

Education for All

Mid Decade Assessment Report Sri Lanka



2008

Education for All



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Ministry of Education Sri Lanka - 2008



EDUCATION FOR ALL
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EDUCATION FOR ALL

**MID – DECADE ASSESSMENT
REPORT**

SRI LANKA

2000-2006

Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka

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Printed by: State Printing Corporation, Panaluwa, Padukka, Sri Lanka

Cover page designed by: Media Unit, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka.

Photographs : UNICEF Colombo

The EFA MDA report was prepared by the Education for All Unit, Ministry of Education.

Foreword

Expenditure on education is considered by economists as an investment in the future with a quantifiable rate of return. Hence all countries generally take a special interest in the education of their children. Most of the Sri Lankans, who traditionally viewed education as the pathway to wealth and social status, took a keen interest in the education of their children. With the emergence of a widespread network of schools by late 1930s which have been established by the government as well as various religious NGOs, even the poor rural children were able to receive some level of education. Education facilities widened substantially to reach all strata of the society with the introduction of free education in mid 1940s which resulted in a phenomenal increase in participation. The steps taken by successive governments have contributed to improve access to as well as quality of education resulting in a noteworthy upgrading of the quality of life of the people. These milestone developments in education had placed Sri Lanka in an enviable position among the developing countries in respect of universal basic education. It is encouraging to note that parents at present are taking a special interest to find a school for their children even before they reach the school going age. Also, the number of parents who are moving towards the practice of sending their children to pre-schools is increasing rapidly.

With the increase in enrolment in education due to measures taken to achieve universal primary education by the governments over the past two decades, many countries faced the problem of providing additional places in secondary education for the increased student population. It is perhaps a unique feature in the Sri Lankan education system that the gradual increase in enrolment was not felt as a burden. Although the Sri Lankan government was bearing almost the total burden of providing general education to the children, not much attention was directed towards early childhood care and education during the past. However, provincial education authorities are seen getting increasingly involved in ECCE activities.

It seems that Sri Lanka took the responsibility of achieving UPE rather lightly perhaps due to the high rates of enrolment the country had achieved before the Jomtien conference. However, to compensate for that, the Ministry of Education, with the assistance of other ministries and organisations in the social sector, has commenced to make a concerted effort in order to achieve EFA targets. We are grateful to the international institutions such as UNESCO and UNICEF for the support and assistance extended to our ministry in implementing activities connected with the EFA programme.

Mid-decade Assessment Report of EFA produced by Sri Lanka includes a comprehensive account of our achievements and shortfalls in achieving EFA goals. The introduction gives a complete narration of the historical background, the current system of education and its characteristics. Early childhood care and education, universal basic education, life skills and life-long education, and adult literacy are dealt with in detail to show the achievements as well as problems and challenges. The conclusions given in chapter 8 give an insight into the present situation and provide a guide to future action. A lot of effort has gone into the compilation of this report and I believe that it will be a very useful source document for decision making as well as future planning. I am confident that this document will go a long way in

making the achievement of EFA goals possible for Sri Lanka. I wish to thank the chapter writers, the data analysts, the editors, copy writers and all others who assisted in this task. I congratulate the Director of the EFA Unit and her staff for a job well done.



M.M.N.D. Bandara
Secretary,
Ministry of Education

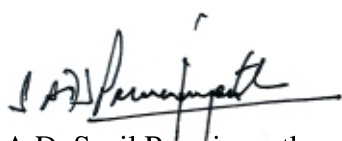
Honourable Minister's Message

Sri Lanka has a rather long history of impressive achievements in the field of education. Our participation rates and retention rates rank high among the developing nations. However, we still have some way to go in achieving total participation. The quality of the education delivered is perhaps a bigger concern for the country.

The government is committed to provide all children of school-going-age opportunities to receive an education of good quality. Many steps have been taken during the past decades to achieve this end. We believe that human resource development is a primary requisite in improving the economy of the country as well as the quality of life of the people. Hence the present government is determined to carry forward the development process of education and equip the younger generation with skills and competencies needed to face the challenges of the modern world.

In the light of our aims and objectives, I perceive, that the Education for All programme sponsored by UNESCO is of immense importance to our country. I am happy to note that the officers of the Ministry of Education, particularly those who are in charge of the Mid Decade Assessment of the EFA programme, are applying themselves with diligence and commitment to the task they are entrusted with. With the commitment of all those who bare the responsibility of educating our children from the tender years of early childhood to the mid teens, we will be able to achieve the EFA goals, Early Childhood Development & Learning, Universal Basic Education, Life Skills and Lifelong Learning, Adult Literacy, Gender and Quality, even before the target dates.

I congratulate all those who contributed in various ways to produce the Sri Lanka MDA Report and wish to affirm that the commitment of the government to implement the recommendations embodied in this report and achieve EFA goals.



A.D. Susil Premjayantha
Minister of Education

SLNCU Secretary General's Message

The Education for All (EFA) goals, as also, the assessments of its performances, greatly assists countries in not only giving increased focus and attention towards achieving the goals being set for EFA, but also, provides impetus to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), to which all countries are committed to.

Above all, it sets the agenda to improve quality education for all at the national levels, since the goals pay attention to a wide array of topics, sector wide, viz; Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Universal Primary/Basic Education, Life Skills and Lifelong Learning, Literacy, Gender and Quality Education.

The success of all governments in achieving these goals on behalf of the future generations will depend on the importance and attention being given by the decision makers and administrators in following up on the monitoring and assessments at all levels, i.e. at the levels of Schools, Zones, Provinces and the Ministry of Education.

It is therefore hoped that the capacities at all levels within the country will be built up, in order to collect, collate, analyse and interpret the data, in order to enhance performance and in achieving the goals.

We wish to congratulate the EFA/MDA Unit in the Ministry of Education, for their untiring efforts in compiling these reports under difficult conditions and with limited staffing support.

Whilst encouraging those involved the EFA assessments in their future endeavours, we would like to urge the Ministry of Education to continue to enhance their efforts to build capacities of the units and personnel at all levels, who carry out the exercise of EFA reporting.

We thank the UNESCO offices in New Delhi and Bangkok for their kind co-operation and assistance.

We also wish to place on record, our appreciation to the Japanese Governments Funds in Trust Programme, for their generous funding support.



R.P. Perera

Secretary General

Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

Acknowledgement

- Hon. Susil Premajyantha, (Minister of Education); for the guidance and directions;
- Mr. M.M.N.D. Bandara, (Secretary/ Ministry of Education) and Mr. Ariyaratne Hewage (Former Secretary Ministry of Education); for overall guidance and supervision;
- Mr. S.U. Wijeratne, (Additional Secretary/Policy Planning & Performance Review Division, Ministry of Education); for guidance for the process of EFA mid decade assessment;
- Dr. Ko-Chih Tung, (UIS Regional Advisor for Asia Pacific/AIMS Unit Chief); Mr. Nyi Nyi Thaug, Dr. S. Venkatraman, Ms. Maria Leotes and staff of the Unit for the Consultation of the EFA/MDA process
- Ms. Minja Young (Director/UNESCO New Delhi); Ms. Akemi Yonimura and staff for financial assistance;
- Mr. R.P. Perera (Secretary General/Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO) and staff for their invaluable support and encouragements
- Officials of the UNICEF Bangkok and Kathmandu offices
Ms. Ita Sheehy (Head/Learning years of the UNICEF Colombo) and Ms. Naioko Imoto (program Officer UNICEF Colombo) for providing the technical and financial assistance for developing EFA Info and supporting the development of EMIS
- Mr. P.N. Ilapperuma (Director/Data Management & Research, Ministry of Education) and System Analysts Mr. H.W.K. Amarasinghe, Ms. Sarojini Pathirana, Ms. Eshwaree Perera, Ms. Hemakanthi Jayasinghe, Mr. Sarath Perera, Mr. Upali Liyanage for providing necessary data
- Senior Statistician and staff of Statistics Branch/MoE for providing necessary data and statistics;
- Ms. Suranjana Widyaratne (Director General/ Department of Census and Statistics Department) and Staff
- Secretary, Ministry of Health Care Nutrition and Medical officers of the Family Health Bureau
- Dr. (Ms.) D. Lekamge (Dean/Faculty of Education, Open University of Sri Lanka); Dr. Prasad Setunge (Head/Department of Education University of Peradeniya) for invaluable contribution to the MDA process
- Additional Secretaries and other officials of the Ministry of Education; Director General and staff of the National Institute of Education, Commissioner General and staff of the Department of Examinations for contributions made at different stages;

- EFA Thematic working group members: Ms. Asoka Pandithasekera (DE/Primary), Dr. Suranimal Lekamge (DE/Social Studies, NIE) Mr. W. Weerakoon (DE /Inclusive Education, NIE), Mr. S. Fransisco (CPO/NIE), Mr. Kingsly Priyantha (CPO/NIE) Mr. H.P.N. Lakshaman (DE/NFE), Ms. W. Rathnawathi (DDE/NFE) Mr. A.D. Nandasena (DE/Technical Education) Ms. D. Balasooriya (DDE/Technical Ed.) for valuable contribution made at Initial stage of MDA
- Ms. Kumari Wijesekere (DEE /Planning), Mr. K. Mohamad Thamby (CCOTE /MoE), Ms. Renuka Peris (DE/Health & Nutrition), Ms. Wasantha Peris (DDE /MoE), Ms. Priyatha Nanayakkara (DDE/MoE), Mr. Y.A.N.D Yapa, (DE/Teacher Education), Mr. S.P. Senaratne (DDE/Planning) for valuable support at initial stage of MDA
- Ms. Lalani Wijesekere (DDE/EFA) excellent contribution assistance for MDA process and to the report
- Ms. Kanisha Ukwattage, Data entry operator EFA/Unit for the hard work for preparing all data templates; Mr. Subry Makkeen, Mr. K.D Roshan/Development assistants of EFA and Planning; Ms. Rasika Lakmali, Ms. Disni Ayoma of the EFA unit for the various tasks towards completing the report
- Staff members of the Planning and Performance Review Branch, for the special assistance extended in various aspects.
- Special thanks to all those who prepared background papers for the report:
 - Mr. R.S. Madagame, (Rtd. Director General Education Reforms MoE); Dr. Harischandra Yakandawala (Program Officer/WHO); Mr. Janaka Jayalath (Information System Manager/ Technical and Vocational Education Commission), Dr. (M s .) M a n j u l a W i d a n a p a t h i r a n e a (Snr. Lecturer Faculty of Education /University of Colombo)
- Mr. K.A.R.D. Gunaratne (Lecturer/Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering, OUSL) for providing technical and other assistance

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Abbreviations

CBT	Competency Based Training
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CGC	Carrier Guidance and Counselling
CGCCs	Carrier Guidance and Counselling Centres
CHDRs	Child Health Development Records
COTs	Colleges of Technology
DDST	Denver Development Screening Tool
DHS	Demographic & Health Survey
DTech	Diploma in Technology
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training
EBF	Exclusive Breast Feeding
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System(s)
ESDEP	Education Sector Development Programme
ESI-R	Early Screening Inventory Revised
ETF	Employees Trust Fund
FHB	Family Health Bureau
GCE O/L	General Certificate Education, Ordinary Level
GCE A/L	General Certificate Education, Advanced Level
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rates
GIR	Gross Intake Rates
GTZ	German Technical Corporation
HDI	Human Development Index
HNDE	Higher National Diploma in Engineering
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDD	Iodine Deficiency Disorder
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
ISAs	In-Service Advisors
ITUM	Institute of Technology University of Moratuwa
LBW	Low Birth Weight
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LRDC	Learning Resources Development Centre
LRUCs	Learning Resource Utilisation Centres
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
MCDWE	Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDA	Mid-Decade Assessment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management Information System

MMN	Multiple Micronutrients
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health and Nutrition
MVTT	Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training
NAITA	National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
NBUCRAM	Norm-Based Unit Cost Resource Allocation Mechanism
NCOs	National Colleges of Education
NCPA	National Child Protection Authority
NDES	National Diploma in Engineering Science
NDT	National Diploma of Technology
NE	New Entrants
NEC	National Education Commission
NER	Net Enrolment Rates
NEREC	National Education Research and Evaluation Centre
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NIE	National Institute of Education
NPA	National Plan of Action
NVQs	National Vocational Qualifications
NVQSL	National Vocational Qualifications Framework of Sri Lanka
NYSC	National Youth Services Council
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
PHDT	Plantation Human Development Trust
PHMs	Public Health Midwives
QMS	Quality Management System
RESCs	Regional English Support Centres
SDP	Skills Development Project
SLIATE	Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education
TCs	Teachers Colleges
TEDP	Technical Education Development Project
TEVT	Technical Education and Vocational Training
TTI	Technician Training Institute
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UN	United Nation
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VTA	Vocational Training Authority
WAN	Wide Area Network
WHO	World Health Organisation

Overview of the EFA/MDA Report

The purpose of this report is to assess changes in education in Sri Lanka in the light of the EFA Dakar framework during the period 2000-2006

Chapter 1 of the report presents a description of the country and its education.

In Chapter 2 the status of Early Childhood Care and Development is analysed according to the EFA MDA indicators. It covers ECCD policy and health and nutrition programmes implemented by relevant ministries and authorities. This chapter highlights the necessity of improving the comprehensive care and education of children aged 0-5 years.

Chapter 3 provides an assessment of progress towards Universal Basic Education. This chapter examines many developments occurred within general education system since 2000, compares data on EFA indicators and draws attention to inequities within schools. It provides a set of recommendations to improve the system.

Chapter 4 focuses on Life skills and Lifelong Education which has been particularly neglected in part because of the difficulty of defining and monitoring it. This chapter highlights the development of linkages between general education and technical and vocational education and a great variety of non-formal, literacy, equivalency life skills and livelihood education programmes.

Chapter 5 provides an account of progress on Literacy, based on the available data. Sri Lanka does not consider adult literacy as a serious issue. But this chapter highlights the importance of developing a mechanism for a practical assessment method so that the actual literacy rate of the country can be found.

Chapter 6 focuses on eliminating gender disparities. It reviews the progress of the country in meeting gender parity, with particular attention to policies and strategies.

Quality is also a crosscutting theme and therefore all the chapters describe the progress and importance of quality of education. Chapter 7 discusses particularly problems and challenges that have affected the quality of education.

Chapter 8 carries a summary of previous chapters. The chapter discusses prospects for achieving 6 EFA goals and the way forward for government and other actors to accelerate the movement towards quality education for all.

