

## **Summary of donor partner response to key QBEP MTR recommendations**

### **MTR Recommendation : Commission an independent design mission to prepare a new proposal for beyond 2015**

- UNICEF have indicated using this mission to prepare a clearer vision for UNICEF post-2015 and developing a new theory of change/results framework/proposal for a new QBEP.
- The DPs are of the view it is UNICEF's responsibility to develop its own strategy. Donors are seeking an independent mission – not led by UNICEF, and not funded by QBEP – that designs the modalities necessary to maintain the partnership among donors in the education sector to support the Ministry of Education implement its new Education sector plan. We propose involving UNICEF (and potentially other DPs) in the drafting of the ToRs, engaging the team for the mission, review of CVs.

### **MTR Recommendation: Address weaknesses in QBEP documentation, reporting and communication**

- UNICEF needs to prepare a communication plan, for approval by donors, outlining expected products. This should include simple and clear briefing materials on QBEP activities, monthly updates for DPs and Government of Myanmar/MoE, improvements to existing progress reports, sharing of adviser reports with DPs and Government and website overhaul.
- A new UNICEF/QBEP communication specialist will commence in September: DPs request input into the ToR for this role please, insofar as it relates to QBEP.
- We also request reports/analysis produced under QBEP be shared with all QBEP donors, including drafts awaiting GoM clearance.

### **MTR Recommendation: Address current weaknesses in QBEP theory of change, logframe, work plan and budget**

- UNICEF advised it does plan to change the theory of change and logframe in last year of QBEP.
- Without spending too much time on revising documentation, the DPS expect a summary document (joint performance improvement plan) that outlines UNICEF's response to the MTR recommendations and a clear narrative on strategic directions (including support for the directions outlined by the Education Law and NESP) and activities until the end of QBEP. The focus of the report is on consolidation of QBEP activities.
- Agreement that the QBEP annual work plan and budget should be revised accordingly and approved by donors.

### **MTR Recommendation: Improve M&E and knowledge management, and evaluate approaches/activities:**

- UNICEF advised they are recruiting a Development Evaluation Specialist and Education Planning/Evaluation Specialist. DPs request consultation on the ToR for these positions please.

- UNICEF drafted an Evaluation Plan outlining various studies/evaluations. We do not accept those that are not directly related to QBEP activities or duplicate with other studies. Evaluation of key pilots undertaken under QBEP should be independent as far as possible. They should review effectiveness and efficiency of the approaches, and provide a comparative impact assessment. DPs should be consulted in the drafting of ToRs and selection of consultants for all studies/evaluations. The proposed evaluations need to be discussed in more detail with UNICEF. From initial discussions, DPs support the evaluation of the SITE training (in a range of townships), learning achievement for students and teachers, township planning and review UNICEFs sourcing and procurement approaches.

**MTR recommendation: Role of DPs on central policy, strategic planning and sector performance monitoring**

- The MTR recommends DPs take a greater and more direct role with MoE in this regard, with corresponding reduction in UNICEF's role in this area. This is linked to the MTR recommendation to DPs to engage a dedicated full time resident education specialist. Australia has committed to engage an education adviser at this early stage. The UK is considering engaging an adviser from 2016. It is unlikely EU, and DK would do the same at this early stage.
- We discussed nevertheless the need for DPs to have regular meetings with the planning and costing advisers together with the MoE task manager for CESR. Australia, as co-chair of the JEWSG has an additional responsibility to maintain an active role in policy dialogue on the sector planning work.

**MTR recommendation: consolidation of activities**

- The MTR highlights the need to address mismatch between QBEP and Government systems. DPs are of the view the school grants (and stipends?) programs should not be continued in light of the Government's school grants and stipends program being rolled out across the country. DPs also do not support the roll out of essential learning kits (backpacks) in light of the MTR recommendations.
- DPs would like to be involved in discussions on graduation criteria with Government.

**Four additional proposals submitted by UNICEF (to make up for unspent funds):**

- We support the MTR recommendation that proposals could be considered if they consolidate and deepen impact of activities in existing locations, and only if proposals are better articulated and pay greater attention to sustainability and systems building issues. Given that QBEP has only 16 months left, it would be irresponsible, both of UNICEF and of donors, to commence new activities or expand to new townships.
- UNICEF has prepared a Rakhine State Education Strategy. Donors have not been consulted in the preparation of the strategy to date. We recognise the situation in Rhakine state is a special case. The MTR highlights limited analysis of UNICEF's conflict sensitivity approaches and donors are concerned about the approach in Rhakine state. Donors are seeking the opportunity to peer review the strategy and consider a broad range of options for support to Rhakine.

### **Other issues following preliminary discussions with UNICEF on the MTR**

#### **UNICEF may request an extension to 2017, to use unspent funds and align with GoM cycle.**

- In view of the MTR recommendations, DPs cannot accept an extension to the contract.
- Moreover, a new suite of modalities needs to be in place in 2015 to support the implementation of the new Education Sector Plan.
- As an alternative, the Development Partners would consider using surplus QBEP funds to support the NESP and 2015/2016 quick wins – for example, the possibility of central level grants to establish kindergartens.
- It is therefore important to clarify the QBEP financial situation including projections to the end of the contract. EU is considering commissioning an independent financial audit which may support this work.

#### **UNICEF staff structure**

- UNICEF advised it would not restructure its education staff given there are only 16 months remaining for QBEP. However, the MTR highlights the lack of clarity around QBEP funded positions and the substantial costs of personnel under QBEP.
- Development Partners request UNICEF clarify how it would be managing its response to the MTR recommendations, including clarifying staffing roles and responsibilities for QBEP funded positions for the remainder of the program. This should include clarity on various ‘focal points’ for QBEP activities.