the system with often the least professional base on which to build the new ideas CFS has introduced; or the incentive, time and readiness required to seriously engage. Based on interviews with teachers and those working with them, a fair number are making a solid start to reflecting on their practice and, importantly, trying to fill the gaps in their knowledge of child development and of how to guide, rather than manage, their learning. Most, however, continue to see their main challenges as external to themselves e.g. their low pay; students' poor punctuality and frequent absences; lack of teaching and learning materials; a curriculum too heavy to "get across" to children.
- Somewhat more striking is the fairly narrow understanding of child-centred teaching many teachers express, essentially interpreting it as "teacher-free" teaching and as content-dependent²⁸. As explained by one CFS-trained group, "social studies can be taught in a child-centred way because students can read and explore on their own, but subjects like arithmetic need a teacher-centred method because students can't discover the rules by themselves. Teachers have to show them".

In terms of all three factors, finding and applying effective strategies to motivate and sustain teachers' learning has proven both time and labour intensive for the teachers and their facilitators. Success has been slow in coming.

One positive note has been the decision to include funding in the upcoming FTI to "strengthen teacher and principal technical capacity to operationalize (the) CFS Master Plan"²⁹. → *However, while funding is a necessary condition to improved teaching, significantly more emphasis needs to be given to the creation of human resources and programme designs capable of providing professional teacher development in effectively learner-centred and practice-based ways than is currently the case.*

Unfortunately, these kinds of resources continue to be weak. The orientation of all pre- and in-service teacher training is typically skewed toward managing information input e.g. steps for arranging the classroom, types of questions to ask, rather than toward creating opportunities for teachers to discover why these actions are important or how to do them in ways that are responsive to students' needs and the learning task.

In the view of many, therefore, CFS is failing to produce changes in learning outcomes because it has not yet changed the fundamentals of how teachers are taught → *Significantly more attention needs, therefore, to be given to making teachers' own learning events less "activity-driven" and "superficial"; to strengthening the connection "between the CFS Policy and the action in schools" by moving away from "rote learning (as) the main method"; and to increasing the emphasis on lesson planning and evaluation³⁰.*

²⁸ There was some evidence that this same understanding was being applied to teacher training. Subjects like literature were seen as amenable to a learner-centred approach, letting trainees explore ways of teaching on their own; but those that were more factual and complex, such as psycho-pedagogy, required traditional teacher-centred lectures.

²⁹ ESSUAP 2008: 14

³⁰ NGO Director, senior MOEYS policy-maker; programme staff of World Education/ESCU.

In describing their CFS classroom management strategies, for example, almost all teachers presented the same activities: creating wall displays and replacing them on the same time schedule; arranging small groups with the same girl/boy and fast/slow distribution; presenting the same topics in learning corners and portfolios. Most also described a similar, and fairly superficial, use of the learning portfolios as a tool for informal student assessment. → *The intention of the Core Package/Master Plan ETL in introducing these activities is to facilitate a more responsive, context-specific and child-centred classroom. The lack of diversity in the descriptions above suggests much more needs to be done to give teachers control over basic principles; to help them to be able to explain what the activities are expected to produce by way of children's learning and to vary them to achieve specific outcomes.*

Two Important Forward Steps In terms of their potential for enabling change in pedagogical practice, two of the most significant actions begun during EBEP-I and continued into EBEP-II have been the introduction of CFS concepts into the TTD curriculum, delivered through the Provincial Teacher Training Colleges (PTTC) ; and development of the Effective Teaching and Learning (ETL) manual, facilitated through Thursday Technical Meetings³¹ (TTM).

Both innovations have promise as key contributors to CFS mainstreaming; both also have a way to go before being fully effective. Both have laid a good base on which systematically to build a more child-centred teaching environment, in the PTTC and schools respectively; neither has as yet evolved to the point of actually producing one. → *Both need more comprehensive and intensive action to consolidate and integrate the new pedagogical practices they are introducing. Both have the potential for doing this, but will require serious follow through on the redesign plans currently being discussed.*

a) Teacher Education There is a general perception, chiefly but not solely among development partners, that the TTD/PTTC needs to play a more central role in the CFS initiative overall, teacher education being core to CFS learning reform. In terms both of preparing new teachers and supporting the continuing professional development of those in the classroom, the perceived absence of the TTD and its colleges from the evolution of the CFS framework, coupled with limited professional development of its own staff and reform of its curriculum, are seen as having an especially dampening effect on CFS progress.

The principal involvement of the TTD/PTTC in the CFS initiative so far has been the provision of 25 curriculum hours/year of CFS content. This is generally seen as being pedagogically sound, but applied in too tangential a way vis-à-vis the core programme to make a real difference to eventual teaching practice, the CFS concept relegated to a topic rather than as a lens through which all aspects of the coursework should be viewed. → *In this respect, the key recommendation from stakeholders makes sense i.e. that a new TTD curriculum be developed that is based fully on the CFS framework, allows a more intensive and extensive practicum component, and builds teachers'*

³¹ Thursday Technical Meetings take place once a month in all schools, facilitated by school Directors, Technical Grade Leaders (TGL), DTMT or specifically assigned resource people.

capacities as professionals able to analyze and manage their own behaviour with respect to realizing planned student learning outcomes.

The Master Plan indicates this will happen by 2010/11. Many see this as too far off, however → *It is important to begin the development of the curriculum as soon as possible, building from the current models and aligning these with the content and approaches of the ETL programme. Also important will be developing an in-service programme to strengthen the CFS-orientation of PTTC instructors, and to link this to more joint training with Application school teachers “so that” according to one in Kg Thom “we can be consistent with each other in the messages we give to trainees”³².*

b) Effective Teaching and Learning Both the ETL Recording manual and the way it is being introduced through the Thursday Technical meetings are recognized as a significant and positive way forward to improving the quality of teachers’ in-service professional development.

Built directly on the success of the taxonomy introduced through EBEP-I, the opportunity to systematically “work through” pedagogical ideas in the ETL with support of facilitators has given teachers access to fundamentals of good teaching practice concepts and strategies to which few have previously been exposed: critical thinking, variable questioning approaches, methods for facilitating reading and writing. Evident from both interviews and TTM observations, the approach has been welcomed by teachers in helping them to test an array of new ideas against their current thinking and practice.

One indicator of the positive response to the ETL is the disappointment consistently expressed by Grade 1 teachers, in interviews, that they are not receiving ETL texts. A few noted borrowing their colleagues’; most valued their inclusion in ETL/TTM training. It is not clear from the MOEYS or UNICEF the reason for their exclusion, other than that the School Readiness Programme materials are seen as equivalent. Teachers, however, see the contents as complementary, but different, and want to have both.

Effectiveness of the initiative is limited, however. A chief impediment continues to be use of cascaded sessions that are managed as one-size fits all exercises and do not build links with teachers directly in their classrooms. Often led by facilitators who themselves have little CFS-relevant teacher training or adult education experience, sessions tend to be planned without input from participating teachers or schools³³. While the day-long sessions are useful in introducing main concepts and new methods, their impact is being reduced by a lack of planned follow up with in-class support as teachers attempted to apply these to practice.

While most teachers appreciate having ETL material, many also consider the concepts and methods “too heavy” for the time allocated. In large part, the problem seems to be less that the contents *per se* are too complicated, but rather that teachers lack the theoretical and conceptual frameworks through which to make ready sense of them. In

³² Application school teacher, Kg Thom

³³ Prey Veng is seen as fairly unique in this respect in its collaborative school, district and provincial planning, facilitated in large measure by the UNICEF Provincial Officer

this respect, the cascade design is weak in not allowing enough time for practice, feedback or interaction among teachers. It is notable in this respect that while teachers find those elements on critical thinking questions and use of games as a teaching and learning method “the most difficult”, they also find them the most motivating and want more time on them.

→ *Building on the promising start being made by the ETL, CFS mainstreaming and improved learning outcomes will need action in two key areas:*

- *rethinking of some common assumptions about the nature of change. The fact that “the teachers have the ETL materials” has not necessarily meant “they are participating in the CFS process”, as some in the PED/TWG contend, irrespective of the quality of those materials. Disseminating manuals is not enough to consider the task done.*
- *better coordination among all those responsible for teachers’ professional development. Both pre- and in-service training of both the Ministry³⁴ and development partners need to be more consistent and cumulative in increasing training quantity e.g. more training opportunities, with more time and follow-up allocated to them; and to strengthening training quality e.g. introducing progressively more complex ideas and practices, facilitated through more interactive practice-based mentoring arrangements.*

Dimension 3: Healthy and safe for, and protective of, children’s emotional, psychological and physical well-being

Partnership with WFP has continued under the CFS umbrella, and the School Breakfast programme is considered among the most important factors in encouraging children’s attendance, and potentially their learning. Provision of clean drinking water and latrines and, especially from the students’ perspective, improvements in the physical quality of school grounds also continue to be noted as reasons for the school’s being child-friendly.

In all of these, the roles of parents through the SSC and of students under the auspices of the Student Councils were reported by WFP and children themselves to be significant. SSC, students and school staff expressed commitment to maintaining the activities, but SSC in particular were uncertain about their ability to so without outside support.

More troubling is the sense of passivity and insularity among the SSC (not the children). Aside from the funding drives they reported, they seemed to be reluctant to engage in active consideration of other, perhaps more substantial and sustainable, options for improving the school’s health and safety status. None, for example, considered putting school needs and problems onto the agendas of Commune Councils or members of the business community, a clearly missing link to D-6.

One new initiative has been production of a manual on hygiene, clean food and drinking water. As part of the Core Package/Master Plan, most of the content and background

³⁴ TTD/PTTC, PED, PRD, Inspectorate and DTMT

materials for this have come from UNICEF and KAPE and appear technically sound. It was not clear from school visits how the manual is being used, but teachers in particular appreciated the easily accessible information and practical ideas for orchestrating class discussion and student activities.

As noted also in the 2005 evaluation, protection continues to be a significant gap under this D-3. An example of the importance of addressing Dimensions collectively, the only people raising the issue of violence against children in the school visits were the Student Council members (D-5) who noted their responsibility to “stop fights” and “protect students from being bullied”. However, no SSC or teachers mentioned protection as an issue; nor was it noted as a specific focus of work through the UNICEF Provincial offices.

Domestic violence, child abuse and sexual harassment remain persistent, serious and ubiquitous problems; corporal punishment continues in many households and schools to be considered a culturally appropriate way to manage children’s behaviour. Again noting the links among Dimensions, all of these are threats confronting especially girls and other vulnerable children (D-4) and keeping many out of school (D-1).

The Master Plan confirms that “violence such as abuses and physical and mental punishment on children should be diminished (and) child protection... promoted to prevent harassment”. In this respect, a manual on these issues is planned³⁵ and a few protection-related issues are included in the SSA tool³⁶. → *Ensuring action on all of these, including outreach to those NGOs doing extensive work on protection, will be important in enabling results both in this Dimension as well as in D-1, D-2 and D-4.*

Dimension 4: Gender-responsive in creating environments and capacities fostering equality

With respect to gender equality goals, the recent ESP/ESSP Midterm review reported some progress, but not across the board. Among the access indicators, four met targets for the total, but not for girls: primary NER in remote areas, proportion of 6-14 years old out of school, number of students enrolled in the grades 3-9 re-entry programme, and transition to Upper Secondary School (USS).

However, girls did meet targets in other key areas: Primary NER nationwide, USS NER and the number of students in teacher training³⁷. In terms of quality, the picture for girls was consistent with the norm for all children: out of 25 indicators, 6 (40%) met planned targets; 13 (60%) did not, including key ones of Grade 1, 3 and 6 promotion, grade 1 and 3 repetition, and grade 6 completion.

³⁵ MOEYS. 2007/d: 4. This second manual may be delayed, however, with the Ministry decision to pause production of the Core texts to focus on consolidating those already in schools.

³⁶ For example, tracking schools’ actions with respect to “student-help-student activities”, including protection; organizing children’s safety networks at village level; listing names of people who have been rescued; measures to protect students from dangers resulting from physical materials (MOEYS. 2007/f)

³⁷ MoEYS 2008: 6

Progress on gender is also not obvious with respect to action under EBEP-II and CFS more generally. According to one senior policy-maker, gender is now considered “not so much a Dimension, as a cross-cutting issue”. While positive in one sense, the comment also warrants a caution: such terminology tends to mean relegating responsibility “to everyone” and so, in effect, to no one.

Seminars and training focusing on gender have continued, but no data or analyses have been reported on what has changed for women in the education system, or girls in school, as a result of these. The development of a “Quality Standards and Indicators for Gender Mainstreaming in Education” policy was noted in the SAT report as “useful”, but not yet addressing the “central challenge (of) how to move beyond the preparation of documents and plans to get into real action” e.g. women in senior policy and decision-making positions³⁸. Anecdotal evidence in and outside the Ministry also suggests that progress has been minimal.

From the perspective of one senior member of the Gender Working Group³⁹, support for women’s equal participation remains “*more for public display*” than for real change. She expressed disappointment that UNICEF decided not to support an analysis of senior Ministry Department, POE and DOE appointments between 2005-2007. → *Intended to identify trends in gender balance across the units, and why some might be doing better than others, it would seem a particularly pertinent way both to generate information and, perhaps, motivate action.*

Worrisome for gender issues at school level, membership of SSC appears heavily skewed in favour of men both in numbers and participation⁴⁰. The reasons given by the SSC themselves for this situation were not unexpected: most SSC members are drawn from Commune Councils and other village leadership positions and these tend to be dominated by men (unlike the PTAs which draw from families and had consequently more women); and, while women “had been encouraged” to join, most were “too busy with children and housework” and few were interested. → *All of these should be remediable through more action in both D-4 and D-5.*

There are some positive signs. Crediting action on D-5, there were balanced numbers of girls and boys on all of the Student Councils interviewed and, in particular, the girls responded equally with boys in content, ease and enthusiasm.

³⁸ SAT 2007: 7

³⁹ The GWG has become more influential over the past couple of years with its shift from the Ministry under coordination of a Department Director to the broader reach of the EFA Secretariat, and coordination by the Director of the Inspectorate. Rather than a loosely-linked network of fairly junior officers, it now includes senior MOEYS policy-makers and officers. This move has enabled it to command greater attention in terms of funding and profile, and to develop more extensive, strategic projects e.g. identifying “outstanding” teachers to use as “exemplar” trainers; and working with the MOEYS Personnel Department on affirmative action job descriptions/criteria.

⁴⁰ In one large group discussion with a mix of parents and SSC members, women were well reflected and vocal. In another SSC, however, where only one woman was present, her male colleagues insisted on answering for her. While acknowledging that they had had gender training, the male members felt the idea of gender balance was more appropriate “*for young people, students, not for us*” and “*too much to expect for a developing country like Cambodia*”.

Further, initial steps are being taken to coordinate development of gender-focused manuals, to be written under the auspices of the CFS Policy/Master Plan and the GWG, in collaboration with both PED and gender and CFS working groups. The first manual will build on the experience of the OPTIONS project in Prey Veng as a particularly powerful approach to encouraging girls to remain in school and avoid high risk behaviour. → *In terms of CFS mainstreaming, this is a good example both of collaboration between EFA and CFS and between Ministry responsibility centres and development partners) and of linking proven small-scale field methods with wider national CFS application that a reconfigured Project 2 might usefully pursue.*

Dimension 5: *Actively engaged with, and enabling of, student, family and community participation in all aspects of school policy, management and support to children*

School Support Committees The evaluation field visits included interviews with SSC members of four schools. While not enough to allow a definitive assessment, these discussions, coupled with data from other interviews, suggest that as interlocutory mechanisms linking schools and communities the SSC are fairly weak. Irrespective of the quite different situations prevailing in each province, of the urban versus rural settings of the schools and of presumably changing circumstances or child-specific priorities, those SSC interviewed were undertaking the same activities and doing the same ones year to year.

In this respect, and in their general discussion of the meaning of a child-friendly and child-seeking school, the impression of the SSC is of a fairly traditional, minimally active group of senior community functionaries, performing well-enough, but with little creativity or forward movement. → *In this respect, the decision to shift membership from parents (PTA) to Commune leadership was perhaps not a fully positive one and warrants rethinking. Reiterating the 2005 evaluation, it is suggested that inclusion of parents is important to bringing in more women and, speaking from that perspective, a stronger focus on issues like quality of teaching and learning and gender equality. Neither of these issues was raised by the four SSC interviewed, nor were questions about either effectively answered.*

Also meriting consideration, there was a notable absence in the interviewed SSC of younger members⁴¹, people who may be more inclined toward an activist role in assessing, and developing interventions with respect to hard-to-address issues (domestic violence, land speculation, child labour and increasing rural poverty). These are issues seriously affecting student and school stability, but did not appear to be high in the thinking or agenda of current SSC. While all were involved in school mapping and some with the SSA, both were being handled in a fairly passive way; members said very little about the purposes, implementation challenges or uses of data generated. → *This would appear to reflect a generally narrow scope of thinking about or mobilizing change, a gap that further advocacy and analytical capacity development will need to address.*

⁴¹ Although this might have been a function of the time of day of the interviews, when younger people may have been at work. All male members of the interviewed SSC were late middle age and indicated having been in their positions in commune leadership for over 10 years.

Student Councils These Councils have been the second most prominent activity aimed at enabling stakeholder participation in school management. Supported under EBEP-I as student associations, Councils now have the same types of responsibility, but with a much more formalized structure, more status and apparently more influence on the children themselves as self-confident participants in school affairs. Assigned functions ranging from teaching students how to queue and keeping the grounds clean, through to mobilizing attendance, managing the classroom in a teacher's absence and mentoring slow learners, SC members are active with respect both to D-3 and to some extent D-1

The changes in their status and responsibility were considered by all SC interviewed as both relevant to themselves and valuable to the school. Most confirmed they were able to make suggestions about what the rules of the school/class should be, not simply enforce them. Few said they were learning very much new from their work, but none indicated it was taking too much time away from their own studies or harming them in other ways. Most were observably proud of their role, especially with respect to the assistance they were giving to struggling classmates⁴². → *Irrespective of the actual extent of responsibility and tutoring capacity exercised by these children, their sense of self-confidence in their positions as contributors to the school, most notably by the girls, was evident and important. As a CFS-support mechanism, the Councils warrant continued and increased support.*

Dimension 6: *Supported through enabling policies, methods, and guidelines to more effectively utilize available structures and resources*

Dimension 6 is different in kind from the other five, concerned not with the conditions and actions of the school, but rather with its policy and institutional environment. In this respect, it has been a critical addition to the CFS concept in formally recognizing the need for symmetry and mutual responsibility between Ministry and schools: between the willingness and ability of the education system to provide resources to enable the changes subsumed under the CFS label; and the willingness and ability of schools to request and make effective use of those resources.

In this respect, Dimension 6 will necessarily be a key focus of attention over the next 5 years of the Policy and Master Plan. → *A critical task for the Ministry as it takes ownership of the CFS concept will be to become increasingly proactive in performing its role of confirming its long term vision and commitment to make mainstreaming happen; setting the parameters for CFS quality, scope and expected outcomes; developing strategies for ensuring fidelity to these; and reinforcing a clear CFS agenda for guiding and using financial and, especially, human resources. On their side, development partners will need progressively to move their programmes under the CFS Policy umbrella⁴³ and provide the Ministry the capacity support it requires.*

⁴² There was no evidence indicating that SC members were realizing better learning outcomes. This was a gap in the interview questions, but as discussed in Section V, is an example of the type of "linkage question" schools need to be asking and analyzing.

⁴³ Setting an agenda has started to happen. SCN noted, for example, that it will give more attention to working with the Ministry on policy directions, drawing on its own experience at the local level. KAPE/ESCUP expects to do the same as it assesses its now pilot approaches for their wider application potential. UNICEF/EBEP has been doing this all along, but will need to work

The Master Plan Matrix has begun to do this. → *Managing the Matrix will require fuller, more strategic, guidance and iterative action than has so far been the case with the CFS interventions. All levels of the system, including schools and development partners, will need a clear sense of direction if they are to be able to determine priorities among actions and identify potential for internal synergies and this will need to come from the Ministry.*

Mainstreaming CFS⁴⁴ Officially, CFS became applicable nation-wide with the launching of the CFS Policy; in principle, this shifted the paradigm and mainstreamed the concept. However, questions continue as to what this means in practice. The Ministry is attempting to answer these through development of common sets of manuals; mechanisms like the DTMT; and various full-coverage training regimes. Concerns here are now being raised, however, that this is reinforcing the kind of top-down management that tends to work against CFS in failing both to recognize diversities across communities and children, and to respect the right and responsibility of local communities to manage their own agenda → *These concerns need to be taken seriously and efforts made to find a viable balance between national level action that, on one side, ensures compliance with the Policy and application of common standards and, on the other, creates room for local interpretation and enables strong local CFS voices to be developed and heard.*

The 70% Solution Officially, CFS was to be considered to have reached nation-wide status with 70% of schools rated as child-friendly. This has proven to be controversial on a number of levels, however. Concerns here centre chiefly around whether and how quantitative criteria can be established for an essentially qualitative, progressive and multi-dimensional innovation like CFS; who should develop these criteria; and how they would be used.

The Ministry itself recognizes flaws in the 70% benchmark that are making it increasingly less viable. For one, it is unlikely the majority of schools will realize a CFS rating any time soon. Secondly, the quantitative benchmark fails to account for issues such as learning outcomes, retention and gender-equality for which no agreed indicators have been set and there are few, if any, reliable school baselines from which any measures of percentage change might be determined. → *There are suggested options, however, and these will be important to pursue.*

Chief among these is to use quantitative data (e.g. daily attendance, test results, teachers' absence and distributions of gender, disability and ethnicity) in qualitative ways; and to align these with qualitative assessments (e.g. appearance of the environment, children's sense of participation, teachers' assessments of children's critical thinking, communication and self-confidence). This approach is the basis of the SSA and is important in measuring trends toward child-friendliness over time. It also suggests a more refined notion of the "nation-wide criterion", recognizing both that all schools should be consciously and clearly "on the CFS path", and that this path is necessarily a continuous one.

more explicitly to coordinate internally between its policy advice at the national level and a more tightly-focused capacity development and testing role at local level with POE/DOE and DTMT.

⁴⁴ See Annex 7 for a fuller background discussion of the summary points made here

Mainstreaming as Co-ordinated CFS Action Nation-wide CFS application by definition must be coincident with strong internal coordination within and across Ministry Departments and responsibility centres. → In practical terms, mainstreaming CFS nation-wide will mean that all levels of the system, and gradually all schools, understand fully the six CFS Dimensions, can assess the situation of their respective responsibilities for school-age children in terms of each, and are prepared to act on this assessment.

Even with the launch of the Policy and Master Plan, along with the “Core Activity” manuals, coordinated action in this sense remains on a relatively small and unsystematic scale. It is still unclear what the official position of the CFS Policy with respect to the MDG, EFA/NPA, ESP/ESSP and now FTI. → *At the same time, CFS will be mainstreamed when it clearly is adding value to these others and to education reform as a whole. Ensuring the CFS Policy is raised to this level will be an important task of senior Ministry management and the CFS Steering Committee, a necessary condition of its serving as a tool for realizing CRC and EFA goals.*

CFS Oversight Mechanism Consequent to being centred not in the school, but in the wider policy and institutional environment, a second key difference of D-6 from the others is in the ambiguity as to where responsibility for it resides. More than the others, actions to direct, legitimize and enforce coordination necessarily cuts across both technical and structural lines.

PED has so far assumed the coordinating mantle, but this is a far from unchallenged position and internal competition for CFS authority will likely continue. A key mitigating factor in this will be the ability of the CFS Steering Committee or its equivalent to exercise a proactive “change manager” role, sitting above the fray of inter-departmental and centre versus local tensions and able to resolve them. → *How and by whom this function might best be performed is somewhat unclear. What is clear is that an overarching responsibility centre, able to function as an integrated and transparent representation of all main stakeholder in setting and enforcing implementation standards, will be a necessary condition to effective CFS Policy application and CFS mainstreaming.*

This section summarizes some of the main factors *explaining the nature of CFS interventions and results*. It is intended to help clarify why expected changes have been achieved or fallen short; and to identify some of the patterns of CFS thinking and action emerging from the past years' experience that should be taken into account and monitored as the CFS Policy and Master Plan move forward in order to reinforce those that prove effective and correct any that are impeding sustainable results.

a) The CFS Implementing Environment

The CFS innovation is being implemented in the context of two operating environments: the external, concerning the socio-economic, political and institutional systems of the country overall; and the internal, concerning the policy priorities, professional capacities, management structures and resources of the MOEYS, as well as those of the various development partners supporting application of CFS.

In order for CFS interventions to take root and make meaningful differences to children's inclusion and learning outcomes, they need continually to try either to change or to accommodate these environments. So far, CFS interventions have had little to no influence on the external and only marginal, although gradually growing, influence on the internal. For this reason, key constraints to children's participation and learning persist:

- Over-centralized policy action continues to impede reform; there has been limited progress in implementing the Decentralization Policy and little action to develop capacities of local governance bodies like the CEFAC.
- Lack of concerted action against the employing of school-age children, persistent high numbers of incomplete schools and increasing instances of multi-shift arrangements are exacerbating the already too few contact hours and the tendency of poor and vulnerable children not to enrol or to drop out irrespective of enrolment campaigns and mapping.
- Introduction of Programme Budgeting, expected to allow schools greater flexibility in determining use of funds and to get funds to them on time, has not reduced the highly centralized fiscal control and significant disbursement delays.
- Weak school management, Directors typically described as unable or unwilling to support teachers, and teachers demotivated by low salaries and poor conditions of service are resulting in strongly change-reluctant school, irrespective of their accepting inputs of hygiene and cleaner playgrounds.

Cumulatively, both systemic and school-based environmental factors are contributing to growing doubts about the depth of Government commitment to the education reform process in general; producing a certain passivity among many, a sense that what schools are is the best that can be expected; and continuing to impede CFS results, key efficiency and effectiveness measures remaining poor and many doubting that MDG and EFA targets will be met. → *Addressing these environmental constraints and their effects*

⁴⁵ See Annex 8 for a fuller background discussion of the summary points made here..

on CFS actions and outcomes will require a strong and proactive impetus from the MOEYS at national level to keep up the post-launch CFS Policy momentum. Working in conjunction with development partners preferably through one of the senior oversight committees e.g. the PMC or JTWG/ED⁴⁶ actions will be needed that move against the systemic and policy impediments to reform, and away from “doing things as usual”.

b) Clarity and Agreement on the CFS “Innovation”

As a school change strategy, CFS remains somewhat of a “concept in progress”. Beyond espousing the right of all children to good quality education and using the six Dimensions to define what that means in practice, answers as to specifically *how* a child-friendly school framework is different from other education reforms and *why* it merits attention have continued to be fairly ambiguous. As a result, CFS has suffered as one among a multitude of programme innovations without sufficient concentration of energy, resources and actions to catalyze significant or often observable change.

This is slowly changing. A number of NGO programmes⁴⁷ have moved quite far in reducing the ambiguity by stressing the roots of the CFS in children and families themselves as “agents” in setting and managing a learning outcomes-oriented agenda within the context of their own schools and communities. This has defined, in turn, approaches that emphasize responsiveness to, and participation of, communities. UNICEF has not gone as far in changing the “locus of control” paradigm, but has advanced the CFS concept by introducing a different moral compass into official ESSP and FTI conversations. → *Overall, however, variations have not reflected major differences in CFS “first principles”, and the onus will remain on development partners to continue extending their mutual learning and adaptation with respect to CFS application and building an open environment of exchange, cooperation and collaboration.*

There is benefit to the Ministry in doing so, providing it a fairly accessible conceptual CFS framework, buttressed by increasingly better-proven methodological and activity alternatives. It has been on the basis of these that MOEYS has been able to make its own accommodations and set its own policy course, the most visible evidence of this being the launching of the CFS Policy.

The CFS Policy is now the Ministry’s operational definition of CFS, and is especially important in reinforcing inclusion and quality of learning outcomes as the central tenets of that definition. → *These priorities now need to be reflected in all Ministry and partner decisions to mainstream CFS, especially as FTI comes into effect. They confirm that:*

- *the onus must be on schools and the system as a whole to proactively seek out and accommodate all children, not passively wait for them to turn up and fit in;*
- *changes in school environments, hygiene and community participation must be understood as necessary, but **not** sufficient, conditions of CFS implementation;*
- *primary action must focus instead on teachers, teaching and learning outcomes.*

⁴⁶ Programme Management Committee, Joint Technical Working Group/Education. The CFS Steering Committee is another option, although its mandate was somewhat unclear.

⁴⁷ Most prominently KAPE, SCN, VSO, World Education and CARE

While launching the Policy has been positive in confirming the Ministry's definition and ownership of CFS, it brings also a challenge that warrants monitoring: that proclamation will be interpreted as implementation, leading CFS promoters to stop or slow their action. There is evidence of this already happening e.g. perceptions among several development partners, including UNICEF, that local officials are leaving responsibility for initiating action to the national policy levels, and senior managers describing teachers as "practising ETL" because they have the manual. → *Mitigating tendencies toward passivity will need to be a key task of the upcoming period, specifically through creating, monitoring and continuously strengthening "CFS-enabling conditions" at all points in the system:*

- *by making it clear that responsibility for implementing the Master Plan is shared by all;*
- *by reinforcing the fact that the process will not be simple or automatic, but that it is doable;*
- *by instituting coherent capacity development programmes; and*
- *by encouraging a stronger "push from the bottom" through actions to enable communities and schools to question, initiate, adapt and demand action with respect to all aspects of the CFS Dimensions.*

c) Collaborating on CFS Implementation

Building the CFS framework and reputation thus far has required consistent collaboration and communication between and among several Ministry Departments and development partners. Much of this has been at the initiative of the partners and overall, interaction among Ministry and development partners with respect to CFS action has been working well, facilitated by long-standing collaboration on the ESP/ESSP and EFA/NPA as well as agreement to apply the Paris Declaration principles of good partnership practice, programme alignment and harmonization.

Sustaining and extending effective action under the CFS Policy, however, will put increasing demand on the Ministry to take the initiative in managing both its internal coordination and external partnerships as it sets the speed and direction of Master Plan application; and on development partners to play an increasingly more responsive part in enabling this to happen.

The importance of, and challenges to, effective internal cooperation and communication are clear. Officers at all levels continue to struggle with the kind of working arrangements that integrated CFS actions requires: joint analysis, common work planning, shared application of authority. → *A critical task for senior management with respect to CFS implementation nation-wide will be to promote and enable a more consensual way of working within and across Departments, and between national and local levels along the "common Policy path".*

This is likely to require considerable effort given the that open, interactive communication is not yet well established within the normative culture of the Ministry. Mainstreaming in this respect will necessarily be a gradual and iterative process, requiring senior managers at all levels to give time and attention to helping those working under them to accommodate the new norms implied by the Policy in the context of their specific responsibilities. It will mean, in some cases, pushing staff to adapt to new ways of working, but equally letting them interpret these Policy tasks in ways that

respect their professional integrity and the difficulties they will inevitably face in giving up practices with which they have felt capable and comfortable.

Partnerships to enable coherent, consistent and cumulative CFS mainstreaming among development partners themselves will be equally critical. The formal relationship between UNICEF and KAPE ended in 2007 by mutual agreement, but conversations have continued on an informal basis. → The current interest of both sides to explore options for a new arrangement seems sound in light of UNICEF's intention to develop an enhanced innovation testing role and the importance to the Ministry of having access to evidence-based information as it attempts to translate the CFS Policy into practice.

Collaboration with WFP has continued, and continues to be instrumental to the success of the CFS intervention overall. Almost all schools when asked about the most important aspects of CFS put the breakfast and accompanying nutritional advice and materials near or at the top; WFP noted that 85% of CFS schools have "well-managed vegetable gardens", a level considerably above the norm. As in all school settings, providing food to under-nourished children is assumed to be serving multiple attendance, learning, socialization as well as health goals. Although there have not been systematic measures of this linkage yet, despite the potential of broad spectrum of CFS-related results from the programme, and its inclusion in the Master Plan, it has not unfortunately been incorporated into the FTI. → Nevertheless, the partnership with WFP is key for UNICEF to maintain, particularly one with a stronger focus on assessing linkages.

District Training and Monitoring Teams Catalyzing Policy implementation through new mechanisms is intended as a way to facilitate "consensus on a common path" -- arrangements such as the PED, TTD and POE Technical Working Groups expected to work around traditional "stove-pipe" decision-making and routinized practice.

The most significant new mechanism has been the District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMT). Established in 2007 as a part-time but permanent assembly of usually DOE officers, TGL and school Directors, DTMT have responsibility for supporting CFS Policy implementation at school level, helping coordinate and facilitate activities across the six Dimensions.

Based on the field visits, the mechanism is working well. Most members were reasonably comfortable in their relationship to other oversight bodies such as the POE and DOE Working Groups. Most understood fairly well their shared responsibility as a team⁴⁸, and were able to explain why the mechanism made sense despite the fact that members, as individuals, were already doing much the same work in their regular jobs. According to one Team:

- The DTMT programme of work is more flexible than that of the traditional units; while initial workplans for covering the schools were made on the basis of the DOE annual plan, "we can adjust it as we visit schools and see new needs or issues".

⁴⁸ Although they typically operate through two sub-groups: DTMT1 responsible for Dimensions 1, 3-6; DTMT2 responsible for Dimension 2

- There was value added in being on a team; “we can share experiences with each other, both about our ideas and what we are learning”.
- Because both sub-teams “work with teachers to some degree, we don’t distinguish too much between us”. As a Team, they were in a good position to be “more consistent and decide together what things need to be improved in a classroom or school and what recommendations to give a teacher or Director”;
- Consequent to all of this, their monitoring was better as a Team; “if one of us comes in later, he can see what the others have written in the record book and follow up with the teachers to see if they are acting on the recommendations”.

This explanation, and the capacity and interest that accompanied it, are positive in indicating that the DTMT may well provide -- if given sufficient technical support -- a reasonably firm base on which to structure the participant-centred, on-site mentoring and integrated, responsive monitoring that will be needed in mainstreaming the CFS Policy.

→ *In this respect, it will be important that DTMT are supported in developing capacities:*

- *to observe classroom teaching and management actions, interpret what they see, and communicate effectively with teachers about teaching plans, learning processes and outcomes;*
- *to plan, execute and follow-up TTM and other mentoring sessions as professional development learning events;*
- *to take a holistic perspective in helping school staff, students and SSC to see how the Dimensions can and should influence one another; and how actions in each should evolve year to year;*
- *to coordinate with the POE, DOE and Clusters and serve an interlocutor role, linking local conditions with national priorities; and*
- *to be self-directed in negotiating school-based activities with Directors and teachers and systematically monitoring results.*

Missing Linkages CFS mainstreaming will require strengthening and consolidating existing core structures and functions, not simply creating new ones. In this respect, some concerns were raised about potentially key mechanisms being overlooked instead of rethought as CFS contributors. Two of the more important of these: the Commune EFA Committees and School Clusters

- Once considered key to EFA/NPA, the CEFAC are currently seen as generally ineffective administrative bodies with little capacity to bring issues related to the welfare of children or schools into local governance discussions. Although CEFAC endorsement is required for school mapping, for example, none of the SSC referred to it or indicated its involvement in their data collection, analysis or follow-up action. → *This is a potentially serious gap with respect especially to D-1 and D-6 warranting perhaps further training of SSC in how they can more effectively interact with this, and other, local governance bodies.*

- School clusters were considered by the 2005 evaluation as key engines of CFS implementation; they are still required by the Master Plan to “act as vehicles for training and follow up” through TTM. However, they are also described as weak venues for both CFS information exchange and capacity development. In this respect, the role of Clusters in building school-school and teacher-teacher support appears to be losing ground, rather than strategically tied, to the work of DTMT in supporting TTM and TGL, and of the SSC in school mapping. → *This is again a gap with respect to building systemic capacity for mainstreaming CFS, especially in rural and remote areas; it warrants further work with schools to determine what role Clusters can play and strengthen their capacity to do so.*

d) Support to Institutional Learning

The CFS has been developed specifically as a holistic “inclusion and quality” education reform initiative. For this reason, its implementation has required considerable human resource capacity development at all points in system. The CFS Policy and Master Plan pushes this requirement further, committing the Ministry to nation-wide CFS application through an extensive agenda of implementation principles and tasks and within a relatively quick 5-year timeframe. → *In this, they have made the scope of capacity needs, and the importance of consolidating and institutionalizing them, even more extensive, complicated and urgent.*

They imply, in this respect, a very steep learning curve for the system as a whole given the weak human resources base currently available. While increasing numbers of capable individuals are coming into, and being trained at, all levels of the system, they do not constitute a strong critical mass of expertise. Most are concentrated in senior positions, and most in Phnom Penh, with relatively few in rural or remote areas. Further, there are few established channels of communication and mutual support through which professional aspects of the work can readily be shared.

Neither the Policy nor the Master Plan, however, has articulated a strategy or programme of human resource and institutional capacity development. Many capacity building activities in support of the various Policy/Master Plan inputs have been started. Key mechanisms expected to facilitate Policy implementation like the DTMT and PED/TTD Technical Working Groups have begun their work. A number of the core Master Plan implementation manuals have been published and disseminated. However, none of these has been set within any kind of system-wide results-based CFS-oriented HRD policy framework.

→ *Action to generate such a policy framework will need to happen soon, however. Three areas of inter-related HRD intervention were suggested by the data as priorities for working toward the development of a more coherent approach to system-based capacity across all aspects of CFS mainstreaming as implied by the Policy and Master Plan.*

Moving the Ministry forward as a learning organization Implementing the CFS Policy and mainstreaming CFS will require going further than simply awareness raising, small-scale trialling or occasional technical assistance. → *It will require instead developing a strategy aimed at enabling the system as a whole to change through learning.* Less vague than it sounds, this will involve attention to basically three criteria:

- *that all training initiatives is designed to address the specific learning needs of officers and teachers on-the-job and over the long-term.* The current provision of occasional 6-day vacation sessions and one-day workshops on pre-determined themes have been appropriate for initial exposure to CFS principles and general techniques for applying CFS activities. They will be insufficient to consolidate this learning or sustain change at an organizational level.
- *that all training is specifically tailored to CFS implementers as adult learners.* The scope of attitudinal and behavioural changes implied by the CFS Policy will require learning that moves well beyond acquiring information. This will happen only through learner-centred and practice-based methods; learner participation in planning and follow-up; sensitivity to the personal and professional risks involved in changing; and facilitators able to manage all of these. None of these has been a common feature of Ministry or EBEP-II CFS training so far.
- *that there are specific plans for strengthening capacities for collaboration.* Strategies and skills for more regular communication will be important at two levels: national between PED and TTD TWG and both of these and the various “support” centres; and local among DTMT members, and between the Teams and respective responsibility centres locally (POE, DOE, school) and nationally (PED, TTD, the Inspectorate).

Creating a CFS-enabling culture of inquiry

One senior Ministry officer listed four “critical steps” to sustaining CFS as an innovation: piloting its application as input to policy; disseminating it along with capacity development; implementing it through the system; and monitoring it for “constructive feedback from all levels, especially the students”. In fact, these are the steps that have generally been followed by the CFS innovation to date, and that have led to the point where senior levels of the Ministry feel confident enough in the viability of the framework to formulate it as a national policy.

An equally critical point made by others, however, is that these are not linear steps, with the Policy and Master Plan as the end point. Nor do they happen just once for a complex change like CFS. As the four key stages of mainstreaming CFS change nation-wide, they will have to happen on a continuous basis as new ideas are generated, tested, applied and evolve. → *In this sense, mainstreaming CFS will mean that working through each step becomes a permanent task with respect to all activities and as a regular task of all implementers. This implies that all of those responsible for CFS Policy application, at all levels, need to be willing and able to continually ask and answer “what works”.*

For senior policy levels and managers, as well as development partners, enabling officers to take on this task will require creating an institutional culture of inquiry. As suggested above → *such a culture will need to be an explicitly “experiment-friendly” one, in which all staff are supported.*

- *to ask questions* about all CFS-related activities to ensure their consistency with CFS principles, and appropriateness to the specific context and people involved, especially children.

- *to give feedback.* Parents, teachers and middle level managers cannot simply be invited to enquire and challenge, which seems to be the current approach, but need to be enabled to enquire and challenge by being given opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and access tools to do these effectively.
- *to make commentary both up and down the hierarchy.* It will be important to address the fact that while those at the top invariably say there are “many opportunities for people to give their opinion”, those further down typically claim they do not see them.
- *to take ownership for progress on CFS* by being rewarded for honest assessment of progress and results. Effective CFS Policy implementation will require that local actors accept the right and responsibility for saying what is working or not; and that senior policy levels have a true picture of what is actually happening in schools and classrooms, not just what is planned to happen. Without both, it will not be possible to ensure relevant guidance, avoid dysfunctional actions becoming ingrained or enable effective ones to be built on.

Enabling continuous CFS-oriented school assessment The CFS Policy includes the concept of CFS-rated schools, each school ranked on the basis of its progress within the six Dimensions as either *basic*, *medium* or *advanced*. Several senior Ministry officers confirmed the ranking as intended to be “*notional ; it recognizes the need for flexibility*”; and its purpose as a means of tailoring support to the specific situation of the school. UNICEF was described as doing this by supporting *advanced* schools; other partners by supporting *basic* schools in remote areas. “*Actions*”, it was noted, “*have to be specific to suit the school setting*” and rating them will allow knowing the quality of child-friendliness in that setting.

It remains unclear precisely how the designations will be made or what they will imply for the school in terms of the kinds of actions taken and/or resources applied. → *In order to ensure the system functions effectively, however, in adding value to school support strategies, while avoiding harm to any school that is negatively ranked, it will be important that:*

- *the process of deciding whether, why and how a rating system will be applied is done in a transparent and negotiated way with schools and communities, and agreed by them;*
- *the agreed labelling process is designed as an on-going, formative one, with the labels themselves understood as genuinely notional and fluid, rather than definitive and permanent;*
- *assigning a rank and deciding actions on the basis of it are done in collaboration with the school, in consultation with the DTMT and, as much as possible, make use of the SSA; and*
- *ultimately, the school itself must agree with the ranking.*

In this way, the ranking plan could well prove an effective means for each school developing its own “culture of inquiry”: gradually improving its ability to assess its CFS

readiness and progress, and to plan how to move forward in a continuous way toward becoming progressively more child-friendly. This has been the premise of the SSA, as a tool for enabling the school to gather data in a systematic way across the six CFS Dimensions and, in a rolling way, assess its CFS status.

The questions of how the ranking process, and the SSA tool itself, will be used to differentiate schools according to those requiring significant direct external support from those requiring less, and from there to provide guidance on the kind of support needed, still need to be worked out.

To be effective, this “working out” will need to follow the four “critical steps” of innovation development discussed above, but by way of example: an *advanced CFS school* might be defined as one with a good rating on the SSA and needing little more than a menu of options and occasional guidance to work through them; a *medium-level school* would be one with a mid-level SSA rating and needing more explicit “recommended” priorities and facilitated support; and a *basic CFS school*, with a low SSA rating requiring fairly explicit directives for activities to undertake and regular on-site mentoring.

→ *Whatever the strategy that evolves, developing some form of holistic school self-assessment “culture”, not simply a procedure for collecting data, will be crucial for CFS mainstreaming. It will imply both time and resources being specifically allocated for the long term. A number of the basics are already in place, however.*

- Development of the SSA as a user-friendly learning tool has been moving forward, as has work on similar development partner tools.
- The ETL manual is proving to have good potential as a self-learning guide for teachers, and could be strengthened through a complementary programme of in-class follow-up and teacher-teacher mentoring.
- Innovative methods, materials and mechanisms such as the student portfolio, question taxonomy, use of performance targets and the Inclusive Learning Toolkit have had initially positive applications and warrant further development as school self-monitoring tools.

EBEP-II expansion and the Ministry’s focus on developing the CFS Policy have slowed action to explore these kinds of CFS-linked innovations somewhat. → *It will be important that the current emphasis on mainstreaming be used to justify such action being reinvigorated.*

IX CONCLUSIONS

“The evaluation should provide analytical evidence of the potential for sustained and extended CFS action; and suggest ways forward toward its further national mainstreaming”⁴⁹.

a) Sustained and Extended CFS Action

CFS action has moved forward since 2005: more schools and community stakeholders have been reached and a greater range of activities mobilized; through more extensive advocacy, training and materials development; and under the auspices of a more diverse set of implementers, including major development partners. Most significantly, responsibility for the CFS innovation has moved out of the hands of UNICEF and other development partners, implemented principally at school level, and into those of the MOEYS, implemented principally from the centre.

On the positive side, this has meant that the Ministry now operationally defines its understanding of the principles of the child-friendly school. It has proclaimed nation-wide applicability of these principles as national CFS Policy; and confirmed commitment to their application through a 5-year step-wise Master Plan. Less positively, schools and local education offices are to only a limited extent making decisions on what and how CFS principles and practices are applied.

The 2005 CFS evaluation put significant emphasis on the need for UNICEF to begin systematically to switch its focus and move the emphasis of its action away from providing materials and services to schools and toward enabling the Ministry to integrate these into the system. In other words, to consolidate capacities and institutionalize changes. Institutionalizing CFS, however, means moving it from donor-managed pilot to Ministry-managed Policy and Plan; it does not necessarily mean decentralizing them. While the first has been happening gradually since 2005, the second has not.

Overall, these changes have contributed to a sense of optimism that CFS action in some form will be sustained and extended. However, this optimism is guarded. It is far from assured that implementation of the Policy and Plan will enable the comprehensive, consistent and ultimately school-based CFS action needed to establish the fundamentals of inclusion and quality learning outcomes.

Based on data from interviews, documents and observation, the conclusion here is that the authoritative capacity required for such action -- self-confident understanding of the concept and control over its practice - remains essentially confined to the Ministry’s senior policy-makers and programme managers. Considerable training has been delivered through the system. It has for the most part, however, focussed on discrete CFS activities and application techniques. There has as yet been no systematic human resource development aimed expressly at decentralizing the initiative for CFS action to Province, Districts or school control.

⁴⁹ Evaluation TORS, March 5/08: 2

→ *The major challenge of the next five years will be to rectify the continuing tension between CFS theory and practice created by this discontinuity.* On the one hand, the CFS Policy has made development of holistic child-friendly schools a nation-wide priority and responsibility. On the other, as the Ministry has taken ownership of the innovation through its launch as CFS Policy, authority for the evolution of the child-friendly school has become - like education practice overall - centralized; and at both local and national levels, a majority of education programming and practices have remained relatively unchanged.

In this context, → *the potential for CFS action to be “sustained and extended” will be determined by the Ministry’s ability to act from the top, while not being top-down. In conjunction with development partners, its commitment to CFS Policy implementation will need to be exercised not through the directed, quantitative expansion of numbers of schools reached through cascaded training and distributed materials, but through:*

- a sustained, consistent and coherent undertaking to help schools, communities and its own officers to clarify what CFS is as a holistic education change innovation; consolidate their new learning on an individual basis; and institutionalize the changes required to implement the CFS Policy within the thinking and operations of the education “system” as a whole; and
- systematic efforts to legitimize and build facilitated and interactive channels of communication and feedback, vertically between national and local levels and horizontally across responsibility centres.

b) Mainstreaming the Child-Friendly School

“... we should always start the CFS implementation process with a discussion of locally defined needs, which occurs in the context of children's rights. But what has happened is that the rush to CFS implementation has led to skipping this crucial stage so that now we have centrally mandated activities without knowing why we are doing them.... [The] danger is that the education system will soon be moving to a 'shell' model of CFS programming”⁵⁰.

“Mainstreaming” is a multidimensional and fairly abstract, concept. → *It will require consistent action both to avoid the core ideals, policies and practices of an innovation becoming a “shell” of their original meaning; and at the same time to enable those ideals, policies and practices becoming ingrained in the thinking and behaviour of all people, in all parts of the system and in a reasonably permanent way.*

From this perspective, mainstreaming the child-friendly school concept as it is reflected in the CFS Policy and Master Plan, implies several meanings and a range of tasks.

→ *Mainstreaming CFS as the expression of all children’s right to a relevant, complete and good quality basic education will require:*

- *Making schools increasingly more child-friendly.* This will mean not just sustaining the largely physical improvement activities that have come to define

⁵⁰ NGO Programme Director

CFS so far, but strengthening (i) attitudes valuing inclusion and learning quality that these activities were intended to reflect, and (ii) capacities for problem analysis and negotiation of priorities that identified them in the first place⁵¹. Clean school grounds and latrines, decorated classrooms and small group seating arrangements have been appropriate and necessary first-steps in creating child-friendly environments; they will not on their own lead to all children becoming successful learners.

- *Applying a “CFS lens” to the implementation of all child-related policies, education programmes and school interventions.* This will mean, for example, ensuring compatibility and consistency between the CFS Policy and the application of EFA, ESP/ESSP and FTI; the work of mechanisms like the POE, CEFAC, DTMT and school clusters; and actions aimed at strengthening education infrastructures, both physical (building schools) and substantive (revising the TTD curriculum, assessing textbook contents).
- *Looking for, and creating, opportunities to extend and integrate CFS ideas into existing structures and different kinds of programmes in ways that are flexible, adaptive and inclusive.* This will mean senior policy-makers and programme managers both to maintain the child rights core of CFS and to encourage less rigidity in the interpretation of CFS Policy priorities and negotiation of Master Plan activities. It will mean making it easier for local stakeholders to find appropriate matches between diverse school problems and equally diverse options to solve them; and accepting it as a sign of “successful” Policy and Plan implementation that schools are adapting national guidelines to do different things, or the same things in different ways.

→ *Mainstreaming child-friendly principles and practices in all management and teaching behaviours will require:*

- *A long-term investment in individual and institutional learning, facilitated through an organizational culture that encourages progressive adaptation.* This will mean senior policy and programme managers actively promoting experimentation, risk-taking, monitoring and feedback; and providing guidance on alternatives rather than one-size-fits-all directives.
- *A progressively more systematic and meaningful approach to decentralized CFS application.* This will mean senior policy-makers and managers authorizing and taking action specifically aimed at helping implementers at all levels, including students, teachers and parents to:
 - interpret what the CFS Policy means for them;
 - discuss, assess and negotiate the status of the school and their own activities in terms of CFS principles and objectives;
 - identify and prioritize CFS actions that are child-friendly and to challenge those that are not; and

⁵¹ NGO Programme Director

- increase the depth and quality of CFS practice across the six dimensions by gradually and continuously adapting, replacing and creating activities.
- *A gradual, but immediate and comprehensive, undertaking toward making teachers the centre point of CFS action.* This will mean shifting away from the current focus on policy and materials development and toward one of enabling teachers to become more effective professionals capable of tailoring child-centred methods to facilitate all children learning. Strategically, this will mean creating a coherent teacher-support framework that includes:
 - Directors who are capable CFS-oriented leaders, not simply administrative managers; who are expressly appointed, trained and evaluated on the basis of creating a child- and teacher-centred school culture that supports the efforts of teachers to change, and puts the highest premium on excellence in actions to promote good teaching, inclusion and participation.
 - Mechanisms and resources that are expressly teacher-tailored, that encourage good teachers to practise and share their expertise; and that enable all teachers to develop new knowledge and skills through more learner-centred TTM and more consistent in-class follow-up supervision and mentoring.
 - A revised PTTC curriculum that integrates all CFS dimensions, particularly ETL, in ways that provide both the theory and concepts underlying them and hands-on practice in creating a CFS environment through their application.
 - A professional development plan for those responsible for the pre- and in-service mentoring and supervision of teachers - including PTTC, DTMT, POE and Inspectorate - that is specifically tailored to emphasize and use both CFS principles and practice and adult learning theories and methods.
 - Human resource development policies and practices that promote and reward strong professional leadership, especially among female teachers and Directors and those from marginalized communities.

X RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation will “make recommendations in relation to future programme direction, as part of the education reform, including harmonization between key partners for effective mainstreaming of CFS nationwide”⁵².

The EBEP, in both its phases, has functioned as a collaboration between UNICEF and MOEYS. Over the last year, however, the initiative has taken on a much more Ministry-centred character with the development of the CFS Policy and increasing expressions of ownership over the CFS framework as a whole by the Ministry. With the April 2008 launching of the Policy and Master Plan, this shift in perspective has become more complete.

In this context, the majority of recommendations made throughout the report and reaffirmed in sub-section (a) below have not been tailored to UNICEF *per se*. Instead, they are addressed to the CFS education community as a whole as it attempts to implement the CFS Policy and mainstream CFS principles of action, with the MOEYS as the lead.

In some areas, the preceding analysis and following recommendations may appear contradictory in arguing multiple directions. The reality, however, is that multiple types and levels of emphasis and action have brought about CFS and will be needed to mainstream it and implement the Policy. In this respect, the implied dichotomy of the MTR between service delivery and mainstreaming is perhaps not a helpful one⁵³. Rather, it will be crucial both to strengthen institutionalization and sustainable structures and to improve direct support to schools in delivering their programmes; and both to build national level capacity for mobilizing and directing CFS action and to support local level capacity in initiating its own CFS action.

The challenge for the Ministry will be to map out with progressively more clarity what all of the tasks and their relative emphases are; to assign roles and responsibilities appropriately; and to direct the ensuing traffic. The challenge for each development partner, including UNICEF, will be to help and work with senior policy and management in doing this, and to assign its own resources based on its respective comparative advantage.

⁵² Evaluation TORS, 2008: 2

⁵³ That said, as required by the TORS, the recommendations are also intended to answer the five “key questions of the MTR”⁵³. From this perspective, the 5 primary and 16 subordinate recommendations in sub-section A broadly reference the first two: how UNICEF, with the Ministry and development partners, can (i) “improve service delivery in a decentralized context”; and (ii) “best structure what needs to be done to ensure mainstreaming” of CFS through a “communication for change strategy”. The 3 primary and 7 subordinate UNICEF-specific recommendations and of sub-section B are intended to answer the last three: how UNICEF can (iii) “best partner in the new aid (effectiveness) environment”; (iv) “use field experience to influence national strategies and policies”; and (v) ensure that EBEP-II overall is “influencing national policy and building sector capacity”.

A Implementing CFS Policy and Mainstreaming CFS Principles

1. Mainstream CFS action at senior policy level

a) Confirm the CFS Policy Implementation Oversight Mechanism

- Review, agree and confirm the mechanism for overall oversight of CFS mainstreaming, at the moment designated to be the CFS Steering Committee.
- Establish and disseminate to local and national level within the Ministry, and to development partners, clear terms of reference with respect to mandate, membership and methods of the oversight function.

b) Bring the unique child-rights voice of CFS to all high-level policy decision-making

- Clarify, confirm and ensure appropriate coordination of the CFS Policy with the programmes of work, reporting lines and respective allocations of budget with the EFA/NPA, ESP/ESSP and FTI
- Elaborate and confirm the status of EFA-based mechanisms such as the CEFAC and the GWG in terms of reporting and working relations with the CFS Policy and CFS action at the school level; confirm, and take steps to ensure, sufficient and appropriate capacities to collaborate and to monitor the effectiveness of that collaboration.
- Move CFS from the “system periphery” to explore ways in which the CFS Policy and principles can mobilize action on persistent hard-core challenges to inclusion and quality of learning outcomes e.g. on teachers’ conditions of service; on timeliness and flexibility of school budgets; on adequacy of contact hours, status of incomplete schools and threats from multi-shift teaching; on child labour, displacement of rural families and family poverty.

c) Work to establish a “culture of inquiry” throughout the CFS Policy environment

- Create a climate that legitimizes evidence-based reflection and open feedback about CFS operations and activities through regular internal communication with all levels that authorizes and explains the value of these behaviours, and demonstrating them in senior policy and management settings; providing user-friendly guidelines and mentoring on various approaches to reflective exchange; and mandating managers to set aside specific time for it.
- Develop, in collaboration with core CFS responsibility centres and partners, and co-terminus with the Master Plan, a “mainstreaming RBM framework”, including incremental annual results, agreed indicators and benchmarks⁵⁴; as well as allocated budget and human resources/training.

d) Foster internal communication and integration in CFS planning, action and monitoring

- Make explicit through policy guidelines, on-the-job training⁵⁵ and its own demonstrated behaviour the importance that senior policy management through the CFS Policy, places on “trying and testing” co-operative CFS action.

⁵⁴ See Annex 5 for a brief list of examples of possible mainstreaming indicators

⁵⁵ These are the types of organizational learning processes that, presumably, have been used to in the work of Project 1 in facilitating implementation of the ESP/ESSP and mechanisms such as

- Provide technical support to enable joint development of operational plans set within the framework of the Master Plan and, as relevant to specific Departments, the six Dimensions.
- Include guidance for “step-wise increments” in coordination, giving official sanction to the idea that not all plans and systems can coordinate immediately.
- Ensure officially sanctioned time for working through these activities, and systematic action to identify and remove formal and informal impediments to openness, negotiation and sharing of authority.

e) Strengthen local demand for CFS Policy mainstreaming

- Work to decentralize ownership of CFS action to schools and communities through comprehensive and sustained interventions to facilitate user-based exploration, negotiation and responsibility for implementing and further evolving the CFS framework. Participatory tools/strategies such as the CFS Menu and SSA need to be used, refined and more widely applied toward this end.
- Extend the parameters of the CFS Policy to incorporate as broad a range of policy and programme initiatives as possible. The diversity of CFS-related policies on inclusive, life skills and school health education can help focus action and mobilize resources. They can also diffuse, duplicate and create competition, however, and so merit some degree of caution.
- Promote the CFS Policy proactively as a catalyst to extend the meaning and application of “child friendliness” further and more deeply by urging schools, communities and mechanisms like DTMT to adapt activities, add new ones and open up opportunities for inter-programme and inter-agency collaboration.

2. Make Dimension 2 the focal point of the CFS agenda until 2011

a) Prioritize coherent, system-wide and adequately resourced teacher upgrading

- Concentrate resources for training and manual revision on those activities enabling teachers to develop as self-directed professionals with increasing capacity to tailor their teaching methods to children’s participation and learning outcomes.
- Develop, cost and initiate action on a revised TTD/PTTC curriculum that fully integrates CFS principles of practice as the overarching Teacher Training philosophy and lens for all coursework.
- Create and initiate a regular programme of PTTC and Application School joint professional development built around CFS child-centred teaching principles

the JTWG/ED. It will be important to draw on the experience of MOEYS officers who have been through this process as mentors to colleagues responsible for CSF Policy implementation.

- Develop a medium-term programme of professional development for PTTC instructors, based on CFS child-rights principles and child-centred practices, prioritizing practicum and using adult learner-centred methods.

b) Redesign ETL in-service training to begin from where teachers are

- Take into account teachers' limited mastery of the fundamentals of child-centred pedagogy, learning theory and child development by providing ETL training that is learner-centred, activity-based and mentored, and emphasizes opportunities to analyze current practice; challenge assumed links between teaching and learning; and explores the effectiveness of alternative approaches.
- Reformulate the current high-speed, pre-scheduled ETL/TTM coverage by allowing teachers a greater role in deciding what they want to learn and when, based on actual issues in their classrooms; how much time they need to become confident in their understanding; and the ways in which they can most effectively consolidate their learning.

c) Revitalize action-research based development of core learning support methods

- Collaborate with PRD, development partners and other appropriate resources (e.g. from RUPP) to analyze the relevance, viability and current use of existing tools (learner portfolio, question taxonomy) and test/trial new ones
- Work with those POE/DOE, PTTC, TGL and teachers with strong child-centred pedagogical skills and grasp of CFS concepts to develop auxiliary ETL materials tailored to teachers on the basis of their feedback on the current materials in terms of further explanation, contextualizing and operationalizing lessons.
- Pursue the UNESCO suggestion of elaborating the ETL manual through a series of booklets built on the ILFE Toolkit, now translated into Khmer and training on their application.

3. Create openings for consolidating individual CFS learning

a) Strengthen training for CFS implementation to enable behaviour change

- Review and revise the format of all training activities to incorporate adult learner-centred methods, opportunities for participant input into content planning, peer interaction, mentored practice and continuous feedback
- Attach to all training, especially TTM, specific plans and resources for follow-up on-the-job application, including support to sustained peer mentoring and twinning arrangements
- Ensure that people in positions with specific responsibility for "making the cascade model work" (DTMT, Inspectors, TGL, Cluster heads) have knowledge and skills for in adult education, participatory planning and monitoring, and HRD strategic planning.

- Encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for their professional progress on ETL by tying training attendance fees to results, paying only travel costs for a first training session and fees for subsequent sessions based on workplans developed, implemented, monitored for results and progressively adapted. This approach should also make sustained training more cost-effective

b) Strengthen effectiveness of Manuals as learning tools for behaviour change

- Develop complementary materials for the current five Manuals to increase the scope of their contents e.g. more examples, more discussion of its relation to the Dimension, more activities
- Develop, for each manual, activity-based on-site training programmes to provide subsequent, follow-on experience, where possible in collaboration with relevant development partner activities to help ground/extend the training and provide resource people

4. Create openings for institutionalizing CFS-oriented change

a) Consolidate and rationalize school-based data management and analysis

- Develop a compendium of core (must have) and ancillary (helpful to have) data that will comprise an overall data base for monitoring school progress in each Dimension, and for the school as a CFS “whole”; and that will make a clear connection with major planning activities such as SIP⁵⁶ in ways that avoid duplication and make use of synergies.
- Link this compendium to training and materials guidance on the range of school monitoring tools and data bases currently in use (including the UNICEF CFS Survey Reports, development partner lists, EMIS) and where each fits.
- Establish a systematic programme of training, follow up and monitoring for all schools focused on the rationale and “how to” of collecting, analyzing and using data; and include the concepts of RBM results and indicators, including the idea of “incremental progress”⁵⁷, to help school Directors and teachers establish better control over their own CFS activity planning and management.
- Revisit the idea of only one SSA tool, to consider instead development of several SSA-linked tools for specific purposes, users and types of data. This would involve, for example, reviewing the PED and Inspectorate tools to identify their particular strengths and reassembling them as appropriate into mini-manuals for use by schools as and when needed for specific purposes; and placing these under an umbrella document that discusses the overall value, purpose and strategy of schools collecting, managing and using their own data.

⁵⁶ According to several respondents, School Improvement Plans continue to be problematic for schools, seen as difficult to apply and, in consequence, poorly done. One UNICEF provincial officer described a Director as “having given up on SIP, after many times trying and failing to have his plan accepted by the DOE”. Tools like the SSA, he felt, should be better linked to the SIP to make planning more evidence-based and Directors/DOE better trained to make the link.

⁵⁷ See discussion of “results-chain” in Annex 4

- Maintain the notion of CFS rankings specifically as a means of tailoring input and encouraging continuous progress, but assuring that the ranking is jointly set between the school, DTMT and POE; is evidence-based enough to allow the school/DTMT and Ministry to agree on objectives (expected results) and indicators; and can be monitored in ways that enable adaptation and moving forward within and between categories.

b) Include in all core CFS mechanisms and initiatives specific strategies for sustainability

- Include in DTMT training both substantive areas e.g. child-centred teaching, gender equality, child nutrition/health, as well as capacities on how to work as a team, plan strategically, observe classrooms and provide effective feedback, facilitate TTM, analyze/map societal and family conditions affecting student participation/progress.
- Collaborate with DTMT and their client schools to systematically track DTMT activities, problems and strengths as the mechanism is implemented over the next 1-2 years and, from that, agree on what its core mandate should be; what and how additional activities can be taken on and tailored to context; how it will exercise responsibility with schools for CFS activities/progress.
- Include in the planning and design of all innovations and pilots (e.g. school mapping, student portfolios, TGL mentoring) explicit time and resources for sustaining their evolution as CFS tools and identifying their potential for integration and wide-scale application.
- Recognize that “communication of innovation” is a field of expertise and experience with considerable potential for guiding the mainstreaming process e.g. assessing the nature and scope of the innovation; identifying potential use/user links; looking for champions; engaging those who might feel threatened; and accepting that the innovation itself will need to adapt to existing systems.

c) Create processes and mechanisms for sustaining mutual learning across the system

- Explore options and experience for developing networks, associations and twinning/mentoring arrangements, on a manageable scale and with a specific theme (e.g. teacher-teacher mentoring arrangements for ETL) or geographic basis (e.g. parent support groups in remotes area to strengthen school links)
- Identify and mobilize CFS “champions” as advocates and peer mentors within their respective education communities (school Directors, teachers, DTMT, TGL)
- Promote bottom-up sharing of human resources, innovation and best practices by generating a compendium or map of existing and emerging CFS expertise, tools and practices and making these available on a wider national scale.

5. Begin medium-long term action to build a strong CFS-enabling environment

Over the 5-year trajectory of the CFS Policy and Master Plan, it will be important to lay the groundwork for longer term development of a Child-friendly Education System and toward realizing MDG, EFA and ESP/ESSP targets. Begin, for example, to:

- a) Develop a human resource development strategy for MOEYS professional upgrading**
- Coordinate with core CFS Departments and Personnel, as well as development partners, to undertake a capacity mapping of available and missing CFS-relevant knowledge and skills among staff, in general terms and related to their specific work contexts.
 - Explore experiences of other education ministries in the region (e.g. Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines) in strengthening their CFS capacities on an institutional basis towards developing a Ministry-wide strategy for building a new and more coherent CFS professional skills base over the 5-year Master Plan period
 - Support Departments and responsibility centres (POE, DOE, DTMT) to design their own shorter-term HRD plans, reflecting the evolving national strategy but tailored to their context-specific needs, resources and programmes of work
- b) Ensure that all Teacher Training and Curriculum Materials are CFS-consistent**
- Collaborate with key development partners (e.g. UNICEF, KAPE, World Education) to design an overall strategy and 2-3 year action plan to review all curriculum and textbooks with respect to core CFS principles (child-centred, gender equality), approaches (participatory, inclusive) and messages (on health, protection, the environment)develop the specific focus, design, terms of reference and funding base
 - Create a joint PED, TTD and PRD working group to manage and oversee application and evolve a strategy and action plan for revising and rewriting
- c) Initiate a strategy for creating an indigenous base of education professionals**
- Identify successful experience and best practices in the region for building a domestic base of academic and research professionals in the major areas of education (learning theory, pedagogy, education change, curriculum development, teacher training)
 - Explore with key development partners options and opportunities for both a long and medium term HRD strategy through individual scholarships and Masters/PhD programme development

B UNICEF-specific Recommendations

The following recommendations recognize, and have attempted to account for, UNICEF's broadly two-fold mandate in implementing the CFS component of EBEP-II:

- i. to support the *system* by institutionalizing CFS principles and mainstreaming the CFS Policy; and
- ii. to support *excluded and vulnerable children* by consolidating learning and change at the level of teaching and child-seeking actions in schools.

They also recognize that UNICEF’s resources for realizing these goals are finite, but that they are at the same time well-positioned in being located at both local practice and national policy levels. In this respect, they suggest a perhaps more optimum allocation of available human and financial resources by:

- i. supporting the MOEYS and CFS Policy through guidance, capacity development and advocacy under Project 1;
- ii. generating and testing school-based innovation in service content and delivery in Project 2; and
- iii. ensuring that the officers and actions of both Projects are informed by, and make use of, the other.

1. Reconsider the logic and reconfigure the design of EBEP-II

a) Integrate into a new Project 1 the substantive and capacity focuses of the current three Projects toward enabling UNICEF to provide more strategic and coherent capacity-oriented support to CFS Policy implementation and mainstreaming;

b) Reformulate a new Project 2 to strengthen UNICEF’s anchor in field-based innovation, thus reinvigorating the analysis and testing aspects of CFSI under EBEP-I and incorporating the intent of Project 3.

In addressing the last three MTR questions, this recommendation is aimed expressly at enabling UNICEF via EBEP-II to (i) strengthen Ministry capacity to ensure the effective harmonization of the CFS Policy with the concerns of the EFA/NPA, ESP/ESSP and MDG; and (ii) enhance the influence of its own school-based programme experience on national strategies and policies.

Under this reconfiguration, EBEP-II would consist of:

Project 1 Capacity Development for CFS Policy Implementation

Its purpose would be to strengthen the case for the CFS Policy as a central component of overall education sector governance, along with FTI and ESP/ESSP. Its capacity development function would focus specifically on reinforcing the policy commitment of senior levels of the Ministry, including the EFA Secretariat, to the coordination and resource implications of the CFS Policy; and building technical, planning and monitoring capacities of mid-level managers in critical CFS “turnkey” positions e.g. the PED and TTD TWG, POE, DTMT, PRD and GWG.

Project 2 Support to School-based Innovation

Its purpose would be to re-establish and enhance UNICEF’s direct links with schools and communities and its role as a catalyst for CFS innovation. Its intervention orientation would be on further developing the substance of the CFS

framework through school-based action research and piloting aimed at deepening and broadening the scope of the Dimensions, especially 1 and 2, and analyzing implementation of CFS Policy actions and mechanisms.

Rationale The current 3-way division of EBEP-I responsibility functioned initially well in an environment where an equally intense and consistent focus was needed at the two ends of the sector spectrum: strengthening the system's financial, planning and human resource capacity for reform on the one hand; and improving equity of access, quality of learning and inclusion, and enabling innovation on the other.

Now that CFS has been officially elevated to national policy status along with ESP/ESSP, and FTI funding has been secured that includes recognition of CFS, the *distinction between policy-making and implementation capacity at the national level, and the changes expected at school level in terms of inclusion, learning outcomes and community engagement is no longer necessary, or necessarily helpful.*

Rather, *mainstreaming the CFS Policy* implies that the Ministry

- acquire, consolidate and institutionalize capacities for sound policy and fiscal management expressly through managing the technical substance and fiscal implications of that Policy, in conjunction with ESP/ESSP and FTI; and
- build internal capacities for forms of coordination and integration of planning, application and accountability functions that are different in both kind and degree from current practice -- both laterally across departments and with development partners, and vertically with POE, DTMT and schools.

At the same time, it will be important for UNICEF/EBEP-II to *re-establish the comparative advantage of a direct anchor in the field* that has been weakened through expansion and the end of its testing of innovations partnership with KAPE. The smaller, more hands-on earlier coverage and working with KAPE provided it the capacity to speak with authority at the policy table both on the substance of what was working or not in CFS at school level, and on proven CFS methods and tools. Regaining this voice will be a critical condition of EBEP-II facilitating CFS mainstreaming.

→ *UNICEF has played a central role in supporting Ministry formulation of the concepts and operational framework of the CFS Policy and Master Plan. The logic of mainstreaming would suggest it now bringing its own internal human and financial resources conceptually and administratively together in supporting systems learning necessary for their implementation.*

Implications The two new Projects would *work interactively and in tandem*, rather than in parallel as the current three projects have tended to do. *Project 1*, working to enable coherent implementation of critical CFS-oriented reform policies, would be informed by the insights gained through *Project 2*. *Project 2*, creating a channel for innovation and policy implementation analysis on the ground, would be informed by mainstreaming strategies and challenges emerging at the centre.

There would need to be a reorientation of the current conception of CFS expansion in the UNICEF-supported provinces. The focus would move away from wide-scale disbursement of its human and financial resources and toward pushing more deeply into the substantive implications and applications of the CFS concept by exploring locally and nationally identified themes; generating and disseminating evidence-based data to policy-makers and partners; interpreting successes and failures in terms relevant to elaborating and implementing the Policy.

The work of the two Project teams would need to become more integrated, internally and in relation to both the policy and technical aspects of UNICEF's work with the Ministry and development partners; and better rationalized in terms of recognizing and making optimal use of the respective capacities of staff in both Phnom Penh and the provinces in analysis, facilitation, strategic HRD planning, monitoring and evaluation.

2. Strengthen internal capacities to support actions in Dimensions 6 and 2

- Make these two Dimensions the focal points for the remainder of the EBEP-II period, the first to ensure sufficiently coordinated, proactive and sustained attention by the Ministry and education sector to CFS Policy mainstreaming; and the second because of the still very limited progress on teaching capacities and learning outcomes across the six UNICEF-supported provinces and nationally.
- Strengthen internal capacities for Dimension 2 and 6 support by:
 - o increasing the share of funding allocated to the design, implementation and monitoring of capacity for CFS-mainstreaming within the Ministry and for pre- and in-service training of teachers;
 - o using the facilitative “adult learning” capacities of UNICEF staff more effectively;
 - o exploring options for sustained partnership with other CFS-related expertise to extend the reach and diversity of in-house knowledge, skills and time especially with respect to capacity building under Project 1 and analytical and trailing work under Project 2.

Links have already been made with VSO for DTMT training, for example. A further partnership with KAPE on several of the EBEP-I inclusion and quality of learning innovations, and with UNESCO on possible strategies for using the ILFE Toolkit to extend the value and reach of the ETL in areas of bilingual education and gender in education are strongly encouraged.

- o extending the reach of EBEP-II ETL support through systematic action to identify, track and support the networking of teachers, school Directors and DTMT members who show capacity as CFS catalysts, champions and mentors (e.g. people comfortable with the change process, flexible in trying new methods and ready to take professional risks) and facilitating formation of a resource person contact base

3. Build a “CFS culture of inquiry” within EBEP-II

- Acknowledge that while CFP Policy implementation at a chiefly activity-based level may happen fairly automatically, mainstreaming CFS principles in terms of sustained and meaningful change in children’s right to education will not happen without creating in the Ministry a self-correcting learning culture to facilitate its progress.
- Take up Marshall’s suggestion of using the poor results of the CFS/non-CFS school comparison “to gain insights about areas where CFS is having success and areas where it is not”, through innovation testing, implementation analysis and evaluation of results aimed specifically at enabling CFS mainstreaming.
- In collaboration with the main Ministry policy-makers and managers, the PRD and development partners, develop a modest, but appropriately targeted and resourced research plan of action to help guide policy, design and resourcing decisions, reduce less-than-useful activities and increase those that are more effective and develop a viable evidence base for the value of CFS intervention practice.

ANNEX 1**ACRONYMS**

CEFAC	Commune EFA Committee
CESSP	Cambodia Education Sector Support Project (WB)
CFS	Child-Friendly School
CFS/WG	Child-Friendly School Working Group
CPC	Country Programme of Cooperation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSC	Community Support Committee
DAC	Disability Action Council
DECE	Department of Early Childhood Education
DGE	Director-General of Education
DOE	District Office of Education
DTMT	District Training and Monitoring Team
EBEP	Expanded Basic Education Programme
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
EFA/NPA	Education for All/National Plan of Action
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPO	Education Provincial Officer (UNICEF)
EQIP	Education Quality Improvement Project (WB)
ESCUP	Education Support to Children in Underserved Populations (USAID)
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Support Programme
ESSSUAP	Education Sector Support Scale-Up Action Programme
ESWG	Education Sub-Sector Working Group
ETL	Effective Teaching and Learning
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GE	Global Campaign for Education
GMS	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy
GWG	Gender Working Group
ILFE	Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environment (UNESCO Tool Kit)
JTWG-Ed	Joint Technical Working Group-Education
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
LCSC	Local Cluster School Committee
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MTR	Mid-term Review
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NFE	Nonformal Education
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NSP	National Scholarships Programme
PAP	Priority Action Programme
PB	Programme Budget
PED	Primary Education Department
PIT	Provincial Implementing Team
POE	Provincial Office of Education
PRD	Pedagogical Research Department
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTTC	Provincial Teacher Training College
PWG	Provincial Working Group
RTI	Rectangle Training Institute
RUPP	Royal University of Phnom Penh

SAT	SIDA Advisory Team
SCN	Save the Children/Norway
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMIS	School Management Information System
SPTG	Scholarship Programme Technical Group
SRP	School Readiness Programme
SSA	School Self-Assessment
SSC	School Support Committee
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TGL	Technical Grade Leader (now called Local Facilitator)
TTD	Teacher Training Department (national level)
TTM	Thursday Technical Meeting
VSO	Voluntary Service Organization
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

ANNEX 2

INTERVIEWS AND SITE VISITS

A] Persons Interviewed

Luise Ahrens, RUPP and NEP
Lisa Albion, Technical Advisor/ESCUP, World Education
Kurt Bredenberg, KAPE
Chan Solin, Programme Director/OPTIONS, World Education
Chorn Chheang Ly, Director of Primary Education Department
 Technical Working Group: York Sovann, Deputy Director
 Chan Sophea, Deputy Director
 Pech Bunna, Chief, Technical Office
 Sok Boret, Deputy Chief, Technical Office
 Kar Neang, Deputy Chief
 Soeu Yok Ky, Deputy Chief, PED Inspectorate
 Ven Thol, Inspector
 Tek Vannaret, Technical staff
 Prum Phirum, Technical staff

Lynn Dudley, Programme Director CESSP
Eng Kim Ly, Deputy Director of PRD
Kou Bun Kieng, Save the Children Norway
Leang Seng Hak, Director of TTD
 Technical Working Group: Chea Phon, Deputy Director
 Leang Seng Hak, Director
 Chea Phon, Deputy Director
 Tan Ly Huong, Deputy Director
 Mao Sam Rethy, Deputy Director

Leang Nguon Ly, Deputy Director of General Education
Sun Lei, Education Officer, UNESCO
Miriam Malmqvist, Programme Officer SIDA
Nath Bunroeun, Under Secretary of State, EFA Secretariat
Nhim Van Chankan, Deputy D-G Inspectorate; Chair, Gender Working Group
Chea Vantha, Education Programme Manager, VSO

UNICEF Education Officers:
 Hiroyuki Hattori, Phnom Penh
 Kerstin Karlstrom, Phnom Penh
 Nhean Sroeng, Kg Speu
 Sekheng Soon, Kg Speu
 Channra Chum, Kg Thom
 Kimlong Sain, Kg Thom
 Vanna Seng, Odtar Meanchey
 Bin Thun, Prey Veng

B] Sites Visits

April 18, 22: Kampong Speu
 Trapaing Chhouk Primary School
 Marum Cheung Primary School
 DTMT

April 23, 25: Kampong Thom
 POE CFS Working Group
 DTMT Stung Sen District
 DTMT Kg Svay District
 Kumru Srok Primary School

PTTC and Application School instructors

April 24: Prey Veng
Thursday ETL Review meeting

April 28: Oddar Meanchey
DTMT Anlong Veng
Two Primary Schools

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ANNEX 4: TRACKING CFS PROGRESS USING A RESULTS-CHAIN

As noted throughout the evaluation, it continues to prove difficult to assess CFS on the basis of its major system-level results i.e. on the differences made to children's access and learning. Rather, there continues to be a preponderance of outputs relative to outcomes; much the same outputs are reported across all schools, whereas a diversity might be expected from the very different contexts in which actions have been taken; many of the results reported are similar to those identified in the 2005 evaluation.

A major part of the problem has been that CFS planning and reporting continue to be framed in terms of inputs and activities, rather than of the changes these are expected to produce. Based on interviews and documents, the questions of *what will be provided and what will be done* are much more often answered than questions of *what will be different and how have things changed*.

Given the complexity of the CFS innovation and thus of realizing clearly evident, significant and sustainable results, it is very important in developmental terms that the perspective be reversed: to ask first what needs to change and then how will we get there. This means recasting the expected Outcomes, and certainly the Impacts, of CFS interventions more expressly in progressive terms, as series of successive, incremental improvements in capacity and action that can be tracked, measured, assessed and enabled over time.

Incremental Results One way around the issue of reporting results at the Outcome level is to look at what some in RBM refer to as a **results chain**. In broad terms, this concerns the underlying logic of a project's design and methods: does it make sense given what is known about the issue and the way people and systems change; how is it being implemented; and what smaller changes are happening along the way to the larger ones. As a "chain", it describes what the project expects and what it is achieving step by step: that (a) will lead to (b) if conditions (c) are met and inputs (d) are provided.

Thinking about CFS in terms of its results chains is important because it can help explain why a project is, or is not, producing the results anticipated. This is especially important in the context of a complex and long-term innovation like CFS where major results will almost inevitably be gradual e.g. sustained and wide-spread enrolment, progression and completion rates; and often difficult to "see" in any objective terms e.g. children with sufficient basic capacities and self-confidence to sustain their learning.

Assessing the logic and following the application of the CFS results chains is important because it can allow a clearer assessment of the small-scale, situation-specific and cumulative changes that it is very likely producing, and sometimes failing to produce, but that may be missed when looking only at the "big picture". Systematically following the chain of inputs, and the changes they are producing, can help keep people motivated when more major successes are not forthcoming; and guide corrective action.

An assessment of the results chains underlying CFS actions needs to consider three broad questions:

- Based on theory and experience, is it reasonable to expect that the results it plans to achieve by its interventions will eventually be realized?
- Have the necessary conditions (directives, mechanisms, resources) been in place to make it reasonable to expect such results eventually?
- Where the necessary conditions are not yet in place, have implementers been aware of this and taking appropriate steps to mobilize them?

A results chain analysis is most effective as a formative assessment tool; it is less so in a point-in-time evaluation where incremental changes are harder to see. Overall, however, the underlying results logic of CFS interventions appear to be sound. As discussed in more detail in the report, CFS actions appear to be consistent with what is known about successful education reform in general in that they attempt to take into account the wide range of push-and-pull barriers⁵⁸ affecting children's ability to go to school and engage in learning; and then to tailor intervention strategies, especially with respect to school environments, teaching methods and learning materials, to them.

The expectations of those responsible for implementing the CFS interventions with respect to progress on results also appear to be realistic -- and, in consequence, relatively pessimistic. Given the widely diverse and complex exclusionary factors that continue to affect the majority of children, and the limited capacity of the education system to be proactive or flexible in addressing these, most acknowledge that realizing the essentials of context-specific, child-centred school environments and realizing sustainable results is proving neither easy nor fast. For most, the likelihood of achieving the CFS Policy goals, and MDG/EFA targets, by 2015 is seen as precarious.

In one sense, this is a positive finding. A clear and honest appreciation of the scope and details of the challenges to creating child-friendly schools, and of the steps (the chain of incremental results) needed to meet these challenges effectively, will be key to taking actions to meet them that are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate. In another sense, of course, the conclusion is negative in confirming the belief of many that the actions undertaken so far have not been adequate to catalyze real change.

⁵⁸ Boredom and punishing teachers pushing them out of school; poverty and opportunities to earn money pulling them out. Parents lack of attention to education failing to push children toward school; unclean, unsafe school environments failing to pull them in.

ANNEX 5 INDICATORS OF “MAINSTREAMING”

In addition to indicators of progress for each of the Dimensions, it will be important for the CFP Policy as a whole to develop a clear idea of what the broader indicators of mainstreaming will be and for which the Oversight mechanism/Steering Committee might be responsible. Four broad categories of such indicators might be, for example:

- *more and better quality “CFS-enabling” decisions and actions* are being taken in the Primary sector;
- *a broader base of people are taking responsibility* for these decisions and actions, especially at local level;
- *greater clarity and agreement* are expressed by stakeholders about how CFS actions should be implemented and the long-term changes to be produced; and
- *extended efforts are being made to monitor and adapt* CFS inputs in terms of changes in participation and learning, especially among marginalized children.

Another way of organizing these higher-level indicators might be in terms of two main strands of mainstreaming: consolidation of individual-level learning and institutionalization of systems change.

a) Indicators of mainstreaming in terms of consolidation might include, for example:

- POE and DOE officers, school directors or teachers expressing their right to guide the further development of CFS messages by promoting and managing the extension of these within and outside the school e.g. through mentoring colleagues, or taking up the issue of working children with local factory owners.
- Teachers engaging in substantive discussions on the implications of the ETL manual for their own teaching or different ways in which their learning could be supported e.g. through teacher-teacher arrangements;
- Different and more systems-oriented approaches to enrolment campaigns being developed based on progressively more fine-tuned school mapping
- Students suggesting changes in their classroom environments beyond simply more materials;
- MOEYS officers and school directors taking the initiative to continue their own professional development in some way.

b) Indicators of mainstreaming in terms of institutionalization might include, for example:

- Senior policy-makers responsible for the CFS Policy laying out clear communication and implementation plans for the Policy and Master Plan, both for schools and with respect to initiatives such as FTI and ESP/ESSP;
- School directors and staff adapting CFS elements to better suit the particular situation of their school and students;
- CFS planners regularly using monitoring data to identify and address implementation bottlenecks;
- CFS facilitators developing, using and strengthening mechanisms through which to follow-up the various CFS training activities;
- POE Working Groups and DTMT expressing clear and increasingly better quality strategies for implementing their responsibilities in applying the CFS Master Plan;
- Parents and students, especially those affected by poverty and exclusion, beginning to demand access to schools that practise CFS principles.

ANNEX 6 VERIFICATION OF EBEP-II ASSUMPTIONS

The TORS for the evaluation included verifying the assumptions made in the 2005 EBEP-II proposal. Like all development intervention initiatives, EBEP-II made a number of these, of varying significance and both explicit and implied. Overall, they were of two kinds:

Situational: those existing or “to be created” conditions assumed to be necessary to enabling CFS interventions to be implemented effectively and to produce results; and

Explanatory: those underlying cause-and-effect relationships believed to make CFS relevant, appropriate and sustainable in the first place.

Both types are important. On the basis of each, initial decisions were made about the design, methods and resources of the CFS interventions. Each has continued to influence decisions as activities have been implemented and changed⁵⁹. Examples of each type follow, including where possible an indication of their validity.

a) Situational Assumptions

a-1] EBEP-II made one very major assumption: that based on essentially the same input conditions of human and financial resource levels, partnerships and design as EBEP-I, UNICEF and the Ministry would be able to rapidly expand the number of schools involved by 2-4 times, sustain progress, catalyze change and maintain consistency sufficient to protect the integrity of the CFS concept at national level.

Specifically, without expanding the Provincial Offices or adding expertise, EBEP-II⁶⁰ assumed that UNICEF would be able to:

- provide “intensive support to the POE in 6 provinces” in ways that would be sufficient and appropriate to “improve quality”;
- promote “whole school child-friendly teaching and learning methods....through both pre-service and in-service teacher training”;
- enable “a regular teacher support mechanism” through the “cluster school system”;
- create “expansion modalities” tailored “to local variations” reflecting the “different standards” in each province; and
- guide “phasing (of) activities within the dimensions based on previous experiences of quality interventions, geographic viability, availability of qualified human resources and commitment of stakeholders”.

Analysis: Based on interviews with UNICEF Officers and more indirect data from schools and partners, this assumption could be validated to only a very limited degree.

⁵⁹ Assumptions explain behaviour. Failed interventions can almost invariably be traced to inadequate or inappropriate designs or activities caused by invalid and/or faulty assumptions. Unfortunately, very few development projects make many of their assumptions explicit; when they do, it is typically only the easier, situational assumptions that are included in the LFA. It is often not clear, in fact, that project designers recognize what their explanatory assumptions are because they are so fundamental to their thinking. This makes questioning them difficult to do, and often threatening where it challenges their first principles. In the CFS initiative, explanatory assumptions about learning and systems change were especially numerous and complicated.

⁶⁰ UNICEF and MOEYS, 2005: pp 14, 17, 44

a) On the positive side, the last two expectations are being partially realized, principally because UNICEF Provincial staff know their provinces well and, with support from Phnom Penh, have been able to work to reorient the focus of their own interventions away from the micro level of the school toward the more meso level of DTMT and DOE. With counterparts, they have implemented the programme with reasonable flexibility.

b) Less positively, the first three expectations have not yet been realized. The quality of teaching and learning has continued to be low; CFS training has remained fairly marginal in the pre-service PTTC programme; in-service training has improved somewhat through the ETL/TTM programme, but the ability of UNICEF and MOEYS officers effectively to facilitate and, especially, to follow-up these sessions has continued to be limited in both technical expertise and time.

a-2] EBEP-II made assumptions with respect to three⁶¹ aspects of UNICEF CFS interventions concerning the conditions necessary for success.

→ **With respect to the CFS package**⁶², EBEP-II assumed that:

- it was “*basic enough*” to be introduced to previously unsupported schools and clusters”, and presumably those that would never get the level of support the first cohort of schools received;
- it was “*comprehensive enough*” to address a multitude of in- and out-of-school factors”; and
- it would have content and activities that were “*relevant and effective*” enough to “advance teaching and learning processes, with the expectation of increased learning outcomes, resulting in increased promotion rates and subsequent reduction in repetition and dropout rates.”⁶³

Analysis:

a) Although these were expressed as assumptions insofar as they suggested the conditions under which the CFS Package would be successful, more accurately they were tasks for which UNICEF should have been, and should still be, held accountable. Together with the Ministry, UNICEF should be ensuring, not assuming, that each manual is “basic”, “comprehensive” and “relevant and effective” enough for the schools and teachers to which it is addressed, and to catalyze the changes it was published to make. Overall, while a reasonable start had been made, these assumptions/tasks could not be validated. They require further attention, both by further elaborating the manuals with more explanatory materials and by more extensive practice-based and follow-up training.

Also with respect to the CFS Package, the EBEP-II further assumed that:

- “(package-related) *progress monitoring would be “guided by baseline data* for selected indicators to be measured from 2005-6 academic year onwards”;

⁶¹ Quoted from p 44; pp 45, 47, 83

⁶² A “package” of 19 activities, developed in 2006 by the MOEYS and covering the 6 Dimensions that are to gradually be translated into the “operational” manuals listed as Core Modules of the Master Plan. Five have been published and disseminated, among them the key ETL and SSA.

⁶³ This assumption was especially complicated insofar as it contained other “explanatory” assumptions e.g. that the particular teaching processes (learner portfolios, for example) included in the ETL would be of a kind to produce the desired learning outcomes; that this learning would be of a kind to cause children to be promoted, and that being promoted would lead to reduced drop outs and repetition.

- “at school and community levels, the *monitoring system (would) use the school self-assessment forms to assess involvement of stakeholders and progress with regards to the implementation of the CFS package*”;
- “a more *elaborate form for assessing outcomes of training activities (would) be used by cluster and district offices of education on a monthly basis*”;
- “*key reports produced by the (CFS) database (would) be used by the POE for strategic planning and review purposes as well as by schools for annual school planning purposes*”; and⁶⁴
- “*through this systematic monitoring scheme, the POE (would) assess progress and regularly report to the CFS Steering Committee for review, assessment and provision of recommendations for future development of the programme*”.

Analysis:

a) These statements were clearly assumptions: activities that would need to happen if the quality, use and effectiveness of the Package manuals were to be thoroughly tracked and adapted. In this case, however, implementation of the assumed activities was not really dependent on UNICEF, but on available interest, capacities and coordination at all points in the system. This was an additional assumption. None of these assumptions can yet be validated. Capacity for, and commitment to, formative feedback and analysis have remained limited to a relatively few in the Ministry; actual activities are still in the design and development stage.

b) While EBEP-II was not responsible for these tasks, it has been accountable for monitoring them in the sense of assuring that the assumptions underlying them are being validated i.e. that commitments are being fostered and the value of Core manuals to users is being tracked. So far, actions to support these assumptions are limited.

→ **With respect to the CFS implementing environment, EBEP-II assumed that:**

- “...there (existed) a *critical mass of CFS trained human resources* at national and provincial levels to support planned capacity building activities including monitoring and progress reporting”.

Analysis:

a) As with the CFS Package, this was perhaps less an assumption than a task expected of, and to be accounted for by, the EBEP-II. There was no basis on which to expect a critical mass of trained CFS people to be available. Rather, the project itself was intended to create these capacities to levels that would be adequate for delivering the fundamentals of the programme: for introducing interventions, facilitating their use, monitoring their effects and reporting on progress.

b) The question to be asked of EBEP-II in this respect is whether it (UNICEF) assumed more than it could reasonably do. In effect, to ask whether its “explanatory” assumptions were sufficiently thought through. For example, whether staff of a very hierarchical, centralized system like the MOEYS would be willing or able to do assessments of implementation progress and results and, especially, to share these with others. Overall, EBEP-II probably has assumed a level of results beyond the scope or capacity of its available activities and

⁶⁴ Page 23 in 2nd Progress Report to SIDA

mechanisms to produce. This appears in large part to be because the depth of learning and scope of support required to turn around ingrained top-down thinking and behaviour have both been insufficient. Inputs have been inadequate, especially in human resource terms, to generate a “critical mass”; and none currently appear to exist, waiting to be mobilized.

→ With respect to the Ministry and development partners, EBEP-II made three key assumptions:

- Assumption 1: That MOEYS “*ownership and commitment to expansion of CFS*” would “remain high”.

Analysis:

a) This was a critical assumption; its validation a necessary condition for the CFS initiative to be considered sustainable. It was also a complex assumption, however, because it implied two others: that Ministry ownership and commitment were already sufficiently high to implement the kind of changes required; and that the definition of what was expanded, and how, was consistent with what EBEP-II and other core partners understood CFS to mean. On the first, the high profile launch of the CFS Policy was a reasonably strong validation of the basic assumption of ownership/commitment, at least at senior policy level.

b) However, the original definition of CFS appears to have been somewhat diluted with expansion and the concomitant increase in directive management from the centre. The implicit assumption that CFS would maintain a consistent meaning is not being validated. Compared to earlier expressions of CFS schools under EBEP-I as “advanced learning environments”, this evaluation tends to confirm the comment that its current expression is more one of “*a minimum set of criteria relating to a small handful of activities*” and that the manner of its expansion is being weakened by “*skipping [the] crucial stage*” of locally-based analysis of priorities and agenda setting⁶⁵.

c) The crucial task for all CFS proponents, both MOEYS and development partners, will be to unpack this assumption, to work through what CFS can and should mean as it shifts from what has been a fairly protected environment of small-scale and labour intensive applications to national integration in some reasonable, if not necessarily ideal, form.

- Assumption 2: That MOEYS would “*remain committed to integrate CFS teaching principles and practice into the teacher training curriculum and to mainstream CFS practices to all the PTTC nationwide, and to evaluate the results of the integration*”.

Analysis:

a) Concerned with Ministry support to building teacher training as a necessary condition of CFS sustainability, it was difficult to assess the validity of this assumption because it so closely interacted with a further assumption: the capacity of the system to improve teacher training irrespective of strong policy commitment. Two key pre-conditions have not yet been met: improving the conditions of service and qualifications of PTTC instructors, and integrating CFS fully into the PTTC curriculum.

⁶⁵ NGO Programme Director

- Assumption 3: That MOEYS and donor “resources will be made available for implementation of related activities in other provinces”.

Analysis:

a) This assumption related more to the reach and sustainability of the CFS concept in general, rather than to its particular expression in EBEP-II. However, it also implied that UNICEF would undertake to mobilize CFS action on the part of national and external resources as part of its “communication for change” strategy. In this sense, the assumption has been reasonably well validated. UNICEF/MOEYS collaboration facilitated development of the national CFS Policy; UNICEF has continued to share both CFS-related activities and experience with development partners. Cumulatively, this has helped form a CFS umbrella under which an increasing range of CFS-oriented actions have been undertaken by MOEYS and partners, generally considered to be better aligned.

b) Explanatory Assumptions

The CFS concept itself has continued to include a large number of cause-effect assumptions, across and within each of the Dimensions: about how children develop and learn; factors internal and external to each child that influence this learning, both negatively and positively; why protecting the rights of children matters; and what this implies on the part of individuals and systems as duty-bearers.

The design and implementation of the CFS strategies and activities incorporated into EBEP-II have built on these assumptions, interpreting them further in terms of yet more assumptions specific to the officers involved. While considerable effort apparently went into clarifying and reaching agreement on the situational assumptions, it is not as clear that the explanatory assumptions were elaborated or agreed with the same degree of rigour.

Obviously, there have been differences in people’s explanatory frames of reference. This has perhaps explained in part why UNICEF and the Ministry have occasionally given different emphases to priorities, and taken different approaches to implementing them. It almost certainly explains differences between UNICEF and some NGOs, such as KAPE, on the best way forward with respect to expansion. However, there is no indication that these points of difference have been about first principles as to what child-friendly schools are or should be. Rather, they have tended to concern the appropriate cause-effect “results chain” links to creating them⁶⁶.

b-1] The ***two most visibly influential and directly related*** explanatory assumptions concern how people and systems change:

- That individuals, institutions and systems will agree with, be able to implement and take ownership of an idea or process because it is presented as the “right” thing to do; or because they are directed to do so.
- That the main tasks of the Ministry, UNICEF and other promoters of CFS interventions can stop at the point of providing information on why an action is good to do, the policies and directives for doing it, and/or technical guidance and resources to get started.

In fact, neither assumption was made explicit in either interviews or documents. Both, however, were implied in the comments of national and local officers to the effect that schools are “already child-friendly”, and teachers are “already applying ETL methods”, because the CFS Policy is in place and manuals are in their hands.

⁶⁶ See Annex 4 for an explanation of the value and practice of this “result-chain” concept.

To a considerable extent, both assumptions underlie the cascade model and Master Plan Matrix. Thus, for example: that teachers will use child-centred methods because the ETL has described them as good teaching; that SSC will collect and analyze interview data from families because the School Mapping manual has directed them to; or that traditionally insular Departments will undertake collaborative planning and share authority because the Master Plan requires it.

Neither assumption has been validated. Certainly, the cascade approach to training has not yet proven itself. And while PED and TTD Working Groups, teachers and SSC members overall express agreement with the ideas and methods of CFS interventions related to their responsibilities, in very few cases have actual changes in how those responsibilities are exercised gone very far. No one, except at senior policy level in the Ministry and among development partners, suggests having enough control (ownership) over CFS initiatives to seriously challenge their relevance, appropriateness or effectiveness.

b-2] **Three other explanatory assumptions** are implied in the CFS activities of EBEP-II, noted here as examples of the kind of “unexplored” expectations that merit further validation as implementation of the CFS Policy moves ahead.

- The design/methods of the ETL manual and TTM venue appear to assume that teachers would be sufficiently motivated by the experiences of interacting with students in trying to tailor their teaching methods to learning outcomes, that they would continue to engage in a genuine way despite the lack of in-class mentoring and persistently poor conditions of service.

Leaving aside whether teachers have been *able* to engage with the ETL lessons, there is considerable evidence that this assumption is proving valid. Teachers interviewed and observed in the TTM sessions were enthusiastic and interested; similar reports came from UNICEF and NGO officers. Enthusiasm is not necessarily translating into changes in the classroom, however, and so may prove transitory.

- Dimension 5 has implicitly assumed that community participation, with the school and community jointly analyzing and acting to improve management and infrastructure would be sufficiently mobilizing and mutually rewarding to be sustained without outside financial support, in contradiction to traditions that foster hierarchy and despite the time and opportunity costs involved.

This assumption has been validated only to a limited degree. In Odtar Meanchey, the positive instances of community-school collaboration described by parents and school staff indicate it could be happening. Reports from some NGO programmes were similarly positive. In general, however, interactions appear much less than substantial; nor do they appear to be deepening over time.

- Underlying much of the CFS, and certainly those aspects dealing with children’s inclusion and learning, has been the assumption that essentially western-based theories and best practice approaches would be sufficiently compatible with Khmer culture, values and behaviour to motivate support; or where they are not that they would be compelling enough to motivate change.

This assumption may have been explicit, and negotiated, in discussions to develop the CFS framework and materials; it was only implicit in formal documentation and interviews. Attempts to validate it with education officers and teachers were not especially successful. Given the intention to concentrate the next period of CFS activity on Dimension 2, unpacking and verifying such a fundamental assumption should be a key first step.

ANNEX 7 MAINSTREAMING CFS NATION-WIDE

Officially, CFS became applicable nationwide with the launching of the CFS Policy. This action shifted the paradigm, and mainstreamed the principle of CFS. The child-friendly school could no longer be considered a donor or Ministry “project” to be engaged with, or not, as a matter of agency or school choice. Rather, it became a “principle of action” to be taken into account as an integral part of the education environment overall in terms of determining all that would be done, by whom and how in the sector.

That said, conversations about what “nation-wide CFS” could and should mean have continued and, not inappropriately, along a number of lines. The core of the debate has so far hinged around the question of whether nation-wide can realistically mean a single national programme applied concurrently in all classrooms, schools and districts.

In part, this pattern is already becoming visible in the distribution of the same manuals, directives for establishing mechanisms like the DTMT and schedules for various training regimes across the country. Equally, however, concerns are already being raised at what is perceived as a reinforcement of the kind of top-down management that has worked against child-friendly reform by failing both to recognize diversities across communities, children and geography in terms of capacity, need and barriers to change; and to support the basic tenet of CFS -- respect for the right and responsibility of local agency.

In fact, the evaluation data indicate that strong local CFS voices are not being created, in large measure because nothing is compelling this to happen. With relatively little room for local interpretation assumed by schools and provincial offices, most are looking to Phnom Penh for direction, and increasingly doing so following the CFS Policy and Plan launch.

The 70% Solution Officially, CFS was to be considered to have reached nation-wide status with 70% of schools deemed to be child-friendly. This has proven to be controversial on a number of levels, however, concerns centring chiefly around whether and how quantitative criteria can be established for an essentially qualitative, progressive and multi-dimensional innovation like CFS; who should develop these criteria; and how they would be used.

The Ministry's position has remained somewhat ambiguous, senior officers presenting varying perspectives at different times. Some initial opinion favoured a solely objective measure: that a school would be child-friendly once it had reached full enrolment. Two key flaws in this as a benchmark have been making it increasingly less viable, however: the unlikelihood of the majority of schools realizing it any time soon; and its failure to account for issues such as learning outcomes, retention and gender-equality.

Another impediment to the viability of quantitative criteria has been the fact of few, if any, reliable school baselines from which any measure of percentage change might be determined. One suggested option has been to use quantitative data (daily attendance, test results, teachers' absence, gender/disability/ethnic distribution) in qualitative ways. Along with qualitative assessments (appearance of the environment, children's sense of participation, teachers' assessments of children's critical thinking, communication and self-confidence), these data would indicate trends toward child-friendliness over time. This has been the basis of the SSA.

In fact, most senior MOEYS officers have been pushing for a mixed measure of CFS attainment. Less readily quantifiable, but probably more realistic and certainly more encouraging, the idea expressed by several is that a school would be considered child-friendly on the basis of its ability to show some level of progress of all dimensions, progress that would be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively depending on the specific issue and context.

In this respect, one very positive outcome of Policy/Master Plan development, at least at senior levels, has been an increased readiness to define CFS status in terms of progressive change, as opposed to an end point.

This has implied a move toward a more refined notion of the nation-wide criterion, recognizing both that all schools should be consciously and clearly “on the CFS path”, and that this path was a continuous one, even if progress were slow. Toward this end, schools would be designated as basic, medium or advanced in terms of child-friendliness. Again, one intended function of the impending SSA would be to help a school, and the Ministry, to determine into which category it falls - and how to move forward from there.

Mainstreaming as Co-ordinated CFS Action Nation-wide CFS application by definition must be coincident with strong internal coordination within and across Ministry Departments and responsibility centres⁶⁷. In practical terms, mainstreaming CFS nation-wide will mean all levels of the system, and gradually all schools, taking cognizance of the six CFS Dimensions, assessing the situation of their respective responsibilities for school-age children in terms of each, and taking action accordingly.

Until recently, coordination of this kind has been on a relatively small and unsystematic scale and chiefly through the various development partner projects that have incorporated CFS concepts and activities. With the publication and launch of the Policy and Master Plan, along with the “Core Activity” manuals, coordination is now described by the PED as “well underway”. Based on the evaluation data, however, this is true only at the level of a “principle” and in terms of exposure to major tasks.

Questions are beginning to be raised about the official position of the CFS Policy relative to the MDG, EFA/NPA, ESP/ESSP and now FTI. Specifically in this respect, how -- as a uniquely rights-based framework -- CFS principles and actions could and should move beyond their currently fairly marginal focus on the periphery of the sector (on better school environments, enrolment campaigns, the ETL) to challenge systemic impediments to change at the core of the system and in the wider socio-economic policy environment.

Albeit still in a preliminary way, mainstreaming CFS application has implied to some development partners the responsibility of the Ministry, with partners, to broaden the CFS sphere of influence from one chiefly within and immediately around the school, to one that included actions aimed at adding value to the education reform process as a whole.

Until now, CFS as such has had little to say, for example, about teachers' salaries and conditions of service; the highly prescriptive and inefficient arrangements of school financing; interference in school operations from other sector decisions (pressures to sell school land for speculation, to bring older students to the labour market, to recruit teachers for non-school jobs); inadequate attention to non-educational impediments to children's participation (insufficient monitoring of internal migration patterns, food security, domestic violence and child abuse).

These are issues obviously affecting children and schools across all six CFS Dimensions. National application of CFS could and should mean deciding to what extent, and how, the tools and mechanisms created through Dimensions 1, 4, and 5 (e.g. school mapping and enrolment campaigns, SSC and student councils) can be expanded to deal with these “hard issues”. Doing so will also be key to enhancing the success of actions under Dimensions 2 and 3 to have an impact, and ultimately CFS as a whole

CFS Oversight Mechanism Dimension 6 has been different in kind from the others in that it has been centred not in the school, but in the wider policy and institutional environment. A second salient difference consequent to this appears to have been a certain degree of ambiguity

⁶⁷ The issue of CFS co-ordination is discussed in more detail in Section VII (c)

as to where responsibility for the dimension resides since, unlike the others, actions to direct, legitimize and enforce coordination necessarily cross both technical and structural lines.

In practice, UNICEF and other development partners have continued to work with the PED and, more recently, the TTD in most matters dealing with CFS implementation. Based on information from interviews, and from its management of manuals production, it appears that the PED has assumed the coordinating mantle. It was a far from unchallenged position, however. Some were fairly strong in noting as a problem the PED over-reaching its “responsibility solely for implementing” CFS in the Primary programme, not also for supporting (through training, research) and monitoring that implementation.

Internal competition for CFS authority will likely continue. A mitigating factor in this may eventually be the role of the CFS Steering Committee which, according to the Master Plan, has Dimension 6 responsibilities by virtue of providing “direction, oversight, coordination and endorsement of plans”⁶⁸. Logically, its unique position sitting above the issues causing inter-departmental and centre versus local tension would suggest its exercising a proactive role as “change manager”.

How and whether it will ultimately function in this way is somewhat unclear. No formal Terms of Reference have as yet been established; the full official membership is for many inside and outside the Ministry uncertain; and it has met only once during the 2007/8 period. There is also some concern that having its own SC mechanism would undermine the intent of the CFS Policy to have its principles and activities integrated into “all schools throughout the country”.

In this respect, other suggestions were made for a more appropriate base for Policy application oversight, focused on the already established bodies coordinating education reform. Consistent with the SAT emphasis on maintaining “a holistic and integrated approach” to CFS mainstreaming, the JTWG/Ed is the principal candidate for this, in terms of its perceived ability to ensure consistency between ESP/ESSP operational plans and “the aims and sequence of activities foreseen in the Master Plan”.

The Programme Management Committee was also suggested, based on its oversight of the FTI. However, while it is the more senior body, it is also less broadly representative of CFS stakeholders, especially the NGOs.

Unfortunately, the evaluation is not in a position to assess any of these options; a planned interview with the CFS/SC to clarify its understanding of its role, priorities and programme of work in managing the CFS change process did not take place. Nevertheless, it is clear that some overarching responsibility forum will be a necessary condition to managing the CFS Policy application and CFS mainstreaming. Key criteria for this will need to include its being a body able and willing to :

- function as an integrated, transparent and “flat” representation of all main stakeholder perspectives;
- set and enforce implementation standards based on core principles;
- ensure reflection of these principles in all policy and programme initiatives of the sector;
- take advantage of opportunities
- remove barriers to communication and coordination; and
- be proactive and creative in seeking and securing human and financial resources.

⁶⁸ MOEYS 2007b: 3

ANNEX 8 FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

a) The CFS Implementing Environment

The CFS innovation has been implemented within the context of two operating environments: the external which concerns the socio-economic, political and institutional systems of the country overall; and the internal, concerning the policy priorities, professional capacities, management structures and resources of the MOEYS, as well as those of the various development partners supporting application of CFS.

While each “environment” has proven complicated to manage on its own, these complications have been exacerbated insofar as each has interacted with the other in not always functional ways. In the northwest, for example, increasing family dislocation as poor rural farmers sell their land to speculators has disrupted children’s already sporadic attendance in incomplete schools. In other provinces, the burgeoning of factories has served as an increasing lure for adolescents to leave school early, where limited contact hours, frequently absent teachers and an uninspiring classroom experience have not offered a very strong counterforce.

In order for CFS interventions to progress in taking root and making a meaningful difference to children’s inclusion and learning outcomes, they have needed continually both to accommodate to these environments; and also to change them. So far, CFS interventions have had little to no influence on the external environment and fairly marginal, although gradually growing, influence on the internal environment.

For children struggling to get to school, stay and learn, the challenges from both environments have continued, reflected in key statistics which, despite ESP/ESSP, EFA and now CFS, have remained generally poor and frustratingly stable. There is doubt among many that national MDG and EFA targets would be met.

According to a recent assessment of education attainment at the Primary School level, one of the most comprehensive such studies, the “overall knowledge of the official Grade 3 curriculum is low. In Khmer (language), on average 40.4% of 53 multiple choice questions were answered correctly and in mathematics, on average 37.5% of the responses to 80 questions were correct.”⁶⁹

While highlighting “significant improvements” over the decade “particularly in terms of primary net enrolment gains” and the introduction of more fiscally responsible and pro-poor policies, the EFA/FTI approval document is also pessimistic in noting “several challenges”: disparities in education participation rates...; inefficiency and poor quality in education service delivery...; weak local management capacity; and lack of reliability in education finance disbursements”⁷⁰.

The ESP/ESSP Midterm Review similarly reflected slow progress. For Policy 1 “ensuring equitable access to education services” where most success has typically been attributed, out of a total of 20 indicators in SY 2006/07 “a total of 8 indicators (40%) met planned targets, but 12 indicators (60%) did not...”⁷¹. Shortfalls were noted in NAR, Lower Secondary School NER nationwide and in remote areas, and in transition rates to LSS. With significance for PTR and addressing the problem of incomplete schools, the number of students in teacher training reached only 87% of the target.

⁶⁹“Student Achievement and Education Policy: Results from the Grade 3 Assessment - Final Report”. 2006. The study was funded by the WB through its CESSP programme, quoted here from the UNICEF “2nd EBEP-II Progress Report to SIDA”, p 23

⁷⁰ ESSSUAP 2008: 8

⁷¹ MOEYS 2008: 6

In Policy 2 “enhancing quality and efficiency of education services”, critical CFS-related outcomes were similarly disappointing. Out of a total of 25 indicators, “6 indicators (40%) met planned targets, but 13 (60%) did not...”. CFS-relevant shortfalls here included: promotion rates at Grade 1, Grade 3 and Grade 6; repetition at Grade 1 and 3; and Primary and LSS completion rates. Achievements in female indicators were similar to trends overall.

Centralized policy action has continued to be a serious impediment to reform, including to the core CFS Dimension 5 principle of local participation at District and community level. Limited progress in implementing the Government's decentralization policy and the organic law on commune authority has left little incentive to support structures such as the Commune EFA Committee (CEFAC). In turn, the data indicated very little action to develop the capacities of these bodies to deliver meaningful interventions, either for the EFA/NPA in general, or for support to schools and School Support Committees in their efforts to move against impediments to enrolment and retention.

Officially, school budgeting was expected to become more efficient through introduction of Programme Budgeting under the Public Financial Management reforms, raising hopes of greater flexibility for schools in determining where money will be used and, eventually, of more punctual receipt of funds. In fact, centralized control and weak management has persisted, creating serious disruptions in the timeliness of disbursements (sometimes up to a year) and leaving many schools to struggle to manage their credit as prices rise. FTI has apparently incorporated a specific financing mechanism aimed at enabling more responsive and viable school management, but this has yet to take effect. Interviews with school Directors and SSC indicated most remained skeptical.

Other, somewhat more extraneous burdens are also taking their toll in terms of disruptions to school operations. Several schools, for example, noted pressures from the upcoming election as political party tensions played out among staff and, as happened with a recent census, teachers were starting to be recruited by the Electoral Commission for various polling duties. Most schools anticipated 2-3 months of teacher shortages; some in more remote areas expected to close for the period.

Some in the Ministry apparently approve of this recruitment as a benefit to teachers, rather than as a loss to the schools. Many teachers agree. For others, the perceived weakness of the Government in dealing with this and other external and internal threats to school stability, is seen as contributing to more general doubts about the depth of commitment to the education reform process. Reference to persistent constraints to good school management is common: lack of concerted action against companies enticing school-age children into the labour market; incomplete schools; low salaries and poor working conditions of teachers.

Not surprisingly, the last point was perceived by most as a core impediment to progress on especially the 2nd CFS dimension. One senior Ministry officer agreed they were “putting too much stress on teachers; asking too much of them without compensation”, with the result that teachers were giving less quality time to the classroom, or leaving it altogether. The latter appeared, however, to be the less harmful action for children; at least, it made it clear that they were not being taught. From the teachers' perspective, their poor compensation in the face of rising costs was like “loading down a truck”; while they would continue to teach, their effort would “slow down”.

Limited classroom contact hours have, in general, continued as a drag on progress with respect to learning outcomes, exacerbated now by the increased use of multi-shift arrangements. Although positive in aiming to increase access and reduce PTR, reliance on the same teachers for all shifts has disadvantaged afternoon classes with tired teachers and multiplied the impact of any one teacher's absence. Somewhat more subtly, it was seen also as undercutting professional development efforts; double-shift teachers who receive double salaries were disinclined to engage in unpaid in-service training or become unpaid TGL.

A further source of pressure on school quality has been the continued and fairly widespread problem of weak school management. Directors are generally described as often unable or unwilling to provide in-class support to teachers, more typically inclined to direct and criticize than mentor; to obstruct, rather than engage with, CFS-oriented changes. In the view of many, significant improvement will come only as older Directors retire and younger ones, with technical rather than political credentials, take their place.

Nonetheless, this has been a turnkey position for all reform. Directors have served -- and must continue to serve -- as focal points for key CFS interventions, including the school mapping and School-Self Assessment exercises. More concerted attempts are starting, with the intention of professionalizing the function. EBEP has done some of this; CESSP and ESCUP have made it even more of a focus; FTI has included it.

Finally, and perhaps the most troubling aspect of the CFS implementing environment overall with respect to both the present quality and future direction of education reform, is the general passivity shown by many. As noted with respect to the SSC, especially within schools there is a sense that what there is, is the best that could be expected. While teachers, students and community members expressed few complaints in interviews about the situation, neither did they express much enthusiasm or attitude of moving forward to something better. One very senior officer in the Ministry was especially graphic in his concerns that the system is "*producing a nation of factory workers, rather than people ready to compete in the regional or global market place*" because "*people no longer care about education*". The country is "*not paying its teachers adequately*" and parents were "*sending children to work, not to school*".

Addressing these attitudes will require a strong sense of direction from the national level through sustained actions that move away from a "doing things as usual" mentality. In this respect, a priority task of the Ministry and development partners, preferably in conjunction with one of the senior oversight committees such as the PMC or JTWG/ED⁷², will clearly be to proactively keep up the CFS momentum.

b) Clarity and Agreement on the CFS "Innovation"

Status of the Concept As a school change strategy, CFS has remained very much a "concept in progress". Beyond espousing the right of all children to a good quality education and using the six Dimensions to define what that means in practice, the answer as to specifically *how* a child-friendly school framework would be different from other education reforms in the country, and *why* it merits attention, has continued to be fairly ambiguous.

A number of NGO programmes⁷³ have perhaps moved the furthest in reducing the ambiguity in stressing the roots of the CFS in children and families themselves as "agents" in setting and managing a learning outcomes-oriented agenda within the context of their own schools and communities. This has defined, in turn, an approach that responds to particular local conditions and emphasizes participation especially of marginalized children. Issues of increasing the number of schools reached, and strengthening the capacities of the national education delivery system to reach them, have been less of concern in these programmes than has making a meaningful shift in terms of who makes the educational decisions, how they are made, and what is being learned.

Building on the same child rights base, but with a different point of departure, UNICEF/EBEP has not gone as far in seeking to change the working paradigm of the educational system. Rather, it has advanced the CFS concept by introducing, in a sense, a different moral compass to the

⁷² Programme Management Committee, Joint Technical Working Group/Education. The CFS Steering Committee is another option, although its mandate was somewhat unclear.

⁷³ Most prominently KAPE, SCN, VSO, World Education and CARE

official ESSP, and recently FTI, discussion. In doing so, it has similarly served to advance and differentiate CFS as a concept by placing the technically pragmatic language of these official discussions more expressly in child rights-based “principles of action” terms.

Variations in focus, intensity and methods of CFS interventions among agencies and projects have, however, tended to be functions more of their organizational philosophies, methodological flexibility and working relationship with the education bureaucracy and communities, rather than CFS first principles. Across all CFS actors, there is evidence of considerable mutual learning and adaptation with respect to CFS application. The range of activities within the six Dimensions has played out within an increasingly open environment of exchange, cooperation and collaboration among CFS advocates.

The benefit of this has been clear from the Ministry’s perspective. Rather than being presented a fixed, take-it-or-leave-it “package”, it has been provided a fairly accessible conceptual framework, buttressed by a set of increasingly better proven methodological and activity alternatives. Within this, the Ministry has been able to make its own accommodations and set its own policy course.

Confirmation in Policy Again, the most visible evidence of this has been the CFS Policy, and the high Ministerial profile given it through the launching. Together with the Master Plan, the Policy has consolidated the CFS concept, as currently understood and agreed by most advocates. As such, it has constituted a potentially “corner-turning” event for the education sector overall.

Significantly, by reinforcing inclusion and quality of learning outcomes as its central goals, the Policy has reinforced an understanding of CFS as *a way of thinking* and *a set of core assumptions* about the value and place of children and their learning.

Two important messages could, and should, be drawn from this as future decisions are made on Policy mainstreaming:

- that the onus will be on schools, and the system as a whole, to proactively seek out and accommodate all children, not passively wait for those who turn up and can fit in; and
- that changes in school environments, hygiene and community participation will be considered necessary, but **not** sufficient, conditions of CFS implementation without primary action on teachers, teaching and learning outcomes.

The Policy has made an important contribution, also, in beginning to recognize CFS not as a single programme to be “delivered” or another list of tasks to be implemented. Rather, its Core Activities were now to be:

- o understood as “a useful *way of explaining* to school staff, students, parents, guardians, community members and local authorities that there are many different factors, and thus *many different activities*, which contribute together to develop good schools, (which) is why CFS is a *holistic way to improve educational quality*; and
- o “implemented in schools throughout the country [in ways that] improve and develop each school itself according to *local circumstances ... in each dimension*.”

As noted in Section III, these statements have given a critical flexibility to the CFS concept, by presenting activities not as the definition of CFS *per se*, but rather as a *way of operationalizing* it in relevant and appropriate ways.

At the same time, the Policy has implied challenges and potential risks. Creating a national policy was a necessary step forward in confirming Government commitment to the concept and principles of children’s right to education. The risk now will be that its launching may be interpreted as its

implementation; that CFS promoters may stop or slow their action. There was some evidence of this already happening. Several Ministry respondents expressed the view that the job of making the system and its schools child-friendly was now accomplished because the Policy had mandated it.

Tendencies toward reduced motivation for action risk being exacerbated further by having the Policy anchored in a very explicit, step-wise Master Plan, with its attendant technical manuals and tools. While the fact of this guidance is positive, some of the reaction to it has been less so.

There is, for example, a perception among several development partners, including UNICEF, that local officials are beginning to hand off responsibility for initiating action to the national level, waiting for directives and materials to arrive and reducing their own activity accordingly. Even among senior Ministry managers there are suggestions that the Policy is “in effect” because the Master Plan has been written; and is necessarily being implemented because manuals are in the hands of key stakeholders.

Working to mitigate these assumptions will clearly be a challenge for the upcoming period of CFS Policy and Master Plan implementation. Without question, their launching has been a key precipitant for any institutional change of the kind implied by the conception of a child-friendly school and system. It has not, however, been sufficient to make that change happen. The emphasis now will need to shift toward creating, monitoring and continuously fine-tuning CFS-enabling conditions at all decision-points in the system; and with everyone taking responsibility for making those decisions and following them through.

Policy Follow-through A key first step in implementing the CFS Policy and Master Plan will be to act against the assumption that the process will be simple. Based on comments from interviews at senior national level, those “next down the line” are expected to *understand* what is required, readily *agree* to take action and *prove able* to integrate new practices into existing ones. Interviews with those others “down the line”, however, suggest that this expectation is far from being validated.

Under EBEP-II, CFS interventions at school level have on the whole continued within the same fairly narrow range of activities as EBEP-I. In this respect, it is probably fair to say that the CFS concept at Provincial, District and school levels has remained relatively unexplored and stable, generally understood as referring to schools that welcome children as pleasant, safe and interesting places to be.

Up to now, this rather limited understanding has been consistent with a largely reactive response to the CFS initiative, communities and schools content to receive the inputs provided, as opposed to initiating them. It appears from comments made during this review, to be a response also consistent with much of rural culture and, on the whole, to have been positive. CFS, in this sense, has been a non-threatening and reasonably easy innovation for most local stakeholders able to see and accept it as consistent with their own values and priorities.

Launching the CFS Policy has made this passive acceptance of physical inputs no longer tenable, however. Its expectations of significant improvement in learning outcomes and systems behaviour has implied, instead, a redefinition of local ownership and a stronger push from the bottom; a greater willingness and ability on the part of communities and schools to question, initiate, adapt and demand action with respect to how and what children learn; what teachers do; and how both are treated. Without such a shift, particularly with the FTI emphasis on CFS as school construction, advances made so far to create a comprehensive CFS “moral compass” will be at risk, probably not of being dropped, but of becoming lost.

In a sense, the CFS Policy has allowed for such a more activist local involvement. As a national strategy in support of MDG, EFA and ESP targets, it has effectively raised the bar with respect to Ministry and development agency responsibility for enabling broadly-based participation. This will

need to include local stakeholders better able to negotiate how CFS will apply and to insist on activities that are relevant, competent and effective.

c) Collaborating on CFS Implementation

Building the CFS framework and reputation thus far has required consistent attention to collaboration and communication between and among several Ministry Departments and development partners. Much of this has been at the initiative of the partners. Sustaining and extending effective action under the CFS Policy, however, will put increasing demand *on the Ministry* to take the initiative in managing these outreach arrangements as it works to determine the speed and direction of Master Plan application; and *on development partners* to play a simultaneously responsive and constructive role in enabling this to happen.

i) *Partnerships*

Overall, interaction among Ministry and development partners with respect to CFS action appears to be working well, facilitated by long-standing collaboration on the ESP/ESSP and EFA/NPA as well as agreement to apply the Paris Declaration principles of good partnership practice, programme alignment and harmonization.

A core assumption of EBEP-II in the design and implementation of the CFS model has been that it would build on and through partnership. This has required MOEYS and UNICEF, along with CFS-active NGOs, to include a wide range of stakeholders in progressively defining, implementing and monitoring goals, norms of behaviour and outcomes. This implies not just allowing broad participation, but actively reaching out to enable it in ways that encourage responsibility for making CFS relevant and effective “on the ground”. As suggested in the previous section, the assumptions underlying the EBP-II work in this respect have been reasonably well, though not fully, validated.

UNICEF and KAPE Where partnership has been validated, albeit more directly in EBEP-I than EBEP-II, has been in the collaboration with KAPE, actions here particularly intensive and critical to the elaboration of both the CFS concept and the trialling of various application methods within several of the Dimensions. The formal relationship ended in 2007 by mutual agreement, a move that made sense given the expansion of the programme, the shift in UNICEF’s emphasis away from school-based interventions toward policy development for nationwide application, and KAPE’s continued support for a niche programme focus.

Conversations have continued on an informal basis, however, and there is now some interest expressed by both sides in exploring options for a new partnership arrangement. This also would seem a sound move, in light of UNICEF’s intention to develop an enhanced innovation testing role and the importance of the Ministry having access to evidence-based information as it attempts to translate the CFS Policy into viable practice. KAPE has continued to prove itself creative and capable in this respect with its own efforts to evolve the CFS framework.

A particularly relevant focus of any UNICEF and KAPE partnership will be their differing perspectives on CFS expansion. Assuming that a position at either end of the “minimalist-maximalist” continuum would not be viable, a rigorously grounded, sustained action-research analysis of alternative positions and strategies along the continuum could serve both the evolution of the CFS concept and application of the CFS Policy very well. Other areas of potential evidence-based analysis appropriately captured in a UNICEF-KAPE collaboration, in conjunction with the Ministry and other partners would usefully include the application of CFS principles to LSS education; elaboration of the SSA as an organizational learning tool for schools; and moving the ETL initiative into classrooms.

UNICEF and the WFP Collaboration with WFP has continued, and continues to be instrumental to the success of the CFS intervention overall. Almost all schools when asked about

the most important aspects of CFS put the breakfast and accompanying nutritional advice and materials near or at the top. WFP noted that 85% of CFS schools have “well-managed vegetable gardens”, a level considerably above the norm. As in all school settings, providing food to under-nourished children has served multiple attendance, learning, socialization as well as health goals. Unfortunately, despite this broad spectrum of CFS-related results and inclusion of the programme in the Master Plan, it was not included in the FTI.

This would nevertheless seem a critical partnership for UNICEF/EBEP-II to maintain, its relevance becoming especially stark in the current food crisis. The two programmes are clearly consistent with core child-rights principles; both have attempted to build the self-reliance of communities in support of schools; both have struggled with weak commitment to and action on child protection on the part of commune governance.

One possible “condition” to a future collaboration, however, would be a stronger focus on assessing the relationship between the various WFP inputs and inputs to/changes produced by CFS action as they relate to patterns of children’s participation and learning. A range of CFS activities could be influenced by and/or augmented through those of WFP e.g. school mapping⁷⁴ and SSA; children’s progress on learning portfolios; changes in families’ treatment of girls with respect to school progress; increasing evidence of community action in sustaining food availability and distribution. According to interviews, little of this kind of connection has been systematically made or monitored so far, reflecting a perhaps important gap in basic knowledge about how the key input of nutrition has affected, and been affected by, CFS.

ii) Internal Cooperation and Communication

The importance of, and challenges to, effective cooperation and internal communication are more evident within the Ministry itself. The SAT 2008 report noted that the CFS Policy required being “translated into detailed annual operational plansfully integrated” into those of the Departments implementing ESP/ESSP; and, in fact, key Departments and responsibility centres continue to express commitment to working in co-operation toward such action.

At the same time, they have continued to struggle with the kind of working arrangements that integration required: joint analysis, common work planning, shared application of authority. Senior PED and TTD officers referenced the procedures used to develop the CFS Policy and Master Plan as evidence of “*a good consultative process*” both at the centre and especially with the provinces; and consider that the common Policy/Master Plan constitutes Departments reaching consensus on a “common path”.

They may well be correct from their perspective, but it is less clear that this more consensual way of working and the common path are equally recognized elsewhere in the system or have been internalized in general practice.

In fact, the PED/TWG itself agrees that the actual daily work of the each Department and provincial level office continues “in the usual way”. Answers to questions of how annual operational plans and the process of putting them together reflect Policy and Master Plan directives are fairly vague. Reiterating the assumed simplicity of implementation noted earlier, the PED/TWG said they feel confident the incorporation of CFS into the work of all Departments will be fairly straightforward: “*CFS is closely related to EFA; all of our work already relates to EFA*”.

In one sense, this perspective has considerable validity. The CFS concept has its roots in the rationale and principles of Education for All; the CFS Policy has expressly tied its aims to those of

⁷⁴ Perhaps in relation to the WFP Vulnerability Analysis Mapping of malnutrition, poverty, education etc

the EFA/NPA and MDG; and launching it has made shared communication about CFS planning and operations a commonly agreed principle.

That said, considerable effort will be needed to fully establish the CFS concept and principle of open communication within the Ministry's normative culture. Mainstreaming in this way will necessarily be a gradual and iterative process. It will require senior managers at all levels expressly giving time and attention to enabling those working under them to achieve a sustainable accommodation with the Policy and Plan tasks as these relate to their specific responsibilities. On the one hand, this will mean to some degree pushing staff to adapt to new ways of working. On the other, it will mean interpreting these tasks in ways that respect professional integrity and the difficulties staff will face in giving up practices with which they have felt capable and comfortable.

Failures in major curriculum reform efforts are sometimes explained in terms of a supposed Hindu fable about an elephant who achieves his stature by standing on the back of the globe, which in turn stands on a turtle and, "after that, it is turtles all the way down". The message of the story is the reality that the most impressive policy, like the elephant, will fail if remains aloof from the multiple layers of interpretation, knowledge, capacity and commitment that are reflected in the various stakeholders, the turtles, on which it is dependent. Unfortunately, reform managers typically do not recognize those that are actually carrying the load; fail to take their priorities into account; exclude them from decision-making; and deny them opportunities to learn the new responsibilities required.

The actors on whom the Policy will depend for implementation were obviously multiple, with highly variable capacities to carry it out and limited resources to support them, especially mentoring. Given this, the full scope of CFS Policy mainstreaming will need to be explicitly facilitated, worked out collaboratively and over the long-term.

District Training and Monitoring Teams In addition to catalyzing Policy implementation through strengthening the capacities of existing structures, new mechanisms have also been created. Intended to facilitate that "consensus on a common path", it is expected that arrangements such as the PED, TTD and POE Technical Working Groups will help work around traditional "stove-pipe" decision-making and routinized practices.

The most significant new mechanism in this respect has been the District Training and Monitoring Team (DTMT). Established in 2007 as a part-time but permanent assembly of usually DOE officers, TGL and school Directors, DTMT have taken responsibility for supporting CFS Policy implementation at school level, helping coordinate and facilitate activities across the six Dimensions.

Based on interviews with several Teams, and generally confirmed by UNICEF Provincial Officers, most members seem reasonably comfortable in their relationship to other oversight bodies such as the POE and DOE Working Groups; it is less clear how they related to School Clusters.

Most also understand fairly well their shared responsibility as a collective⁷⁵, and are able to explain why the "team" mechanism is useful even though members as individuals are already doing much the same things in their regular jobs. According to one Team:

⁷⁵ Although they typically operate through two sub-groups: DTMT1 responsible for Dimensions 1, 3-6; DTMT2 responsible for Dimension 2

- Its programme of work is more flexible than that of the traditional units; while initial workplans for covering the schools are made on the basis of the DOE annual plan, “we can adjust it as we visit schools and see new needs or issues”.
- There is value added in being on a team; “we can share experiences with each other, both about our ideas and what we are learning”.
- Because both sub-teams “work with teachers to some degree, we don’t distinguish too much between us”. As a Team, they said, they are in a good position to be “more consistent and decide together what things need to be improved in a classroom or school and what recommendations to give a teacher or Director”;
- Consequent to all of this, their monitoring is better as a Team; “if one of us comes in later, he can see what the others have written in the record book and follow up with the teachers to see if they are acting on the recommendations”.

This explanation, and the capacity and interest that accompanied it, suggest a reasonably firm base on which to structure the participant-centred, on-site mentoring and integrated, responsive monitoring implied by CFS Policy. Also positive in this respect is the fact that most respondents in and outside the Ministry perceive the mechanism to be permanent, even though its initial conceptualization was triggered by UNICEF.

Overall, the DTMT appear to be a mechanism with good potential for supporting Policy implementation and CFS mainstreaming; for providing the consistent, integrated and cumulative support schools and teachers will need to apply both the Dimensions and CFS as a whole in a progressive way. As teams, they should be able to work with schools in a more holistic way than as individual officers, to help staff, students and SSC see how the Dimensions can and should influence one another and how actions in each should evolve year to year. At the same time, in their individual positions as school, DOE, POE and sometimes PTTC officers, members should be able to serve an interlocutor role, linking local conditions with national priorities.

Important again, however, is an over-simple expectation by some of the ability of the DTMT to function in these ways. Even from DTMT themselves there is the sense that the task of setting up a viable mechanism is “done” with the assignment of members and 6-weeks of CFS training.

This assumed capacity of the mechanism to be self-directed and sustainable has not yet been validated. Managing varied and complex mentoring and monitoring tasks; coordinating with the POE, DOE and Clusters; and responding with flexibility to directives from the national level have created a quantitatively heavy and qualitatively complex DTMT mandate. Without a long-term, incremental capacity development programme aimed at consolidating and institutionalizing the mechanism, it will prove difficult to avoid wasting resources through duplication; undermining CFS coherence and overlooking key activities through mixed messages; and DTMT members burning out or cutting back.

Missing Linkages CFS mainstreaming will require strengthening and consolidating existing core structure, not simply creating new ones. In this respect, concerns were expressed of potentially key existing mechanisms being overlooked instead of rethought as CFS contributors.

Once considered key to EFA/NPA, Commune EFA Committees are currently seen as generally ineffective administrative bodies with little capacity to bring issues related to the welfare of children or schools into local governance discussions. None of the SSC interviewed made reference to them or indicated their involvement in school mapping (although their endorsement is required by the school mapping manual).

More notable is the apparent diminution of School Clusters. Seen by many in the 2005 evaluation as key engines of CFS implementation, and required by the Master Plan to “act as vehicles for

training and follow up” through TTM, they are more often described as uncertain venues, both for capacity development and as channels for introducing CFS-related ideas. One senior policy officer considered them of use only for the distribution of resources from core to remote schools, and so relevant only in rural areas. In general, the role of Clusters in building school-school and teacher-teacher support seems to be losing ground to, rather than being strategically tied with, the work of DTMT in supporting TTM and TGL, or with the SSC in terms of school mapping.

Little attention has been given to coordination in terms of peer mentorship, linking and sharing resources and expertise between system members. Rarely in interviews was note made of Directors or teachers, having become comfortable and capable with CFS thinking and practice, being expressly associated with colleagues to pass on their learning. KAPE is doing some of this with TGL in ESCUP; CESSP with school Directors; the GWG have initiated a small-scale linking arrangement of “outstanding” female teachers; some Student Councils report occasional exchange visits. Overall, however, there appears to be no systematic application of “twinning” under the CFS as such, even within Clusters.

A degree of caution will be warranted with respect to all of these mechanisms, old and new: that the Ministry continue to monitor that each is well anchored in actual need; that they include people who are technically capable to do the work, especially with respect to outreach and co-ordination functions; and that they are adding value by complementing, reinforcing and also challenging standard practice. Each should also, at least to some degree, be sustained without external support. In general, none of these conditions is currently being met in full.

d) Support to Institutional Learning

The CFS has been developed specifically as a holistic “inclusion and quality” education reform initiative. For this reason, its implementation has required considerable human resource capacity development at all points in system and for the contents and methods of the six Dimensions.

In committing the Ministry to now nation-wide CFS application, through an extensive agenda of implementation principles and tasks, within a relatively quick 5-year timeframe, the CFS Policy and Master Plan have made more extensive, complicated and urgent the scope of these capacity requirements, and the importance of consolidating and institutionalizing them.

The Policy has, to some extent, recognized this in noting as “vital to all aspects of its implementation...overarching” processes such as co-operative learning, research and analysis, creative and divergent thinking and problem solving⁷⁶. It has also identified the Implementation Principles or tasks to be done: viable working groups created; schools scored according to standards of CFS achievement; activities expanded to realize “constant progress”; work coordinated to “promote synergy”; and “innovative and creative” action used to strengthen good governance and implement decentralization.⁷⁷

While reasonable enough in implementing the Policy, all of this has also subsumed as preconditions a large range of underlying capacities that relatively few Ministry or school staff are likely to have. This has implied for the system as a whole a very steep learning curve.

Increasing numbers of capable individuals have been coming into, and being trained at, all levels of the system. They have not yet formed a critical mass of expertise, however. Most have concentrated in senior positions and at the centre; others have been scattered both physically and by function in various departments, offices and schools. For both, there have continued to be relatively few established channels of communication and mutual support through which professional aspects of the work can readily be explored. Support to learning from an institutional

⁷⁶ MOEYS 2007a: 9

⁷⁷ MOEYS 2007a: 9-10

development perspective with a focus on the kind of “overarching” co-operative learning and critical thinking capacities assumed by the Policy, is rare, as is the norm of operating in this way.

For all of these reasons, implementing the CFS Policy and Master Plan will require considerably increased attention to generating capacities specifically geared to guiding institutional change; and to creating supportive learning structures to underpin them.

To some extent, the Policy has provided a start to this through its listing of 20+ Core Activities and the Implementation Principles noted above. The Master Plan has gone somewhat further through its “principles of implementation” and Matrix. Both, however, have been limited by focussing more on what will be done, rather than how or why; on the techniques of application rather than a substantive elaboration of the theories, concepts and causal assumptions underlying the actions proposed.

In this sense, neither the Policy nor the Plan has gone far enough in articulating a strategic programme of human resource and institutional capacity development. Neither has tied its several lists of tasks and plans together to provide the directional learning-for-implementation structure that Ministry and school staff will need to manage and monitor the acknowledged complexities of the CFS change process in an internally coherent and cumulative way.

Action to generate such a “scaffolding” structure will need to happen soon. Key mechanisms expected to facilitate Policy implementation like the DTMT and PED/TTD Technical Working Groups have begun their work. A number of the core Master Plan implementation manuals have been published and disseminated. Much of the capacity building activity planned in support of the various Policy/Master Plan inputs has been started.

Based on interviews with many of the individuals involved in or with these mechanisms and tools, however, few appear to have developed a clear enough sense of the scope and trajectory of results expected from the CFS inputs, or their own actions, to effectively manage the activities.

For example, the Master Plan encouraged POE and DOE to use scheduled training days “with flexibility to address needs and priorities within their province and districts”. However, DTMT have identified training on “how to plan a TTM agenda” as a main priority. It seems unlikely, in this case, that many Teams will be willing or able to take up the Plan’s suggestion without the guidance and legitimacy of a CFS institutional development agenda mapping out fairly clearly the “how and why” of Ministry expectations.

The comprehensive coverage of CFS tasks included in Policy and Master Plan have provided a wide range of possible entry points for more structured support aimed at the kind of “institutional change” learning mentioned above, linked to specific teaching or management functions. Based on discussions at different levels of the system, three areas of inter-related HRD intervention are suggested here as priorities common to most functions making action on them reasonably cost-effective.

i) Moving the Ministry forward as a learning organization

Generating the multitude of capacities implied by the principles and practice of CFS, will remain the crucial challenge facing EBEP-II and the CFS Policy for at least the next 5 years. For this reason, the absence of an overarching and reasonably specific results-based CFS-HRD strategic plan in either the Policy or the Master Plan has been important to highlight.

Producing such a strategy will be a crucial first step for both the Ministry and development partners. Reiterating issues raised elsewhere in the report, three inter-related criteria will be important in this regard:

- that all training initiatives be designed to address the specific learning needs of officers and teachers on-the-job and over the long-term. The current provision of occasional 6-day vacation sessions and one-day workshops on pre-determined themes have been appropriate for initial exposure to CFS principles and general techniques for applying CFS activities. They will likely be insufficient to consolidate this learning or sustain change at an organizational level.
- that all training be specifically tailored to CFS implementers as adult learners. The scope of attitudinal and behavioural changes implied by the CFS Policy will require learning that moves well beyond acquiring information. This will happen only through learner-centred and practice-based methods; learner participation in planning and follow-up; sensitivity to the personal and professional risks involved in changing; and facilitators able to manage all of these. None of these has been a common feature of Ministry or EBEP-II CFS training.
- that the strategy incorporate specific plans for strengthening capacities for collaboration. Strategies and skills for more regular communication will be especially important: at national level between PED and TTD TWG and both of these and the various “support” centres; and at local level among DTMT members, and between the Teams and respective responsibility centres locally (POE, DOE, school) and nationally (PED, TTD, the Inspectorate).

All three of these criteria have been featured in other programme planning documents and monitoring reports dealing with education sector reform and CFS implementation, including the 2005 evaluation. Unfortunately, the barriers to effective capacity building in the sector have continued to impede their being met and appear likely to continue to apply:

- persistent dependence on technical assistance, despite the expressed intention of donors to reduce it;
- frequent use of short-term adjunct resource groups in preference to existing structures; and
- still-prevalent use of cascade training, by definition a method contrary to adult learning principles.

Both the Ministry and development partners have recognized the limitations of these practices; both have also struggled with effective ways of addressing them given the weak human resource base in the system, especially at local level.

On-site and adjunct technical assistance, large group one-off training sessions and parallel implementation mechanisms have proven insufficient as methods of sustainable capacity development, but they have also proven necessary to establishing CFS awareness; proving and improving important CFS tools; and, as was evident in discussions with teachers, beginning to mobilize individual efforts to change behaviour.

Implementing the CFS Policy and mainstreaming CFS will, however, require going considerably further than awareness raising and small-scale trialling. As one senior member of the PED/TWG noted, having outside assistance manage the Policy and Plan will “*not be sustainable; donors and NGOs can train parts of the system, but not the whole. When we do it, we have to work within the system as a whole*”. The next two areas of HRD support suggest some of the aspects of CFS implementation where this “working with the whole” will need to focus.

ii) Creating a CFS-enabling culture of inquiry

One senior Ministry officer listed four “critical steps” to sustaining CFS as an innovation: piloting its application as input to policy; disseminating it along with capacity development; implementing it through the system; and monitoring it for “constructive feedback from all levels, especially the students”.

In fact, these have been the steps that have generally been followed by the CFS innovation to date, and that have led to the stage of senior levels of the Ministry feeling confident enough in the viability of the framework to formulate it as a national policy.

An equally critical point made by a number of respondents in various ways, however, was that these steps cannot be considered as linear with the Policy and Master Plan as their end point. Rather, in a form of upward spiral, the four stages of sustaining CFS implementation need to become a permanent feature of all activity, continuously repeated in successively more comprehensive and coherent ways.

The education system, certainly in terms of CFS, will continue to be in a state of evolution for many years. Those responsible for CFS Policy application, at all levels, will need to be willing and able continually to test “what works”. This implies the Ministry, with development partners, taking action to create an institutional culture of inquiry.

As the four steps suggest, such a culture would involve everyone, to some degree, as “skeptical owners”, ready and able to question and evaluate all CFS-related activity in terms of its being consistent with CFS principles, appropriate to the specific context and people involved, especially children; and progressively able to produce better CFS results. A CFS institutional culture would be an explicitly “experiment-friendly” one.

Key to this will be making commentary and feedback genuinely legitimate, transparent and inviting of all stakeholders – through facilitation, resources and creation of user-friendly channels. This will mean parents, teachers and middle level managers not simply being “allowed” to enquire and challenge, which seemed to be the current approach, but actually enabled to enquire and challenge through opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and access tools to do these effectively.

Open and multi-directional flow of formal and informal commentary and assessment data have continued to be weak throughout the Ministry, however, a function of barriers created by the system itself and by the influence of a traditionally hierarchical society. One indicator of this is the way in which people at different points in the Ministry, and in schools, talk about the communication process: those at the top invariably note that there are “many opportunities for people to give their opinion”; those further down typically recognize few such opportunities, including requests for feedback.

An institutional culture that rewards critical and reflective evidence-based feedback from all stakeholders will be a necessary condition to CFS mainstreaming. Implementation of CFS as a complex innovation in an equally complex bureaucratic environment will inevitably follow a course different from what was intended, whether because implementers have not understood the idea, not agreed with it, or not been able to apply it. Effective CFS Policy implementation will require senior policy levels having a true picture of the nature and extent of actual progress, not just the expected progress. So far, this has been lacking, with the result that guidance from the top has been somewhat blind, not able to avoid ineffective actions and dysfunctional differences becoming ingrained or, on the other hand, to enable effective actions and positive differences being recognized and built upon.

iii) Enabling continuous CFS-oriented school assessment

The CFS Policy has included the concept of CFS-rated schools, each school ranked on the basis of its progress within the six Dimensions as basic, medium or advanced. How such a designation would be made, and what it would imply for the school, are still unclear, however, and clarification will be a critical on-going process if the labelling is actually to have a value, and avoid being either harmful to schools in some way, or simply irrelevant.

There is general agreement, however, that to be consistent with the concept of the CFS, a ranking has to be considered fluid, not fixed; and that the process of assigning a ranking and deciding actions based on it has to rest with each school. Several senior Ministry officers confirmed the point of one, in fact, that the ranking is “*notional; it recognizes the need for flexibility*”. Also, they confirmed the idea that identifying different school levels would be necessary as a means of tailoring support. “*UNICEF is doing this in support to advanced schools*”; others are doing it by supporting basic schools in remote areas. “*Actions have to be specific to suit the school setting*” and this would mean knowing the quality of child-friendliness in that setting.

In this sense, the ranking plan could effectively serve as an opportunity for each school developing its own “culture of inquiry”: gradually improving its ability to assess its CFS readiness and progress, and to plan how to move forward in a continuous way toward becoming progressively more child-friendly.

This has been the premise of the SSA, as a tool for enabling the school to gather data in a systematic way across the six CFS Dimensions and, in a rolling way, assess its CFS status. However, it is not clear whether or how the tool and results of the individual assessments would be used to assign one of the three rankings e.g. to differentiate those schools requiring significant direct external support, from those requiring less, or to provide guidance on the kind of support needed.

This could be done. For example, an *advanced CFS school* might be defined as one with a good rating on the SSA and needing little more than a menu of options and occasional guidance to work through them; a *medium-level school* would be one with a mid-level SSA rating and needing more explicit “recommended” priorities and facilitated support; and a *basic CFS school*, with a low SSA rating requiring fairly explicit directives for activities to undertake and regular on-site mentoring.

Developing some kind of holistic school self-assessment “culture”, not simply a procedure for collecting data, implies both time and resources. A number of the basics are already in place, however. Development of the SSA as a user-friendly learning tool has been moving forward. The ETL manual has proven to have potential as a self-learning guide for teachers, and could be strengthened through a complementary programme of in-class follow-up and teacher-teacher mentoring.

Other innovative methods, materials and mechanisms, including the student portfolio, question taxonomy, use of performance targets and the Inclusive Learning Toolkit have had initially positive applications and warrant further development as school self-monitoring tools. Unfortunately, EBEP-II expansion and Ministry focus on developing the CFS Policy appear to have slowed action to explore these kinds of CFS-linked innovations. Mainstreaming will require such action to be reinvigorated.