

# **Mid-term Review of the Quality Basic Education Programme in Myanmar**

**Report**

**August 2014**

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## List of acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CESR	Comprehensive Education Sector Review
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
DEPT	Department of Education Planning and Training
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DfID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELP	Essential Learning Package
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPIC	Education Promotion Implementation Committee
EU	European Union
FESR	Framework for Economic and Social Reform
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GoM	Government of Myanmar
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LEP	Learning Enrichment Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDEF	Multi Donor Education Fund
MDTF	Multi Donor Trust Fund
MEC	Myanmar Education Consortium
MNEC	Mon National Education Committee
MoE	Ministry of Education
MTR	Mid-term Review
NFPE	Non Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
QBEP	Quality Basic Education Programme
SITE	School-Based In-Service Teacher Education
TEIP	Township Education Improvement Planning
TEMIS	Township Education Management Information System
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WSA	Whole State Approach

## **Disclaimer**

The Government of Myanmar, the Multi Donor Education Fund and UNICEF commissioned this report. The views in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the commissioning organisations or any other person.

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## 1 Executive summary

This Mid-term Review of the Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP) comes at a time of rapid political change in Myanmar. The government has committed itself to an ambitious reform agenda and is opening up to greater external exposure. The purpose of the Review has been to:

- Evaluate the scope and effectiveness of the programme, its governance and management arrangements and its implementation;
- Examine the programme in the light of the changing context;
- Identify directions for future donor support to meet Myanmar's education needs.

**Background and Review methodology** are outlined in **Section 2**. A team of four international and national education specialists undertook the Review, assisted by senior UNICEF staff. The Review was largely based on a qualitative assessment, based on the collective experience of the team members and the evidence gained through document review, interviews and discussions. The team interacted with many officials in the Ministry of Education (MoE), both at the centre and during field visits, with representatives of the Multi-donor Education Fund (MDEF) partners and with UNICEF staff responsible for implementing the programme. Sincere thanks are due to all who gave freely of their time to assist the Review.

Some **positive findings** impressed the team (**Section 3**). Senior government officials are very committed to the reform process, although there is also uncertainty at lower levels about what it all entails. There is also a considerable need for capacity building at all levels. However, a real desire to make the programme work was evident, as was a strong sense of public service and national pride. This was most particularly noticeable amongst teachers whose enthusiasm was very impressive.

A high level of trust exists in the relationship between the government and UNICEF, the implementing agent for QBEP, which has been built up over the years of Myanmar's relative isolation. UNICEF has been present in Myanmar for half a century. For many years UNICEF was the only channel for donor funds to the education sector. Global partnerships between UNICEF and the EU, Australia and other donors have provided the basis for collaboration amongst QBEP partners. In Myanmar, relations between UNICEF and the MDEF partners have not always been harmonious over issues of management, approach and disclosure, but with a large number of new staff, both within UNICEF and the MDEF partners, there are opportunities for closer, more productive working relations in the future.

In the field the Review team were impressed by the visible impact of QBEP on schools, ECD facilities and non-formal education centres in the target areas. Amongst government implementers QBEP activities are generally regarded as meeting needs and having positive effects. The in-service training provided for teachers, in particular, was regarded as making a major contribution. At the centre, QBEP support to the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) has had a major influence on the direction of policy discussions.

**Major contextual developments** mean that QBEP needs to adapt (**Section 4**). The largest expenditure item for QBEP has been the supply of provisions for schools and ECD centres. Increasing the capacity of MoE to take responsibility for basic service delivery is now becoming more of a priority than providing basic supplies on behalf of the government. There have also been changes in donor assistance to the education sector. The expansion of the Stipends and School Grants Programme with World Bank and Australia assistance and the government's plans to develop secondary education with ADB assistance are major developments, which mean that QBEP is not now the only donor-funded programme. Careful coordination and agreement with government

over the division of labour is required. Moreover, sector policy and planning has emerged as a priority in GoM–donor relations. The current arrangements, by which the MDEF supports technical assistance to the sector review process through UNICEF, may not be the most efficient and effective way of supporting these strategic developments in the future.

**Significant aspects of the programme need to be improved (Section 5).** The programme design documents for QBEP provide a poor guide to the programme and how it is being implemented. The basic foundation documents, the theory of change and the logframe, need to be revised. The financial management framework is not capable of producing information on expenditure by programme component or geographical location. The work plan for QBEP is subsumed within the UNICEF multi-year work plan. While this may ensure alignment between the overall UNICEF programme and QBEP, it leads to uncertainty about the boundaries between them. Donors have expected more consultative programme management and reporting, while UNICEF has historically regarded MDEF money akin to core funding. Lack of transparency in sharing information and problems of communicating and reporting the programme have strained relations between UNICEF and the MDEF partners. Both UNICEF and the MDEF partners must share responsibility for this. For their part the donors need to specify the content, frequency and level of detail of the information and reports they require and agree the areas of discretion within which the implementing partner can operate without referral.

A lack of attention to communication around QBEP means that opportunities for effectively communicating good work that QBEP is doing are being missed. Given the changed context in Myanmar, UNICEF needs to recognise the variety of audiences it now needs to reach (e.g. government, MDEF, partners, press, general public etc.) and the most appropriate media with which to reach them.

QBEP should provide a better-articulated vision for its activities, greater cohesion amongst the components and signposts for the desired evolution of each component. Packages of activities are applied in different combinations in different townships without a clear sense of what they are collectively aiming to achieve, how the various activity streams relate to one another or where they intersect. There is also a lack of clarity about whether the activities, or the combinations of packages provided, are sufficient to bring about required changes. There is further uncertainty about what should happen once they are completed, which raises questions of sustainability.

Together with clearer conceptualisation, a more rigorous, reflective and critical approach to monitoring and evaluation is needed. UNICEF relies heavily on the partial and self-interested evaluations of their service providers. More independent evaluation of results and comparative impact assessment would strengthen the credibility of claims of successful implementation.

Greater attention also needs to be paid to bridging areas of dissonance between QBEP-inspired changes and existing government systems. Examples of this are the mismatch between active learning methodologies and student assessment and school inspection regimes, which value rote learning and memorisation. A further example is the development of the Township Education Management Information System (TEMIS) which risks setting up separate and parallel data management processes rather than attempt to breathe life into ailing government systems.

QBEP is a complex programme, operating at different levels across a widely scattered geographical area. The number of townships covered by the different QBEP components varies. This has resulted in a patchwork of disconnected geographical targets, which has expanded over time. This requires strong programme management. However, the organisation structure of the UNICEF education section does not accord to the structure of QBEP and the financial management system is not geared to

assisting programme management. There is also scope for an examination of job specifications and potential for making better use of the available human resources, in terms of a more effective division of labour between technical and administrative specialisms.

The design of the programme, which involves geographically scattered target townships, means that QBEP operating costs are high and it loses out on efficiency gains that come with economies of scale. Efficiency is further compromised by Development Partner restrictions on channelling funds direct to central government. UNICEF is consequently required to manage fund flows to individual townships, a process that imposes a heavy administrative burden on both UNICEF and the government.

Although the MTR did not thoroughly examine the efficiency of procurement, anecdotal evidence suggests that QBEP procedures are cumbersome and insufficiently nimble to cope with the need for rapid action.

UNICEF can justifiably take credit for its work on emergency relief. However, other aspects of the equity agenda need greater attention. Targeting of townships was carefully done, in methodologically sound ways, to include areas of comparative disadvantage, in terms of poverty and social exclusion. However, despite a strong focus on gender and disability in QBEP, the logframe does not disaggregate indicators by either gender or disability. The Review did not find evidence that the programme has realised its stated intention of raising awareness of issues of disability and has put in place basic capacity and structures that will allow for inclusion of disabled children. Nor did the Review find evidence of a strong focus on gender in QBEP to date. There is an urgent need for research into the prevalence of special educational needs and the barriers to access. In view of the strong political and social sensitivities involved, there is also a need for an independent evaluation of peace-building work in conflict-affected areas.

Given the levels of current and potential future commitments to the education sector in Myanmar, MDEF partners should deploy at least one dedicated full time resident education specialist between them. The MDEF partners and UNICEF should establish a set of ground rules to clarify their respective roles, rebuild confidence based on principles of transparency and accountability and ensure sufficient visibility and shared participation in policy dialogue with government.<sup>1</sup> Once the basic programme governance architecture is re-established, MDEF partners should confine their inputs to strategic concerns, leaving the everyday programme management to UNICEF. Areas such as school based training and ECD are areas in which UNICEF has long and valuable experience. One part of QBEP, however, stands out as an area in which MDEF partners should play a more prominent and more direct role; donors could make a significant contribution to supporting to strategic policy, planning and sector performance monitoring, through directly providing technically sound expertise and assistance.

The priorities for the **remainder of QBEP** should be critical evaluation, consolidation, intensification and lesson learning to provide evidence for influencing national policy. The drive for further expansion of geographical reach should not be encouraged (**Section 6**). Given the short amount of time available, the four proposals suggested for the use of unspent funds do not seem appropriate. They provide insufficient rationale in terms of the priorities suggested above. Consolidation, intensification and lesson learning should take the form of:

- Urgent action to address weaknesses in project documentation and reporting

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<sup>1</sup> A Statement of Cooperation between MDEF and UNICEF was drafted but not signed.

- A reduction of direct provisioning and service delivery by QBEP and the development of support mechanisms to help the government, as it takes over increasing responsibility in these areas.
- The systematic evaluation of QBEP approaches and activities to ensure their integrity and robustness as models of good practice, before they are recommended for scale-up or inclusion in national policy.
- The development of graduation strategies for each activity stream as the end of current levels of external support approaches.
- Establishment of a knowledge base of the programme through the production of briefing sheets for key activities, revitalisation of the QBEP website as a repository of knowledge and research in a number of key areas.

For the future beyond the lifetime of QBEP, there will be a continuing need for further donor support to basic education. In consultation with MoE, MDEF partners should commission the preparation of a new programme proposal for the period beyond 2015. This should be clearly focused on systems development and capacity building, rather than direct service delivery.

The **conclusions** of the MTR are in **Section 7**.

**Recommendations** are in **Section 8**.



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The Myanmar Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP) is a joint partnership between Australia, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Norway, collectively known as the Multi-donor Education Fund (MDEF), and UNICEF. UNICEF is the implementing agency. The programme is due to cost US\$82 million over 4 years from January 2012. QBEP followed a first phase of support to basic education, financed by the same donor partnership and UNICEF from 2007-2011. This programme was called MDEF I.

QBEP's purpose is to ensure that an increased number and proportion of children access and complete quality basic education in targeted townships. The four key Outputs detailed within the logframe (**Annex 2**) are:

- 1) Expansion of coverage of quality early childhood development (ECD) services
- 2) Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning
- 3) Enhanced planning, management and monitoring at all levels
- 4) Enhanced coverage, quality and relevance of second chance education.

Different components of QBEP operate in a different number of target townships. Activities relating to the quality of teaching and learning are carried out in 25 core townships. This number has been expanded over time. Various elements of teacher training have been incorporated in the emergency support provided to Northern Rakhine state and a "whole state approach" in Mon state. There has also been an introduction of School-based In-service Teacher Education (SITE) in seven additional townships. School-based ECD operates in 11 townships; school and community-based ECD activities operate in a further 14 townships and community-based only ECD activities operate in 55 townships. The two non-formal second chance components (NFPE and EXCEL) operate in 45 and 41 townships respectively.

The fluidity of the political environment and the rapid rate of change present a moving backdrop against which QBEP is operating. Over a very short period of time the government has embarked on a process of opening up the political system and economy, which were formerly highly centralised and controlled. Ambitious reforms are being introduced in line with the government's Framework for Economic and Social Reform (FESR), including reforms in the politically sensitive area of education. After years of under-investment, more resources are being provided. Teachers' salaries have increased. There are proposals for decentralisation and the government has started a consultative review of the education sector. The expansion of the government's existing Stipends and School Grants programme is a significant investment of resources and political capital in an effort to improve access and education quality.

Political change has also brought about greater openness to external assistance. The first MDEF operated through UNICEF, because this was the only external support modality acceptable to the Government of Myanmar. When QBEP started in 2012, apart from some Japanese involvement in specific infrastructure-related areas, QBEP was the only external support to government basic education. There is now a major Stipends and School Grants programme which is planning to operate on a national scale, supported by the World Bank and Australia. It is likely there will shortly be an ADB programme for secondary education. UNESCO is just beginning a programme of assistance to pre-service teacher education. MDEF partners and other donors are looking to invest in the education sector beyond QBEP.

The purpose of this Mid-term Review (MTR) has been, firstly, to evaluate the scope and effectiveness of the programme, its governance and management arrangements and its implementation. Secondly, the Review has examined QBEP in the light of the changing context. Thirdly the Review has identified directions for future donor support to respond appropriately to Myanmar's education needs.

The Review team consisted of a Team Leader, Stephen Baines, an independent consultant nominated by DFAT, and three highly experienced experts: Nu Nu Wai a National Consultant and expert in teacher education; Colin Bangay, Senior Education Adviser, Department for International Development (DfID), based in Delhi; and Jim Ackers, Regional Education Adviser, UNICEF, based in Bangkok. Senior members of UNICEF national staff acted as translators and guides and provided invaluable assistance to the team. The Review took place in Myanmar 1- 13 June 2014.

This Review would not have been possible without the full cooperation and active assistance of members of the Government of Myanmar. We would particularly like to thank the Ministry of Education for the warm hospitality extended to the team throughout the mission. Were it not for the dedicated manner in which staff of the Department of Educational Planning and Training obtained relevant permissions at short notice and facilitated meetings, field visits and interviews, the scope of the Review and the credibility of its findings would have been severely limited. Representatives of the donor community provided time and valuable insights, not to mention the financial support that made the Review possible. The team is grateful for all this assistance. Thanks should also go to the many teachers, head teachers township and state officials and NGO staff interviewed in the course of the Review. Without exception, they responded to our questions openly, and with great politeness, coped with the disruption caused by our visits. Last, but not least, the team would like to record sincere thanks to UNICEF staff in Yangon and the regional offices for their help and infinite patience in organising our programme and explaining a complex programme and a shifting environment.

## 2.2 Terms of reference for the Mid-term Review

The full terms of reference are included in **Annex 1**. A central part of these ToRs is a set of key areas of enquiry that the Review has addressed. The following table reproduces these guiding questions and provides signposts and cross references to relevant sections of this report.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The guiding questions have been slightly amended and reordered to improve clarity and reduce repetition.

### 2.2.1 Key areas of enquiry derived from the Terms of Reference

Key questions	Detailed questions	Responses
<b>Is QBEP well structured?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the underlying theory of change in the programme logic and to what extent is it appropriate?</li> <li>• How well is this logic reflected in the logframe and other key documents?</li> <li>• What has been the quality of planning documentation and reports?</li> <li>• How well is QBEP documenting and communicating lessons and contributing towards scaling up quality improvements?</li> <li>• How effective has the communication strategy been?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adequacy of key programme documents is discussed in section 5.1</li> <li>• References to communications are in sections 5.1 and 7.2 and 8</li> </ul>
<b>Is QBEP on course to meet its desired purpose of increased number and proportion of children accessing and completing quality basic education in targeted townships?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the programme activities contributing to the delivery of the stated outputs?</li> <li>• What is the level of resourcing by thematic area and what is the rationale for this?</li> <li>• How effective and sustainably affordable have been the capacity building and training methods used by QBEP disaggregated by thematic area?</li> <li>• What have been the enabling and hindering factors for achievement of results?</li> <li>• What results have been achieved so far and what can reasonably be expected by end of QBEP?</li> <li>• How and to what extent do the planned QBEP results require revision in light of programme progress to date and the changed environment in Myanmar?</li> <li>• What evidence exists that QBEP is having a positive impact on children's access to education and their learning outcomes?</li> <li>• What evidence is there that the influence of QBEP is extending beyond the target townships?</li> <li>• What evidence exists that QBEP is informing policy dialogue?</li> <li>• Have there been positive or negative unintended or unplanned impacts?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sections 3 and 5 discuss the approach, the efficacy of activities (including capacity building modalities) and results. These sections also assess the contribution of QBEP to wider objectives, and its sustainability and value for money.</li> </ul>

<p><b>How effective are the QBEP governance structures, and the MDEF modality?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is QBEP providing value for money?</li> <li>• Are the arrangements appropriate to achieve the desired operational and implementation outcomes of the programme?</li> <li>• How effective are relationships amongst UNICEF, QBEP partners and Government of Myanmar?</li> <li>• What is the nature and effectiveness of strategic engagement amongst QBEP partners and GoM on policy issues and amongst QBEP partners and other development partners in the education sector?</li> <li>• How well does QBEP fit into GoM's planning and decision making processes?</li> <li>• How responsive and accountable is QBEP to GOM's evolving needs?</li> <li>• How accountable is UNICEF to other QBEP Partners and in what ways does this matter?</li> <li>• What perceptions exist over the visibility of QBEP partner investments?</li> <li>• How well have UNICEF staff performed in implementing QBEP, reporting and providing technical and management support.</li> <li>• How flexible has QBEP been in responding to emerging issues in the Myanmar context, including the emerging sector wide approach in education and opportunities to use government systems in implementation?</li> <li>• What is affecting the sustainability of the MDTF model?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance structures, relations amongst GoM and the MDEF partners and UNICEF and UNICEF's performance as implementing agent are examined in section 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 5.1, 5.4, 5.7 and sections 7 and 8</li> <li>• Options for future multi-donor involvement in basic education and the changing nature of the MDEF are set out in sections 6 and 8.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How effectively is QBEP being monitored and evaluated?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How accessible and reliable are data on the programme's outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>• To what extent does the M&amp;E system provide timely information on project progress and impacts, including enrolment and completion outcomes?</li> <li>• How are the results of QBEP disseminated and shared with other stakeholders and partners in education sector?</li> <li>• What measures do UNICEF and MoE have in place to obtain early warning of issues, learn lessons and proactively seek continuous improvement?</li> <li>• To what extent are GoM and QBEP partners engaged in monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues of reporting against outputs and outcomes and the effectiveness of communications are discussed in sections 5.1 and 5.7</li> <li>• UNICEF's programme monitoring, quality assurance and graduation strategy are examined in section 5.2</li> <li>• The performance of the MDEF partners in stating their requirements and holding UNICEF to account are explored in sections 5.1 and 5.7</li> </ul>

	<p>and evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are QBEP supported staffing structures within UNICEF appropriate for M&amp;E functions required?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF staffing structures are explored in section 5.4</li> </ul>
<b>How appropriate is the scope and reach of QBEP?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been the township selection process and how effectively have disadvantaged townships been targeted?</li> <li>• What has been the balance between ECCD investments and investments in the school system (including teacher education)? How might this be changed in the future?</li> <li>• To what extent is QBEP responding to the development priorities of the education sector in Myanmar.</li> <li>• How well is QBEP aligned with GoM's Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, and its intention to decentralise education management.</li> <li>• To what extent is QBEP adaptable to the priorities identified in CESR phase 1 and 2 reports.</li> <li>• What investment is being made in education management information systems and how appropriate and effective is it?</li> <li>• How effective has the whole-state approach been and is there a case for replication?</li> <li>• To what extent is QBEP contributing to other initiatives in education planning and delivery?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implications of the programme design and implementation with reference to township targeting are set out in section 5.5</li> <li>• The overall balance of the programme is discussed in section 5.4</li> <li>• The extent to which QBEP is aligned with emerging developments in the education sector, including policy and planning, and strategy options for the future are discussed in sections 4 and 5.7</li> <li>• The effectiveness of education management information systems being developed under QBEP is examined in section 5.3</li> <li>• In section 5.2 and 5.5 there is discussion of the effectiveness of the whole state approach</li> </ul>
<b>How effectively is QBEP addressing equity and being conflict-sensitive?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How successful has QBEP been in acknowledging and mitigating disparities in educational access and outcomes, especially those related to poverty, ethnicity/ language, disability and gender.</li> <li>• How well does QBEP integrate responses to these cross-cutting issues in order to contribute to improved education outcomes for disadvantaged children?</li> <li>• To what extent is QBEP based on current and sufficient understanding of barriers to education in targeted townships?</li> <li>• How much progress is QBEP making, or likely to make, on bridging inequities in Myanmar?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QBEP's record on addressing equity issues, peace building, conflict sensitivity and collection of disaggregated data is discussed in section 5.6.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively does QBEP disaggregate data by sex and promote gender equality.</li> <li>• What scope exists to disaggregate data by disability, ethnicity and location to provide information to increase the inclusiveness of the programme?</li> <li>• In what ways and to what extent is QBEP making a contribution to peace and adhering to conflict-sensitive approaches</li> </ul>	
<b>What is proposed for the remaining 1.5 year of the programme?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does the analysis behind the current draft proposals correspond to the findings of the review?</li> <li>• Do the draft proposals represent an appropriate response to the issues identified by the Review?</li> <li>• Do the proposals sufficiently reflect the concerns already expressed for greater priority on equity?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for the remaining period of the current programme and comments on the draft proposals are set out in section 6.1 and 8.</li> </ul>
<b>What are the recommendations from the Review on priority areas for improvement for the remaining 1.5 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What changes should be made in the scope of the programme?</li> <li>• What needs to be done to increase the value for money of QBEP?</li> <li>• What needs to be done to increase the sustainability of QBEP beyond 2015?</li> <li>• What improvements should be made to the existing arrangements for governance, management arrangements and monitoring and evaluation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for the remaining period of the current programme are in section 8</li> <li>• Options for future support to basic education are set out in sections 6.2 and 8.</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Methodology

The Review consisted of a combination of desk study, visits, meetings and interviews with stakeholders, both individually and in small groups. The stakeholders included MoE officials, staff of the principal donor organisations, UNICEF staff involved in QBEP, both at the centre and in field offices, NGO service providers and a large number of teachers, head teachers, parents and township officials. Prior to the work in Myanmar, the Team spent time reviewing documents. The Review in Myanmar took place in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and a selection of QBEP participating townships. The schedule for the Review is in **Annex 3**

It is important to point out that the Review was largely based on a qualitative assessment, based on the collective experience of the team members and the evidence gained through document review, interviews and discussions. This is partly because there is little quantitative data readily available against which QBEP's results can be judged. Although there is information on inputs and activities e.g. the numbers of teachers trained, evidence of the effects of these activities is harder to find. Much of the information available is largely based on the self-reporting by service providers and lacks verification through triangulation with independent evaluation.<sup>3</sup> Even information that is available on inputs is not presented in ways that relate to the structure of the programme.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as the analysis in this report unfolds, it will be evident that QBEP is defined more readily in terms of activities and processes rather than results, to the extent that it is not always clear what results the programme is aiming to achieve.

Another reason for the reliance on qualitative methods lies in the strategic nature of the MTR, one of whose major tasks was to judge the continuing relevance of QBEP in a rapidly changing environment. Thus the Review was as much about the future as it was about the past. Such a forward-looking assessment is bound to be based upon perceptions and projections rather than hard facts. The Review team made every attempt to reconcile conflicting opinions of those most intimately involved and maintain a balanced view, but ultimately this comes down to the judgement and experience of the team members. However, some confidence in objectivity and balance might be derived from the composition of the Review team, which combined independent international and national consultants, a representative of the MDEF partners and a senior UNICEF official.

The impressionistic nature of the Review was emphasised during briefing and debriefing meetings in Myanmar. Two separate debriefing sessions were conducted with UNICEF staff and the principal funding organisations, prior to a full wrap up meeting with the MoE and the other stakeholders. As will be apparent from the presentation in **Annex 4**, which was submitted as the Aide Memoire for the MTR, the findings were presented in terms of *What impressed us? What needs to be improved* and *Where should we go from here*. It is hoped that from these sessions and from this report, consensus can be formed on the way forward.

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF has conducted interesting research on learning outcomes and teaching styles, but this has not been published.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF does not maintain a chart of accounts that reflects the structure of QBEP. This makes it extremely difficult to present financial information either by programme component (output) or by location.

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### **3 Key findings: positive developments**

#### **3.1 The rate of change and Government commitment to the reform process**

In a period of rapid change, the policy and legislative framework and hence the direction of reform are still evolving. The preparation of the sector plan and education law is still in progress. There is uncertainty about what decentralisation will actually mean and there are two potentially overlapping consultative processes, the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) led by the MoE and Education Promotion Implementation Committee (EPIC), whose impetus comes from the Office of the President. The existence of an active Opposition and the possibility of elections in 2015 bring a further level of uncertainty. The importance of a credible sector plan lies in the opportunity it affords for the building of consensus behind a new vision for education and a long-term reform agenda, which will withstand short-term political changes.

While those in the higher levels of the civil service at the centre are actively engaged in the reform process, those at lower levels and those at the periphery do not yet share their sense of involvement. It is clear from discussions with township officials that there is much to be done in communicating the reforms and building confidence and capacity for decentralised decision making amongst lower level officials.

The Review team was impressed by the commitment of the MoE staff involved in the programme at all levels. They demonstrated a real desire to make the programme work and a strong sense of public service and national pride. This was most particularly noticeable amongst teachers encountered in primary schools and ECD centres, whose level of commitment was truly inspiring. This level of involvement and ownership, which is not always apparent amongst civil servants and teachers elsewhere in the world, is a significant boost to QBEP. MoE officials deserve commendation for their enthusiasm and willingness to embrace new ideas.

#### **3.2 A partnership of trust established between MoE and UNICEF**

It is clear that part of this enthusiastic official and personal backing derives from strong feelings of trust that UNICEF has built up over many years. UNICEF has worked in Myanmar for fifty years. As the only channel for aid monies in the years of Myanmar's isolation, UNICEF has a network of relationships at central and field levels. The warmth of these relationships, particularly at township level, was obvious to the Review team. UNICEF is identified so closely with QBEP that the terms QBEP and UNICEF are used interchangeably. The most significant positive implication of this is that QBEP activities have received official acceptance and support. Much of the progress that QBEP has made, including the potentially pivotal involvement in policy and the CESR, has been due to the facilitating effect of UNICEF's unique relationship with MoE. As circumstances have changed the challenge now is to ensure that the MDEF partners can emerge from the shadows, share involvement in policy dialogue with government and bring with them a broader set of perspectives and expertise.

#### **3.3 Achievements at school and community levels**

The Review team did not carry out a forensic evaluation of the quality, efficiency, relevance and impact of the various QBEP programmes, but observed that QBEP is making a difference in the target areas. The ideas behind Child Friendly Schools (CFS), especially the Learning Enrichment Programme (LEP), have affected teaching methodologies in the schools visited during the Review. The teachers talked enthusiastically about the changes they had made in their classrooms; attempts had been made to make classrooms more stimulating spaces; children's work was being



marked. Head teachers identified in-service training as the single most significant contribution to improved teaching and learning. Most significantly children seemed motivated and keen to learn. In many other countries teacher training programmes fail to register such impact on teacher attitudes and practices. Furthermore Education Officers in the townships also seemed to share the commitment to shifting from rote learning to active learning methodologies.

The school-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres visited were obviously very popular. There is considerable community involvement in setting up and funding the centres and this model of shared responsibility seems to be working well. The ECD centres visited were happily and constructively informal within a structured environment and children were learning through play. It was gratifying to see parents involved in playing with the children. The main area of contention over ECD was whether reading should be introduced as a formal skill. This is a tension that will have to be addressed through enhancing the evidence base around the different modalities of ECD, including the more informal approach to ECD promoted through QBEP and more formal approaches utilised by private sector providers.

Second chance education is obviously addressing a need of some magnitude. The non-formal education programme run through the Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre provides an accelerated primary curriculum in two levels for children from 10-14. The EXCEL programme aims to provide instruction in literacy and life skills for 10-17 year olds, but judging from the evidence of the field visits, there is some flexibility in the intake.

### **3.4 QBEP personnel**

The Review team were impressed by the hard work and commitment of the QBEP supported staff in UNICEF, the quality of their interactions with government counterparts and their general technical expertise and professionalism. Concerns about the ways in which this technical expertise is communicated and about the amount of time senior staff members are able to devote to high value-added work are set out in section 5.4 below. However, the Review team would like to put on record an appreciation of the generous spirit and dedication with which UNICEF staff approach their work.

The large number of new staff, both within UNICEF and the MDEF partners, affords a great opportunity to move on from past difficulties in institutional relations and for innovative, strategic and collegiate working in the future.

## **4 Key findings: the changing context**

### **4.1 The need for a shift in approach**

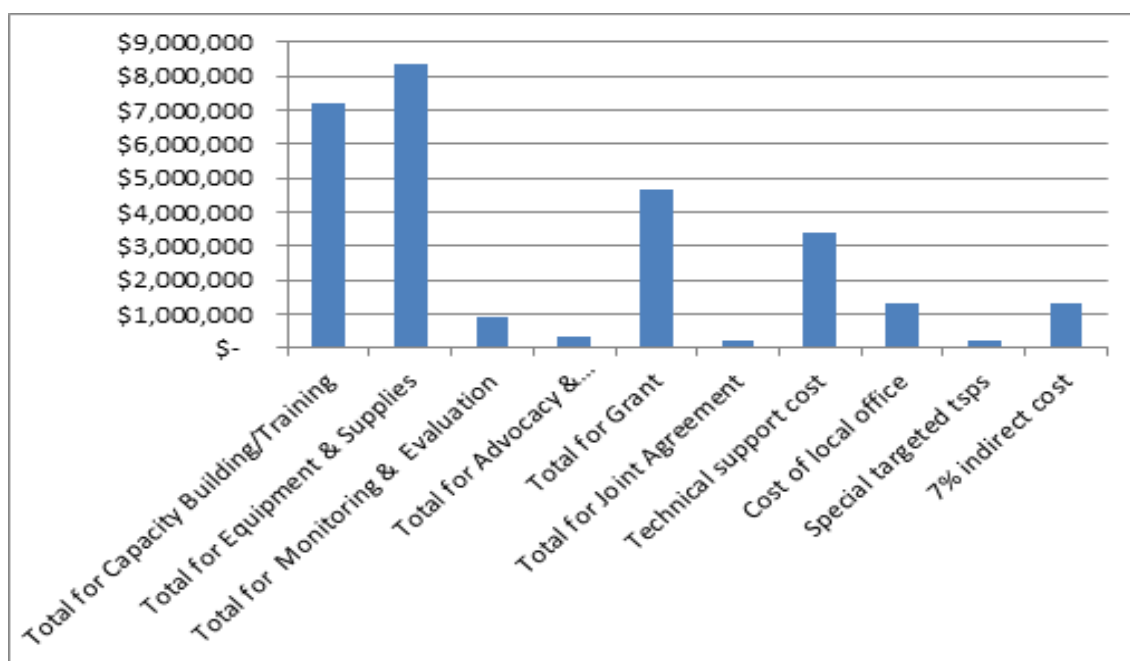
The rapidity of change has already been emphasised. The shifting context has implications for QBEP, because approaches, which may have been appropriate two years ago, may no longer be relevant. Three major contextual developments mean that QBEP needs to adapt:

- A need to increase MoE capacity to take greater responsibility for basic service delivery
- Changes in donor assistance to the education sector
- A new desire for greater collaboration between government and development partners for closer engagement in sector policy and planning.

#### 4.1.1 MoE, QBEP and service delivery

An analysis of expenditure figures provided by UNICEF (see figure 1 below) gives an insight into the nature of QBEP. The largest expenditure item relates to the provision of supplies. These range from Essential Learning resource kits and school bags to building materials and roofing sheets.

**Figure 1: QBEP by expenditure category**



UNICEF is providing physical resources and consumables for education in target areas in much the same way that it provides emergency assistance in IDP camps. This may have been appropriate in the past, but it is less so now. The procurement and logistics involved in the supply of basic provisions is time-consuming. The educational value added is low and the transaction costs are high. GoM is now devoting more resources to education and has shown itself willing and able to take on more of a role in basic service provision. QBEP was able to influence, through studies on textbooks and advocacy, the government's recent policy decision to take on the supply of textbooks to schools. In future, MoE will be taking the lead in the basic provisioning of schools, increasingly regarding this as a normal function of government. It will also be a "quick win", demonstrating commitment to education for all and winning popular legitimacy, for which the government can justifiably take credit. QBEP, by contrast, should be concentrating on higher value-added activities and assisting the transfer of provisioning through researching capacity gaps and providing support in the form of technical advice and expertise.

#### 4.1.2 Changes in donor assistance to the education sector

QBEP is no longer the only donor-assisted programme supporting basic education. This has implications at both operational and political levels. Operationally, QBEP will be affected by the start of the Stipends and School Grants. The new programme will remove the need for QBEP to provide school grants. It also offers opportunities for innovative work with schools and communities on the uses of grants to support teaching and learning. The development of possible ADB support for secondary education and the prospect of funding for Myanmar from the Global Partnership for

Education (GPE) from 2015 will bring other opportunities for aligning approaches. QBEP, which currently consists of a collection of standard support packages, will need to adapt flexibly to the new context.

At a political level, the arrival of the multilateral lending agencies changes the nature of donor relations with government. At the same time there is interest amongst existing donors to increase investment in the education sector in Myanmar. With this come the desire for greater visibility and the obligation for greater accountability to domestic constituencies. These developments emphasise the need for improved coordination to mark out the division of labour and avoid duplication. They also highlight the need for development partners to provide high calibre technical advice and to offer a coherent and consistent suite of assistance to government. This will include support aimed at building the capacity of government to manage donor contributions. In the new dispensation, UNICEF, despite its global and regional experience of sector wide approaches, will no longer have the role of sole interlocutor and gatekeeper with MoE.

#### **4.1.3 Emerging priorities in GoM–donor relations around sector policy and planning**

The original QBEP programme documentation did not envisage major involvement in policy or planning. QBEP's role in supporting the CESR process has been opportunistic and an appropriate response to changing circumstances. Indeed the progress made in phases 1 and 2 (the initial assessment and the wider consultation process) would not have been possible without the support and nurturing that QBEP has provided. QBEP has provided the focus and the wherewithal for stakeholder engagement. A study tour to Cambodia, organised by QBEP, was catalytic in leveraging support for policy reform within MoE. Technical Assistance is helping to keep the CESR process on track and the support of development partners through QBEP is bolstering MoE's impetus and resolve.

In this sector review process, the stakes for the government are high. It is engaging in a broad consultative process and it really needs to show some results. There is also considerable donor interest in supporting strategic interventions capable of leveraging change throughout the education system.

This policy work has developed in a responsive and reactive manner as an adjunct of QBEP. It is now appropriate for the MDEF donors to take stock, to assess with government where the CESR process is going and to work out the most productive means of supporting it in the future. The main question that needs to be addressed is whether or not the current arrangements, by which the MDEF supports technical assistance through UNICEF systems, is the most efficient and effective way of doing this. A response to this question is suggested in section 5.7.

## **5 Key findings: areas that need to be improved**

### **5.1 Programme documentation, reporting and communications**

The original programme design documents for QBEP provide a poor guide to the programme and how it is being implemented. Some variation from the original plan should be expected as the programme responds to shifting circumstances, but the basic foundation documents have not been updated to reflect major changes that have taken place. The theory of change does not provide a convincing conceptual framework and explain the causal relations between activities and results. The logframe provides neither an accurate summary of the programme nor a basis for measuring performance.

Detailed annual work plans for QBEP with targets and budgets have been submitted by UNICEF and agreed by the MDEF partners. The fact that these work plans do not relate to an up-to-date and coherent set of base programme documents could be seen as a reflection of the programme's responsiveness to changing circumstances. It could also be seen as a symptom of weak governance arrangements.

The Review team's repeated requests for financial information on spending by project component and by location eventually elicited information of limited utility. The programme would be much easier to manage if its chart of accounts were aligned to the main project components and provided better, more disaggregated financial information on the costs of operation. Weaknesses in the financial system may be part of the explanation for the sizable underspend in 2013.

Furthermore, UNICEF's financial system is apparently incapable of reporting QBEP expenditure of the sort that MDEF partners require to ensure accountability and value for money. In this regard, however, it is important to point out that MDEF partners have a responsibility to clarify their information requirements and the content, frequency and format of reports.

A relaxed attitude to programme documentation is a feature of the peculiar programme management and governance arrangements for QBEP. UNICEF is both implementing agent and donor partner in its own right. It has a unique special relationship with government, based on a presence in Myanmar going back many years. Consequently QBEP and UNICEF are closely identified with one another to the extent that the two terms are used interchangeably. Throughout MDEF I and the early days of QBEP, donor monies were, in effect, contributions to the UNICEF country programme. This close complementarity of QBEP and the UNICEF country programme had the advantage of aligning goals and reducing internal transaction costs, at a time when the operating environment was difficult and constrained. Now that this environment is changing, development partners want greater visibility and the government should be entitled to greater transparency.

QBEP directly funds thirty-eight UNICEF posts and a large proportion of the activities in the country programme, leading to some vagueness about what are parts of QBEP and what are not. WASH and education for emergencies, for instance, seem to sit half in and half out. QBEP has some involvement in peace building, although UNICEF separately funds peace-building activities. The changing context means that there needs to be clearer definition, so that UNICEF can report more effectively, MDEF partner contributions can be more visible and the government can take a more active role in directing the programme.

A paucity of basic information about the programme and its constituent components only adds to the lack of definition. Apart from the original programme documentation, there is no briefing information on QBEP approaches or activities in particular regions or townships. Central policy and sector planning work, which is now a major focus for QBEP, is hardly mentioned in the logframe. Reference to QBEP on the UNICEF website has not been updated since 2012.

Concerned about this lack of basic information, the MTR team commissioned QBEP component profiles during the Review, providing guidance on format, content and length. Significantly, there was some debate within UNICEF about what should be included. The resulting documents are still work in progress, but collectively they represent the only extant briefing material that explains what the programme is about, what issues it is facing and where it is going.

QBEP has reportedly completed a comprehensive and robust learning outcomes study which could potentially make major contributions to learning and policy, both in Myanmar and more widely. This, in common with much of the research done under

QBEP, is not publicly available, because, it was felt, the government was opposed to publication. A more open attitude has now been indicated.<sup>5</sup>

The annual and mid-year QBEP reports are comprehensive, but dull. They provide heavy helpings of information, which tend to assume prior knowledge and are not easy to assimilate. The fact that these documents are issued some three or four months after the period they report on reduces their currency and usefulness and does little to project UNICEF's reputation as a dynamic, accountable and responsive actor.

And yet there are good stories to be told. UNICEF is currently missing opportunities to communicate effectively the good work it is doing. It needs to recognise the variety of audiences it needs to reach (e.g. government, MDEF, partners, press, general public etc.) and the most appropriate media with which to reach them. Much of this basic communication and knowledge management could easily be remedied, but it will entail effort and professional input, along with a greater willingness to share information and compile the repository of information that should form the knowledge base of QBEP.

## **5.2 Better articulated vision, cohesion and evolutionary path**

QBEP can be viewed as a series of activity packages, each of which is labelled with an acronym (CFS, LEP, SITE, ELP, WSA etc.). These packages are rolled out in different combinations in different townships. It is not clear, however, what these packages are individually or collectively aiming to achieve, how the various activity streams relate to one another or where they intersect. It is also not clear if the activities provided, or the combinations of packages provided, are sufficient to bring about required transformations. There is further uncertainty about what should happen once they are completed and no articulation of how they contribute to a higher outcome; how the whole is greater than the sum of the constituent parts.

The labelling of activities tends to obscure their true nature and is often confusing. Child Friendly Schools (CFS) is a broad approach to school improvement that is not new or unique to UNICEF. In QBEP, it is used as shorthand for training in teaching methodologies. Similarly School-based In-service Teacher Education (SITE) is a wrapper for a host of different activities, but is confused with the delivery of a particular training module. The Whole State Approach involves the delivery of combinations of activity packages to all the townships in one state. It is not conceived in terms of a set of results that will be achieved or synergies gained as a result of working across a group of contiguous townships. Clarity of purpose is not just a matter of semantics. In creating lasting change, establishing common understanding of key concepts is important.

In the rush to implement it remains necessary to maintain a level of rigour in assessing the performance of service providers and evaluating their work. The business model adopted by UNICEF involves funding on the basis of pilots proposed by suppliers. These pilots are evaluated by the suppliers themselves and, unsurprisingly, are invariably judged successful. UNICEF needs to maintain tighter quality control over this process by introducing independent evaluation of suppliers' claims. These evaluations need to be written up and archived. Learning should be garnered from across a range of studies to identify both successes and weaknesses. If UNICEF were to adopt a more rigorous, reflective and critical organisational approach, in which independent evaluation of results and comparative impact assessment were the norm, claims of successful implementation would be more credible.

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<sup>5</sup> At the MTR Wrap-up on 17 June 2014, the Director in DEPT indicated that all QBEP reports should be made widely available.



UNICEF also needs to look critically at the delivery modes it is supporting and discuss possible changes with its service providers. For example, the NFPE second chance education provided by MLRC follows a rigid schedule that requires students to attend an NFE centre six days a week for eleven months. It is likely that this renders the programme unsuitable for children involved in seasonal work or those migrating with their families. A more flexible arrangement might reach a greater pool of needy students. Similarly, UNICEF's procurement of backpacks and stationary abroad and their delivery en masse to townships is unsustainable and does not build government ownership or local production and distribution capacity.

QBEP has focused as much on service delivery as capacity building: on doing things for the government, rather than supporting the government to do things itself. This may have been a product of the time, but one consequence of this is that the connections between activities and objectives have become fuzzy: the activities have become ends in themselves.

This lack of clarity on means and objectives begs a number of questions about what QBEP will leave behind and what managerial capacity exists in the treatment townships to sustain the positive developments brought by the programme. Questions of sustainability are also raised by the absence of an articulated coherent strategy to assist townships in graduating from the current high levels of external input. Moreover there does not appear to be any over-arching strategy for spreading benefits of QBEP nationally, for example, by researching, documenting and communicating best practice: what works, what does not and why.

### **5.3 Strengthened linkages with government systems**

QBEP has introduced changes to teaching and learning practices, which enable students to develop thinking and problem solving skills and achieve deeper understanding than traditional methods. The importance of this contribution should not be under-stated as many attempts to do the same in other countries have not been very effective. QBEP is working to link these QBEP teacher-training experiences into the broader discussions on teacher education policy and the education law, and into both CESR and EPIC recommendations. However, the student assessment system is still based on an examination that tests memorisation and recall. Fears have been expressed that children taught using the new approaches would do less well in the examinations and scholarship competitions than those taught by traditional approaches.

Similarly there is a potential mismatch between new supplementary reading materials and teaching approaches of the Learning Enrichment Programme (LEP) and the prevailing assessment regime, which is based on factual recall of information in traditional government textbooks. There is a perception amongst some teachers and township Education Officers that participation in LEP could potentially disadvantage students in terms of examination performance. This may or may not be the case, but what is important is that the perception exists and negative perceptions can damage the credibility of the approach. QBEP needs to address this issue with sensitivity, initially by carefully explaining evidence on which informed debate can be based. Over the longer term, engagement with government over reform of the student assessment system will be necessary.

A similar dissonance exists in the area of school assessment. Township Education Officers are obliged to carry out supervision and inspection of schools using proformas that do not take into account QBEP approaches, even where the township officers have been trained in these new approaches. These instances of mismatch between QBEP systems and the prevailing government administrative requirements are not new

or unpredictable.<sup>6</sup> QBEP needs to rapidly address these challenges and to find ways of bridging the gaps and bottlenecks through strengthening existing systems.

There are also potential challenges in relation to data management and use. The government's data collection and management information system is cumbersome, labour-intensive and unreliable. QBEP has developed a new system, TEMIS, in various locations in parallel to the existing system. The logic of doing this, rather than supporting the development of the existing national system is unclear.<sup>7</sup> From a technical standpoint, there are features of TEMIS that require further refinement. As a system, it has missed opportunities for rationalisation and simplification, for example by ensuring that information that does not change, (e.g. school name, identification number, location etc.) is pre-printed on data capture form. The system still involves multiple data entry, the storage of data on laptops, and the transmission of data up the system in printed form on request. Consequently, the impact of TEMIS seems to have been limited to introducing ICT into selected townships. Moreover, TEMIS, in common with the existing government system, is supply rather than demand driven. Township education staff encountered during the field visits appeared to have little idea of the function or value of an EMIS.

There is no doubt that something needs to be done to improve data management. It will not be apparent that TEMIS, in its current manifestation, is a sufficient solution until it has been thoroughly evaluated. It seems likely that further work will need to be done on the development of TEMIS to ensure that it provides a marked improvement over the current government system, before it can be put forward as a model for adoption on a national scale.

Discussions with township officers revealed little evidence that data were being used for planning. The concept of Township Education Improvement Plans (TEIP) seems to have been introduced in a vacuum, when planning was not a function of township education offices. As decentralisation unfolds, township planning may become an issue, but until this happens it is difficult to judge whether the TEIP model will be appropriate. Although there is now increased interest from MoE, the introduction of TEIP may have been ahead of its time.

It is incumbent on QBEP to be aware of potential points of dissonance with existing government systems and to evaluate its chosen solutions in relation to the contribution they make to improving government systems. The challenge lies in managing the interface between technically superior solutions and existing practices, so that better results are achieved. It is only after these results are tested that the basis for improved systems can be established.

#### **5.4 Stronger programme management**

QBEP is a highly complex programme operating at different levels in different sub-sectors over a wide geographical area. It needs careful management to ensure that it does not run out of control.

The number of townships covered by the different QBEP components varies. This has resulted in a patchwork of disconnected geographical targets, which has expanded over time. At times the initiative for this expansion seems to have come from service providers, especially those who were active in advocating for the national ECCD Policy and for instituting the NFPE accreditation framework. While this is a responsive

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<sup>6</sup> Problems of reconciling active learning methodologies and unreformed student assessment mechanisms were being encountered in Indonesia in the 1980s.

<sup>7</sup> The Stipends and School Grants Programme, recently expanded with support from the World Bank and Australia, uses existing government data collection systems, which it aims to improve.

approach, seizing opportunities to increase coverage and engage with strong NGO advocates where there is traction, it has resource implications, both in terms of the balance of spending amongst programme components and in terms of staff resources. It also raises concerns about sustainability beyond 2015. It is the role of programme management to consider these implications.

The QBEP 2013 Annual Report noted an underspending of some \$9 million against projected spend. The reasons for this are explained and have not been a major concern of this MTR. However, it is mentioned here because it illustrates a problem of programme management that is partly explained by limitations in the financial reporting system (see section 5.1 above), but may also be partly due to organisational difficulties<sup>8</sup>.

Although some 38 posts are designated QBEP posts, eleven of which are in the headquarters in Yangon, the organisational structure of UNICEF education section is not arranged in a way that reflects the functional structure of QBEP. The structure reflects the fact that no real distinction is made between QBEP and UNICEF's core activities. It is understood that some reorganisation is being considered that will rectify this. The MTR team supports the need for a rationalisation of roles and responsibilities.

The team would also welcome measures that free up the time of technical staff to allow them space to apply their technical expertise. It was reported that senior staff spend much of their time overseeing administrative matters concerned with procurement and contracts and consequently have less time for higher value inputs using their technical expertise. This has been exacerbated by restrictions placed by the MDEF partners, which require that no funds be channelled directly to central government, thereby requiring a system of direct township bank transfers for all QBEP activities in the field. This creates further administrative burdens for staff. Nevertheless, there is scope for an examination of job specifications and potential for making better use of the available human resources in terms of a more effective division of labour between technical and administrative specialisms.

## **5.5 Greater efficiencies**

QBEP is by design, scattered geographically around the country. The process of township selection against various criteria of deprivation was scientifically based. The government's preference for a geographical spread, based on political considerations, is understandable and, if the work in the townships is to be taken to scale there are benefits in the fact that many parts of the country have experienced QBEP initiatives. However, in hindsight, the scattering of target townships makes little practical sense and leads to serious inefficiencies. The logistical difficulties alone make it difficult to think of a less cost effective arrangement.

For non-formal education and ECD, for which there are no MoE departments, QBEP sub-contracts both 'intermediary' capacity building trainers and geographically specific non state implementers. The situation is exacerbated by the scattered geographic targeting. The process is transaction heavy and as noted above, has the effect of diverting specialist expertise away from technical work. It may also be the case that QBEP is not accessing the full range of available service providers. The scattered geographical profile of the programme may be preventing the consolidation of services for competitive bidding.

Given available financial data, it is not possible to put a figure to the costs involved, but the transaction costs of the programme must be much higher than they would have

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that this problem predates the current programme manager's arrival.



been had groups of geographically contiguous townships been chosen and the benefits of economies of scale been exploited. Working in contiguous political units (such as latterly pursued in Mon state) offers a much better chance of addressing overall system change by strengthening education management at state and district levels and engaging with NGOs on a regional scale. Other things being equal, the programme could have achieved similar results for considerably less outlay of funds.

There is not a great deal that can be done about this state of affairs at this stage. However, this is a lesson that should be noted for any future programme and the message for the remainder of QBEP is that any further expansion that increases transaction costs should be avoided.

The MTR did not thoroughly examine the efficiency of procurement, but heard anecdotal evidence that QBEP procedures are extremely cumbersome and insufficiently nimble to cope with the need for rapid action. In the case of support to the CESR, it has been reported that inflexibility over hiring staff caused delays, adversely affected progress of the technical work and damaged relations. It has also been suggested from other sources that UNICEF's financial reporting requirements are so stringent that potential suppliers are reluctant to work on QBEP.

## 5.6 Clearer focus on equity

UNICEF has education in emergency and peace building as major planks of its country strategy. It is a reasonable assumption, therefore, that QBEP would be implemented in ways that are sensitive to political and social issues in conflict-affected areas. There is certainly some evidence of this. With GoM agreement QBEP is supporting the education activities of non-state actors in ethnic minority areas (e.g. Mon National Education Committee, MNEC) and the Learning Enhancement Programme has been specifically designed for the teaching of children for whom the Myanmar language is not their mother tongue. In addition, QBEP has supported the development of reading and training materials for ECD and NFE in 10 local languages, which have been field-tested in 2014. However, labelling activities 'peace building' while acknowledging the sensitivity of the operating context, does not guarantee that they have the desired effect. The Review team are not aware of any evaluation of QBEP activities in conflict-affected areas and would hope that such an evaluation would now take place.

In deciding the target areas, considerable pains were taken to ensure that areas of relative disadvantage were chosen. However, despite a strong focus on gender and disability, the logframe does not disaggregate indicators by either gender or disability.

The development of a gender strategy is part of the 2014 QBEP work plan. The programme set out to raise awareness of the issues of disability and to put in place basic capacity and structures that will allow for the inclusion of disabled children to be more adequately addressed. The Review did not find evidence that this has taken place although plans were said to be in place to carry out a study and a survey on disabilities and education in 2014. UNICEF should examine its activities to determine whether, for example, WASH facilities have taken into account the access needs of disabled children, whether teacher training includes strategies for teaching children with special needs or whether there has been any piloting to develop inclusive education.

The lack of data on the situation of children with disability limits understanding on what to do, or even the need to do it. There is urgent need for research on the prevalence of disability and the barriers to access.<sup>9</sup> This should be carried out during the coming year

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF Headquarters is in process of piloting a childhood disability statistical module for use globally. UNICEF Myanmar should follow-up with their team in New York to look at options to employ this type of study in Myanmar.

and is included in recommendation 8 (as part of building the knowledge base in section 8).

### 5.7 More focused MDEF support

At a time when UNICEF was the only vehicle for supporting the education sector, MDEF partners and UNICEF seem to have been willing to tolerate a certain level of imprecision in the relationship. It was a partnership, rather than a contractual relationship and this was an appropriate arrangement at the time. Now Myanmar is opening up, development partners have other opportunities for engagement with government, both bilaterally and through other agencies. The larger funding they now have available also brings a greater desire for visibility and an increased need for accountability.

The MDEF still works as a mechanism for donor coordination, within the broader forum of the Education Sector Working Group. However, it does so in ways that appear to be somewhat labour-intensive, for example through weekly meetings. Some of the more cumbersome aspects of the partnership might be avoided if there were agreement on tighter definition of roles and expectations and a better flow of information. There is no signed letter of agreement defining the respective roles of the various parties.<sup>10</sup>

Significant amounts of money are invested in QBEP, particularly by DFAT Australia and the European Union, and the donors are properly concerned with accountability and value for money. They need to be able to explain what their funds are spent on in easily digestible form. The absence of clear and concise information means that the line between responsible supervision and micro-management becomes blurred.

The donor partners have not defined what it is they want from their implementing partner. They should support UNICEF in specifying the required content, frequency and format of the information they require. As a general rule they should operate at a strategic level, including managing relations with government, and leave the everyday programme management to UNICEF.

Areas such as school based training and ECD are areas in which UNICEF has long and valuable experience, and can be expected to do a reasonably sound job. One part of QBEP, however, stands out as an area in which MDEF partners have legitimate interest and could play a more prominent and more direct role. Support to strategic policy and planning is becoming increasingly important and politically significant. It is the basis on which future donor support to the education sector will be built. To date, UNICEF has led the field in supporting the government through the process of sector review. A clear vision is now needed of how this process will lead to a cohesive and realistic sector plan, how this will translate into budgeted action plans and how performance can be monitored. UNICEF capacity in these areas needs further strategic support. It would now be appropriate for MDEF partners to take a more direct role to access the capacity of other agencies, which have comparative advantages in sector planning and sector performance monitoring. The case for greater directly managed donor involvement, offering the government high quality international expertise, is more compelling than simply carrying on with the current arrangements.

Part of the required support will involve strengthening the capacity of government to coordinate various donor inputs and this implies a commitment on the part of the development partners to be coordinated. Given the levels of current and potential future commitments to the education sector in Myanmar, there is an urgent need for MDEF partners to agree with government the deployment of at least one dedicated full time resident education specialist between them. The absence of a full-time education

<sup>10</sup> A Statement of Cooperation was drawn up, but it was not signed. The 'changing context' was cited as a reason for this. The MTR team was not given access to this document.

specialist amongst the MDEF partners restricts the technical support and constructive criticism the donors can give to UNICEF and MoE. It also reduces the donors' visibility, their credibility in the eyes of government and their capacity to engage, both in time and depth, in supporting a rapidly changing education system.

## **6 The future**

### **6.1 Priorities for the remainder of the programme**

#### **6.1.1 Consolidation**

The priorities for the remainder of QBEP must be founded on a re-examination of the programme strategy and adjustment to the changing operational environment. Precisely how this consolidation will be achieved will be decided through discussions between UNICEF, the MDEF partners and MoE. However, as a starting point, the theory of change and the logframe, the key conceptual and management documents, need to be revised.

In each activity area, UNICEF, the MDEF partners and the government should be examining what has been achieved and what needs to happen in order to embed the benefits that have accrued. This process of assessment will require 'easing off the accelerator', a reduction in the rush to roll out more and more activity, to allow time for reflection and appraisal. The emphasis needs to be on ensuring that pilot activities are critically evaluated as fit for purpose. This will involve identifying some activities as models of better practice, amending some activities and discontinuing others.

QBEP activities should not be proposed as models for adoption as national policy until this evaluation and stress testing has been completed and is properly documented. Government participation in this evaluation and documentation will help to reinforce a sense of ownership and joint endeavour.

The following priorities should be considered:

- Urgent participatory action to address weaknesses in project documentation and reporting would go a long way to allaying MDEF concerns and confirming MoE commitment to the overall strategy of the programme.
- The systematic evaluation and documentation of QBEP approaches and activities to ensure their integrity and robustness as models of good practice, before they are recommended for scale-up or inclusion in national policy.
- Agreement with MoE for a phased shift away from QBEP direct provisioning and service delivery and for the development of support mechanisms to help the government as it takes over increasing responsibility in these areas.
- The development of graduation strategies agreed with government for each activity stream as the end of current levels of external support draws into view.
- Establishment of a knowledge base for the programme, which will contribute to the overall knowledge base for the sector and the reform process. Production of simple briefing sheets for key activities would be an easy first step. Revision of the QBEP website as a repository of knowledge would be another. In addition there is an urgent need for research in a number of areas. The following list is indicative. The MTR team suggest that UNICEF, MDEF Partners and MoE agree priority areas and a schedule for studies to be completed over the next year and a half.
  - An evaluation of QBEP involvement in peace building and activities in conflict-affected areas.

- Computerised mapping (GIS) for school / ECD (perhaps with UN's Myanmar Information Management Unit).
- Independent evaluation of effectiveness of the variety of ECD approaches (e.g. with and without nutrition elements and with and without formal instruction in reading in pre-schools).
- Study on effectiveness of the variety of instruction approaches for teaching non-mother tongue ethnic groups.
- Sample survey on disability prevalence and impediments to access.
- Study on the nature and incidence of seasonal migration and its effects on education access and provision, (as this was a major issue highlighted during the MTR field visits).

### 6.1.2 Four proposals

In order to utilise unspent funds, UNICEF has proposed to the MDEF partners four expanded areas of activity. These will involve expansion into new geographical locations or the extension of existing technical areas in existing locations.<sup>11</sup> The MTR team was asked to comment on the merits of these proposals. The ECD proposal involves expanded support in line with the ECD Policy, involving new townships. The Rakhine and Kachin proposals are an expansion into new locations based on Mon Whole State Approach. The proposal for Mon State involves introducing SITE training in all the townships in the state, where some QBEP activities are currently taking place.

The view expressed by the team during the wrap-up meetings is repeated here. While each of the proposals respond to areas of need, each could be a project in its own right. The proposals do not have clear time-bound objectives related to the remainder of QBEP. They do not appear to reflect a strong demand or rationale from the government and they do not include strategies for ensuring sustainability. Given the limited time left for QBEP (less than eighteen months), it would not be feasible to achieve anything more than preliminary results, which are unlikely to be lasting. It would therefore be unwise to start these activities at this stage. Instead The Review team feel that a great deal needs to be done to determine which parts of QBEP are working well and which are not, to build the knowledge base and to consolidate the progress that has been made.

## 6.2 Beyond 2015

There is a need for further donor support to basic education when QBEP ends in 2015. Preparation for this will need to start soon. In consultation with government, MDEF partners should commission the preparation of a new programme of support to basic education for the period beyond 2015. This should be clearly focused on a theory of change that demonstrates systems development and capacity building, i.e. supporting GoM to deliver high quality education, not attempting to provide it for them.

The MDEF mechanism has served reasonably well in the past, but it has not been without its tensions and is less fit for purpose now that the context is so different. It will also need to change to accommodate different development partners. Some form of multi-donor collaboration should, however, continue in order to offer concerted support

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<sup>11</sup> The four proposals are: Capacity Development for National Kindergarten programme; Kachin Education Support; Rakhine Expanded Education Support; Mon State Teacher Training for trained and untrained newly recruited primary school teachers

to the government's efforts to reform the education sector. The MTR envisages three distinct ways MDEF might evolve beyond the current QBEP. These are set out in the recommendations in section 8.

Decisions on the future pattern and modus operandi of the MDEF will need to be made soon. In order to signal a break with the past, MDEF partners should take the lead in the process of engaging with government and designing future support to basic education. The proposal process should involve UNICEF, but not be led by UNICEF. Initial conceptualisation of a new programme should be undertaken by an independent MDEF design mission, working in cooperation with MoE, the MDEF partners and UNICEF. It should take into account UNICEF's strengths, e.g. school based teacher inservice training, and the strengths of other potential implementing agencies. It should align with and reinforce other programmes that are being rolled out e.g. UNESCO's pre-service teacher education project and the World Bank/Australia supported School Grants programme. The design of a new programme should also take into account the services that could potentially be secured through other service providers, such as the Myanmar Education Consortium.

## **7 Conclusions**

### **7.1 Overall performance:**

QBEP is successfully delivering inputs and benefitting teachers and students in schools, ECD centres and non-formal settings. From observations during the MTR, these inputs and processes are having impact on the attitudes of teachers, head teachers, education officers and parents, whilst also having an impact on teaching and learning processes. As such, this represents a notable achievement. However, evidence of sustainable change, the contribution to higher outcomes and lesson learning is limited. This may be due, in part, to the focus on immediate delivery and reinforced by weak communications. The relationship between activity strands in QBEP is not well articulated and appears to lack overall coherence. Many separate activities are being rolled out in different combinations in geographically dispersed locations and it is not clear how they add up in terms of improved access and quality. There are real dangers of dilution of the core messages through expansion in the scope and geographical spread of the programme at the expense of internal integrity. QBEP should move away from direct provision of service delivery towards a different mode of support: through systems development and human and institutional capacity building.

### **7.2 Reporting:**

The lack of robust and up to date foundation documents: theory of change, logframe, and financial management that enables reporting by output or geography – impedes effective management and compromises communication. UNICEF's financial system does not currently lend itself to the kind of financial reporting MDEF donors require to meet their needs in terms of accountability and value for money. Action on these areas lies completely within UNICEF's remit, but MDEF partners share a responsibility to assist. They should also have a responsibility to support UNICEF in defining reporting content, frequency and format.

### **7.3 Delivery:**

QBEP is using appropriate delivery management partners and channels to reach some challenging locations. The piecemeal nature of geographic targeting, combined with large variations in inputs provided to different beneficiaries, makes for complex procurement, high transaction costs and major challenges in measuring impact. QBEP

involves a significant amount of provisioning: books, bags, roofing sheets etc. As government increasingly takes responsibility for provisioning schools, the remaining QBEP period should focus on responsible graduation from these logistical tasks by building government and private sector capacity to deliver. MDEF Partners should consider taking a greater and more direct role in relation to central policy, strategic planning and sector performance monitoring.

#### **7.4 Learning:**

QBEP has undertaken some robust research and could contribute significantly to the evidence base. However its overall knowledge management and broader communication strategies require serious attention. There is a need for greater emphasis on learning and sharing experience internally and with others, independent evaluation and documentation. Report management, archiving and retrieval and tailoring messages and media to its various audiences all need to be addressed. This communication task has been given a significant boost by the announcement at the QBEP MTR wrap-up that MoE is happy for UNICEF to share its reports and findings more broadly. Better use of the QBEP website as a knowledge repository is an urgent requirement.

#### **7.5 Future Potential:**

There is a continuing need for further support to basic education and demand from government for continued international involvement. There are opportunities for a major development partner contribution, to which UNICEF, along with others, could play a part. School improvement, in-service training, inclusive education and early childhood are all areas of UNICEF strength. To maximise impact, careful consideration will be needed on effective targeting both geographic and thematic. In the next few months, the MDEF donors should individually decide what part they wish to play in future support to basic education in Myanmar and collectively engage with government in the development of a joint programme proposal.



## 8 Recommendations

			Action by:
1	<b>A joint performance improvement plan</b>	MDEF partners, UNICEF and MoE should jointly agree a performance improvement plan for the programme. This will state: the actions required to address weaknesses in documentation, reporting and communication; timescales for completion; the individuals responsible; and the ways in which progress will be monitored. This plan will include responses to subsequent recommendations listed below.	MDEF Partners, UNICEF and MoE
2	<b>Planning for the future</b>	In the next few months, MDEF partners should agree with government the commissioning of an independent MDEF design mission, working in cooperation with UNICEF and MoE, to prepare a new programme of support to basic education for the period beyond 2015	MDEF Partners
3	<b>MDEF Technical Specialist</b>	MDEF partners need to urgently agree with government the deployment of at least one dedicated full time resident education specialist between them.	MDEF Partners
4	<b>Programme documentation</b>	<p>UNICEF, the MDEF partners and MoE should urgently address the current weaknesses in programme documentation and their use in programme management and communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The theory of change (conceptual model),</li> <li>• Logframe (accountability and performance indicator measures),</li> <li>• Workplan (activity planning)</li> <li>• Budget (financial planning, forecasting, and activity tracking)</li> <li>• Briefing materials on QBEP (rationale for activities and their evolution and spending by component and location)</li> </ul> <p>All need to be re-visited urgently, in order that they provide a coherent direction to activities and accurate and timely data, responsive to the needs of policy-making, programme management and MDEF funding clients.</p> <p>MDEF and MoE have responsibility to clearly specify their information and reporting requirements and engage with UNICEF to establish the required content, frequency and length of reports and briefing materials.</p>	UNICEF, MDEF Partners and MoE

5	<b>Communications</b>	UNICEF is missing opportunities to effectively communicate the good work it is doing. It needs to recognise the variety of audiences (e.g. government, MDEF, partners, press, general public etc.) it needs to reach, and the most appropriate media with which to reach them.	UNICEF
6	<b>Monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management</b>	QBEP should review its monitoring evaluation and knowledge management strategy: The evaluation of activities including the multitude of pilots using 'new' approaches, needs to be more independent and more rigorous. Greater thought is needed on generating, using and disseminating learning in accessible formats for a variety of audiences. The QBEP website should be overhauled and used as a repository for accumulated knowledge.	UNICEF
7	<b>Sourcing and procurement</b>	QBEP should review its sourcing and procurement strategy: QBEP should explore (i) greater use of competitive tendering for larger consolidated service contracts; (ii) revising procurement and financial management procedures to facilitate the large number of contracts and a proliferation of small value transactions; and iii) the potential of using MEC as a consolidating management agent for its non state actor-delivered service provision.	UNICEF
8	<b>Consolidation during the remainder of QBEP</b>	<p>UNICEF and MoE should use the remaining QBEP phase to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) critically evaluate approaches and activities to determine what is working and what is not before these approaches and activities are proposed for scale up and adoption as national policy;</li> <li>ii) consolidate progress to date;</li> <li>iii) focus activities on responsible graduation;</li> <li>iv) address points of mismatch between QBEP systems and prevalent government systems;</li> <li>v) build the evidence base for a future programme that is targeted, development-focused and based on systems development and capacity building.</li> </ul> <p>The four funding proposals submitted by UNICEF are poorly articulated and do not appear appropriate at this stage in the programme cycle. Elements of the proposals could be considered if they genuinely consolidated and deepened the impact of other activities in existing locations, but the proposals would require considerably more attention to issues of sustainability and systems building.</p>	UNICEF and MoE



		In dialogue with government and other key development partners MDEF partners should support UNICEF to effect the transition of QBEP to a more development focused programme and should broker and incentivise collaboration with other initiatives they fund, notably World Bank, ADB and MEC programmes.	
9	<b>Policy, strategic planning and sector performance monitoring</b>	MDEF Partners should consider taking a greater and more direct role with MoE in relation to central policy, strategic planning and sector performance monitoring. This would involve a corresponding reduction in UNICEF's role in this area of QBEP.	MDEF Partners, UNICEF and MoE
10	<b>Options for a future programme</b>	<p>Three possible options are envisaged for the continuation of the MDEF and support to basic education beyond 2015. The chosen option will need to be agreed with MoE in the next few months to allow sufficient time for programme preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donors fund UNICEF to deliver a new round of QBEP under the same financial and management arrangements as currently applied, but with changes in the light of lessons learned in the MTR.</li> <li>• Donors exit funding of UNICEF on completion of QBEP in 2015. Alternative arrangements are made to deliver support, e.g., via the development banks, MEC, or through a contracted management agent selected through international competitive tender.</li> <li>• Donors fund a technical management agent to design and deliver a new basic education programme. UNICEF remains a core implementing partner. However UNICEF is paid on a reimbursable basis against agreed activities in an activity / results based contract.</li> </ul>	MDEF Partners and MoE

## **ANNEXES**

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Annex 2: QBEP logframe

Annex 3: MTR Schedule

Annex 4: Wrap-up Aide Memoire presentation, 13 June 2014

## Annex 1: MTR Terms of reference

### Introduction

Decades of political isolation and economic stagnation in Myanmar have slowed progress on all aspects of human development. The low level of investment in education has prevented the achievement of quality basic education for many of its 21 million children. Whilst enrolments have increased, primary completion rates are low (only 54% of students complete primary school) and minimum quality standards have not been achieved. A massive acceleration of effort and substantially increased Government investment in primary education is required.

The Myanmar Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP) is a joint partnership between UNICEF, Australia, Britain, the European Union, Denmark and Norway (\$82 million over 4 years). QBEP's purpose is *increased number and proportion of children accessing and completing quality basic education in targeted townships*. The four key Outputs are: 1) *expand coverage of quality early childhood development (ECD) services*, 2) *improve quality of teaching and learning*, 3) *enhance planning, management and monitoring* and 4) *enhance coverage, quality and relevance of second chance education*.

The expected beneficiaries of QBEP include an estimated 650,000 children annually (1.1m cumulative), representing all children attending primary schools (including monastic schools) in 25 targeted disadvantaged townships in Myanmar, which were selected based on levels of poverty, difficulties in access, high proportion of linguistic/ethnic minorities, high incidence of conflict and/or high prevalence of natural disasters.

Given the focus on enrolment, inclusion, dropout prevention and improved learning; it is expected that the beneficiaries will include poor, disadvantaged, ethnic minority and children with a disability who might otherwise not have enrolled or remained in school. A first phase of QBEP was financed by a Multi Donor Education Fund partnership (MDEF1) together with UNICEF's own resources from 2007-2011. It achieved successes in addressing access and quality issues and building capacity and partnerships. The second phase of QBEP began in January 2012 amid the rapid democratic and other reforms that have been sweeping Myanmar since 2011. Over this period QBEP has been operating in a context of political change, greater openness to external assistance and the implementation of major Government led reforms in the education sector including progress towards decentralised education management.

The Government of Myanmar's preparation of a costed education plan is expected to lead to a repositioning and expansion of donor support to the education sector and further evolution of the Government of Myanmar-Donor governance and financing arrangements.

A mid-term review of QBEP has been commissioned jointly by the Myanmar Government and the QBEP partners. The mid-term review provides an opportunity to review current arrangements and build on the experience of QBEP in supporting an evolving sector wide approach to education in Myanmar.

In particular, a mid-term review will examine three core components of quality/effectiveness, governance/programme management and monitoring/evaluation of the QBEP with all three components exploring cross-cutting issues of sustainability and equity. It will include an analysis of QBEP's ability to be flexible to respond to the education challenges Myanmar is currently facing, particularly in light of the rapid evolution of the political, social, economic, and aid context in which QBEP operates. The Government and QBEP partners will consider the findings of the review to refine and sharpen the focus of the QBEP and make adjustments, as required, to accelerate the achievement of equitable and sustained outcomes for the beneficiaries.

The findings of the mid-term review will be shared with all stakeholders.

## **2. Purpose of the Review**

The review will advise the Government of Myanmar and the QBEP donors on whether the program scope, governance arrangements (including engagement with GoM) and implementation (including activity management and monitoring and evaluation), are responding effectively to the education priorities of Myanmar, and, propose changes to QBEP and donor support that would better address Myanmar's education needs.

One major activity supported by QBEP is the CESR. The CESR will culminate in an education sector plan that will guide future development assistance to the sector. The review will inform QBEP planning for donor coordination and engagement with Government on implementing the sector plan.

The MTR will address the following specific questions:

### **I) How effective are the QBEP governance structures, management arrangements and the MDEF modality? This should include analysis of:**

- whether they are appropriate to achieve the desired operational and implementation outcomes of the program?
- the relationship between UNICEF, QBEP partners and Government of Myanmar.
- strategic engagement between QBEP partners (including with GoM) on policy issues and between QBEP partners and other development partners in the education sector.
- how they relate to the Government of Myanmar's decision making process.; how mutual accountability is implemented?
- the visibility of QBEP partner investments
- the performance of UNICEF staff in implementing QBEP and providing technical and management support.
- the quality of planning documentation including the communication strategy.
- the flexibility of QBEP to respond to emerging issues in the Myanmar context, including the emerging sector wide approach in education and opportunities to use government systems in implementation.
- the sustainability of the MDTF model.
- the evaluability of the program logic and approaches of evaluation of the changes created by the program

**II) How effectively is QBEP being monitored and evaluated?** This should include analysis of:

- How data of the programs' outputs and outcomes are accessible and how data quality assurance is undertaken
- continuous improvement (the extent to which UNICEF proactively identifies areas for improvement of activities and applies lessons learned in implementation)
- the extent to which the GoM and QBEP partners are engaged in monitoring and evaluation.
- how the results of QBEP assessments are disseminated and shared with other stakeholders and partners in education sector and how are they informing policy dialogue?
- Whether staffing structures within UNICEF as supported by QBEP are appropriate for M&E functions required
- whether M&E system provides timely information on project progress and impacts, including measuring enrolment and completion outcomes. What level of QBEP's contribution to the education sector's expected outcomes/targets?

**III) How appropriate is the scope and reach of QBEP?** This should include analysis of:

- the targeting of disadvantaged townships and the township selection process.
- the balance between ECCD investments and investments in the school system (including teacher education).
- the extent to which QBEP is responding the development priorities of the education sector in Myanmar.
- the extent to which QBEP is responding to the Government of Myanmar's agenda outlined in the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, and its intention to decentralise education management in Myanmar.
- the extent to which QBEP can respond to the priorities identified in CESR phase 1 and 2 reports.
- whether the investment being made in education management information systems in Myanmar are appropriate and effective.
- the effectiveness of the whole-state approach.
- whether work under QBEP is contribute to other initiatives in education program and planning?

**IV. Is QBEP on course to meet its desired purpose of *increased number and proportion of children accessing and completing quality basic education in targeted townships*.** This should include analysis of:

- whether QBEP is having a positive impact on children's access to education and their learning outcomes?
- Whether there are any positive or negative unintended or unplanned impacts
- the capacity building and training methods used by QBEP.
- the results that have been achieved so far and can reasonably be expected by end of QBEP?
- the enabling and hindering factors for achievement of results
- whether the planned QBEP results require revision in light of program progress to date and the changed environment in Myanmar?

**V) How effectively is QBEP addressing equity and being conflict-sensitive?** This should include analysis of:

- the extent to which QBEP responds to dimensions of disparity in educational access and outcomes, including poverty, ethnicity/ language, disability and gender.
- whether cross-cutting issues are integrated into how QBEP effectively to contribute to improved education outcomes for disadvantaged children.
- whether QBEP's understanding of barriers to education in targeted townships is current and sufficient for the changed environment in Burma.
- tracking progress? whether QBEP is making progress, or likely to make progress, on bridging inequities in Myanmar.
- how effectively QBEP disaggregates data by sex and promotes gender equality.
- scope to disaggregate data by disability, ethnicity and location to provide information to increase the inclusiveness of the program.
- the extent to which QBEP is making a contribution to peace and adhering to conflict-sensitive approaches.

**VI) Provide analysis and feedback on draft proposals for the remaining 1.5 years of QBEP** (see attachment x) – with specific attention to strengthening the focus on equity

**VII) Make recommendations on priority areas for improvement of QBEP for the remaining 1.5 years of the program.** This should include any suggestions for improvements to the existing governance arrangements, management arrangements, monitoring and evaluation of activities and any changes in scope. In particular, explore the overall sustainability of QBEP beyond 2015

Make recommendations on the usefulness of the MDEF modality and QBEP governance arrangements beyond the life of the existing contract. This should include suggestions for possible joint design work for new arrangements between development partners..

### **3. Guiding Principles**

The following principles will guide the mid-term review:

#### **➤ Ownership and Alignment**

The Ministry of Education will co-lead the mid-term review with UNICEF and MDEF donors.

The review should be aligned with QBEP partners standards for M&E for MTR processes. Whenever possible, quantitative measurements should be included.

Triangulation of data is encouraged to provide strong evidence to support the findings and recommendation.

#### **➤ Participation and Inclusion**

The mid-term review will follow a participatory and inclusive process including key partners national & sub-national governments, civil society and development partners

#### **➤ Equity and Evidence**

The mid-term review will have a strong equity focus and will aim to strengthen government's efforts to bridge inequities in the country

#### **➤ Results Orientation**

The review will capture results achieved so far and lessons learned. Revised results will be formulated as required.

#### **4. Methodology and timeframe**

The evaluation will take around 5 weeks and is planned between 26 May and 30 June, with an in-country mission to be held during the first two weeks of June 2014. The proposed timeline of the evaluation will be confirmed based on the evaluation plan (including methodology) to be developed by the team leader.

Specifically, the team will undertake the following steps:

i. Conduct a desk study involving:

- review and appraisal of background documents (x days)
- the development of an evaluation plan (including the methodology), field research guide and instruments and identification of key respondents and further documentation required. The plan will indicate the roles and responsibilities of each team member for data collection, analysis and reporting (up to 3 days including incorporating feedback from Government of Myanmar and DFAT/UNICEF).

UNICEF will provide an initial list of key documents. Consultants will search for additional literature and documents to supplement this list where necessary, which will form the basis of the desk review. Consultants will continue to source additional documents during the in-country mission to inform the final evaluation report.

- ii. Prepare an evaluation plan, with criteria for ratings and proposed methodologies
- iii. Participate in a briefing via teleconference or video conference with QBEP partners.
- iv. Participate in a briefing session with QBEP partners at the start of the in-country visit
- v. Conduct consultations with core partners and stakeholders.
- vi. Conduct visits to relevant sites.
- vii. Conduct in-country team discussions, document reviews and data analysis where appropriate.
- viii. Participate in a QBEP partner debriefing session in Myanmar at the completion of the in-country visit and present initial findings of the evaluation to QBEP partners and GoM (total in-country mission duration up to 2 weeks)
- ix. Upon return from Myanmar, process information from document reviews, interviews and any other proposed methods; finalise evaluation (up to xx days including incorporating comments/feedback on the draft report).
- x. Participate in review of the draft report with QBEP partners via teleconference (1/2 day)

The mid-term review will be undertaken by an external Review Team – composed of 3 international experts and one national consultant. The Myanmar government and UNICEF/MDEF partnership members may also contribute staff to the review team in addition to the core team of experts identified below. It is expected that the Director General, Department of Educational Planning and Training of the Ministry of Education will lead the MTR process from the government's side.

The Review Team will submit their documentation and findings to the Team Leader and UNICEF (to share with MDEF partners and MoE) by 30 June. The Team leader will compile the documentation from the team members along with feedback from government and MDEF partners – who will compile and submit a complete draft MTR Report by 14 July.

UNICEF Myanmar will support the Review Team by:

- arranging field visits for the team
- providing translation
- organising meetings with stakeholders
- providing necessary reports, documentation and other materials as required.

## **5. Qualifications of the Review Team – M&E**

The mid-term review will be carried out by a team of three external international experts and one specialist Myanmar consultant. While working as a team, it is anticipated that the international consultants focussing on Monitoring & Evaluation will serve as the ‘team leader’, while the other two experts will focus on Quality & Effectiveness and on Governance & Program Management respectively. The Myanmar national consultant will work across all areas with a particular focus on the rapidly evolving political and education reform process in Myanmar. Working together they will produce the deliverables outlined in the next section.

In terms of qualifications, the team leader (Monitoring & Evaluation) should have:

- At least 10 years’ experience at a senior level in education policy and practice in developing country contexts
- Extensive expertise and experience in program monitoring and evaluation including of programs financed through donor pooled funding mechanisms
- An understanding of the political context in Myanmar as it relates to Government of Myanmar engagement in aid programs (desirable)

The international consultant (Governance and Program Management) should have:

- At least 10 years’ experience evaluating governance arrangements for education systems at different levels of decentralization
- Extensive experience evaluating governance arrangements for programs implemented by multilateral institutions including sector coordination mechanisms
- Extensive experience with elements of decentralization and school based management
- An understanding of the political context in Myanmar as it relates to Government of Myanmar engagement in aid programs (desirable)

The international consultant (Quality & Effectiveness) should have:

- At least 10 years’ experience evaluating the quality of education programs financed through joint donor funding mechanisms



- Expertise in education service delivery operations including training and local capacity elements
- Extensive expertise in assessing the effectiveness of program interventions within national education programmes
- An understanding of the political context in Myanmar as it relates to Government of Myanmar engagement in aid programs (desirable)

The specialist Myanmar consultant should have:

- In-depth knowledge of recent political and social reforms in Myanmar, particularly in education
- In-depth understanding of the Myanmar Education System including the Ministry of Education organisational structure and management arrangements from Nay Pyi Taw to the school level.
- A working knowledge of the CESR process
- Excellent Myanmar language skills (written and spoken)

All team members should have the ability to travel intensively within Myanmar including to remote destinations for at least a two-week period starting 1 June 2014 – and time to submit their respective reports by 30 June.

UNICEF and donors representatives may join the team for meetings and fieldwork if mutually agreeable by all.

## 6. Deliverables

The review team will prepare an evaluation plan (including methodology) –draft to be submitted 12 May; with the final draft plan submitted 26 May prior to in-country mission. The evaluation team will develop an evaluation plan based on the guidance in these ToRs. The plan will outline questions appropriate to the purposes of the evaluation, sampling strategy, methods and instruments for collecting data, data analysis techniques where appropriate; any challenges to achieving the evaluation purposes and how these will be addressed; and the roles and responsibilities of team members.

The Review Team will prepare a report including a description of the extent to which QBEP's objectives are being achieved using Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Partially Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory ratings.

The review team will prepare an Aide Memoire that will be presented at the final briefing.

The Review Team will prepare a Review Report within one month of completion of fieldwork. The report will address the aim of the mid-term review, the specific questions outlined above, and any other issues agreed in the Methodology and Timeframe agreed with the UNICEF/QBEP partnership.

## **7. Background documents and information**

Information to be reviewed includes, but is not limited to:

- Framework for Economic and Social Reform
- QBEP Programme Document (October 2012) & Annexes
- QBEP logframe
- QBEP Planned budget (2012-2015)
- QBEP 2012 Annual Report and 2013 DRAFT Mid-Year Report (including financial utilization reports)
- Teacher-classroom interaction baseline study
- Draft Monitoring of Learning Achievement baseline report
- Progress report study on teaching practices
- ECD quality assessment baseline
- Lifeskills teacher training assessment reports
- CESR TOR, Phase 1 report and individual studies
- UNICEF peacebuilding, education and advocacy programme document
- MICS, ILCHA reports
- Translated training materials as developed under QBEP – including CFS modules, Instructional Leadership, Township Education Improvement Plans, and SITE Training modules
- Mon Whole State documentation and Mon Situation Analysis
- documentation
- CESR Phase 2 draft reports and individual studies
- Australia's principles for engaging in ethnic areas document

The documents will be made available in soft copy to the experts prior to their commencing the review process

## Annex 2: QBEP Logframe 2012-2015

OUTCOME	Indicator	Baseline: 2010-11		Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-2016	Assumptions
Increased number and proportion of children accessing and completing quality basic education in targeted townships <sup>12</sup>	Net primary enrolment rate in targeted townships (by sex) <sup>13</sup>	Total: 689,470 students  M: 350,691 F: 338,779			1% above baseline		2% above baseline (see footnote 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The economic situation does not deteriorate drastically</li><li>• No severe external shocks</li></ul>
	Survival rate (by sex) to grade 3 in targeted townships	Total: 83% M: 83% F: 82%					3%-points above baseline	
	Survival rate to grade 5 (by sex) in targeted townships <sup>14</sup>	Total: 72% M: 72% F: 73%					3%-points above baseline	
	Source							
Ministry of Education EMIS data; programme surveys								
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015		

<sup>12</sup> Targeted townships include the 25 core townships, 9 additional Mon State townships and 3 Northern Rakhine townships.

<sup>13</sup> If reliable population estimates are not available, the number of enrolled students will be used to assess progress in enrolment in targeted townships and the milestone 2 will be an increase of 1% and the target in 2015-16 an increase of 2% compared to the baseline in 2011-12. National data is 84% for NER. This is in line with the average enrolment trend at national level between 2004-05 and 2010-11.

<sup>14</sup> Survival rate to grade 3 & 5 will be calculated using the reconstructed cohort method with the underlying data taken from the routine EMIS. National data is 74% for grade 5.

	Proportion of grades 3 and 5 students (by sex) achieving the minimum (50%) competency <sup>15</sup> in standardized maths and Myanmar language tests	To be determined <sup>16</sup>				30% Mathematics 50% Myanmar Language <sup>17</sup>	
	<b>Source</b>						
	Standardized tests administered at baseline and end of programme						
	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline: 2011-2012</b>	<b>Milestone 1: 2012-13</b>	<b>Milestone 2: 2013-14</b>	<b>Milestone 3: 2014-15</b>	<b>Target: 2015-2016</b>	
	Proportion of new entrants in grade 1 with prior ECD experience in targeted QBEP townships <sup>18</sup>	To be determined <sup>19</sup>				6%-points above baseline	
		<b>Source</b>					
		UNICEF monitoring and survey data					
<b>INPUTS (US\$)</b>	<b>TOTAL<sup>20</sup> (US\$)</b>	<b>UNICEF (US\$)</b>	<b>UNICEF Share (%)</b>			<b>MDEF (US\$)</b>	<b>MDEF Share (%)</b>
	83,239,015/-	14,315,255/-	17.2%			68,923,760/-	82.8%
<b>OUTPUT 1</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline: 2011-2012</b>	<b>Milestone 1: 2012-13</b>	<b>Milestone 2: 2013-14</b>	<b>Milestone 3: 2014-15</b>	<b>Target: 2015-2016</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Expansion of coverage of quality ECD services	Number of 0-5 year old children in targeted townships <sup>21</sup> accessing	To be determined	20,000	42,000	74,000	89,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy climate favourable for proposed</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Minimum competency level expected is at least 50% score (out of possible 100%) in a standardized learning achievement test.

<sup>16</sup> Analysis of baseline survey is under way and results are expected in January 2013. No national data exist.

<sup>17</sup> MDEF 1 learning achievement result for language was 59% for mathematics 21%.

<sup>18</sup> This will be taken from the school survey conducted together with learning achievement tests.

<sup>19</sup> This will be determined through the learning achievement baseline survey in February 2012. MICS data (2009-10) is 39.8%.

<sup>20</sup> Total programmable amount excludes 7% recovery cost.

<sup>21</sup> Only selected villages in the targeted townships will be selected. Since population sizes at village levels are not available, the number of children reached will be monitored.

	facility-based ECD services <sup>22</sup>						<div>changes</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government approves policy development process</li><li>• If multi-sector plan agreed, System for targeting mapping and provision of integrated ECD services by concerned ministries to be developed by 2015.</li><li>• Improved school readiness and retention.</li></ul>					
		Source										
		Partners' data & UNICEF monitoring reports										
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-2016						
	Proportion of schools in targeted townships with ECD facilities for 3-5 year olds <sup>23</sup>	10%	12%	15%	18%	20%						
	Proportion of school-based ECD facilities that meet minimum quality standards in targeted townships	2%		10%		20%						
								Source				
								TEMIS; UNICEF and partner monitoring reports				
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-2016						
	Multi-sector ECD national action plan/ policy in place		Policy framework designed	Policy drafted	Action plan drafted	Multi-sectoral five year ECD National policy in place.						
								Source				
								Government plans; UNICEF reports				
	IMPACT WEIGHTING											
			RISK RATING									

<sup>22</sup> It includes school- and community-based ECD facilities, which includes mother circles; however parenting education is not included due to measurement difficulties. MICS data for 3-5 attendance is 22.9%.

<sup>23</sup> National data is 6.6% of schools with preschool classroom.

							Low
INPUTS (US\$)	TOTAL (US\$)	UNICEF (US\$)	UNICEF Share (%)			MDEF (US\$)	MDEF Share (%)
	11,992,614/-	1,773,656/-	2.1%			10,218,958/-	12.3%
OUTPUT 2	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-2016	Assumptions
Improved quality of teaching and learning practices in basic education in targeted Townships in Government and Monastic schools and in both mono-grade and multi-grade schools.	% of primary teachers applying improved teaching methods as defined by classroom observation criteria	To be determined <sup>24</sup>				35% of sampled teachers	Technical and human resource capacity of implementing partners meet the scope of the programme
		Source					
		Baseline and end of programme surveys; UNICEF monitoring; both using classroom observation					
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-2016	
	Pre-service teacher education framework developed and operationalised in targeted Education Colleges		Draft national teacher education strategy framework developed <sup>25</sup>	Comprehensive assessment report of 2 ECs		Reforms institutionalised in Yangon and Mandalay colleges	
		Source					
		UNESCO reports					
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-12	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-2016	
	Number of primary teachers receiving face-to-face and distance learning in-service training	0	Face-to-face:	Face-to-face:		Face-to-face:	
			8250 teachers	15250 teachers		23,500 teachers (cumulative)	
		SITE:	SITE:	SITE: 1000	SITE:		

<sup>24</sup> Baseline was conducted in October 2011. Reports will be ready in early 2012.

<sup>25</sup> This change is due to delays in joint programme and alignment with the CESR. The original milestone has been moved to second year

	(SITE)		1000 teachers	1000 teachers	teachers	1000 teachers 4000 teachers (cumulative)		
	Number of students in targeted township provided with essential supplies and textbooks, (including humanitarian support to border areas).	0	620,000 students receive supplies	830,000students receive supplies (increase reflects 9 Mon State extra townships)	645,000 students receive supplies	658,000 students receive supplies 1.3 Mio (cumulative)		
		Source						
		UNICEF M&E and monitoring reports						
		Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15		Target: 2015-2016
		Number of teachers trained to implement secondary life skills curriculum	3,900 teachers	10,800 teachers	11,200 teachers	2,903 teachers		30,000 teachers (cumulative)
	Proportion of children (10-15 years) in school demonstrating correct information and skills to reduce risk including prevention of HIV/AIDS in targeted townships			To be determined (Baseline)				50% answer correctly
			Source					
	Baseline, and end of programme surveys; UNICEF monitoring reports							
	IMPACT WEIGHTING	Indicator	Baseline: 2011		Milestone: 2012-2013			Target: 2015
INPUTS (US\$)	TOTAL (US\$)	UNICEF (US\$)		UNICEF Share (%)		MDEF (US\$)	MDEF Share (%)	
	40,405,917/-	9,557,912/-		11.5%		30,848,005/-	37.1%	
OUTPUT 3	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015	Assumptions	



Enhanced planning, management, monitoring & evaluation and mentoring capacity of key education actors at all levels	Proportion of schools with operationalized SSAs/SIPs in targeted townships	0%		20%	25%	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>MoE agreeing on ESR and committing to implementing the identified milestones</li><li><b>RISK RATING</b></li><li>Low/Medium/High</li><li>High turnover of head teachers</li></ul>
		Source					
		UNICEF field monitoring					
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015	
	Number of master trainers, head teachers and TEOs/ATEOs trained on instructional leadership and management	0	50 master trainers trained  32 TEOs/ATEOs trained  500 head teachers trained	60TEOs/ATEOs trained  2700 head teachers trained	32 TEOs/ATEOs trained  1700 head teachers trained	124 TEOs/ATEOs trained (cumulative)  4900 head teachers trained (cumulative)	
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015	
	Number of townships with TEMIS fully operational	TEMIS partially operational in 3 townships	TEMIS partially operational in 5 townships	TEMIS partially operational in 15 townships		TEMIS fully operational in 15 townships	
	Source						
	TEMIS review, regular monitoring reports						
	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015	
	Number of townships with Township Education	0 townships	Strategy for development of	20 townships	14 townships	34 townships (cumulative)	

	Plans according to agreed standards <sup>26</sup>		township planning developed				
		Source					
		UNICEF field monitoring; commissioned studies					
IMPACT WEIGHTING							
		RISK RATING					
							Low
INPUTS (US\$)	TOTAL (US\$)	UNICEF (US\$)	UNICEF Share (%)			MDEF (US\$)	MDEF Share (%)
	3,872,875/-	573,525/-	0.7%			3,299,350/-	4. 0%
OUTPUT 4	Indicator	Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015-16	Assumptions
Enhanced coverage, quality and relevance of second chance, alternative education	Number of out-of-school aged 10-14 year –old children (by sex) enrolled in NFPE programme in targeted townships	8,000	9,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on reintegration and equivalence is clarified</li><li>• Government allow more NGO partners implement NFPE</li><li>• Human resource capacity of MoE increased</li></ul>
		Source					
		Ministry of Education Reports, NFPE data, UNICEF M&E Reports					
		Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015	
	Number of out-of-school adolescents aged 10-17 reached by EXCEL in	11,000	14,000	14,000	11,000	50,000 (cumulative) (by sex)	

<sup>26</sup>Township Education Plans should at least include simple diagnosis of problems, planned activities with cost estimates and strategies for mobilizing these resources

	targeted townships						
	Proportion of reached out-of-school adolescents completing EXCEL in targeted townships	85% of total reached learners complete full course	85% of total reached learners complete full course	85% of total reached learners complete full course	85% of total reached learners complete full course	85% of total reached learners complete full course	
	Source						
	EXCEL data						
		Baseline: 2011-2012	Milestone 1: 2012-13	Milestone 2: 2013-14	Milestone 3: 2014-15	Target: 2015	
	National framework for Non Formal Education (NFE) equivalency and certification developed		Task force established & functional	Agreed framework	Action plan	Evidence of framework with implementation plan	
IMPACT WEIGHTING	Indicator	Baseline 2011	Milestone 1: 2012-13			Target: 2015	
							RISK RATING
							Medium/High
INPUTS (US\$)	TOTAL (US\$)	UNICEF (US\$)		UNICEF Share (%)		MDEF (US\$)	MDEF Share (%)
	10,365.914/-	884.778/-		1.06%		9,481.136/-	11.4

### Annex 3: MTR Schedule

#### Pre-mission activities

Date	Activity	People involved
13 May	Submission of draft evaluation plan	Team Leader
14-21 May	Feedback on draft plan	UNICEF in collaboration with MoE and MDEF partners
28 May	Teleconference	Review Team members, UNICEF and MDEF partners
30 May	Submission of finalised evaluation plan and sharing with the Team	Team Leader
1 June	Team arrive in Yangon	Review team

#### In Myanmar detailed itinerary

QBEP Partners = Senior staff from Australia AID, DFID, EU, UNICEF and possibly Denmark

MTR Translators = Senior national staff from QBEP partners who will accompany and support MTR team to the field – and to specific meetings

	Date	Time	Activities	Participants	Venue/Place	Mode of Travel	Focal Point
1	2 June	8.30-9.30	Initial Meeting with MoE, UNICEF and MDEF Partners to get guidance and direction from Ministry of Education. Review of Evaluation Plan	DEPT staffs, QBEP Partners (Australia, EU, UK, UNICEF)	DEPT office, YGN	UNICEF Cars, AusAID Car	Daw Khin Thin Phyu

		10.00-12.00	QBEP MTR meeting with DPs – more detailed Q & A on components, priorities, general issues	MTR translators, DP Partners - (Australia, EU, UK, UNESCO, UNICEF)	UNICEF office, YGN	UNICEF Cars, AusAID Car	Dee Dee
		12.00-1.00	Lunch	DEPT staffs, MTR translators	Savoy? Napoli?	UNICEF Cars, AusAID Car	Dee Dee
		1.00-4.00	Meeting of MTR team – team building on relative roles and focus areas, approaches and writing responsibilities	MTR Team, MTR Translators	UNICEF Office	UNICEF Cars, AusAID Car	
		4.00-5.00	Meeting with Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) team. Get idea of status of sector reform	MTR Team, MTR Translators	Mi Casa Hotel – (CESR venue for training)	UNICEF Cars, AusAID Car	Khin Muang Kyaw
		5:30	Meet with CESR International Coordinator	MTR team	Savoy Hotel	UNICEF car	Cliff
2	3 June	6.00-9.00	Travel to Nay Pyi Taw	DEPT staffs, QBEP partners	-	By flights, UNICEF Cars,	Daw Khin Thin Phyu
		9.00-12.00	Meeting with Director Generals – Briefing by senior MOE staff on accomplishments of QBEP – areas for improvement – any suggestions for changes post-MTR	MOE staff - DEPT, DBE 1, 2 & 3, MERB and MTR Team, MTR Translators, UNICEF Chief (?)	MoE Minister Office, NPT	UNICEF Cars, AusAID Car	Daw Khin Thin Phyu -
		12.00-	Lunch	MOE staffs, MTR team -	-	-	Daw Khin Thin

		1.00					Phyu
		2.00-5.00	Focus Group Discussion – by Components  Interview with DGs and QBEP component teams – MTR team divides itself	MOE staffs,	MoE Minister Office, NPT	-	Daw Khin Thin Phyu
3	4-7 June		Three Field Visits : See Detailed Itinerary:  Group 3 = DBE No.1 – Ye, Tha Yet Chaung. Stephen, Nu Nu, Hnin  Group 1 = DBE No. 2 – Pyityitagun and Myaign Townships: Colin, Kyaw Lwin Latt  Group 2 = DBE No.3 – Pyapon, Hlaing Thar Yar: Jim, Nilar.	DEPT staffs, DBE staffs, Translators for QBEP Partners	To be discussed in detail for logistic arrangement. Listed activities components for reference only. Some Townships selected may still change	UNICEF cars	YGN Office  Kyaw Lwin Latt  Khin Saw Nyunt  Khin Mon Nyein  UNICEF Field Officers;  Khin Maung Kyaw  Mra Thuzar/Myint Myint Yee  Thura Ko Ko
4	8 June		Day of rest in Yangon – or for driving back				
5	9 June	9-12	Meeting with selected SEO/DEO/TEO invited to Yangon for focus group discussions. Thinking 15 persons total.	DEPT staffs, DBE staffs, translators from QBEP	DEPT office, YGN	UNICEF cars	Daw Khin Thin Phyu

			Can be combination of plenary and small groups. Current invitees planned = Rakhine – SEO, DEO, TEO/ATEO Kachin – SEO, DEO, TEO/ATEO Loilin/Manse – ATEOs with SITE training Kayin – SEO, TEO/ATEOs Mon – SEO, DEO, 2 TEO/ATEOs	partners  DEPT staff, QBEP partners			
		130 – 5:00	Individual meetings with DPs and Key Partners. Individual time with DPs and Start meeting with partners	MTR Team with Australia, EU, UK, UNESCO and UNICEF			
6	10 June		Meeting with Key Partners	Visits to NGO - PNTZ, Yanthway, MBC, TBC, Thiri May, MLRC, Save, Visits to development partners - ADB, JICA, WFP, WB	UNICEF office, YGN/Hotel to be discussed	UNICEF cars	For Programme Kyaw Lwin Latt  Khin Saw Nyunt  Khin Mon Nyein
7	11-12 June		Time for MTR team to prepare report for MTR	MTR team,	-	-	-
8	13 June	9:30 – 12:00	Final Meeting to share initial MTR findings with Government and QBEP	MTR Team, MOE staffs, QBEP Partners	DEPT office	UNICEF cars	Dee Dee



			DPs				
		1:30 – 3:00	Closing debrief with QBEP DPs on next steps	MTR team, QBEP Partners			

Post mission activities

Date	Activity	People involved
15-21 June	Individual Team members work on reports and submit to Team Leader	Review Team
22-30 June	Collation and finalisation of draft report	Team Leader with inputs for Team members
1-8 July	Comments/feedback on the draft report	MoE, MDEF partners and UNICEF
9 July	Composite feedback sent to Review Team	UNICEF
15 July	Submission of final report	Team Leader

## Annex 4: Wrap-up Aide Memoire presentation, 13 June 2014

### Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP) Mid-term Review

Debrief  
13 June 2014

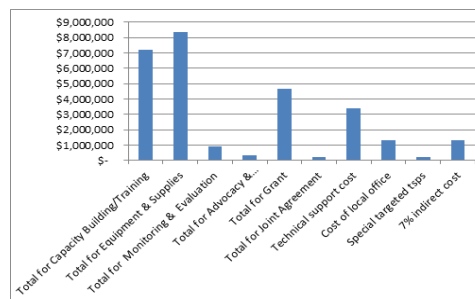
### Agenda

- Purpose of the MTR
- QBEP – a quick overview
- What impressed the MTR team
- The changing context
- Where improvements are needed
- Strategy for the remaining life of QBEP
- Options for future support to Basic Education

### QBEP overview

- Objective – Improve access, quality and equity
- Implementing partners: MoE, UNICEF, UNESCO, DSW & NGO's / Civil society
- Project Value – \$ 84 m
- Duration – 2012-15
- Key areas – ECCD, Primary, Teacher edn, Sector reform, research, second chance education
- Geographic coverage – 34 core townships
- MDEF funders – Denmark, Norway, Australia, EU, UK (DFID), UNICEF

### The current balance of funding in QBEP activities



## The purpose of the MTR

- Explore the achievements of QBEP
- Assess the extent to which QBEP is meeting its objectives
- Comment on the governance and management arrangements
- Assess the appropriateness of QBEP in a changing environment
  - Targeting, scope and reach
  - Delivery mechanisms
  - Equity and conflict sensitivity
- Review the effectiveness of M&E, reporting and knowledge management
- Help set the direction for the remaining 1.5 years
- Examine the options for the longer term.

## What impressed us?

- Commitment of government to the reform process
  - Hard work and commitment to public service of many officials in a fluid political environment
  - Increased allocation for education
  - CESR
  - Stipends and School Grants programme
  - Supply of textbooks
- Level of UNICEF/MDEF engagement with government
  - UNICEF a trusted partner of MoE
  - Involvement in policy work – CESR
  - Relations between UNICEF field staff and Township Education Officers
- Changes at school level
  - Schools visited seemed purposeful and happy
  - Teacher enthusiasm – training appreciated
  - Activities clearly addressing needs – ECD and Non-formal Education
- QBEP staff
  - Commitment and hard work
  - Technical expertise and potential

## The changing context

- Rapid change
  - Greater openness at the centre of government
  - Slower attitude change at lower levels
  - From emergency response to supporting development
- Changing /new functions and responsibilities
  - MoE greater finance / taking on new roles ?
  - QBEP no longer the only DP programme
  - Important new programmes coming (e.g., National Stipends and Grants)
- Donor coordination / approaches need to evolve
  - Division of labour – who does what and where ?
  - Alignment – ensuring complementarity and not duplication

## Where improvements are needed

- Poor programme documentation (theory of change, logframe, financial reporting by activity and location)
- Activities need clearer and better articulated vision, cohesion and evolutionary paths
- Stronger management to avoid dilution of original objectives
- Shift from provisioning and piecemeal capacity building to well targeted and sustained systemic change with clear graduation (exit) strategy.
- More critical awareness, self-evaluation and adaption
  - Consider the balance of activities in terms of spending and staff time
  - Concentrate on areas of comparative advantage
  - Do less activities with low impact/high transaction costs
  - Use greater flexibility in delivery modes to suit recipient needs

## Where improvements are needed

- Need to strengthen linkages between government systems and QBEP supported changes
  - School assessment formats not yet revised to reflect changes in teaching methodologies
- Poor communications and reporting
  - Need to demonstrate greater willingness to share and learn
  - Celebrate success – e.g. the learning outcomes study is World Class – has relevance within and outside
- Procurement inefficiency?
  - Anecdotal evidence suggests procurement transaction heavy and may not be benefiting from growth in number of training providers (e.g. using consolidation of services into packages and competitive tendering).
- Inconsistent evaluation
  - Multiple 'pilot' and 'new' initiatives (all successful)
  - Absence of independent evaluation
  - Untested models – the sufficiency and sustained impact of training

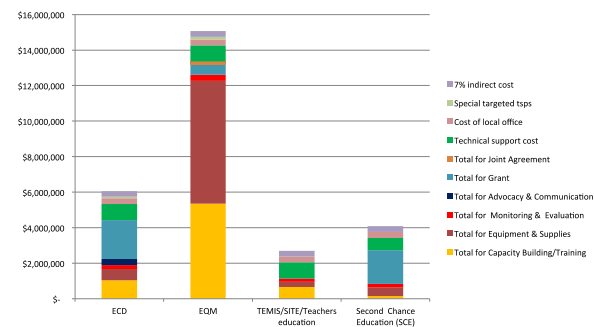
## MDEF Responsibility

- Need for enhanced quality, continuity and clarity in MDEF engagement
- MDEF need for dedicated resident technical expertise
- Build trust through better programme documentation
- Broker and incentivise alignment with other DP funded programmes (World Bank, MEC, ADB)
- Greater transparency and accountability
  - Strategic engagement not micro-management
  - Simple protocols of association
  - Common email distribution lists
  - Programme briefing sheets – overall and by component
  - Monthly updates

## Immediate Priorities

- Ensure key programme documentation reflects realities and is kept up to date
- Realign programme management to key programme functions
  - Staffing structures
  - Financial reporting
  - Communications tools
  - Accountability for results not activities
- Use technical expertise more effectively (e.g. technical inputs not managing procurement).
- Document experience and share knowledge

## Financing by Component 2012/13



### Strategy for the remainder of the Programme

- Use time to prepare properly for responsible graduation / exit.
- Prepare for the future – built on a vision of where we want to be in 5 years' time?
  - Stop expanding programme scope. Transaction costs already too high.
  - Decide on targeting – thematic and geographical
  - Focus on strengths – school improvement, teacher training, peace building

### Strategy for the remainder of the Programme

- Prepare for hand over of functions to government with technical support e.g. provisioning of school supplies
- Consider alternative delivery modes e.g. using a contracting agent
- Conduct research
  - Computerised mapping (GIS) for school / ECD (perhaps with UN's Myanmar Information Management Unit)
  - Independent evaluation of effectiveness of the variety of ECD approaches (e.g. with or without nutrition elements)
  - Study on effectiveness of the variety of instruction approaches for teaching non-mother tongue ethnic groups
  - Sample survey on disability incidence and impediments to access
  - Study on nature and incidence of seasonal migration and its effects on education access and provision
  - Indicative mapping of children's nutritional status
- Any unspent monies should be rolled over to finance a new programme.

### Options for the future

- Continuing need for support to basic education
- Delivery approach needs to change to reflect new situation
  - Transition from provisioning to systems building and institutional and human capacity building
  - Alignment and coordination with other programmes – complementarity not duplication.
  - Targeting – by geography, by technical area, by school type (government, non state, private)
  - Respond to sector planning recommendations.
  - Respond to the evolution of decentralisation at all levels (State level, District and township)
  - Exploit new opportunities for different delivery options – e.g. the private sector

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