

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Impelled by the goals of Education for ALL (EFA) to provide, expand and improve comprehensive education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, Alternative Education Programmes (AEP) have increasingly been envisioned as a key strategy “to fill the gap” for marginalized children who are not enrolled in the formal education system due to “age, gender, ethnicity or geographical location” (IIEP, 2009:2). This report represents an assessment of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Malaysia initiative entitled “Reaching the Unreached: An Alternative Education Programme (AEP) for Refugee, Undocumented and Stateless Children in Kampung Numbak, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah”, which ran from 2011 to 2013. UNICEF Malaysia provided RM 422,715.16 for the viable alternative education project in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Malaysia, Federal Special Task Force (FSTF), Malaysian Teacher’s Foundation (MTF), and the local community with a focus on sustainable alternative education policy development in Malaysia and partnerships to scale up successful interventions for the long-standing issue of marginalized immigrants in Sabah in particular, and Malaysia in general. In October 2012, UNICEF Malaysia contracted Universiti Malaysia Sabah to conduct the assessment.

### Scope and Methods

The focal point of the study was the Numbak Education Centre (NEC) project, with the assessment period being from the project’s inception in January 2011 until March 2013. A number of key parameters were established: (1) Relevance (Why was the project needed?); (2) Effectiveness (What were the results of the project?); (3) Efficiency (How well was the project administered?); (4) Outcome (What are the positive and negative consequences arising from the project’s activities?); and (5) Sustainability (Does the project have a future?). The assessment took the form of a theory-based assessment of the antecedents, processes and

results of AEP strategies and activities; it employed a participatory approach drawing on a mixture of information sources – quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary. The assessment relied on data from four sources: (1) a review of existing policy and programme documents (to understand the policy environment governing education for refugee and undocumented children); (2) a review of Kampung Numbak project documents; (3) a review of the Education Centre’s records on (a) school environment; (b) school achievement of learners, and (c) budget and expenditure; (4) primary data collection from stakeholders (MoE, MTF, and FSTF officers, parents, teachers, children) designed to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the provision and results of education from the perspective of different stakeholders through (a) focus group discussions with parents, villagers, and children; (b) interviews with Government officials, community leaders, and NGO representatives; (c) case studies of selected children’s life success stories; (d) product analysis of objects created by the children; and (e) roundtable discussion with existing stakeholders, non-governmental organisations and potential future stakeholders.

### Conclusions

The conclusions presented here are based on the findings detailed in the body of the report. They are based on the five parameters used in the assessment: (1) Relevance), (2) Effectiveness), (3) Efficiency), (4) Outcomes, and (5) Sustainability.

#### **Relevance**

NEC was established in response to two factors: Firstly, the undocumented and stateless children faced difficulties in gaining access to mainstream schools; and secondly, the Kampung Numbak parents recognised the need for their children to receive a formal education.