

# Adolescent-Led Review of the Magic Classroom Project and Community Preschool Programme Playgrounds

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# Outline

- ▶ Overview of the review
- ▶ Cambodian context
- ▶ Background on Magic Classroom and the playgrounds
- ▶ Why the adolescent-led approach?
- ▶ Approach and methodology
- ▶ Findings and analysis
- ▶ Conclusions and lessons learned
- ▶ Recommendations

# Overview

- ▶ Internal review of early childhood education (ECE) and nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities
- ▶ Conducted in June to August 2018 in Kratie, Ratanakiri and Phnom Penh
- ▶ Adolescent evaluators aged 15-19 conducted focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews and then analysed the results and made recommendations
- ▶ The review was also piloting adolescent participation

# Overview

- ▶ Findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations being presented on behalf of the adolescent evaluators
- ▶ Conclusions and recommendations formulated using inputs from adolescents and from evaluation team

# Context

- ▶ Between 2000 and 2014, the under-five mortality rate reduced from 124 in every 1,000 live births, to 35 in every 1,000 live births
- ▶ 35 per cent of Cambodians in rural areas lack access to improved drinking water in the dry season
- ▶ Only 43.1 per cent of children aged 3 to 5 have access to pre-school education
- ▶ 32 per cent under 5 are stunted
- ▶ 10 per cent are wasted
- ▶ High rates of giardia and other related diseases

# Magic Classroom

- ▶ Education sessions that cover:
  - ▶ Hand washing with soap practices
  - ▶ Maternal and child health (MCH) and breastfeeding
  - ▶ Protection of children from animal faeces and proper disposal of animal faeces
  - ▶ Safe drinking water and water filtration methods
  - ▶ Proper use of latrines
- ▶ Held in the evenings with time for questions from the community with a facilitator from Sipar that is knowledgeable on the subjects

# Community preschool programme playgrounds

- ▶ Benefit of play
- ▶ Safe spaces away from animal faeces, rubbish, flooding, etc.
- ▶ 2 modalities:
  - ▶ 'Commune playground': internally-sourced, recycled materials such as tires
  - ▶ 'Community preschool (CPS) playground': externally-sourced, built on site

Photo Credit © UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Elizabeth Fisher



'Commune playground' in Kratie

- Built using \$300 from UNICEF
- Used locally-sourced materials, such as recycled tires
- The community helped to build the structures

Photo Credit © UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Elizabeth Fisher



'CPS playground' in Kratie

- ▶ Donated by UNICEF
- ▶ Used externally-sourced materials
- ▶ Built on-site
- ▶ Includes a fence with a gate



Key:

Magic Classroom: 🟠

Commune playground: 🌟

CPS playground: 🟡

# Why adolescent-led?

- ▶ Provides a different perspective
  - ▶ Potentially allows for use of local language (such as Tampuan)
- ▶ Encourages full participation of young people
- ▶ Allows UNICEF to ensure policies and systems are responsive to the needs of young people
- ▶ Empowers young people
- ▶ Teaches new hard and soft skills to young people

# Approach and methodology

## Training

- Evaluation concepts and big picture
- How to conduct FGDs and SSIs

## Data collection

- Field visits
- FGDs and SSIs

## Analysis

- Using rubric to assign scores for each OECD/DAC criterion
- Providing recommendations

# Data collection

Technique	Number conducted	Number of participants
Semi-structured interview	29	29 (21 Female; 72%)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 on Magic Classroom</li><li>• 16 on playgrounds</li></ul>	
Focus Group Discussion	16	136 (89 Female; 65%)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7 in Kratie<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 2 Magic Classroom</li><li>○ 5 playground</li></ul></li><li>• 7 in Ratanakiri<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 4 Magic Classroom</li><li>○ 3 playground</li></ul></li><li>• 2 in Phnom Penh<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 2 Magic Classroom</li></ul></li></ul>	

- ▶ Three methods of data collection:
  - ▶ Semi-structured interviews
  - ▶ Focus group discussions
  - ▶ Observations
- ▶ Done in pairs (1 girl, 1 boy) by the adolescent evaluators

# Data collection

- ▶ Example of one of the tools used in the focus group discussions to learn about health and education needs in the community

Photo Credit © UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Elizabeth Fisher

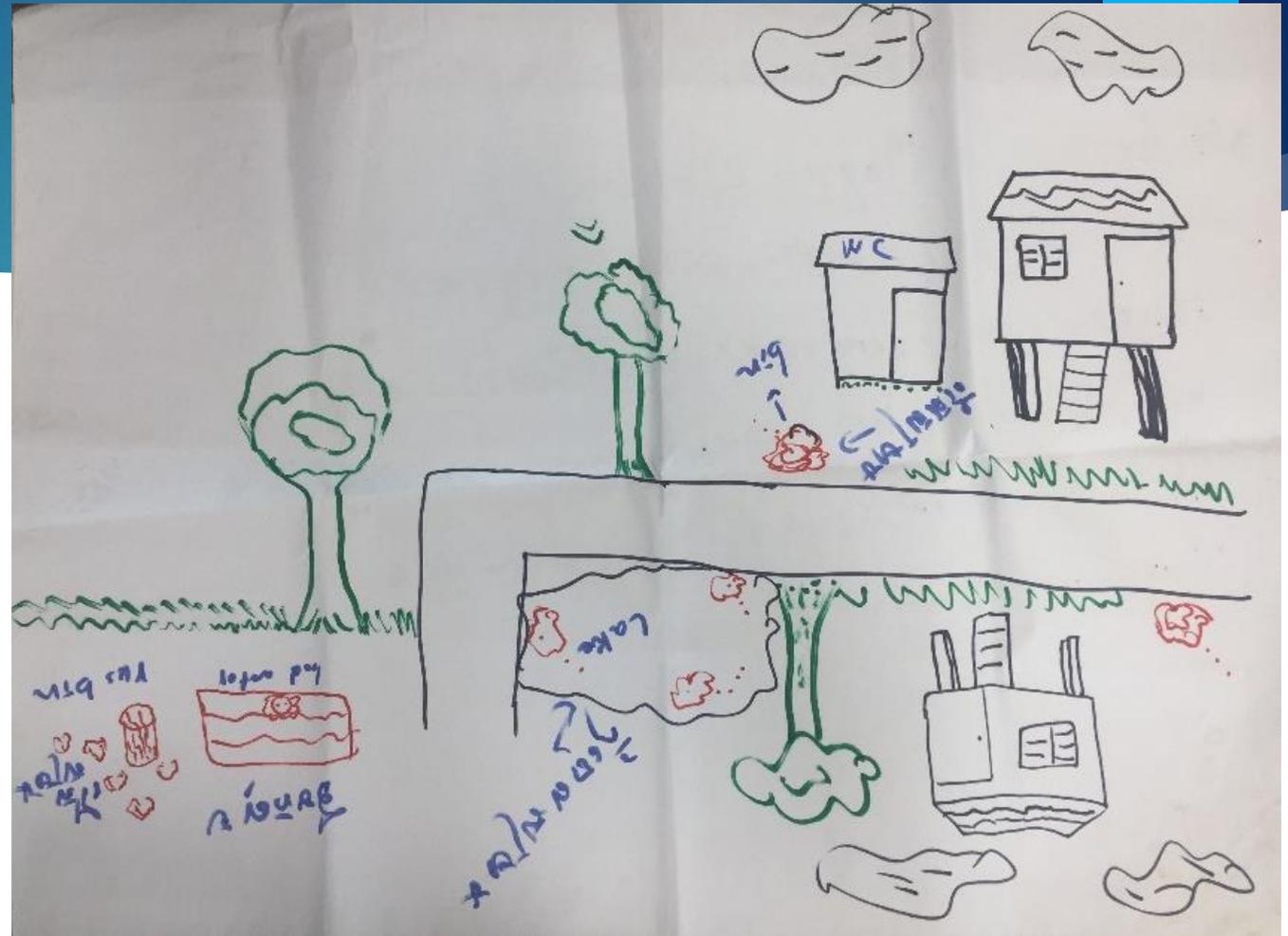


Photo: During FGDs, respondents were asked to illustrate on a map which places in the community were good and bad for their health

# Analysis

- ▶ After data collection, the adolescents used this tool to rate the activities
- ▶ Used a rubric that standardized the different scores across the cohorts

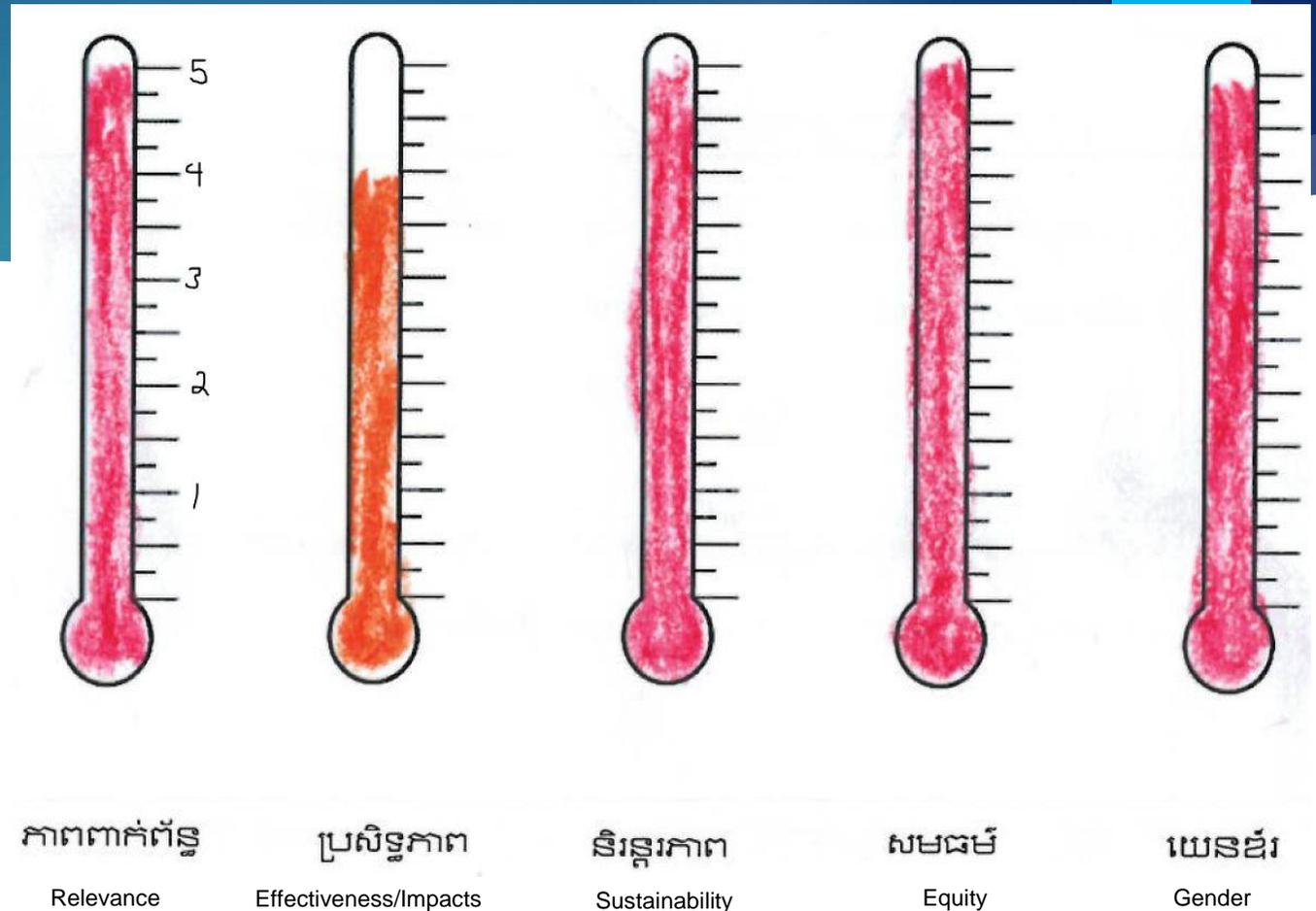


Figure: Final analysis tool used by the adolescent evaluators in which they used a rubric to assign a score for each criterion.

# Findings: Magic Classroom

Photo Credit © UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Elizabeth Fisher



Photo: FGD in Phnom Penh on Magic Classroom

- ▶ Respondents were knowledgeable and motivated
- ▶ Some lacked access to soap, latrines or other materials
- ▶ They could easily identify places in the community that were both good and bad for them
- ▶ Not everyone could attend sessions
- ▶ How lessons were interpreted/internalized by attendees was not always gender equitable

# Findings: Magic Classroom

- ▶ There is a clear need for integrated interventions on health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions. All respondents identified locations in the community that need attention due to health risks, e.g., trash around the well, holes under the house that collect water and mosquitos
  - ▶ Magic Classroom is filling a need for more knowledge on personal care to improve health outcomes
- ▶ While the videos are effective in encouraging behaviour change, there are some gaps
  - ▶ 80 per cent reported behaviour change as a result of Magic Classroom but FGDs revealed that access to soap or latrines was sometimes limited
    - ▶ The other 20 per cent either had already adopted that behaviour or did so because of something other than Magic Classroom
  - ▶ Those that have not adopted behaviours cite lack of materials, such as soap and latrines
  - ▶ Socio-cultural barriers are also obstacles to behaviour change, though this assessment did not explore this

# Findings: Magic Classroom

- ▶ The main reason villagers could not engage with the sessions was because they were unable to attend
  - ▶ The reasons cited were they lived too far away, the road condition was poor or they had to work
- ▶ Sessions are reported as appropriate for all genders
  - ▶ All respondents said that they are appropriate
  - ▶ We learned from FGDs and SSIs that the burden of changing habits and improving household sanitation fell mainly to women, though this needs more study
    - ▶ The videos promote a gender equal approach, but the messages appear to have been internalized as the responsibility of girls and women

# Findings: Playgrounds

Photo Credit © UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Elizabeth Fisher



Photo: Children playing on a commune playground in Ratanakiri

- ▶ Playgrounds, with the exception of one, were well-used and appreciated
- ▶ Parents have a clear understanding of the importance of playgrounds for their children
- ▶ Playground location was not always ideal
- ▶ Animal faeces, rubbish and other risks were present
- ▶ There was some division between girls and boys on the playground

# Findings: Playgrounds

- ▶ The playgrounds had challenges in remaining hygienic
  - ▶ None of the 'commune playgrounds' had fencing; one was littered with rubbish and had a cow tied up on the edge
  - ▶ One of the CPS playgrounds had animal faeces inside the fence
  - ▶ There was a clear lack of upkeep or maintenance

Photo Credit © UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Elizabeth Fisher



Photo: Children playing on a commune playground in Kratie, where a cow and rubbish bin were located just adjacent

# Findings: Playgrounds

- ▶ Parents feel the playgrounds are important for their child's development
  - ▶ Every parent interviewed said the playground was important for their child's health, wellbeing and intelligence
  - ▶ 67 per cent said it made their child want to come to or stay in school
- ▶ Not all children can benefit equally
  - ▶ 78 per cent said that the playgrounds are good for girls and boys
  - ▶ None of the playgrounds had equipment appropriate for children with severe physical disabilities
  - ▶ Two interviewees said playgrounds are more appropriate for boys; from observations, children tended to play in gendered groups

# Findings: Adolescent-led approach

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- ▶ With the right training and support, adolescents can carry out meaningful and rigorous work
- ▶ Ample time is needed for understanding evaluation concepts and data collection techniques
  - ▶ Time constraints led to some limitations
- ▶ This approach allowed for access that would not be possible with external evaluators
  - ▶ Data collection in Tampuan language in Ratanakiri

# Conclusions

- ▶ Community members are pleased with the activities, but there are some gaps
- ▶ Magic Classroom has led to increased knowledge and behaviour change; not everyone has access to necessary materials, like soap or latrines
- ▶ Playgrounds are a source of great fun and learning for children; lack fencing and maintenance to keep kids in a healthy space
- ▶ Adolescent-led approach showed that adolescents are highly effective evaluators; time constraints lead to some limitations

# Lessons learned: Magic Classroom

- ▶ People are willing and able to adopt healthier behaviours, especially when it relates to their own health and wellbeing
- ▶ Even if people want to change, they cannot if the materials (e.g., soap, latrines) are not available to them
- ▶ Magic Classroom and other health, nutrition and WASH activities could approach these issues in an integrated manner (i.e., with partnerships with other NGOs or private companies) to ensure access across the community
- ▶ A plan should be in place to ensure that the widest group possible can attend the sessions
- ▶ Without a conscious plan in place, the burden to improve health, nutrition and WASH will fall to the female members of the household

# Lessons learned: Playgrounds

- ▶ Playgrounds should be carefully placed somewhere where there is shade and that is convenient, wherever possible
- ▶ Playgrounds should be visible from various points so that the children can be supervised
- ▶ The community should be prepared and have the resources to maintain the playgrounds
- ▶ Preschool teachers should encourage all children to play on all the equipment, to avoid gendering certain elements
- ▶ If a community cannot maintain the playground, alternative early childhood education (ECE) activities should be considered

# Lessons learned: Adolescent-led approach

- ▶ Adolescents, with the right training and support, are highly effective evaluators
- ▶ To fully train adolescent evaluators, it is important to commit as much time as possible so they have more time to practice and get comfortable in their new roles
- ▶ Adolescent evaluators are more familiar with the context and can get perspectives that external evaluators cannot

# Recommendations: Magic Classroom

1. Ensure that everyone has access to the necessary materials (e.g., soap and latrines) to follow lessons from education sessions
2. Create and distribute posters or pamphlets that include the information and clear illustrations of what was in the videos. These materials could be given to attendees and/or to the village chief to distribute to those who could not attend
3. Verify that the educational sessions and the information provided during them both by facilitators and participants, as well as any papers or pamphlets, ensure and advocate for gender equity. The extra effort to adhere to the lessons should not fall exclusively to girls and women and should encourage men to be equal partners

# Recommendations: Playgrounds

1. Create a rubric or set of prerequisites for playgrounds that consider location and other factors before repairing or building new ones
2. Ensure the community can maintain the playground and that there is a plan in place to deal with issues that arise; consider engaging UNICEF Zone Office colleagues to monitor playgrounds
3. Invest in new playground technologies and innovations to deal with the issue of keeping the areas clean

# Recommendations: Adolescent-led approach

1. Continue to promote the participation of adolescents and young people in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
2. Ensure that the plan and materials are sensitive to age or maturity differences between different cohorts given that the maturity and confidence of a 15-year-old old can be significantly different than that of an 18-year-old
3. Expand on existing tools and guides, in the local language, that can be used in future evaluations that encourage meaningful participation of adolescents and young people

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▶ Adolescent Evaluators:

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