

Annexes

Evaluation of UNICEF's Alternative Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centers in Uzbekistan, 2019-2023

LRPS-2023-9181813

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**Economic
Policy
Research
Institute**



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POLICY RESEARCH OUTREACH

Prepared by

Economic Policy Research Institute & Center for Policy Research and Outreach

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Annex A. Evaluation terms of reference

LRPS-2023-9181813
UNICEF Uzbekistan

Country:	Uzbekistan
Object of evaluation:	UNICEF Alternative Early Childhood Education Centers (ECE) in Uzbekistan
Time period of the intervention that evaluation covers:	2018 – to present
Geographic coverage:	Khorezm and Namangan regions of Uzbekistan
Type of evaluation:	Formative evaluation with a focus on Value for Money
Date of preparation of TOR:	February 2023
Special condition:	Compare alternative ECE models

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ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
ECARO	Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ERB	Ethic Review Board
IR	Inception Report
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
RO	Regional Office
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	Convention of the Right of Child
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VfM	Value for Money

INTRODUCTION

This Terms of Reference (ToR) is the formative evaluation of modelling alternative Early Childhood Education centres in pilot sites of Uzbekistan with a focus on Value for Money. VfM is about how well resources are used, and whether they are being used well enough (King, 2017)¹. The ToR heavily relies on the framework and approach to VfM suggested by King and OPM, 2018².

This ToR outlines the context of the evaluation, conditions and requirements for the evaluation as well as its scope, objective and future use, and the technical requirements that the prospective contractor(s) should meet.

EVALUATION CONTEXT

Early Childhood Development and Education is one of the priority areas of the UNICEF Uzbekistan Country Programme. UNICEF has been complementing the Government of Uzbekistan's efforts to improve the ECE services through providing technical support to enhance systemic improvements and policy reforms. During design of the Country Programme for 2015-2020 the coverage in ECE was around 27% and several barriers with availability and access to affordable quality ECE was an issue in the country. Most critical bottleneck of ECE was fragmented and incoherent policies and the rigidity of the education system which inhibited the establishment of flexible and affordable quality alternative ECE arrangements. Almost all existing programmes were costly and not accessible to disadvantaged children. With the change in the Government of Uzbekistan in 2016 the reforms in preschool education became a priority area in the country and in September 2017 the new Ministry of Preschool Education (MOPSE) was established to enhance implementation of the reforms in provision of equitable access to quality preschool education for the 3–6-year-old children in Uzbekistan. The priority tasks for the newly established Ministry were to address gaps in access, service delivery and quality. The National 5-year programme supported by the road map, Education Sector Plan for 2019-2023, several policies and Law on Preschool Education identified key priority directions and the vision of the country towards achieving country specific goals and SDG 4. Provision of alternative pathways of services was one of the solutions in transformative changes in provision of the quality services for all children, including most vulnerable ones living in remote and rural areas. This was one of the priority areas in the Country Programme Document for 2016-2020 signed with the Government and continued in Country Programme for 2021-2025.

As highlighted in a recent Public Expenditure Review, conducted by WB in 2022, the public expenditure for preschool education has doubled since 2017, reaching close to 20% of the total expenditure in education³. The analysis of spending in preschool education further shows that per-capita expenditures in preschool are higher than per capita expenditures in general or specialized secondary education, estimated at 1,300 US\$ in 2022. The recent expansion of

¹ King, J. (2017) 'Using Economic Methods Evaluatively'. American Journal of Evaluation, Vol 38, Issue 1, March 2017.

² King and OPM (2018). The OPM approach to assessing value for money: A guide. Oxford: Oxford Policy Management Ltd.

³ WB (2022), Republic of Uzbekistan Second Public Expenditure Review, The World Bank Group, Washington

services and the need of additional targeting in order to reach the most marginalized regions and community calls for the identification of cost-efficient solutions, that meet the expected quality standards of preschool education.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

UNICEF and the Government of Uzbekistan have agreed to develop alternative and innovative models of ECE provision in the country within the Joint Work Plan between UNICEF and MOPSE and identified as priority in the partnership with the Government. In a consultative and participatory mode, a Conceptual Framework for alternative forms of preschool education and initial workplan for modeling of the alternative forms of preschool education has been drafted in the end of 2018. Alternative forms of provision were planned to be modelled in a few selected, most deprived regions in the country with low preschool enrolment rates and recommended three types of alternative models of preschool education based on international best practices. Those are:

- “School readiness” groups for 6 years-old children, last year of preschool education.
- Mixed age groups for 3-5 years-old children.
- Play groups for 3-5 years-old children

All of the forms of alternative ECEs have proposed considered holistic development of a child, including social and emotional and cognitive, in low cost, parents engagement, use of spare premises which was not expensive to equip, ECE opportunities for children from various cultural environment, opportunities for different age children to learn and develop through interaction in broad social context and preparation for school and kindergarten (in the long-term); School readiness model has been taken over by the Government and introduced as part of the commitment of implementation of the new Law on Preschool Education guaranteeing free compulsory pre-primary education for all 6 years old children. As the Ministry of Preschool Education (MOPSE) was relatively new and would immensely benefit from learning the good practices from across the world, UNICEF has also decided to support the government with exposure visits to some of the most relevant and effective practices in other countries. Taking into account successful experience of Poland in reforming preschool education system and good practices in implementation of alternative models of ECE and its policy implication and system level change, UNICEF and Poland Government jointly organized a study visit for Uzbekistan Government officials at National and regional levels.

Based on obtained knowledge and understanding from the study tour the Conceptual Framework of the Alternative models of ECEs was finalized and detailed work plan developed for implementation with key responsible people nominated for the project. It was decided by the MOPSE that two regions – Namangan and Khorezm, Heads of Regional Departments of Preschool Education of which has attended the study tour, were identified for modeling. Selection of the regions were based on the level of the coverage by preschool education and density of the population, as in case with selection of Namangan Region.

Several stages of project implementation were identified:

1. Assessment of the catchment area/groups (# of 3-5 years old children; demand; “waiting que”, how far those children live from the location of the group; Makhalla engagement for identifying children from the poorest and most vulnerable families);
2. Selection of safe premises/preparation the premises (renovation, heating, clean water and WASH facilities)

3. Preparation of the supply plan for teaching and learning materials (TLM) and furniture based on standards and list of required specifications provided by MOPSE
4. Creation of the programme and manuals based on National Preschool Curriculum and Early Learning and Development Standards approved by MOPSE.
5. Development of training package and teacher guidebook on teaching in multi-age groups with focus on “learning through playing” methodology.
6. Capacity development and training of the preschool teachers
7. Admission process of children to the groups based on the list prepared based on the Makhalla list of children from vulnerable families.
8. Baseline assessment for starting activities, diagnoses of initial level of development of children based on the Observation list of the curriculum.
9. Monitoring and coaching of teachers.

Based on the Work plan and identified key stages of the modeling areas of responsibilities has been identified and agreed. While UNICEF provided full equipment of the ECE facilities with Teaching and Learning Materials and furniture the local Government was responsible for identifying of appropriate facilities, renovation and establishing of WASH facilities. Teachers were identified and they received salaries from local government. Initially total 8 groups – 4 in Khorezm and 4 in Namangan regions were launched and two more groups were opened with Romanian Government financial support with enrolment of around 400 children.

The same mode of alternative ECEs will be established with the EU funded project with focus on multi-lingual education in Surkhandarya region with establishment of 10 groups for around 400 children from vulnerable and ethnic minority families in 2023.

OBJECT OF EVALUATION

The object of VfM evaluation is the alternative models of preschool education of multi-age play groups in 6 centres in Khorezm and 4 in Namangan regions of Uzbekistan in comparison to existing models introduced in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Centers are established based on the Concept of Alternative ECEs developed based on the international practices (as Poland, Ukraine and Georgia with similar political context in the past and the situation with preschool education) and Study tour reflections. Centers are established at available spaces of schools, community (Makhalla) centres and Pedagogical Colleges. Implementation of the project was affected by COVID-19 pandemic with no cost extension of implementation due to lock down and COVID-19 preventive measures. In 2021 eight groups of Alternative ECEs were launched and two more supported by the technical aid of the Romanian Government in 2022 in Khorezm region. Expected result of the introduction of the Alternative models is provision of the equitable access to preschool education to vulnerable children living in the remote areas and provision of the opportunities to learn and develop in line with the curriculum and ELDS. This will cover the period of 2018, when project was initiated and conceptual frameworks were developed, to present when those alternative groups fully functioning.

The theory of change (TOC) developed for the project as the following:

Alternative forms of Preschool Education Results Framework / TOC



The contactors are required to re-construct the existing ToC to match the current operational reality and adjust it for the evaluation.

RATIONALE, PURPOSE AND USE OF EVALUATION

Rationale: The ECE model is a learning and adaptive model being tested in two pilot sites of the country. With the new government structures and staff reshuffling, and at the current stage of the model implementation, it is important to identify the extent to which ECE model is cost efficient and meet the expected quality standards of preschool education.

Use and users: The Uzbekistan CO ECE and CRM staff will lead the efforts to utilize the insights, findings and recommendations of the evaluation. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation will also be shared with the Government and all relevant stakeholders for further considerations in expansion of models Nationwide with technical support of other stakeholders. Results of the evaluation will inform the Government for future scaling up Alternative models of ECE, envisaged by the IsDB 70 million project and other initiatives.

Purpose: The evaluation will offer the iterative approach to testing, reflection and adaptation that will eventually help to improve the ECE models and evaluate how well the available resources are being used and whether the resource use is justified on the basis of observable features of the ECE models delivery, short-term and medium-to-long-term outcomes. The evaluation is to compare alternative models of preschool education with existing models, to inform decisions about scaling up new models. As the alternative models are still quite new and developing, the evaluation should also provide learning and insights to help government and UNICEF adapt and improve.

It can also support UNICEF Uzbekistan to work effectively by helping to clarify and communicate the value of their work, and by providing insights to support learning and improvement.

The evaluation will also help identify if the model meets human and child rights standards and equity gaps to inform Government for further scale up the model nationwide, with engagement

of other stakeholders as IsDB, WB and others. A key focus on costing and financing of the proposed model is also required in light of need for scale up and existing challenges to sustain population growth with quality services.

OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is aimed at generating knowledge from the implementation with a focus on value for money; identifying lessons learnt and propose recommendations for future programming and scale up. The specific objectives include:

- Assess of the project relevance to the country's development needs specifically the needs of the most vulnerable child rights to education perspective, status, and the capacity to achieve the project objectives through looking at the resource use (what did we put in and how was it used?) – e.g. efficiency, relevance
- Review the effectiveness and performance of the project against planned results through looking at value derived from the resource use (what did we get out?) – e.g. results chains
- Assess the efficiency of the project, in particular in comparison with the traditional state based ECE services through looking at whether the value derived/likely to be derived justifies the resource use (was it worth it?) – e.g. efficiency, sustainability, outcome, equity
- Identify and document successes, challenges lessons learned
- Look into the sustainability of the project with potential for scale up of the model at the national level.
- Provide recommendations for future programming and scale-up.

The findings of the evaluation will be used as a basis for discussions, planning and programming between UNICEF and key national and international stakeholders. Evaluation results will be disseminated amongst government, development partners, civil society, and other stakeholders. It will inform the Government for future scaling up Alternative models of ECE, envisaged by the IsDB 70 million project and other initiatives. A joint management response will be produced upon completion of the evaluation process and made publicly available on the evaluation platforms.

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Period to be covered: The evaluation timeframe is anticipated to take place from April to November, 2023 and cover the period of intervention implementation from 2018 up to now.

Sectoral coverage: The evaluation will focus on the results of preschool education services provided by alternative centres, total 10 groups to be covered by evaluation including comparative analysis with other existing alternative models available in the country.

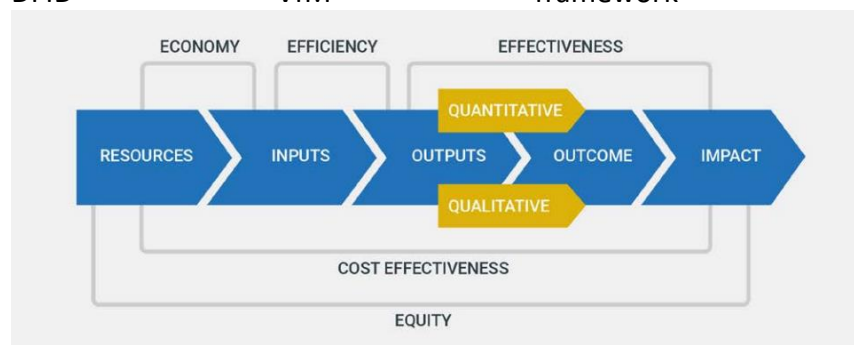
Thematic coverage: The current VfM assessment will be limited to the Five E's with the inclusion of relevant OECD-DAC criteria where they are considered to be critical to VfM that their exclusion would result in poor judgements being made.

Geographic coverage: Khorezm and Namangan regions of Uzbekistan.

USE OF RELEVANT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

The evaluation will follow DFID VfM framework⁴ (DFID, 2011) focusing on the 'Three E's' of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness which correspond respectively to three different levels of a programme results chain – inputs, outputs, and outcomes. A fourth 'E' – equity – is also acknowledged in the framework though there is also the fifth criterion of cost-effectiveness, which compares outcomes or impact to total costs.

DFID VfM framework (DFID, 2011⁵):



This conceptual framework is a good fit for the current evaluation for the following reasons:

- DFID was a reliable, well known thought leaders in the assessment of VfM in development programmes. Therefore, the framework is a valid, rigorous and well-recognised and established tool.
- It is relevant to all stages in the life cycle of an intervention including at the piloting stage focusing on potential cost-effectiveness and efficiency.
- The inclusion of equity is particularly important to the ECE whose primary goal is to reach most vulnerable children and delivering equitable ECE services as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

⁴ According to the DFID (2011: 4) the key terms are: Economy: Are we or our agents buying inputs of the appropriate quality at the right price? (Inputs are things such as staff, consultants, raw materials and capital that are used to produce outputs) Efficiency: How well do we or our agents convert inputs into outputs? (Outputs are results delivered by us or our agents to an external party. We or our agents exercise strong control over the quality and quantity of outputs). Effectiveness: How well are the outputs from an intervention achieving the desired outcome on poverty reduction? (Note that in contrast to outputs, we or our agents do not exercise direct control over outcomes). Cost-effectiveness: How much impact on poverty reduction does an intervention achieve relative to the inputs that we or our agents invest in it? Equity: This includes making sure development results are targeted at the poorest and include sufficient targeting of women and girls.

⁵ DFID (2011) DFID's Approach to Value for Money (VfM). Department for International Development, United Kingdom

The bidders are welcome to suggest other more relevant criteria or adapt the 5Es framework to allow a better focus on criteria such as access, quality, cost, and scalability. The successful bidders will finalise the criteria and their definitions in consultation with UNICEF during the inception stage.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND DESIGNS

A list of potential questions against the OECD-DAC criteria could be:

Relevance: What is the value of the intervention in relation to the needs of the most vulnerable compared to better-off groups of children? What does current pilot project suggest about the relevance of intervention to the needs of the target population? If successfully implemented would this project intervention likely to address the key issues affecting needs of vulnerable groups of children, e.g. readiness for school and equal start with other children? Were cultural, economic, political social factors have been taken into account while designing and implementing project?

Effectiveness: Is the project intervention achieving the results stated in the objective of the project? What are the main constraints on demand and supply? How well are the outputs from an intervention achieving the desired outcome on poverty reduction? Are the results of the project sufficiently targeted at the poorest and include sufficient targeting of women and girls?

Efficiency: Does the project use the financial and human resources in the most economical manner to achieve expected results? Are there any economical alternatives feasible? How cost-effective are state-funded public services in reaching the most vulnerable groups? How do costs of alternative ECE forms from pilot project compare to state funded public services to reach the most vulnerable? To what extent does the programme represent value for the resources used, and how can its value be improved?

Sustainability: Is it likely to be scaled up when the external support is withdrawn? Which of the models are viable options for scale-up? What can be learned from the alternative models to inform scaling decisions?

Impact (to the extent possible, taking into account socio-economic and cultural aspects): How much impact on poverty reduction and decrease in inequalities does an intervention achieve relative to the inputs? What are the results of intervention: positive and negative? Intended and unintended?

More specific questions will be developed by the successful contractor(s) during the inception stage.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The approach and methodology of the evaluation should be guided by the UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy⁶, the Evaluation Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)⁷, UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluations and Data Collection and Analysis⁸ and UNICEF's reporting standards. The suggested VfM framework is a multi-dimensional concept and encompasses all of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, as well as additional factors.

Proposals should set out an approach and methodology for gathering and analysing data. Bidders are welcome to suggest ideas about how they would approach this assignment in order to complete it as efficiently and timely as possible. Proposals should set out the most appropriate combination of approach and methodology (document review, synthesis or meta-analysis, semi-structured interviews, field visits, stakeholder surveys, focus group discussions and other methods) for gathering and analysing data to address each evaluation question. The proposed methodology shall be suitable to address the evaluation questions and should seek to include a mixed method approach based on review of existing evaluations, programme documents, surveys and interviews with key stakeholders, and field visits. This information should then be captured in an evaluation matrix, which will also identify the indicators, data sources and analytical methods to be used to address the evaluation questions. Potential methodological approaches are to be refined during the inception phase and before the data collection phase. A theory-based design will be applied to guide the assessment, and the evaluation will refine the underlying theory of change, incorporating process, outcome and contextual considerations into one framework. Bidders are also strongly encouraged to suggest an appropriate design to be able to compare UNICEF ECEs with government centres to answer some of the evaluation questions. Probably, it is likely that the actual costs of the alternative models to date might be quite different from the potential cost of the models at scale. Therefore, the evaluation probably will need to analyse cost breakdowns of the new models to inform modelling of potential costs at scale.

Data collection methods and processes should be gender-responsive and data should be systematically disaggregated by sex and age and, to the extent possible, by geographical region, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and other contextually relevant markers of equity.

The contractors together with UNICEF CO will clarify strategies for meeting the expressed expectations. The contractors will, furthermore, review the TOC, manage possible data limitations. Available data include Situation Reports, Results Assessment Module (RAM), Annual Report, SMQs, etc. Although all CO reports annually on output indicators in RAM, challenges in accessing data for selected outputs and outcomes may prevail. The output level indicators mainly rely on the project-level data. The contractors will also find that disaggregation of data, at times, is limited, and baseline data unavailable, which will influence assessment of changes.

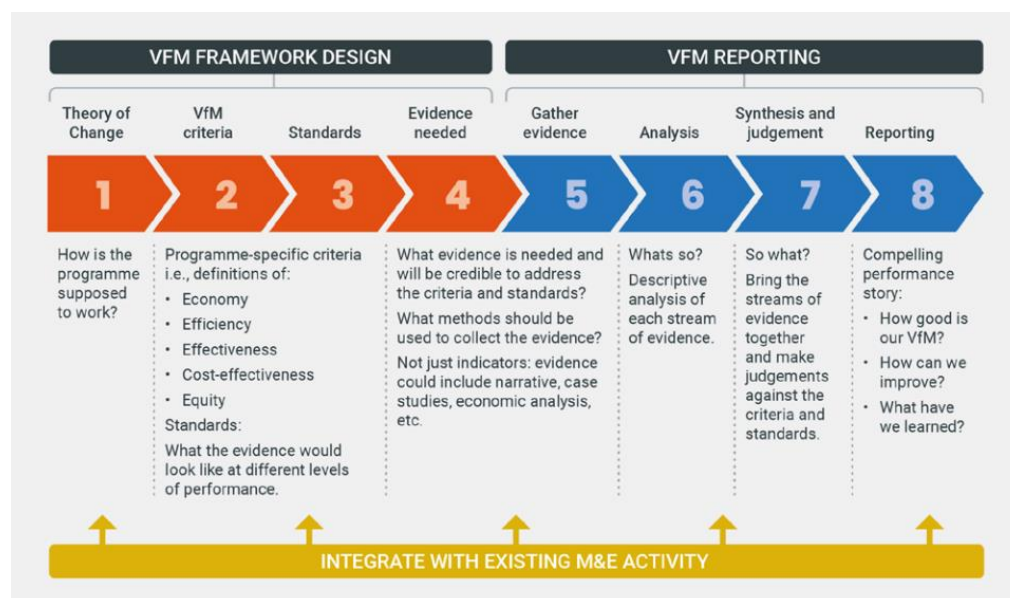
⁶ UNICEF 2018 Evaluation Policy <https://undocs.org/E/ICEF/2018/14>

⁷ UNEG Norms: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>, UNEG Standards: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22>

⁸ https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

The contractors will be expected to explain its approach to triangulation and quality assurance of all evaluation deliverables and to clarify, how it plans to engage key evaluation stakeholders to promote participation, ownership and utilization of the evaluation. The evaluation design should also consider the issues of gender and equity and mainstream them throughout the evaluation according to UNICEF Guidance on gender⁹ and disability integration¹⁰.

The approach to answer the efficiency-related questions, the following overall VfM design and reporting¹¹ is suggested:



Steps 1–4 will be discussed and finalised during the inception stage as they relate to the design of the VfM framework and Steps 5–8 will be done once the framework is agreed and in place.

As per to King and OPM, it is recommended to ensure that the VfM methodology uses evaluative reasoning based on rubrics; it relies on mixed methods: quant, qual, economic, and explores the ways of using M&E system of the models and the internal data.

EVALUATION PROCESS

⁹ UNICEF (2019) UNICEF Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation EVALUATION OFFICE AND GENDER SECTION; UNICEF (2020) “How to” checklist for gender integration into COVID-19 socioeconomic impact assessments and response plans

¹⁰ UNICEF (2012) Integrated Social Protection Systems Enhancing Equity for Children, UNICEF

¹¹ The OPM approach to assessing value for money: A guide. Oxford: Oxford Policy Management Ltd

Once the consultants are on board, the evaluation will be structured in the following main phases defined by accompanying activities as described below:

INCEPTION PHASE

The inception phase must include but not be limited to the following:

Initial Briefings and Desk Review: Brief introductory phone calls with staff from UNICEF CO will be held to kick off the process and planning the evaluation methodology. The consultants will commence the evaluation with a document review for which an electronic library. Apart from UNICEF documentation, consultants will explore any/all administrative data from EMIS and official data sources as MOPSE and State Statistics Committee. The purpose of the review will be to familiarise with the ECE models and start working on the methodology and inception report. The desk review will also be helpful in considering the scope of and specific aspects of VfM reforms to be included in the evaluation (or not) in the evaluation and fine-tune the object of evaluation. Once the initial desk review is completed, there will be a joint and separate call(s) with wider stakeholders to introduce the evaluation team to the key evaluation stakeholders, including members of an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) established as a sounding board for the evaluation to foster transparency and participation and to review key evaluation deliverables. ERG composition will be discussed and agreed during the inception stage.

Refinement of the evaluation methodology: One of the key steps is to familiarise and work with the ToC, and review if it is fit for purpose and revise it accordingly so that it is explicit about resources and inputs and how they are supposed to be used to produce outputs and outcomes. In addition, consultants will propose criteria of merit and worth relevant to this evaluation as well as the Five Es as the basis for VfM assessment. The consultants will work on the methodology in consultation with key stakeholders during rounds tables/workshops, including refinement of evaluation questions and exploring the most appropriate and feasible approaches. As part of refining the methodology, the team will also determine what kind of credible evidence is needed to make judgements, answer questions, etc. including project financial accounting data, log frame indicator data. Operational data, M&E data, and etc. The evaluators will suggest a relevant approach, evaluation framework, methods, sampling, timing, roles and responsibilities, etc.

An Inception Report (IR): An inception report will be submitted that demonstrates impartiality, and that aligns with UNICEF's quality standards. Based on the desk review, the IR will provide a contextual description and focus; justifications of proposed changes to the evaluation ToR; and a detailed methodology of the proposed feasible approaches to answer evaluation questions; refined theoretical framework and VfM framework; a description of the quality assurance mechanism, refined desk review outputs, and etc. The IR will also outline the strategies for management of data gaps, or data reliability issues, and it will include ethical considerations relating to primary data generation and use, as per UNICEF guidelines. Attached to the IR will be an evaluation matrix outlining evaluation questions, sub-questions, judgement criteria/indicators and benchmarks, assumptions, data sources and instruments/methods; mapping outputs which will be refined for the Evaluation Report; a work plan with a timeline; and an overview of the division of labour between the evaluation team members (national and international). The IR will

be subject to quality assurance: a review conducted by internal evaluation stakeholders and the ERGs (through a virtual presentation), an ethical review – should the proposed data gathering involve vulnerable groups, sensitive subjects and/or use of confidential data – and, finally, quality assurance by ECARO external assessment entity that requires a satisfactory rating for the field mission to proceed and be considered an acceptable product¹². The evaluation will proceed to implementation only on acceptance of a quality assured and approved evaluation design. The approval of the IR will mark the completion of the Inception Phase.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSULTATION STAGE

The evaluation will follow the design agreed in the Inception Report.

Hybrid data collection and report writing: Following the inception phase, an eight-week hybrid data collection will be organised during which primary and further secondary data will be generated and collected. The consultants will travel to Uzbekistan. The team will present the preliminary findings to the key stakeholders and ERG before drafting country evaluation reports. Evaluation report will be subject to a review undertaken by UNICEF CO, and an external quality assurance that requires a satisfactory rating. Following the first review of the draft report and the initial quality assurance, the evaluators will incorporate the comments provided as appropriate and prepare a next draft. There will be several rounds of comments and revisions (3-4). Once a final draft report has been approved, evaluators will present the evaluation findings and recommendations to the CO and ERG. The report will comply with UNICEF’s reporting standards and be no longer than 60 pages excluding annexes (Annex 1). The report will be rated in UNICEF’s Global Evaluation and Research Oversight System (GEROS)¹³, and will be published on UNICEF’s global website.

Other key elements of the implementation stage: it is important to consider how to answer the evaluation questions comparing ECE centres to government one. And on the totality of evidence and triangulation, synthesis of findings for each VfM criterion will be made leading to making judgements. More weight will be given to the criteria which are of more interest to the UNICEF team and partners.

In addition to UNICEF quality standards, the report should¹⁴:

- Tell a compelling performance story, focused on and structured around the aspects of performance that matter (as defined by the criteria) and presenting a clear judgement about the level of performance (as defined by the standards); and

¹² The evaluation team will be given a QA checklist to ensure their products meet UNICEF quality criteria. Financial proposals should take into account several rounds of comments and revisions of IR and each CER.

¹³ https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_GEROS.html

¹⁴ King and OPM (2018). The OPM approach to assessing value for money: A guide. Oxford: Oxford Policy Management Ltd.

- Give clear answers to important questions – by getting straight to the point, presenting transparent evidence, and being transparent about the basis upon which judgements are made
- Give relevant recommendations – recommendations should be developed to ensure the utility of the evaluation. They should logically follow the findings based on evidence and the conclusions drawn from them, with their rationale clearly explained, be developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders to ensure the relevance and feasibility of the actions.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND LIMITATION

Limitations include

- Lack of systematic documentation of the design and implementation of ECE model as well as lack of some data may limit the evaluation.
- Not all key informants might be available or reachable at the time of the evaluation.
- Some governments might be reluctant to share some data, while some could be of poor quality.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering UNICEF’s strategic agenda to harness innovation and deepen the evidence base to drive and sustain global progress towards the realization of children’s rights, ensuring ethical conduct in evidence generation is imperative. This is necessary both in its own right and as a significant contributor to ensuring quality and accountability in the evidence generation process, especially when it involves children. The evaluation should be conducted in strict adherence with UNEG ethical guidelines and code of conduct. The evaluation team will also sign a non-disclosure agreement.

The consultants should identify any potential ethical issues and approaches, as well as the processes for ethical review and oversight of the evaluation process in their proposal. At this stage, it is not anticipated that evaluation will engage children under 18 and other vulnerable groups of the population in data collection. However, should bidders propose otherwise, all evaluation deliverables will be subject to ethical approvals through the regional LTA holder.

Please see Annex 2 for more details.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The activity will be managed by the UNICEF Uzbekistan and conducted by external contractor(s). The CO will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight and management of evaluation and for management of the budget. The CO will assure the quality of evaluation and guarantee its alignment with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines and provide quality assurance checking that the findings and conclusions are relevant and proposed adaptations are actionable. All major deliverables will be reviewed firstly by CO (zero draft) and then by ECE team and ERG.

UNICEF's responsibilities include timely provision of all required information, guidance and feedback on all deliverables. The contractor is expected to produce products as per defined tasks and deliverables and revise them based on feedback to be provided by UNICEF.

The evaluation Manager will have the following responsibilities:

- Lead the management of the evaluation process (design, implementation and dissemination and coordination of its follow-up)
- Convene the regional ERG meetings; Facilitate the participation of those involved in the evaluation design
- Coordinate the selection of evaluation contractor(s);
- Safeguard the independence of the exercise and ensure evaluation products meet quality standards
- Connect the evaluation contractor(s) with the wider programme units, senior management and key programme stakeholders, and ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the evaluation
- Facilitate access to all information and documentation relevant to the evaluation, as well as to key actors and informants who should participate information-gathering methods
- Provide overall guidance and administrative support; Oversee progress and conduct of evaluation, the quality of the process and the products
- Manage/support relationship between CO, partners, etc
- Approve the deliverables
- Take responsibility for disseminating and learning
- Disseminate the results

The CO ECE team will have the following responsibilities at the country level:

- Support the Manager with the management of the evaluation process at the country level
- Review deliverables
- Facilitate access to all information and documentation relevant to the evaluation, as well as to key actors and informants who should participate information-gathering methods
- Provide overall guidance and administrative support; Oversee progress and conduct of evaluation, the quality of the process and the products
- Support evaluation manager in organising round tables/workshops as required

The ERG will:

- Review and provide comments and feedback on the quality of the evaluation process as well as on the evaluation products
- Facilitate the communication/presentation of results to CO and relevant partners at the regional and country level

The evaluators will report to the evaluation Manager and conduct the evaluation by fulfilling the contractual arrangements in line with the TOR, UNEG/OECD norms and standards and Ethical

Guidelines; this includes developing of the inception report, drafting and finalizing the final reports and other deliverables, and briefing the commissioner on the progress and key findings and recommendations, as needed. The evaluators should also adhere to UNICEF’s Evaluation Policy, to UNEG’s ethical guidelines for UN evaluations and to UNICEF Reporting Standards. Evaluators will sign a no conflict-of-interest attestation. They must demonstrate personal and professional integrity during the whole process of the evaluation and respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Further, contractors must respect ethics of research while working with children including using age appropriate consent forms, age appropriate data collection, and principle of do no harm. Furthermore, they must take care that those involved in the evaluation have an opportunity to examine the statements attributed to them. The evaluation process must be sensitive to beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment in which they will work. Especially, contractors must be sensitive to and address issues of protection, discrimination and gender inequality. Furthermore, they are not expected to assess the personal performance of individuals and must balance an assessment of management functions with due consideration of this principle.

WORKPLAN AND DELIVERABLES

A tentative time frame for the evaluation is provided below. The evaluation is expected to be completed within **8 months upon signing the contract**. This might be subject to change depending on the prevailing situation on ground at the time of the evaluation.

Stage	Activity	Duration	Deliverables
Kick-off	Contract signing; initial briefings (April, 2023)	1 week (April)	Meeting minutes
Inception	Initial desk review and development of Inception report	4 weeks (May)	Draft Inception Report
	Submission and presentation of first Draft Inception report to UNICEF (remotely)	1 week (June)	PPT and meeting minutes
	Revisions of draft report based on comments and inputs from UNICEF (1 week)	2 weeks (June)	Final draft Inception report
	Submission of Inception Report to Quality Assurance (Review by UNICEF, ERG, Universalialia and Ethical Review Board, if needed)	1 week (June)	Review matrix/ Approval

	Finalisation and submission of the Inception Report (consolidation of the comments)	July (2 weeks)	Final Inception report
	Preparation for field visit (planning ahead including for visas if necessary)	July (2 weeks)	Draft Schedule/Agenda
Implementation and consultations	Data collection and field work (10 days in-country)	August/September (2 weeks)	Finalised agenda
	Inception meetings with UNICEF (1 days)		Meeting minutes
	4 days in Namangan		Initial evaluation findings report
	4 days in Khorezm regions		Initial evaluation findings report
	Presentation of preliminary findings to CO (1 day)		PPT, meeting minutes
	Report writing and analysis and preparation of draft Evaluation report	September/October (4 weeks)	Draft Evaluation Report
	Submission and review of the report by UNICEF and ERG	October (2 weeks)	Comments
	Revisions of the draft report	November (2 weeks)	Revised version
	Submission and review of the report by ERG	November (1 week)	comments
	Consolidating comments and working on final report	November (1 week)	Final Draft Evaluation report
	Submission for Quality Assurance to Universalialia (1 week)	December (1 week)	Evaluation Commenting Matrix
Finalising report, consolidating comments	December (to allow payment before December 10)	Final Evaluation Report	

The evaluation process at all stages should follow UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. Expected deliverables are listed in the Table 7 below:

In case of virtual events, translation and Zoom and other expenses have to be included in the proposals.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

UNICEF is seeking to contract a Consultancy company/institution, corresponding to the following requirements:

- Duly registered in the country of residence, without limitation as to the countries of registration.
- Proven experience in evaluation using theory-based designs mentioned listed above (not **less than ten years**) is a must.
- Consulting experience on evaluation of **child protection** programmes is a must.
- Demonstrated experience undertaking evaluative assessments of deinstitutionalisation programmes

The Consultancy company shall provide the Evaluation team. The Evaluation team should (minimum) be comprised of Team Leader, and local researcher

The Evaluation Team Leader should have the following qualifications:

- Advanced university degree, preferably in evaluation, social studies or a related field. A combination of relevant academic background and relevant work experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree
- At least eight years' experience in evaluation, including experience of evaluating child protection programmes and familiarity with UNICEF and the UN system (CVs required)
- Previous work experience with UNICEF and ECA region, knowledge of UNICEF procedures
- Previous solid experience of designing and leading Theory-Based Evaluations and documented professional experience in conducting rigorous independent evaluations that meet professional evaluation standards including VfM evaluations
- Proven experience of using techniques/approaches in previous evaluations
- Understanding of Sustainable Development Goals and its relation to UNICEF work in ECAR
- Strong analytical skills and statistical data analysis experience
- Ability to produce content for high standard deliverables in English
- Sensitivity towards ethics with regards to human and child rights issues, different cultures, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction and gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity
- A strong development background with a profound understanding of development and Human Rights-Based programmes

National Evaluators

National Evaluators should have relevant higher academic/post-graduate degrees and a minimum of five years of relevant professional experience in research especially in conducting data collection activities (in English and local language(s)), analysing collected primary and existing secondary data and writing up the analysis in English. The National Expert should speak a relevant local language and be knowledgeable of the local context.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Award criteria: Cumulative Analysis.

The evaluation and award criteria that will be used for this RFP is Cumulative Analysis evaluation (point system with weight attribution). The weighting ratio between the technical and financial proposals will be 70:30. The respective importance between technical and financial scores will be weighted as 70% and 30%.

An offer is considered technically acceptable (and therefore eligible for opening of financial offers) when it obtains 49 points out of 70 during the course of the technical evaluation. The final selection of the contractor will be based on a combination of the technical and financial proposals with a weighting of 70% for the technical proposal and 30% for the financial proposal. In the case of cumulative analysis, the proposals scoring below 70% of the available technical points will be considered non-compliant and will be rejected and not further considered (e.g. in the case of 70:30, the passing score is 49 points out of 70).

- Weightage for Technical Proposal = 70%
- Weightage for Financial Proposal = 30%
- Total Score = 100%

A) The technical proposal (70 points) should include the following information:

- Cover letter
- Presentation of the firm/research institution/consulting group and experiences
- Understanding of the ToRs and Evaluation needs
- Team composition (incl. identification of Team Leader and a manager), with complete CVs (Annex 4 lists the key requirements for Team Leader)
- Matching the team skills with the required skills
- Proposed methodology and rationale for it
- Detailed Timeline/Chronogram and level of effort by Team Leader and manager
- Sample(s) or link(s) of previous Evaluation(s) by the team members

B) The following documents should be included in the technical proposals of the bidders:

- a) A complete copy of your latest audited financial statements with comparative figures for the last 2 years, preferably signed by your company’s accounting firm/ certified external auditor. The financial statements are to include, but not limited to, the following:
 1. Balance sheet (mandatory)
 2. Income statement/ Profit and Loss Statement (mandatory)
 3. Statement of cash flows (if available)
 4. Statement of changes in shareholders’ equity (if available)
 5. The report from the external auditor (if available)
 6. Notes to the financial statements (if available)
- b) A copy of your company’s certificate of legal registration (mandatory)
- c) A copy of your Official list of authorized signatures (mandatory)
- d) Your company’s UN Global Marketplace (UNGM) registration number. (mandatory). You are kindly requested to register for, at the very latest, Basic and Level 1 stages. For registration and instructions on how to, kindly refer to the attachment or the UNGM site: www.ungm.org/RegistrationProcess

The technical proposal will be assessed with the following criteria:

Technical criteria	sub-	Description	Maximum Points
Completeness of technical requirements (5 points)	of (5)	Overall conformity of the proposal, including appropriate referencing and supporting documents (description of institution and key personnel, understanding of ToRs, matching team skills with required skills, proposed methodology, detailed timeline, references and written sample)	5
Qualifications of team (35 points)	of	Overall conformity with requirement of the Team leader	35
		Overall conformity with requirement of international experts	
		Overall conformity with requirement of national experts	
Quality of technical proposal (30 points)	(30)	Understanding of the ToRs (match between the proposed approach and requested scope of evaluation)	4
		Quality of the methodology and methods proposed	20
		Realistic work plan and level of efforts of team	2
		Understanding of ethical considerations and integration of such in the methodology	4
Maximum Score for technical criteria			70
Minimum Score for technical compliance			49

Total Maximum points for the technical proposal is **70** points. Only proposals which receive a minimum of **49** points will be considered further.

Separately, a **financial proposal** should be as detailed as possible, and it is recommended that the proposal be broken down by the number of days worked by each team member and the daily rate of each member, travel costs, per diem, insurance, and administrative and operational costs, etc. A Financial Proposal Template will be provided.

B) **Financial Proposal** should include:

1. Detailed budget as per the Financial Proposal template
2. Explanation of budget assumptions with regard to planning, team composition, field work, etc.

The total amount of points allocated for the price component is **30**. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price; e.g.:

$$\frac{\text{Score for price proposal X} = (\text{Max. score for price proposal (30 Points)} * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal})}{\text{Price of proposal X}}$$

Total obtainable Technical (70) and Financial (30) score: **100**

All interested institutions/consultancy companies are requested to include in their submission detailed costs including:

- a) Daily rate including hours per day
- b) Expenses associate with remote data collection, and translation etc. Please include all relevant costs that are required for this exercise) to be agreed prior to commencing project
- c) Any additional requirements needed to complete evaluation or that might have an impact on cost or delivery of products
- d) The evaluators would be required to use their own computers, printers, photocopier etc.

PAYMENT

Payment is contingent on approval by the Evaluation Manager and will be made in three instalments:

- a) 40% upon clearance and acceptance of Inception Report (including activities suggested above)
- b) 30% upon clearance and acceptance of Evaluation Report (including activities suggested above)

c) 30% upon clearance and acceptance of Final Evaluation Report (including activities suggested above)

The institutions may propose different payment schedules that will be considered during the assessment of the proposal.

Annex B. Ethical review approval letter



Research Ethics Approval

28 August 2023

Mr. Nard Huijbregts & Ms. Katharina Bollig
Economic Policy research Institute (EPRI)
Sunclare Building, 21 Dreyer Street
Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa

RE: Ethics Review Board findings for: *Evaluation of UNICEF's Alternative Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centers in Uzbekistan* (HML IRB Review #769UZBE23)

Dear Mr. Huijbregts & Ms. Bollig,

Protocols for the protection of human subjects in the above study were assessed through a research ethics review by HML Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 15 – 29 August 2023. This study's human subjects' protection protocols, as stated in the materials submitted, received **ethics review approval**.

You and your project staff remain responsible for ensuring compliance with HML IRB's determinations. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring prompt reporting to HML IRB of proposed changes in this study's design, risks, consent, or other human protection protocols and providing copies of any revised materials;
- conducting the research activity in accordance with the terms of the IRB approval until any proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the IRB, except when necessary to mitigate hazards to subjects;
- promptly reporting any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others in the course of this study;
- notifying HML IRB when your study is completed.

HML IRB is authorized by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (IRB #1211, IORG #850, FWA #1102).

Sincerely,

D. Michael Anderson, Ph.D., MPH
Chair & Human Subjects Protections Director, HML IRB

cc: Zokir Nazarov, Alberto Biancoli, Vazira Nazarova, Shakhlo Ashrafkhanova, Penelope Lantz, JD

Health Media Lab, Inc.
1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 450
Washington, DC 20036 USA
+1.202.246.8504
unicef@hmlirb.com www.hmlirb.com

Annex C. Evaluation matrix

OECD-DAC/ VfM criteria	TOC level	Evaluation questions	Indicators	Data collection method	Data source
Relevance	Activity level, Output level	1. Is the current pilot project relevant to the needs of the target population (i.e., children from low-income households in remote areas)?	1.1. Extent to which reported needs of the target children are included in the ECE model design and its TOC 1.2. Perceptions from stakeholders (policy makers, implementers, parents/caregivers) on relevance of ECE project, disaggregated by gender	Desk review	Programme documents (conceptual framework, action plan, training materials, communication campaigns) Programme monitoring data Publications on the situation of children in Uzbekistan Publications on the education system in Uzbekistan Publications on early childhood education
		2. If successfully implemented would this project intervention be able to address the key issues affecting needs of vulnerable groups of children, e.g., equitable access to quality preschool education? 3. To what extent and how have equity, gender and human rights considerations been integrated into the design and planning of the ECE centres?	2.1. Extent to which TOC incorporates access to quality preschool education 3.1. Extent to which cultural, economic, political, social factors were included in the project's activities, the project's conceptual framework and TOC, teacher training, monitoring documents, financial reports. 3.2. Degree of inclusion of gender in teacher training, project TOC, monitoring data, communication campaign 3.3. Gender of facility managers in 10 pilot sites 3.4. Perceptions from policy makers and implementers on cultural, economic, political social factors influencing the project's design and implementation, disaggregated by gender/location	Key informant interviews Focus group discussions	Interviews with MOPSE, UNICEF, local governments, teachers to discuss relevance of ECE centres to meet identified needs and relevant cultural, economic, political social factors Focus group discussions with parents/caregivers on the relevance of the alternative ECE centres in addressing their (education) needs
Effectiveness	Output level, Outcome level	1. To what extent are the inputs translating into desired outputs and outcomes?	<u>Outputs</u> 1.1. Number of children enrolled in alternative ECE groups 1.2. Number of facilities renovated and equipped with age-appropriate	Desk review	Programme documents (theory of change, conceptual framework, action plan) Publications on other (alternative) ECE interventions

		<p>furniture and play and learning materials</p> <p>1.3. Number of preschool staff trained</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <p>1.4. Number of children attending alternative ECE groups</p> <p>1.5. Percentage of children enrolled in alternative ECE centre; vis-à-vis original targeting lists prepared in communities</p> <p>1.6. Percentage of parents/caregivers reporting to know children aged 3-5, not enrolled in ECE centres</p> <p>1.7. Average group sizes</p> <p>1.8. Pupil-to-teacher ratio</p> <p>1.9. Percentage of parents/caregivers indicating involvement in centres activities and events</p> <p>1.10. Rating from parents/caregivers on overall satisfaction with alternative ECE centre, satisfaction with facilities, curriculum and teachers</p> <p>1.11. Perceptions from researchers on age-appropriateness of facilities</p>	<p>Analysis of monitoring data</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Focus group discussions</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Observations</p>	<p>in Uzbekistan and globally, and the results achieved by these</p> <p>Original targeting lists of children in poor households, prepared in communities (if available)</p> <p>Programme monitoring data on outputs, collected by ECE centres, MOPSE, UNICEF</p> <p>Key informant interviews with MOPSE, UNICEF, local governments, teachers to discuss perceptions on effectiveness of pilot in achieving its desired objectives, and constraints in terms of preschool education demand and supply</p> <p>Focus group discussions with parents/caregivers on the involvement of parents/caregivers in the pilot, their perceptions on the pilot's effectiveness, and constraints they may be aware of</p> <p>Questionnaire administered to parents/caregivers</p> <p>Observations of pilot ECE groups, conducted by evaluation team</p>
	<p>2. Is the project intervention achieving the results stated in the project's objective?</p>	<p>2.1. List of desired outputs and outcomes achieved</p> <p>2.2. List of desired outputs and outcomes not achieved</p> <p>2.3. Perceptions from policy makers and implementers on achievement of original objectives</p>		
	<p>3. Has the project been effective in reaching vulnerable children in remote areas?</p>	<p>1.1. Number of children enrolled in alternative ECE groups, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, location</p> <p>1.2. Number of children attending alternative ECE groups, by gender, age, ethnicity, location</p>		

		<p>4. Is the project achieving its results considering equity dimensions, including children's gender/age/location/ ethnicity?</p> <p>5. What are the main constraints/challenges to achieving the results in terms of providing ECE services in the alternative centres?</p>	<p>1.3. Percentage of parents/caregivers reporting to know children aged 3-5, not enrolled in ECE centres, by location</p> <p>4.1. Number of preschool staff trained, by gender, ethnicity, location</p> <p>4.2. Average group sizes, by location</p> <p>4.3. Pupil-to-teacher ratio, by location</p> <p>4.4. Percentage of parents/caregivers indicating involvement in centres activities and events, by gender/location</p> <p>4.5. Rating from parents/caregivers on overall satisfaction with alternative ECE centre, satisfaction with facilities, curriculum and teachers, by gender/location</p> <p>5.1. Perceptions of implementers and parents/caregivers on constraints and challenges in ECE provision, by gender/location</p> <p>5.2. Perception of implementers and parents/caregivers on potential exclusions of children, by gender/location</p> <p>5.3. Extent to which strategies to reduce challenges are included in conceptual framework</p> <p>5.4. Extent to which implementers have adopted activities to address constraints and challenges</p> <p>5.5. List of main challenges faced, mentioned by teachers</p> <p>5.6. List of potential improvements mentioned by parents</p>		
Efficiency	Activity level, Output level	<p>1. Are inputs into the project in terms of human, financial and infrastructural resources of adequate quality?</p> <p>2. Does the project use the financial and human resources in the most</p>	<p>1.1. Perceptions of implementers on quality of resources vis-à-vis costs</p> <p>2.1. Ratio of inputs (human and financial resources) to outputs (number of</p>	Key informant interviews	Key informant interviews with MOPSE, UNICEF, local governments, teachers to discuss the efficiency of the delivery process and hold-ups encountered

		<p>economical manner to achieve expected results?</p> <p>3. To what extent do costs differ based on project location?</p> <p>4. Are there more economical alternatives available?</p>	<p>children enrolled, number of teachers trained, number of facilities renovated and equipped, number of awareness raising activities)</p> <p>2.2. Unit cost per child, teacher, facility, activity</p> <p>2.3. Ratio of actual inputs to target inputs</p> <p>2.4. Degree of satisfaction of implementers regarding availability of resources and efficiency of administrative processes</p> <p>1.1. Input-output ratios per location</p> <p>1.2. Unit cost per location</p> <p>1.3. Actual-to-target ratios per location</p> <p>4.1. Relation between costs of various alternative ECE models</p>	<p>Analysis of administrative project data</p>	<p>Financial data from alternative ECE model, data on outputs (including number of children enrolled, teachers trained, facilities renovated and equipped, awareness raising activities, etc.); financial data and output data from other existing ECE models</p>
Sustainability	Outcome level, Impact level	<p>1. Is the project likely to be scaled up when the external support is withdrawn?</p> <p>2. Is the alternative ECE model, as implemented in the pilot sites, a viable option for scale-up?</p>	<p>1.1. Perceptions from policy makers on political will of MOPSE and more generally government to continue and scale up alternative ECE model</p> <p>1.2. Extent to which existing legislation incorporates alternative ECE models</p> <p>1.3. Extent to which financial resources are available/likely to be available to continue financing of alternative ECE model</p> <p>2.1. Affordability of alternative ECE model in the future, considering different scale up options</p> <p>2.2. Perceptions from policy makers and implementers on scalability of ECE models</p> <p>2.3. List of challenges to scaling up of alternative ECE model mentioned by interviewees</p> <p>2.4. Perceptions from policy makers and implementers on demand for alternative ECE services</p> <p>2.5. Percentage of parents/caregivers indicating that their child would not be</p>	<p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Desk review</p>	<p>Interviews with MOPSE, UNICEF, implementers of other, alternative ECE models to understand prevailing political will and state of human and financial resources and willingness to invest in ECE over the coming years.</p> <p>Documents pertaining to the legal and institutional framework of preschool education in the country</p> <p>Government budgets, public expenditure reviews speaking to historic allocations to education and preschool education</p> <p>Programme evaluations from other ECE models in Uzbekistan and globally speaking to scalability of programme and challenges encountered therein</p>

		3. What can be learned from the alternative model to inform scaling decisions?	<p>attending ECE in absence of alternative centre, by location</p> <p>3.1. Perceptions from policy makers and implementers on lessons learned, opportunities, challenges</p> <p>3.2. List of main learnings mentioned by interviewees</p>	Costed scale-up options	Financial data/reports from alternative ECE project, historic data on preschool enrolment rates, historic data and projections of population size, including age-group breakdown
Impact	Impact level	<p>1. Is the project likely to contribute to its desired impact?</p> <p>2. What (other) positive and negative, intended, and unintended impacts were achieved/are likely to be achieved?</p> <p>3. How are these impacts likely to differ when considering equity dimensions, such as children's gender/age/location/ethnicity?</p>	<p>1.1. Extent to which outputs and outcomes have been achieved as ascribed by the TOC, providing for the achievement of impact</p> <p>1.2. Percentage of parents/caregivers indicating that children would not be attending ECE, in absence of alternative ECE centre</p> <p>1.3. Percentage of parents/caregivers who can identify prevailing barriers of access to ECE</p> <p>1.4. List of main barriers of access to ECE</p> <p>1.5. Extent to which interviewees agree that alternative ECE centres help to provide every child the opportunities to learn and develop</p> <p>1.6. Perceptions from policy makers, as to whether alternative ECE centres can close prevailing access gaps</p> <p>2.1. Perceptions from policy makers and teachers on other direct, indirect, positive, negative impacts, by gender/location</p> <p>2.2. List of most significant changes reported by parents/caregivers and teachers</p> <p>3.1. Percentage of parents/caregivers indicating that children would not be attending ECE, in absence of alternative centre, by gender/location/ethnicity</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Focus group discussions</p>	<p>Programme documents (theory of change, conceptual framework, action plan)</p> <p>Publications on other (alternative) ECE interventions in Uzbekistan and globally, and the ability of these to achieve impacts</p> <p>Interviews with MOPSE, UNICEF, local governments, teachers to discuss the changes the project is likely contributing to in children, families and the wider communities</p> <p>Focus group discussions with parents/caregivers to discuss the changes they see in their children and broader communities</p> <p>Monitoring data on children's progress across child development domains, collected by teachers</p> <p>Parents/caregivers questionnaire</p>

			<p>3.2. Percentage of parents/caregivers who can identify prevailing barriers of access to ECE, by location</p> <p>3.3. Extent to which interviewees agree that alternative ECE centres help to provide every child the opportunities to learn and develop, by location</p> <p>3.4. Perceptions from policy makers, as to whether alternative ECE centres can close prevailing access gaps, by location</p> <p>3.5. List of most significant changes reported by parents/caregivers and teachers by location</p>		
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Annex D. List of documents consulted

Policy framework for ECE in Uzbekistan
Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Law on Preschool Education and Upbringing, 2019
Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Law on Education, 2020
Cabinet of Ministers, Resolution on measures to further develop the system of compulsory one-year preparation of children for primary education, 2020
Alternative ECE models
Rafalska, M., Conceptual framework for Alternative Models of Preschool Education in Uzbekistan, 2018
Ministry of Preschool Education & UNICEF, Action Plan for the Implementation of Models of Alternative Preschool Education in Uzbekistan, 2018
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan, Alternative Models of Preschool Provision in Uzbekistan, 2022
World Bank, Project Appraisal Document for Promoting Early Childhood Development Project, 2019
World Bank, Implementation Completion and Results Report for the Improving Pre-Primary and General Secondary Education Project, 2020
Islamic Development Bank, Terms of Reference for Joint GPE-ACG SmartED Project for Improving the Quality and Efficiency of the National Education System in the Republic of Uzbekistan, n.d.
Education sector in Uzbekistan
Republic of Uzbekistan, Education Sector Plan, 2013-2017
Republic of Uzbekistan, Education Sector Plan, 2019-2023
UNICEF, Policy Review of Preschool Education in Uzbekistan, 2017
World Bank, Uzbekistan Education Sector Analysis, 2018
Zakhirova, G., Possibilities of Practical Application of International Experience in the Development of the Education System in Uzbekistan, 2018 (<i>original in Russian</i>)
Bigarinova, A., Islamova, U., Public-Private Partnerships In Early Childhood Education: International Experience And Lessons For Uzbekistan. Document For Discussion, 2018
Republic of Uzbekistan, Concept of Preschool Education Development, 2019
Republic of Uzbekistan, Concept of Secondary Education Development, 2019
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan, Education Continuity in COVID-19 Pandemic times: Impressions on Introducing Distance Learning in Basic Education in Uzbekistan, 2020
World Bank, Improving pre-primary and secondary education project, 2020
Iminov, O., Preschool Education: Reforms in Action, 2020 (<i>original in Russian</i>)
Sankar, D., Uzbekistan Education Sector Analysis, 2021
Salikhov, N., Improvement Of Management Of The Preschool Education System In Uzbekistan, 2021 (<i>original in Russian</i>)
Hidirbaev, B., Identified problems in the development of the preschool education system, 2021 (<i>original in Russian</i>)
Ministry of Preschool Education & UNICEF, Towards Achieving Universal Preschool Education in Uzbekistan, 2022
Sharopova, N., Opportunities for Applying Foreign Experience in the Development of the Preschool (<i>original in Russian</i>)
Keldiyorova, Z., Modern System of Preschool Education in Uzbekistan, 2023 (<i>original in Russian</i>)
Situation of children in Uzbekistan
UNICEF, The pattern of public investment in children in Uzbekistan: current status and development prospects, 2018
UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children in Uzbekistan, 2019

United Nations Uzbekistan, Situation Analysis on Children and Adults with Disabilities in Uzbekistan, 2019
UNICEF, Youth of Uzbekistan, 2020
State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics & UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021-2022. Survey Findings Report, 2022
Broader socio-economic context in Uzbekistan
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan Annual Reports, 2017-2022
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan, Country Programme Document 2015, 2020
ADB, Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment Update, 2018
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan, Building a National Social Protection System fit for Uzbekistan's Children and Youth, 2019
World Bank, Project Information Document: Strengthening the Social Protection System Project, 2019
ILO, World Bank, UNICEF, Assessment of the social protection system in Uzbekistan, 2020
Fattakhova, J., & Chepel, S., Assessment of COVID-19 Impacts on the Socio-Economic Situation in Uzbekistan, 2020
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan, Gender Programmatic Review, 2020
UNESCO, Inclusion Profile Uzbekistan, 2021
World Bank, Second Systematic Country Diagnostic, 2022
World Bank, Country Profile Disability Inclusion, 2022
UNDP, Negative Impact of Gender Stereotypes and Patriarchal Attitudes on Gender Equality in Uzbekistan, 2022
Design, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of inclusive early childhood education
United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, A Journey to Gender Equality in Education, 2010
UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank or the Global Partnership for Education, Education sector analysis: Methodological guidelines, 2014
UNICEF, UNICEF's Programme Guidance for Early Childhood Development, 2017
UNICEF, Defining, monitoring and improving quality. Guidelines for stronger quality assurance systems in early childhood education, 2019
UNICEF, A World Ready to Learn: Prioritizing quality early childhood education, 2019
UNICEF, Build to last: A framework in support of universal quality pre-primary education, 2020
UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and education: All Means All, 2020
UNESCO, Policy paper: Right from the start: build inclusive societies through inclusive early childhood education, 2021
UNESCO, Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: Inclusion and Education: All Means All, 2021
Nugroho, D., Delgado, M., Baghdasaryan, B., Vindrola, S., Lata, D. and Mehmood Syed, G., Tackling Gender Inequality from the Early Years: Strategies for building a gender-transformative pre-primary education system, 2022

Annex E. List of visited sites

Visited site	Address/preschool facility
<i>Tashkent, Uzbekistan</i>	
UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan*	Mustaqillik Ave 6, 100050, Tashkent, Toshkent Shahri, Uzbekistan
Ministry of Finance Uzbekistan	Mustaqillik maydoni 5a, 100008, Toshkent, Toshkent, Uzbekistan
<i>Khorezm region, Uzbekistan</i>	
Regional Education Department of Khorezm	Urgench
Kushkupir District	Preschool facility #38
Khiva District	Preschool facility #7
Bogot District	Preschool facility #12, Yangi Qadam Makhalla
<i>Namangan region, Uzbekistan</i>	
Regional Education Department of Namangan	Namangan
City Education Department of Namangan	Namangan
Norin District	Preschool facility #30, Soy Buyi Makhalla
Chust District	Preschool facility #47
Turakurgon District	Preschool facility #37
Kosonsoy District	Preschool facility #23

* Several meetings with stakeholders from government agencies were conducted at the UNICEF CO Uzbekistan Office. Moreover, multiple meetings were conducted online, via zoom.

Annex F. Primary data collection tools

Key informant interview guides: Representative from the Ministry of Preschool and School Education or Agency for Preschool Education

Time allocation: 60-80 minutes

Consent script (to be read out to participants)

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate and have this conversation?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

Behzod Alimov	b.alimov@wiut.uz	+998 71 2387400
Sarvinoz Mamadjonova	sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com	
Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Ministry/agency	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

<p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position. 2. Please elaborate on your experience with early childhood education and development in Uzbekistan.
<p>Education needs of children</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From your perspective, what are the main educational needs that children face in Uzbekistan? Probe specifically for preschool education. 2. Do these needs differ for boys/girls, children in urban/rural areas, children from ethnic minorities, etc? 3. What barriers do children and their families face in addressing these needs? 4. How is the Government/your ministry currently working to address these barriers?
<p>Involvement in ECE design and implementation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you been involved in the design of the alternative ECE model? Please elaborate. 2. Please elaborate on the design process and the different actors that were involved. 3. How were the needs of the target population considered in the design process? 4. Do you think alternative ECE models, such as the one implemented by UNICEF and MOPSE, can help to address the educational needs of children?
<p>Results</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From your perspective, what are the main results of the alternative ECE model implemented by MOPSE and UNICEF? <i>(Probe for results in terms of improved ECE facilities and infrastructure for preschool education in the pilot sites, increased capacity of preschool teachers, heightened awareness on the importance and relevance on preschool education in the vicinity of the pilot sites, etc.)</i> 2. What factors helped to achieve the results you mentioned? 3. Are there any results that you were hoping for but were likely not achieved? 4. What factors were obstacles to achieving these results? 5. Over the longer-term, what broader changes do you hope the alternative ECE pilot will contribute to? Probe for positive, negative, intended or unintended changes. 6. Do you think the alternative ECE pilot contributes to equal access to quality education, especially for vulnerable children? Please explain your answer.
<p>Inclusion of vulnerable children</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the alternative ECE pilot project been effective in reaching disadvantaged children in the selected pilot sites? 2. How exactly were these children targeted?

3. Were characteristics such as gender and ethnicity included in the targeting process?
4. Are you aware of any challenges parents continue to face in terms of accessing preschool education?

Efficiency

1. Do you think the ECE centres have all necessary resources to efficiently provide ECE services? Which resources (human, financial, equipment) are missing?
2. Were all actors involved in the implementation sufficiently trained to fulfil their responsibilities in an efficient manner?
3. From your perspective, how efficient was coordination and exchange of information between different actors involved in the implementation of the ECE pilot project?
4. Are you aware of how the costs of the ECE services provided under the pilot project compare to state funded/public services?

Sustainability

1. Do you think there is political and financial willingness to continue and scale up the alternative ECE project, even when the external support is withdrawn?
2. Do you think the alternative ECE model is a viable option for scale-up? Please explain why/why not.
3. What would be needed for further scale up of the alternative ECE model?
4. What lessons can be learned from the alternative ECE model in the pilot sites to inform scaling decisions? Would you propose any changes to its design or implementation?

Closing

1. Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you would like to provide about the ECE pilot project, that we have not discussed yet?

Key informant interview guides: Representative from the Ministry of Finance

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate and have this conversation be recorded?

Contact details of researchers

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Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Ministry/agency	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

<p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.2. What is the Ministry's role in relation to the funding and financial management of education in Uzbekistan?
<p>Budget allocation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Could you provide an overview of the budget allocation for the education sector in Uzbekistan?2. How has it evolved in recent years?3. What percentage of the national budget is allocated to education, and how does this compare to other sectors?4. What percentage of the budget allocation to the education sector goes to preschool education?5. How are financial resources distributed among different levels of education?6. Is there a focus on equitable resource allocation, particularly to underserved regions or populations?
<p>Priorities and challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the Government's funding priorities within the education sector, and how are these determined?2. Are there specific areas or education programmes receiving increased funding attention in recent budgets?3. What are the priorities specifically for preschool education?4. Are there plans to invest in the expansion of preschool infrastructure?5. What are the main financial challenges or constraints faced by the Ministry of Finance in funding the education sector?
<p>Monitoring</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does the Ministry of Finance monitor and evaluate the spending on education, specifically preschool education?2. Are there mechanisms in place for monitoring and evaluating the impact of education spending?
<p>Private and alternative ECE models</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From your perspective, what is the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in preschool education?2. Are you aware of the alternative ECE models, implemented with support from international partners?3. How would you assess the role of these alternative models in providing preschool education in the country?4. Should international support be withdrawn, do you think there would be political will to finance such alternative models by the Government?

Closing

1. Is there any additional information or insights you would like to share regarding the Ministry of Finance's role in the financing of education and early childhood education?

Key informant interview guides: Representative from the Agency for Strategic Reforms

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate and have this conversation be recorded?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

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Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Organisation	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.2. Could you briefly explain the mission and objectives of the agency?3. How does the Agency work together with other government agencies? (In this case, for example, the Ministry of Preschool Education.)
Priorities <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the key strategic priorities and initiatives that the Agency for Strategic Reforms is currently working on?2. What are the strategic priorities in the education sector, specifically preschool education?3. Are these included in strategies, plans, roadmaps?4. How do these priorities align with Uzbekistan’s long-term development goals?5. To what extent do the priorities align with the SDGs?6. How have these priorities evolved over the years, and what factors have influenced these changes?7. Specifically with regards to education, can you provide an update on the progress made in implementing reform initiatives over the past few years?
Inclusion and equality <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does the agency ensure that reform initiatives promote inclusive development, reaching all segments of the population?2. From your perspective, what are the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the country?3. Are there specific measures to address disparities and social inclusion?
Implementation and monitoring <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does the agency monitor and evaluate the progress of its reform initiatives on key sectors?2. What are some of the main challenges and obstacles faced during the implementation of reform initiatives?3. How does the agency address these challenges and adapt its strategies?
Future outlook <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where do you see the Agency for Strategic Reforms heading in the next few years?2. Are there emerging areas of focus or new reform initiatives on the horizon?3. What is the role of education, specifically preschool education, in the future of Uzbekistan?
Closing <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is there any additional information or insights you would like to share regarding the agency's work and its impact on Uzbekistan's development?

Key informant interview guides: Partners at national level, implementing ECE models

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate and have this conversation be recorded?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

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Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Organisation	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.2. Please elaborate on your experience with the education/early childhood education system in Uzbekistan.
Education needs of children <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From your perspective, what are the main educational needs that children face in Uzbekistan? Probe specifically for preschool education.2. Do these needs differ for boys/girls, children in urban/rural areas, children from ethnic minorities, etc?3. What are the main barriers to fulfilling these needs?4. What are efforts from the Government to address these barriers?5. Does your organisation work to address these barriers? Please elaborate on activities.
Involvement in ECE design and implementation <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have you been involved in the design or implementation of a project/programme on the provision of alternative ECE? Please elaborate on the project. <i>Probe for objectives, target group, geographic area of implementation, involved actors, etc.</i>2. How is this project/programme aiming to address prevailing barriers to ECE?3. To what extent is the project/programme aligned with government priorities in the area of ECE?
Results <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the main results you sought to achieve with the implementation of the alternative ECE model/ECE activities?2. Have you achieved these results so far? Please elaborate. Probe for differences in results according to location, gender, etc.3. What factors helped to achieve the results you mentioned?4. What factors were obstacles to achieving these results?5. Over the long-term, what broader changes do you hope to achieve through the project/programme?6. Is the project/programme on track to achieving these?
Efficiency <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do you think the ECE services provided under your project/programme are cost/effective? Please elaborate why/why not.2. Are you aware of how the costs of the ECE services provided under the project/programme compare to state-funded/public services?
Sustainability

1. How would you assess the political willingness from the Government to continue and scale up alternative ECE models, even when external support is withdrawn?
2. How would you assess the Government's willingness to finance alternative ECE models?
3. From your point of view, what further support does the Government need to scale up alternative ECE models?
4. What lessons can be learned from the implementation of alternative ECE models to inform scaling decisions?

Closing

1. Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you would like to provide about the ECE pilot project, that we have not discussed yet?

Key informant interview guides: UN and development partners in the education sector

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate and have this conversation be recorded?

Contact details of researchers

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Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Organisation	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.2. Please elaborate on your experience with the education sector and early childhood education system in Uzbekistan.
Overall priorities <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the Uzbekistan's priorities for the education sector, specifically early childhood education?2. How have these goals evolved over the years?3. What recent developments or reforms have been implemented in the education sector?
Educational needs <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the main educational needs of children in the country? Probe for access to education and quality of education services.2. What about children from remote areas, ethnic minorities, girls, children with disabilities?3. What barriers do children and their parents face in meeting these needs?
Meetings educational needs <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does the Government of Uzbekistan address the educational needs of children, specifically in terms of access to education and quality thereof? Probe for early childhood education.2. How does the Government work to address the needs of children with disabilities and other marginalized groups?3. Are there inclusive education policies and practices in place?4. What are the main challenges that the Government faces in meeting children's educational needs?5. What further efforts are needed to reduce barriers to education?
Alternative ECE models <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do alternative ECE models (as implemented by UNICEF and MOPSE, the World Bank, etc.) fit into the Government's efforts?2. Do you think alternative models can help to close the gap to access to quality education, specifically ECE?3. Do you think alternative ECE models will continue to be implemented or even be scaled up?
Future outlook <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where do you see Uzbekistan's education sector heading in the next few years?2. Are there any emerging trends that will shape the sector?
Closing <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is there any additional information or insights you would like to share regarding Uzbekistan's education sector?

Key informant interview guides: UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

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Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Organisation	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

Introduction 4. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.
Overall development goals and priorities 8. What are the key long-term development goals and priorities for Uzbekistan? 9. How have these goals evolved over the years, and what factors have influenced these changes?
Progress on Sustainable Development Goals 1. How do these national priorities align with the SDGs? 2. What is the current status of Uzbekistan's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals? 3. Specifically in the areas of education, gender equality and poverty eradication, were there any significant achievements or milestones in recent years that you would like to highlight? 4. Are the SDGs integrated into the country's development plans and policies? And if yes, how?
Inclusion and equality 4. How does Uzbekistan ensure that progress towards the SDGs benefits all segments of society, including vulnerable and marginalized groups? 5. What are the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the country? 6. How does the government plan to ensure equal access to social services for all citizens? Are there specific programs or policies targeting inclusivity and equality?
Implementation and monitoring 4. How does the government monitor and evaluate the progress of its policy priorities (nationally and SDGs)? 5. What mechanisms are in place to adjust policies based on feedback and changing circumstances? 6. What are the main challenges or obstacles the government faces in implementing its policy priorities and the SDGs? 7. How does Uzbekistan plan to address these challenges?
Future outlook 4. Where do you see Uzbekistan's national policy priorities heading in the next few years? 5. Are there any emerging issues or trends that will likely shape future policy decisions? 6. How can international partners contribute to the country's development goals?
Closing 2. Is there any additional information or insights you would like to share regarding Uzbekistan's national policy priorities and progress toward the SDGs?

Key informant interview guides: Representative from Government at sub-national level

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

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Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Ministry/agency	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.2. Please elaborate on your experience with education and early childhood education in Uzbekistan.
Education needs of children <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In your region/community, what are the main educational needs that children face? Probe specifically for preschool education.2. Do these needs differ for boys/girls, children from ethnic minorities, etc?3. What barriers do children and their families face in addressing these needs?4. Are you currently implementing any interventions to address these barriers?
Involvement in ECE design and implementation <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To what extent have you been involved in the design and implementation of the alternative ECE pilot project from MOPSE and UNICEF? Please elaborate.2. Were you consulted during the design process and preparatory discussions? Please elaborate.3. How were the needs of vulnerable children in this area considered in the design process?4. Do you think alternative ECE models, such as the one implemented by UNICEF and MOPSE, can help to address the educational needs of children?
Results <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. From your perspective, what are the main results the alternative ECE model achieved in this area? <i>(Probe for results in terms of improved ECE facilities and infrastructure for preschool education in the pilot sites, increased capacity of preschool teachers, heightened awareness on the importance and relevance on preschool education in the vicinity of the pilot sites, etc.)</i>2. Do you see different results for the different pilot sites, or for girls versus boys?3. What factors helped to achieve the results you mentioned?4. Which results were not achieved?5. What factors were obstacles to achieving these results?6. Over the longer-term, what broader changes do you hope the alternative ECE pilot will contribute to in this community? (Probe for positive, negative, intended, unintended changes.)7. Do you think the alternative ECE pilot project is on track to contribute to these changes?
Inclusion of vulnerable groups <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Has the alternative ECE pilot project been effective in reaching vulnerable children?2. How exactly were these children targeted? Please elaborate on the process.3. (Are the community lists that were used for targeting available?)4. Were characteristics such as gender and ethnicity included in the targeting process?

5. Are you aware of any challenges parents continue to face in terms of accessing preschool education?
Efficiency
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please elaborate on the human and financial resources and the equipment that were needed to implement the alternative ECE model in this area? 2. Were all resources available in a timely manner? 3. Were all actors involved in the implementation sufficiently trained to fulfil their responsibilities in an efficient manner? 4. From your perspective, how efficient was coordination and exchange of information between different actors involved in the implementation of the ECE pilot project? 5. Are you aware of how the costs of the alternative ECE model compare to other ECE services provided in this area?
Sustainability
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think the alternative ECE project would be continued even when the external support is withdrawn? Please explain why/why not. 2. Do you think the alternative ECE model could be scaled-up within this area and maybe even nationally? Please explain why/why not. 3. What would be needed for further scale up of the alternative ECE model in this area? 4. What lessons can be learned from the alternative ECE model in this area? Would you propose any changes to its design or implementation?
Closing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you would like to provide about the ECE pilot project, that we have not discussed yet?

Key informant interview guides: Facility managers

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project and to understand whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

Behzod Alimov	b.alimov@wiut.uz	+998 71 2387400
Sarvinoz Mamadjonova	sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com	
Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location	

Ministry/agency	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

Introduction 1. Kindly introduce yourself and your current roles and responsibilities in your position.
Education needs of children 1. In your region/community, what are the main educational needs that children face? Probe specifically for preschool education. 2. Do these needs differ for boys/girls, children from ethnic minorities, etc? 3. What barriers do children and their families face in addressing these needs?
Involvement in ECE design and implementation 1. To what extent have you been involved in the design and implementation of the alternative ECE pilot project from MOPSE and UNICEF? Please elaborate. 2. Were you consulted during the design process and preparatory discussions? Please elaborate. 3. How were the needs of vulnerable children in this area considered in the design process? 4. Do you think alternative ECE models, such as the one implemented by UNICEF and MOPSE, can help to address the educational needs of children?
Results 1. From your perspective, what are the main results the alternative ECE model achieved in this area? <i>(Probe for results in terms of improved ECE facilities and infrastructure for preschool education in the pilot sites, increased capacity of preschool teachers, heightened awareness on the importance and relevance on preschool education in the vicinity of the pilot sites, etc.)</i> 2. Do you see different results for the different pilot sites, or for girls versus boys? 3. What factors helped to achieve the results you mentioned? 4. Which results were not achieved? 5. What factors were obstacles to achieving these results? 6. Over the longer-term, what broader changes do you hope the alternative ECE pilot will contribute to in this community? (Probe for positive, negative, intended, unintended changes.) 7. Do you think the alternative ECE pilot project is on track to contribute to these changes?
Inclusion of vulnerable groups 1. Has the alternative ECE pilot project been effective in reaching vulnerable children? 2. How exactly were these children targeted? Please elaborate on the process. 3. Were characteristics such as gender and ethnicity included in the targeting process? 4. Are you aware of any challenges parents continue to face in terms of accessing preschool education?
Efficiency

1. Please elaborate on the human and financial resources and the equipment that were needed to implement the alternative ECE model in this area?
2. Were all resources available in a timely manner?
3. Were all actors involved in the implementation sufficiently trained to fulfil their responsibilities in an efficient manner?
4. Are you aware of how the costs of the alternative ECE model compare to other ECE services provided in this area?

Sustainability

1. Do you think the alternative ECE model could be scaled-up within this area and maybe even nationally? Please explain why/why not.
2. What would be needed for further scale up of the alternative ECE model in this area?
3. What lessons can be learned from the alternative ECE model in this area? Would you propose any changes to its design or implementation?

Closing

1. Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you would like to provide about the ECE pilot project, that we have not discussed yet?

Key informant interview guides: Teachers

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to participants)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project, particularly whether the project has resulted in the desired short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, this evaluation will provide learnings and insights that will serve the purpose of adapting, further improving and scaling ECE models in the future.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All your answers will be kept confidential. Your responses and comments will be summarised in the evaluation report, but on no occasion, will you be identified by name. All information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the interview. We would like to take notes during the interview. Do you agree to participate?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

Behzod Alimov	b.alimov@wiut.uz	+998 71 2387400
Sarvinoz Mamadjonova	sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com	
Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	
Date of interview	
Location of ECE centre	

Consent given (Yes/No)	
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Questions

Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How long have you been working in early childhood education?2. How many children do you currently teach in your ECE group?
Needs of children <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the main educational needs of children, especially vulnerable children from low-income households, in this area?2. Do you think this alternative ECE model addresses these needs? Please elaborate why/why not.
Programme results <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the main results that the ECE centre achieved for children in this area?2. Do you think alternative ECE centres like this one can help to close the gap in access to education and provide every child the opportunities to learn and develop? Please elaborate why/why not.
Access to services <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Has the alternative ECE pilot project been effective in reaching vulnerable children in this area?2. Is there a particular group of children that was not reached (because of their gender, location, ethnicity)?3. What is the share of girls vis-à-vis boys enrolled in this centre?4. Are children from ethnic minorities enrolled in this centre?5. Are you aware of challenges parents continue to face in terms of accessing preschool education?6. Do you think that children in your group would be attending ECE services, if this centre was not here?
Quality of ECE services <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Please elaborate on the capacity building and training you received prior to the start of the alternative ECE groups. Do you feel sufficiently trained and prepared?2. How do you create a supportive and stimulating learning environment for the children in your care?3. How do you assess and support children's individual learning and developmental needs?4. How do you address behavioural issues and encourage positive behaviour in the classroom?5. How do you engage and communicate with parents about their child's progress and development?6. Do you regularly monitor the children and track process in the child development cards?7. What changes have you noticed in the skills of the children?8. What are the most significant challenges you face in your role as an early childhood educator in this centre?9. How do you handle these challenges, and what support do you need to overcome them?

<p>Other results</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the alternative ECE centre had any impacts on parents/caregivers? 2. Do you see any impacts within the whole community? Please explain.
<p>Efficiency</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have all necessary resources here in this centre to carry out your work as an ECE teacher? Which resources (human, financial, equipment) are missing? 2. Are there any barriers, for example in terms of long administrative processes, that hinder you from working efficiently?
<p>Sustainability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you foresee a demand for these alternative ECE centres in the future? Please explain why/why not. 2. Should this alternative ECE model be scaled up to more pilot sites, or even nation-wide? Please explain your answer.
<p>Closing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you would like to provide about the ECE centre that we have not discussed yet?

Focus group discussion guide: Parents/caregivers

Time allocation: 45-60 minutes

Consent script *(to be read out to each participant individually!)*

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak to us. We work with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and are here on behalf of UNICEF to evaluate the alternative early childhood education (ECE) centres. We would like to invite you to participate in this focus group discussion and give us your opinion on a range of questions that will help us to get a better understanding of the ECE pilot project, and the results it achieved for your children and yourself. Moreover, we would like to hear from you what you like about the ECE centres and what could potentially be further improved. Ultimately, your answers will help our research to better understand how ECE models could be further improved and scale-up in the future.

Your participation in the focus group discussion is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and we want you to feel free to express your views honestly. You may always refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. We will not note down your names and all answers will be anonymous. There are no risks to participating in this discussion, and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All information collected during this focus group discussion will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study. We also ask you to not share anything that is discussed within this focus group with anyone outside the group.

The focus group discussion will not take longer than 60 minutes. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the focus group and to take notes during discussion. Do you agree to participate?

Furthermore, want to inform you that we would like to administer a short, individual questionnaire to each focus group participant at the end of the focus group. The questionnaire has close-ended questions and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

Behzod Alimov	b.alimov@wiut.uz	+998 71 2387400
Sarvinoz Mamadjonova	sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com	
Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of moderator	
Name of note taker	

Date of FGD	
Location of ECE centre	

Number of focus group participants	
Number of female participants	
Number of male participants	
Consent given (Yes/No)	

Questions

<p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were your first impressions when you visited this alternative ECE centre? 2. How did you get to know about the alternative ECE centre? 3. From your perspective, how important is preschool education for children? Please explain.
<p>Relevance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the past, did you face any barriers to enrolling your children in preschool? Please elaborate. 2. What are your main needs, with regards to preschool education? 3. Does this centre meet your needs?
<p>Overall satisfaction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe your overall experience with the early childhood education centre? 2. What do you like most about the ECE centre? 3. What could be further improved within this ECE centre?
<p>Access to preschool education</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you know other children in the area that are not enrolled in preschool education? <i>Please raise your hands, if yes.</i> 2. Why are these children not enrolled? What are some of the challenges the parents from these children may face? 3. Do you agree with the statement that this ECE centre facilitated access to preschool in your area? Please raise your hand, if yes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If you do not agree, please elaborate why.
<p>Parents engagement & teacher support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are you – as parents/caregivers – involved in the preschool education provided through this centre? Please elaborate. 2. Could you please share any positive experiences or specific instances of the teacher’s support or dedication? 3. Could you share any experiences in which you would have liked more support or dedication?
<p>Child development</p>

1. What changes have you noticed in your child's behaviour or social skills since attending the centre? Please elaborate on a few.

Other changes

1. What (other) positive or negative impacts does the alternative ECE centre have on your children, yourself or the wider community?

Closing

1. Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback you would like to provide about the ECE centre?

Parents/caregivers questionnaire

Time allocation: 10 minutes

The questionnaire is to be administered to all focus group participants immediately after the focus groups.

Consent script (*to be read out to each participant individually!*)

In this questionnaire we would like to ask you a few more questions on your satisfaction with the alternative ECE centre. Most of the questions are close-ended and we will read out pre-given answer options to you. Again, we will not be noting down your name or the name of your child. Again, your participation in the questionnaire is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers and you may refuse to answer an individual question and you may also refuse to answer all questions. We want to strongly emphasize that all answers and information collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this questionnaire and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the project. All information collected on this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared except through the verbal or written dissemination of the findings of the study.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. We would like to ask your permission to participate in the questionnaire and note down your answers. Do you agree to participate?

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

Behzod Alimov	b.alimov@wiut.uz	+998 71 2387400
Sarvinoz Mamadjonova	sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com	
Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of note taker	
Date	
Location	

Questions

General information	
Gender of respondent	<i>Open answer</i>
Gender of child attending ECE centre	<i>Open answer</i>
Relationship to the child (e.g., mother, father, guardian)	<i>Open answer</i>
Age of respondent	<i>Numerical answer</i>

Age of child attending ECE centre	<i>Numerical answer</i>
How long has your child been enrolled in the centre?	<i>Open answer</i>
Access to preschool education	
If this alternative ECE centre would not be here, would your child be in preschool?	<i>Yes/No</i>
Are there other ECE centres that you could enrol your child in?	<i>Yes/No</i>
Overall satisfaction	
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "highly satisfied" and 1 being "extremely unsatisfied," how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the early childhood education centre?	1=extremely unsatisfied 2=unsatisfied 3=somewhat satisfied 4=satisfied 5=highly satisfied
What are the primary reasons for your rating in the previous question? Please provide specific examples or comments.	<i>Open answer</i>
Learning space	
Overall, does the centre provide a safe and child-friendly environment for your child?	<i>Yes/No</i>
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "excellent" and 1 being "poor," how would you rate the facilities at the centre? Please rate	1=poor 2=fair 3=good 4=very good 5=excellent
Are there any improvements you would suggest for the centre's facilities?	<i>Open answer</i>
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "excellent" and 1 being "poor," how would you rate the available learning resources and play materials in the centre?	1=poor 2=fair 3=good 4=very good 5=excellent
Are there any improvements you would suggest for the centre's facilities?	<i>Open answer</i>
Learning and curriculum	
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "excellent" and 1 being "poor," how satisfied are you with the centre's learning programme?	1=poor 2=fair 3=good 4=very good 5=excellent
What specific aspects of the curriculum do you find most beneficial for your child's development?	<i>Open answer</i>
Are there any areas where you believe the centre's curriculum could be improved?	<i>Open answer</i>

Teachers	
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "excellent" and 1 being "poor," how would you rate the quality of teaching and interaction with the teachers and staff?	1=poor 2=fair 3=good 4=very good 5=excellent
Do you have any recommendations on how the teachers could further improve?	<i>Open answer</i>
Communication and involvement	
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "highly satisfied" and 1 being "extremely unsatisfied," how satisfied are you with the centre's communication with parents and involvement of parents (e.g., newsletters, parent-teacher meetings, etc.)?	1=extremely unsatisfied 2=unsatisfied 3=somewhat satisfied 4=satisfied 5=highly satisfied
Do you feel encouraged to participate and get involved in the centre's activities and events?	<i>Yes/No</i>
Child development	
Have you noticed any positive changes in your child's behaviour or social skills since attending the centre?	<i>Yes/No</i>
Please name a few changes that you have noticed.	<i>Open answer</i>
Closing	
Please provide any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback about the ECE centre.	<i>Open answer</i>

Observation guide

Time allocation: 30 minutes

Instructions

Complete the observation guides during the field visits to the selected pilot sites. Observe and record the behaviour, interactions, and other aspects of the ECE environment. Do not interrupt the children or teacher in their activities, and at all times respect children's and teacher's privacy. Do not record any names or personal characteristics in the observation guide.

Consent script *(to be read out to class prior to observations)*

You are being invited to participate in an observation as part of a research project on the services provided by this ECE centres. These observations are conducted to provide us with direct insights into the playing and learning at this ECE centre, and the interactions between teachers and children. We are simply going to observe you while playing and learning in this classroom, there will be no interaction from our side. We will take some notes, for example on the classroom, the play and learning materials, and the overall interactions between the teacher and children. This observation does not serve to observe anyone of you individually, but rather to observe your interactions in this learning environment. We are not taking any pictures of you or noting down any of your names. We want to strongly emphasize that all information noted down during the observations will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks to participating in this observation and there is no direct benefit to you, other than knowing that you are helping us to evaluate the services provided at this ECE centre. Participation in this observation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without any negative consequences.

Contact details of researchers

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further clarification about the observation or this consent form or the research we are conducting, please feel free to contact the researchers at the contact information provided below.

Behzod Alimov	b.alimov@wiut.uz	+998 71 2387400
Sarvinoz Mamadjonova	sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com	
Katharina Bollig	katharina@epri.org.za	

Identification

Name of note taker	
Date	
Location	
Number of children present	

Questions

Learning environment:

- Is the learning environment safe and clean?
- Is the learning environment well-organized and stimulating?
- Are age-appropriate learning and play materials available (e.g., books, toys, resting areas, etc.)?
- Do children have opportunities to demonstrate fine motor skills (e.g., by holding a pencil or using scissors)?
- Do children have the opportunity to exhibit gross motor skills (e.g., by running, jumping, climbing)?

Teacher-child interactions:

- How do teachers communicate and interact with the children?
- How many children are currently present in the class?

Social interactions and play:

- How do children interact with peers during playtime?
- Are children actively participating in classroom activities?
- Is there an observable difference how children interact according to their gender/ethnicity?
- How are children exploring their environment and engaging with toys/materials?
- Do children have opportunities to express their creativity and imagination in their play?
- Are children required to demonstrate problem-solving skills during activities?

Further observations:

- Are there children that show signs of particular vulnerabilities or challenges in their actions and interactions in the classroom?

Annex G. Protection protocol

1. Introduction

This protection protocol serves to provide guidance for conducting, storing, sharing and destroying information related to the *Evaluation of UNICEF's Alternative Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centres in Uzbekistan*, which the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) is conducting together with the Center for Policy Research & Outreach (CPRO) for the UNICEF Country Office Uzbekistan. This protocol covers all primary qualitative data collection activities – key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), observations, parents'/caregivers' questionnaire – carried out as part of this evaluation and therefrom derived data sources (in audio and written form), with the rules stipulated in the following sections applying to each single source.

2. General principles

- a. The terms contained in this protection protocol are in addition to, and not in replacement of, the terms of the contract between EPRI and UNICEF. This protection protocol and the contract will be construed and interpreted as complementary of one another other. Nothing in or related to this protection protocol will be treated as a waiver of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including UNICEF.
- b. EPRI-CPRO's work is guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles in line with the Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), developed by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), as well as the UNICEF Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2021). Strict adherence to a high set of ethical standards is of the utmost importance, given the subject matter of the evaluation and its focus on vulnerable groups. As such, the participatory data gathering approach is designed so as to avoid stigmatization and any form of discrimination.
- c. EPRI's and CPRO's researchers are bound by ethical research principles of impartiality, independence, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability.
 - i. Researchers will remain as impartial and objective as possible and allow participants to express their own views and opinions without interruptions, making suggestions or engaging in personal debates about the views expressed.
 - ii. Researchers are committed to an independent review, safeguarded through ongoing checks on the quality and ethics of this study from the researchers themselves, and through inputs and feedback from UNICEF and the evaluation reference group.
 - iii. Researchers are responsible to safeguard the credibility of the evaluation by acting fair and credible towards research subjects, providing an accurate and transparent

description of the potential risks or discomforts and the anticipated benefits derived from the study; as well as ensuring a fair selection of research respondents.

- iv. Researchers also account for the conflict of interest arising from the concern for individual rights and potential harm to research objects and the benefits of knowledge and learnings generated on the impacts of the response on beneficiaries' lives by avoiding insensitive questions or probing for information, when it is clear that participants would prefer not to answer.
- v. To safeguard the accountability, information of all research team members' names, positions, and qualifications is submitted as part of the project's inception report, offering an estimate of competence together with a chain of responsibility and accountability for all those holding responsible positions and in direct contact with subjects.

3. Informed consent

- a. On the day of the KIIs/FGDs/questionnaires, a consent script will be read out (in the participant's preferred language) prior to the commencement of research and potential participants will be asked to provide their consent to join in the research. Based on the information in the consent scripts, the individuals can decide whether or not to take part in the participatory research.
- b. The consent script will include a thorough explanation of the purpose of the evaluation, the participant's role within the evaluation, and what information will be asked from him/her. By providing participants with elaborate and transparent information prior to the interview, their engagement and preparedness can be optimised.
- c. In gathering informed consent, EPRI-CPRO will assure all potential interviewees/discussants of the confidentiality and voluntariness of their answers; if at any point a participant feels uncomfortable, he or she is not obliged to provide the requested information and may state his or her reasons for doing so.
- d. All KIIs/FGDs/questionnaires will be conducted in a quiet, private setting without interruptions. Only the researchers and participants will be present on these occasions.
- e. During the course of a KII/FGD/questionnaire, if a participant voices his/her unwillingness to answer a question or to continue on, the researcher will not press the participant for further details or pressure him/her. In the event that a participant wishes to leave an interview before its conclusion the researcher will thank the participant for his/her participation and ask if the participant would like to speak again to this topic on another day, in private and in confidence. Should a participant wish to accept this option, the

researcher will find a date and time, and will inform the participant that what he/she says is not being recorded and will be kept in confidence.

- f. EPRI's and CPRO's researchers are also responsible for appropriately responding to and managing emotional responses from participants during the course of an interview, and thus becomes part of risk mitigation.
- g. All team members will work in a sensitive, supportive, non-threatening and non-abusive manner with the respondents, ensuring appropriate behaviour at all times.

4. De-identification of data

- a. At the outset of data collection, all participants will be informed that their answers will be kept confidential. Responses and comments will be summarised in the research report, but on no occasion, will respondents, within this report, be identified by name or any other identifying characteristics aside from approximate age and gender.
- b. The real names of the participants will not be recorded in the notes or the audio recording. The KII/FGD/questionnaire audio recording and notes will be saved under a numerical value.

5. Data protection and storage

- a. Smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktops (hereafter computers) themselves must be password protected and EPRI-CPRO will ensure that each individual member of staff uses his or her own login and does not share passwords.
- b. In addition to the computer itself, if emailing an electronic file (e.g., Word, Excel, etc.) containing sensitive data, the file will be password protected, and the password will be emailed separately. EPRI-CPRO researchers will ensure that emails are only sent to the intended recipient with no one else in copy.
- c. Strong passwords will be used, i.e., containing at least 8 characters including one number, one capital letter, one letter and one special character that cannot be easily guessed and default shared network drives will be disabled.
- d. Passwords for documents and computers will be changed when an authorised user leaves his/her current position.
- e. EPRI-CPRO researchers must lock their computer when away from it. Computers should also be set to automatically lock if the user is away from the machine.
- f. EPRI-CPRO researchers are not allowed to save sensitive information on their personal computers. Only work-assigned computers can be used for managing information related to the evaluation.
- g. The computers hosting sensitive data will only be accessed by authorised personnel and should be used exclusively for that purpose.

- h. Computers are fitted with up-to-date anti-virus software so as to avoid corruption and loss of information.
- i. Memory sticks (USBs) will be avoided or, if necessary, passed by hand between the staff responsible for the information and be password protected, and the file erased immediately after transfer. The file will then be permanently erased from the 'Recycling Bin' file on the computer.
- j. If for whatever reason, a member of the evaluation team ceases to work on the project, it will be ensured that access to sensitive data will immediately be revoked.

6. Transmission

- a. The notes of researchers, as well as the digital recording, will not be shared outside the research team. After all data for the study has been collected, only the primary researchers will have access to field notes, transcripts and other research materials. EPRI-CPRO will be responsible for the compliance by its researchers with these guidelines.

7. Data breaches

- a. A data breach means a breach of data security leading to the accidental or unlawful/illegitimate destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, sensitive data transferred, stored or otherwise processed.
- b. EPRI will immediately notify UNICEF if there is any actual, suspected or threatened unauthorized or accidental disclosure of the data or other security incident affecting the data. As such, Article 5.9 of the UNICEF General Terms and Conditions of Contract (Services) will apply.

8. Data destruction

- a. Access to and use of the information collected through the KIIs/FGDs/observations/questionnaires will be limited to the period of the evaluation.
- b. Upon the finalization of the evaluation, signified through submission of the final evaluation report, all audio and written recordings of the KIIs/FGDs/observations/questionnaires will be destroyed.
- c. EPRI's and CPRO's obligations under this protection protocol will survive the end date of the evaluation.

Annex H. CVs of team members

Dr Michael Samson

email: directors@epri.org.za

telephone: +27 21 671 3301

fax: +27 21 671 3157

Capacity statement

Dr. Michael Samson is the Director of Research of the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), a global institution based in Cape Town, South Africa. His 27 years of experience working in social protection and ECD involves specialization in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating social protection and ECD policies, systems and programmes. Over the past five years he has worked on many ECD projects in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan and Nepal, both as project leader and as a team member of large-scale technical assistance programmes. He has provided technical assistance to policy initiatives in Indonesia and presented at conferences and workshops in Indonesia several times over the past three years. In Bangladesh, he contributed to the design of the second phase of the *Chars Livelihood Programme (CLP)*, he has participated in several evaluations of both BRAC's *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR)* and the CLP, and he supported the political economy analysis of social protection in Bangladesh. He has provided technical assistance to Nepal's Planning Commission supporting ECD strategy development and capacity building. He has published work on social protection programmes and ECD programmes in Asia, most recently in the OECD's 2013 Development Co-operation Report.

Dr Samson has worked on ECD and social protection policy design, implementation, evaluation and capacity building projects in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Michael co-ordinated and co-led the team implementing the first-ever integrated impact assessment of the Child Support Grant in South Africa and is currently the study lead in the evaluation of Thailand's Child Support Grant, with funding from UNICEF. In addition, he recently oversaw a baseline study on ECD in Sierra Leone for UNICEF and has completed previous evaluations of programmes grants in Bangladesh, Mozambique, and South Africa and *ex ante* evaluations of programmes in Nepal, South Africa, Viet Nam and other countries. He is the lead author of three editions of EPRI's policy guide *Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes*, and he has convened courses in South Africa, Thailand and Kenya on this topic for the past seven years. He also teaches courses at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS-Sussex), Maastricht University, the University of Mauritius, and other institutions. He lectures at policy conferences and training workshops around the world. He is also on the Economics faculty at the Williams College Center for Development Economics in the United States, where he teaches courses at the master's level in the field of social protection. He has a Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University.

Academic and professional qualifications

1994 Stanford University, Stanford, California, USA; Ph.D. Economics

1983 Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA; B.A. Economic (Summa Cum Laude)

Relevant experience

- Impact Evaluation Thailand's Child Support Grant, UNICEF Thailand
- Baseline Study on ECD in Sierra Leone, UNICEF Sierra Leone
- Social protection courses in Ethiopia, Nepal, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe (2008-2013)
- Integrated quantitative-qualitative evaluation of South Africa's Child Support Grant
- Feasibility study of universal provision of the Child Support Grant
- Evaluation of South Africa's means tests for social grants
- Evaluation of Mozambique's social cash transfers
- Evaluation of Zambia's social cash transfers
- Monitoring and Evaluation of Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme
- Developed a National Social Protection Strategy in Kenya
- Policy support to Papua New Guinea social protection system
- Technical support to Malawi's social cash transfers
- Evaluation of Namibia's social cash transfers
- Consultant on Ghana's Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme
- Design of Lesotho's OVC cash transfer programme
- Team leader in the Integrated Social Protection Feasibility Study in Rwanda
- Design and feasibility study of social transfers in Uganda
- Design and technical support to the evaluation of the Savings and Investment Linkages for the Child Support Grant in South Africa
- Member of evaluation teams for the Chars Livelihood Project in Bangladesh (2011, 2012)
- International Consultant on the Comprehensive Social Protection Programme Formulation Team for UNDP: Bangladesh (2012 to 2014)
- Member of the Annual Monitoring Mission of the BRAC – Challenging Frontiers of Poverty Reduction programme
- Member of the End Project Review Team for the BRAC – Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction End Project Review
- Conducted a study on Social Pensions in Nepal (2011 – 2012), published by ADB
- Developed and convened the course for policy-makers *Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes*, South Africa and Thailand (2007-2013 and planned for 2014)
- Developing and convening the course for policy-makers *Designing and implementing Social Protection Programs in Africa*, Kenya (2010-2013 and planned for 2014)

Journal articles, books and chapters

Michael Samson (2013) "How countries are using social protection to benefit the poor", Chapter 6 in OECD's *Development Co-operation Report 2013: Ending Poverty*, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/dcr-2013-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/dcr-2013-en). Publication date: 13 November 2013.

Michael Samson (forthcoming) "Social protection's role within a modern development agenda: the socio-economic impacts" in University Press Limited (UPL) volume of conference papers from

'Scaling-up Social Protection in Bangladesh: Providing Ladders out of Poverty and Social Safety Nets', held in Dhaka on October 9th and 10th 2011.

Carolyn Heinrich, John Hoddinott, Michael Samson (2013) "Reducing Adolescent Risky Behaviors in a High-Risk Context: The Effects of Unconditional Cash Transfers in South Africa". Submitted to *World Development*, February 2013 (revise and resubmit).

Michael Samson (2012) "The design and implementation of social pensions for older persons in Asia" (Chapter 3) in *Social protection for older persons*. Edited by Sri Wening Handayani and Babken V Babajanian; Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, c2012. (OCOLC)829388236

Michael Samson (2012) "Nepal's senior citizens allowance" (Chapter 9) in *Social protection for older persons*. Edited by Sri Wening Handayani and Babken V Babajanian; Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, c2012. (OCOLC)829388236

Carolyn Heinrich, John Hoddinott, Michael Samson (2012) "The impact of South Africa's Child Support Grant on schooling and learning". Submitted to *Journal of Development Studies* (September 2012, revise and resubmit)

Michael Samson, Carolyn J. Heinrich, Sheshangai Kaniki, Ferdinando Regalia, Kenneth Mac Quene, Tendie Muzondo, Ingrid van Niekerk and Martin Williams. (2011). "Impacts of South Africa's Child Support Grant" in *Social Protection for Africa's Children*, edited by Sudhanshu Handa, Stephen Devereux and Doug Webb; Routledge Studies in Development Economics; pp. 117-146.

Samson, Michael (2009) "The Impact of Social Transfers on Growth, Development, Poverty and Inequality in Developing Countries" chapter in *Building decent societies: Rethinking the role of social security in development*, edited by Peter Townsend, published by Palgrave MacMillan (ISBN 978-92-2-121995-8)

Samson, Michael, (with K. Mac Quene and I. van Niekerk). *Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes*. EPRI Press: Cape Town, 2006. Also, 2nd edition (2010) and 3rd edition (2014).

Samson, M. "Social Cash Transfers and Pro-Poor Growth" in *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection*. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2009.

Samson, M. "Social Cash Transfers and Employment: A note on empirical linkages in developing countries" in *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Employment*. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2009.

OECD 2009. "Social Protection, Poverty Reduction and Pro-Poor Growth" in *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection*. Policy Guidance Note. (Michael Samson of the Economic Policy Research Institute, Republic of South Africa was the lead author of the policy guidance note on social protection)

Samson, M. "HIV/AIDS and poverty in households with children suffering from malnutrition: The role of social security in Mount Frere" in *South African Journal of Economics*, Vol. 70:7, 2002.

Samson, M. "The Social, Economic and Fiscal Impact of Comprehensive Social Security Reform for South Africa" in *Social Dynamics*, Vol. 28:2, 2002.

DSD, SASSA and UNICEF. 2012. *The South African Child Support Grant Impact Assessment: Evidence from a survey of children, adolescents and their households*. Pretoria: UNICEF South Africa. (The study was carried out by the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) in partnership with the International Food Policy research Institute (IFPRI), as part of a larger project partnership including the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Oxford Policy Management (OPM), Reform Development Consulting (RDC) and Take Note Trading (TNT))

Samson, M., Miller, L. *HIV Sensitive Social Protection: State of the Evidence in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Commissioned by UNICEF and produced by the Economic Policy Research Institute, Cape Town, 2012.

Samson, Michael. *Strengthening social protection responses to the global economic downturn: A policy toolkit for developing countries*. Commissioned by the UK Government Department for International Development (DFID), 2011.

Samson, Michael (with D. Neves, I. van Niekerk, S. Hlatshwayo, A. du Toit). *The use and effectiveness of social grants in South Africa*. FinMark Trust, Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), 2009.

Samson, M., Heinrich, C., Williams, M., Kaniki, S., Muzondo, T., Mac Quene, K., van Niekerk, I. *Quantitative Analysis of the Impact of the Child Support Grant*, UNICEF, 2008.

Samson, M., Mac Quene, K., van Niekerk, I. *Feasibility study for a social pension in Malawi*. Government of Malawi report, 2008.

Samson, M., Cherrier, C., Mac Quene, K., van Niekerk, I. *A child-centred social protection strategy for Rwanda*. UNICEF and Save the Children Rwanda, 2008.

Samson, M., Mac Quene, K., van Niekerk, I., Kaniki, S. *Feasibility study for a child grant in Lesotho*. Government of Lesotho report commissioned by UNICEF, 2007.

Samson, M., Mac Quene, K., van Niekerk, I., Kaniki, S. *Implementation plan for the Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty cash transfer programme*. Government of Ghana report, 2007.

Samson, M. "The Impact of Social Transfers on growth, development, poverty and inequality in developing countries", Economic Policy Research Institute, Cape Town, 2007.

Samson, Michael, (with K. Mac Quene and I. van Niekerk). *A Case Study of Social Security in South Africa*. Commissioned by the Inter-regional Inequality Facility (NEPAD, African Development Bank, Economic Commission on Africa, et. al.), 2005.

_____, (with K. Mac Quene, I. van Niekerk, J. Lorentzen, H. Rhee, S. Kaniki, G. S. Mabilo, E. Mtonga, R. Lamberti and K. Reynolds). *An Assessment of the Government's Microeconomic Reform Strategy and Overview of Developments and Outlook of South Africa's Real Economy*. Commissioned by the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Office of the Director-General for the 2005 Cabinet Lekgotla, 2004.

_____, (with U. Lee, A. Ndlebe, K. Mac Quene, I. van Niekerk, V. Gandhi and T. Harigaya). *The Social and Economic Impact of South Africa's Social Security System*. Commissioned by the Economics and Finance Directorate, Ministry of Social Development, 2004.

_____. *The Socio-economic Impact of South Africa's State Old Age Pension*. Commissioned by the Economics and Finance Directorate, Department of Social Development, 2004.

_____, (with U. Lee, K. Mac Quene, I. van Niekerk, V. Gandhi). *The Social and Economic Impact of Social Assistance Grants*. Research report commissioned by the Department of Social Development (South African Government), 2003.

_____, (with S. Ampofo, K. Mac Quene, A. Ndlebe, I. van Niekerk). "The fundamental determinants of the rand exchange rate: a historical and forward looking analysis". Research paper commissioned by Strategy and Research Unit Trade and Investment South Africa (TISA), 2003.

_____, (with N. Sogaula, R. van Niekerk, M. Noble, C. Green, and M. Sigala). *Social security transfers, poverty and chronic illness in the Eastern Cape: an investigation of the relationship between social security grants, the alleviation of rural poverty and chronic illnesses including those associated with HIV/AIDS – a case study of Mount Frere in the Eastern Cape*. Economic Policy Research Institute, 2002.

Nard Huijbregts

email: nard@epri.org.za

telephone: +27 21 671 3301

fax: +27 21 671 3157

Capacity statement

Nard Huijbregts is the Lead Social Policy Advisor at the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), a global institution specialized in social protection research, advisory and implementation support, based in Cape Town, South Africa. Leading a team of ten Social Policy Advisors, Nard has conducted research and provided policy advice to over 40 countries, primarily in Africa (South Africa, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Madagascar, among others), Asia and the Pacific (including China, India, Fiji and Viet Nam) and the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen). Nard is specialized in the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection policies, programmes and delivery systems.

Since 2014, Nard led over 50 implementation support projects, studies and evaluations for UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, WFP, UNAIDS, FCDO, Save the Children, the African Union and various government ministries. Amongst this, he has led the design and/or implementation of various cash transfer programmes for UNICEF, including cash+ programmes with a focus on education (Nigeria and Uganda), child protection (Benin) and health and nutrition (Lao PDR, Nigeria, the Gambia and Kenya). In addition, he has led several large-scale impact evaluations and process reviews of social protection programmes or reform processes, including recently in Kazakhstan (the targeted social assistance scheme reform) and the Philippines (the Social Amelioration Program, a 2 billion USD COVID response cash transfer programme). Furthermore, Nard is currently leading the development of a new social protection strategy in Lesotho, and has led or contributed to past strategy development processes in Tanzania, India and Nigeria as well.

Thematically, Nard has extensive experience in shock responsive social protection, including from an evaluative perspective as the co-lead of an evaluation of UNICEF's work on cash transfer programming in emergencies for UNICEF's Evaluation Office and as the team lead in the review of the joint WFP/UNICEF programme on adaptive social protection in the Sahel, as from a perspective of providing technical advice to governments on the subject, as he is doing presently in the DRC for instance. He has furthermore overseen the development of programme management information systems (in Nigeria, Lao PDR, Kenya and Bangladesh) and provided technical assistance on financing social protection to governments, by conducting fiscal space and cost-benefit analyses in Brazil, Uganda and the Gambia as well. Finally, Nard has led several large-scale data collection and analysis projects, most recently the 2020 UNDP/UNICEF socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 in the Philippines (sample: 3,600 households).

Nard has presented his research at conferences in a range of countries, including Armenia, Mauritius, Brazil, the Republic of Congo, the Netherlands and Argentina.

Academic qualifications

2013 Maastricht Graduate School of Governance – United Nations University, Maastricht, the Netherlands; M.Sc. Public Policy and Human Development (Cum Laude)

2011 Maastricht University, Maastricht, the Netherlands; B.Sc. Economics

Relevant experience

Programme design and implementation

- Design of the Mother and Early Childhood Grant in Lao PDR, UNICEF Lao PDR Country Office (2020)
- Design of a shock responsive social protection programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNICEF DRC Country Office (2020)
- Design of a cash transfer programme tackling child marriage in Benin, UNICEF Benin Country Office (2020)
- Design of two social protection programmes for children living with disabilities and pregnant women for the Mombasa County Government, UNICEF Kenya Country Office (2020)
- Design and implementation of a cash transfer for the victims of a mudslide in Sierra Leone, UNICEF Sierra Leone Country Office (2017)
- Design and implementation of a cash transfer for maternal, new-born and child health in conflict affected north east Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria Country Office (2015 – present)
- Design and implementation of a cash transfer for maternal, new-born and child health in the Gambia, UNICEF the Gambia Country Office (2016)
- Design and implementation of a cash transfer programme for adolescent girls in Kampala, UNICEF Uganda Country Office (2019 - present)
- Design and implementation of two education-focused cash transfer programme in four states in Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria Country Office (2014 – present)
- Design and implementation of Cambodia’s Maternal and Child Cash Transfer programme, UNICEF Cambodia
- Design and implementation of a cash transfer targeting young women at risk of HIV in Western Kenya and Nairobi, USAID Kenya (2016)

Monitoring and evaluation

- Evaluation of UNICEF’s work on cash transfer programming in emergencies. Country case studies: Yemen, Nepal, Dominica and Malawi. UNICEF Evaluation Office at headquarter (2020)
- Evaluation of Kazakhstan’s social protection system reform, UNICEF Kazakhstan Country Office (2020)
- Assessment of the efficacy of the social protection response to COVID-19 in the Philippines and its impact on child poverty, UNICEF Philippines Country Office (2020)
- Evaluation of the HIV-sensitive social protection initiative in Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia, UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office
- Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon’s Syrian-crisis linked child protection program, UNICEF Lebanon Country Office
- Evaluation of five cash transfer programmes in the Cook Islands, UNICEF Pacific Islands multi-Country Office (2019)
- Evaluation of UNICEF Jordan’s Syrian-crisis linked child protection case management programmes, UNICEF Jordan Country Office
- Evaluation of Philippines 4Ps Modified Conditional Cash Transfer programme, UNICEF Philippines Country Office
- Review of Lesotho’s Conditional Cash Transfer programme and Integrated Social Safety Nets project, UNICEF Lesotho Country Office

- Evaluation of CRS's social protection activities in Nigeria, Catholic Relief Services Nigeria
- Evaluation of Thailand's Child Support Grant, UNICEF Thailand Country Office
- Evaluation of the Savings and Investment Linkages for the Child Support Grant in South Africa, Ford Foundation and Department of Social Development, South Africa

Research and policy advisory

- Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable households in the National Capital Region of the Philippines, UNDP Philippines Country Office and UNICEF Philippines Country Office (2020)
- Development of a new social protection strategy for Lesotho, UNICEF Lesotho Country Office (2021)
- HIV-sensitive social protection assessment in Nigeria, UNAIDS headquarter (2019)
- Institutional assessment of Cambodia's Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, UNICEF Cambodia Country Office
- Costing of the national social protection strategy in Lao PDR, ILO Lao PDR Country Office
- Development of a position paper for UNICEF Viet Nam on multi-tiered child benefits, UNICEF Viet Nam Country Office (2019)
- Rapid assessment of cash transfer programming for children during emergencies, UNICEF Viet Nam Country Office (2020)
- Development of an options paper for the new FCDO social protection support portfolio in Nigeria, FCDO Nigeria (2020)
- Development of Tanzania's first National Social Protection Framework, UNICEF Tanzania Country Office (2015)
- Study developing a cost benefit model for school feeding, WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil
- Development of a communication strategy on shock responsive social protection in Lesotho, UNICEF Lesotho Country Office
- Development of a business case and fiscal space analysis for social protection in Sierra Leone, UNICEF Sierra Leone Country Office
- 20-country study on school feeding in Africa, African Union and WFP Centre of Excellent against Hunger in Brazil
- Study assessing the impact of Ebola on Sierra Leone and its children, UNICEF Sierra Leone Country Office
- Rapid assessment of the impacts of the Philippines 4Ps programme on nutrition, UNICEF Philippines Country Office
- Social protection sector review in Nigeria, Save the Children Nigeria Country Office
- Development of a business case for social protection in Nigeria, Vice-President's Office of the Federal Government of Nigeria
- Study assessing fiscal space for social protection in the Gambia, WFP the Gambia Country Office
- Development of the Recovery and Peace Building Assessment for social protection in North East Nigeria, World Bank study, seconded by the UNICEF Nigeria Country Office

- Development of a costed sector plan for social protection in Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria Country Office
- Support for reforming and improving the social assistance system in China, UNICEF China Country Office
- Social protection systems review in Cambodia, OECD
- Development of a single registry for social protection in Bangladesh, consultancy for Maxwell Stamp, funded by DFID Bangladesh Country Office
- Development of a business case for child sensitive social protection in Uganda, UNICEF Uganda Country Office
- Study assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of health sector inputs in reaching the poorest of the poor in Ethiopia, UNICEF Ethiopia Country Office
- Study assessing the available fiscal space for social protection in Tanzania, UNICEF Tanzania Country Office

Capacity building

- Team lead, development of a social protection curriculum for Nigeria, Save the Children Nigeria Country Office
- Team lead, development of a shock responsive social protection curriculum for Lesotho, UNICEF Lesotho Country Office
- Study tour lead, organization of ten week long study tours for Nigerian Government officials to South Africa, Kenya, Brazil and Indonesia, funded by the UNICEF Nigeria Country Office, Save the Children Nigeria Country Office and the World Bank Nigeria Country Office
- Technical advisor, International Training Programme on Social Protection for Sustainable Development, Swedish International Development Agency
- Lecturer in Micro-simulation Models for Policy Analysis in the Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes course in Chiang Mai, Ford Foundation, Thailand
- Guest lecturer in Microsimulation Models for Policy Analysis, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance – United Nations University, the Netherlands
- Lead lecturer in an two-month long course in Macroeconomics and International Finance to South African ministers, deputy-ministers and members of Parliament, South Africa

Katharina Bollig

email: katharina@epri.org.za

telephone: +27 21 671 3301

fax: +27 21 671 3157

Capacity statement

Katharina Bollig is a Social Policy Advisor at the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), a global institution based in Cape Town, South Africa. She has ten years of experience in social protection and child protection research and policy advisory. Katharina has worked in over 30 countries, primarily across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East, with consultancies for the African Union, CRS, ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNU-WIDER, USAID, WFP and World Bank. She is specialized in the design, review and evaluation of social protection and child protection policies and programmes and has worked extensively on collecting and analysing household-level, programme-level and institutional data in lower- and middle-income countries.

Katharina has been technical advisor and policy advisor to the implementation of several cash transfer programmes with links to gender (Kenya), nutrition and child protection (the Gambia) and health (Nigeria). Furthermore, she has coordinated and led multiple social protection and child protection programme and system evaluations, drawing on mixed-method approaches. These included, among others, an evaluation of Kazakhstan's social protection system for families and children, an assessment of the main five cash transfer programmes in the Cook Islands, an evaluation of UNICEF's child protection case management activities in Jordan in refugee camps and host communities, as well as Zambia's integrated case management system for orphans and vulnerable children. Katharina has also coordinated various formative research projects, most recently, a business case and fiscal space analysis for the scale-up of a mother and early childhood grant in Lao PDR, an investment case for child-sensitive and shock responsive social protection in the Philippines, and an options paper for different emergency cash transfers for children and their families in Vietnam.

Katharina has also developed several social protection and child protection policies and strategies, such as the social protection strategy and social assistance policy for Lesotho, financing strategies for social protection across three states in Northern Nigeria, and the social protection policy for Nauru. She has presented her research at conferences, workshops and webinars in the Philippines, South Africa, Canada and Brazil.

Academic and professional qualifications

- 2013** Maastricht Graduate School of Governance – United Nations University, Maastricht, the Netherlands; M.Sc. Public Policy and Human Development
- 2012** Maastricht University, Maastricht, the Netherlands; B.A. European Studies

Relevant experience

Programme design and implementation

- Technical advisor to the implementation of a cash transfer targeted at adolescent girls and young women at risk of HIV, USAID Kenya.

- Social policy advisor to the Government of the Gambia in the development of a cash transfer programme targeted at pregnant women and lactating mothers in food insecure regions across the country, UNICEF the Gambia.
- Policy advisor to the design of a MNCH-targeted social protection intervention in Northern Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria.

Programme monitoring and evaluation

- Project coordinator and leading researcher for an evaluation of Kazakhstan’s social protection system for families and children, UNICEF Kazakhstan
- Project coordinator and leading researcher for an evaluation of the Cook Islands’ main five social assistance programmes, UNICEF Pacific
- Project coordinator for an assessment on the HIV-sensitivity of social protection programmes in Nigeria, UNAIDS Nigeria.
- Social policy advisor and researcher on an evaluation of the expansion and scale-up of HIV-sensitive social protection in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe 2014-18, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office.
- Project coordinator and lead researcher for an organisational review and capacity assessment of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youths in Cambodia, UNICEF Cambodia.
- Researcher assessing ways forward for Zambia’s integrated case management system for orphans and vulnerable children, UNICEF Zambia.
- Project coordinator for a process review and assessment of the Modified Conditional Cash Transfer programme for homeless and street families in the Philippines, UNICEF Philippines.
- Project coordinator and lead researcher on an evaluation of five cash transfer programmes in the Cook Islands and in how far they continue to meet their development objectives, UNICEF Fiji.
- Project coordinator and leading researcher assessing the nutrition impacts of a conditional cash transfer in the Philippines, UNICEF Philippines.
- Project coordinator and leading researcher evaluating UNICEF’s and partner’s child protection case management activities, UNICEF Jordan.
- Project coordinator of a process evaluation of Lesotho’s Conditional Cash Transfer pilot and a review of its Integrated Social Safety Net pilot, UNICEF Lesotho.
- Technical advisor to the assessment of several programmes of Catholic Relief Service (CRS) vis-à-vis social protection activities, CRS Nigeria.

Formative research

- Project coordinator and lead researcher on the development of a business case and fiscal space analysis for the scale-up of a mother and early childhood grant in Lao PDR, UNICEF Lao PDR
- Project coordinator and lead researcher on the development of an investment case for anticipatory action through adaptive and shock responsive social protection in the Philippines, FAO Philippines
- Project coordinator and lead researcher on the development of an investment case for child-sensitive and shock responsive social protection in the BARM region, UNICEF & FAO Philippines

- Project coordinator and lead researcher for an assessment of how social protection contributes to achieving UNICEF's key results for children in Benin, Guinea, Nigeria and Togo, UNICEF Western and Central Africa Regional Office.
- Project coordinator assessing the feasibility of and UNICEF's position towards the introduction of a multi-tiered child benefit for Vietnam, UNICEF Vietnam.
- Project coordinator and lead researcher in a social protection sector review for Nigeria, covering all 36 states, Save the Children International Nigeria.
- Project coordinator developing a strategic options paper for future social protection activities in Nigeria, DFID Nigeria.
- Project coordinator and lead researcher developing a business case and fiscal space analysis for social protection in Sierra Leone, UNICEF, UNDP & WFP Sierra Leone.
- Qualitative lead in the modelling of potential cross-sectoral returns of a demographic dividend for Uganda, UNICEF Uganda.
- Quantitative lead in developing a cost-benefit analysis model for school feeding, WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger.
- Project coordinator and quantitative lead in the development of a fiscal space analysis for social protection in the Gambia, WFP & UNDP the Gambia.
- Social policy advisor on an assessment of nutrition-sensitive social protection over the first 1,000 days in eastern and central Africa aiming to enhance nutrition-sensitive social protection programming across the region, WFP Central and East Africa Regional Bureau.
- Study lead in the development of an investment case for social protection to the Federal Government of Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria.
- Social policy advisor to State Governments in Southern Nigeria on the mapping of existing social protection programmes and interventions, and the development of state-level social protection strategies and policies, UNICEF Nigeria.
- Researcher assessing school feeding across Africa and developing options of sustainable school feeding models, African Union and WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger.
- Social policy advisor and quantitative lead for developing a cost-benefit model for sustainable school feeding across Africa, African Union and WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger.
- Project coordinator of the World Bank-led Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment for the social protection sector, UNICEF Nigeria.
- Research fellow assessing the impact of Ebola on the Sierra Leonean health sector, UNICEF Sierra Leone.
- Research assistant generating a database on social assistance programmes, politics and institutions for the Asian region, UNU-WIDER Helsinki.
- Lead consultant analysing social protection programmes and their efficacy in curbing child labour in the Philippines, ILO Philippines.

Policy and strategy development

- Project lead on the development of Lesotho's social protection strategy and social assistance policy, UNICEF Lesotho
- Project lead on the development of financing strategies for social protection in three States in Northern Nigeria, Save the Children International

Capacity building

- Social policy advisor during a study tour of 20 Nigerian social protection policy makers and implementers from federal- and state-level to Brazil, Government of Nigeria.
- Facilitator and presenter at capacity building workshop on quantitative modelling in social protection for Tanzanian Government officials, UNICEF Tanzania.
- Presenter at annual study tours of social protection policy makers and implementers to Cape Town, South Africa.
- Technical advisor to the Government of the Philippines in establishing a basic social protection floor, ILO Philippines.

Behzod Alimov, PhD, DSc

email: behzod.alimov@gmail.com

Capacity statement

Dr Behzod Alimov is Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Policy Research & Outreach from the Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Behzod holds a PhD in Economic and has been working at the CPRO for over ten years. He holds substantial experience working with UN agencies and international partners, having conducted multiple research and capacity building projects with them. Recently, Behzod carried out the analysis of child poverty in Uzbekistan for UNICEF and as part of the same project provided capacity building on the relevant methods and models for the Institute for Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research (IFMR).

Professional experience

- 09/2020 – today **Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan** Senior Lecturer; The UNESCO Chair in Knowledge Economy
*Teaching: Dissertation (final year undergraduates); Econometrics (3rd year undergraduates);
Advanced Topics in Quantitative Research Methods (Master's level)
Taught: Public Finance (3rd year undergraduates); International Economics and Labor Economics (final year undergraduates)*
- 09/2014 – 09/2016 **Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan**
Associate Lecturer
Taught: Mathematics for Economists and Economics (2nd year undergraduates)
- 09/2013 – 08/2014 **Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, Uzbekistan**
Part-time Lecturer (Contract of Service)
Taught: Mathematics, Economics, and Statistical Methods (1st and 2nd year undergraduates)
- 09/2013 – 08/2014 **BLKTB Mevasabzavot PLC, Tashkent, Uzbekistan**
Part-time Position as Accountant-Economist
Performed project-related calculations for clients
- 04/2009 – 09/2009 **CLAAS KGaA mbH, Harsewinkel, Germany**
Internship in Managerial Accounting

Academic and professional qualifications

- 10/2016 – 04/2020 Vilfredo Pareto PhD in *Economics*
Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy
 Title of the PhD thesis: ‘Essays in Applied International Macroeconomics’
 Doctoral advisors: Fabio Cesare Bagliano, Luca Gambetti
- 04/2011 – 02/2013 Master of Science in *International Economics and Public Policy*
Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany
 Title of the Master thesis: ‘Is there an “allocation puzzle” in international financial markets?’ (Mark: 1.0 – excellent)
 Overall mark / GPA: 1.6 (corresponds to “A” in the U.S. or 1st in the U.K.)
- 09/2006 – 02/2011 Bachelor of Arts in *International Business and Management*
Hochschule Osnabrück (University of Applied Sciences), Germany
 Title of the Bachelor thesis: ‘Faith-based finance and investments: A comparative analysis of Islamic and conventional mortgages and securitization’

Relevant experience

- 01/2023 – 02/2023 ***International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and WIUT***
 Held a day’s session within one-week training course in Applied Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis for Young Economists/Researchers in Uzbekistan
- 10/2021 – 12/2021 ***UNICEF Uzbekistan***
 - Provided consulting services for the analysis of child poverty in Uzbekistan
 - Conducted one-week workshop on econometric methods and models for employees of the Institute for Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research (IFMR)
- 07/2021 – 12/2021 ***UNDP Uzbekistan together with WIUT***
 Prepared materials and conducted trainings for employees of the local government bodies in 4 pilot regions of Uzbekistan.
- 04/2012 – 09/2012 ***Deutsche Bundesbank (Mainz, Germany)***
 Actively contributed to the development of an improved method for estimating remittances outflows in the Balance of Payments of Germany

Selected publications

- The dynamic effects of debt and equity inflows: evidence from emerging and developing countries. *The Journal of Economic Asymmetries*, Elsevier, Vol. 26, November 2022, e00259.
- Private debt, public debt, and capital misallocation. R&R at *Kyklos*, Wiley.
- The role of misallocation in the relationship between trade and income inequality (Available as Conference Paper at

https://iariw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Alimov_Trade_Misallocation_paper.pdf)

- Income inequality and political instability (work in progress, with Ahliddin Malikov)

Conferences and publications

- 2023 ASSA 2023 Annual Meeting (New Orleans, LA)
- 2022 70th Annual Conference of the Japan Society of Political Economy (Tokyo–Virtual); 11th Young Economists Conference: Political Economy of Power (Vienna–Virtual); 8th International Conference of the Turkish Economic Association (Nevşehir); ESCoE Conference on Economic Measurement (Glasgow)
- 2021 36th Annual General Conference of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth (Oslo–Virtual); 9th Meeting of the Society for the Study of Economic Inequality (London–Virtual); 4th Workshop on Macroeconomic Research (Krakow–Virtual)
- 2020 AISSEC XXI Scientific Conference “Comparative Perspectives on Economic Development and Inequalities” (Urbino–Virtual); ESCoE Conference on Economic Measurement (London–Virtual)
- 2019 1st Comp Net Data User Conference (Paris); XX Conference on International Economics (Granada); 5th International Conference on Applied Theory, Macro and Empirical Finance (Thessaloniki)

Sarvinoz Mamadjonova

email: sarvinozmamadjonova89@gmail.com

Capacity statement

Sarvinoz Mamadjonova is a Research Assistant and PhD candidate in Econometrics and Statistics at the CPRO. Her research focus is on education, labour market and gender economics and she has published several academic articles on the topics of education for girls and women and integration of females in the Uzbek labour market. Next to quantitative research, Sarvinoz has also conducted qualitative, primary research activities, and is fluent in Uzbek, Tajik, Russian and English.

Academic and professional qualifications

- 2013 Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; PhD in Economics and Statistics
- 2022 Binary Graduate School at Tashkent Institute of Finance, Uzbekistan; M.Sc. Accounting and Finance
- 2020 Namangan State University, Uzbekistan; Diploma of Retraining for Teaching Mathematics
- 2011 National University of Uzbekistan; B.Sc. Economics

Professional experience and publications

- Research assistant at the CPRO at Westminster International University in Tashkent
- Participation in multiple conferences to present research findings; including Tashkent Business & Economics Conference (TBEC) organized at Westminster International University in Tashkent, International conference conducted by Kazan Federal University and Tashkent State University of Economics, Tashkent Business & Economics Conference
- Khidirov, N., & Mamadjonova, S. (2022). Obtaining Higher Education For Women: Issues And Challenges. *Economics and Education*, 23(3), 198–205
(<https://cedr.tsue.uz/index.php/journal/article/view/527>)
- Mamadjonova, S., (2022) Female Contribution To The Economic Growth Of The Country. *O'zbekiston Respublikasida Soliq Ma'muriyatchiligini Samarali Faoliyatini Ta'minlash*. Pp 425-427
- Mamadjonova, S., (2022). Why Women Choose Particular Professions More Than Others In Uzbekistan: Qualitative Research. *Science and Education*. 3(9), Pp 511-517
(<https://openscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/4247>)
- Mamadjonova, S., (2022). Correlational Analysis Of Gdp, Female Unemployment Rates, Girls' Higher Education Attainment, And Other Factors In Uzbekistan. *International Conference "Statistics and its application"* Pp 305-307
- Mamadjonova, S., & Khidirov, N., (2022). Female Labor Force Participation Rates: Uzbekistan Case. *The Journal of International Finance and Accounting*. Issue 5.
(<http://interfinance.tfi.uz/?p=1910>)