Thematic global evaluation of European Commission support to the education sector in partner countries (including basic and secondary education)

Evaluation for the European Commission

Dissemination seminar Brussels, February, 2011

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Structure of presentations

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- Presentation 2: Conclusions
- Presentation 3: Recommendations
Conclusions
1. Overview on conclusions
2. Conclusions per cluster
   • Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes
   • Service delivery/ Government take-up
   • Managing aid modalities
Evaluation Questions

Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes

EQ1 on relevance
EQ2 on access
EQ3 on secondary education
EQ4 on quality
EQ5 on skills

Service delivery/Government take-up

EQ6 on service delivery
EQ7 on transparency & account.

Managing the aid modalities

EQ8 on co-ordination
EQ9 on modalities

Conclusions

Adaptation to the rapidly changing policy context
Increasing alignment with partner country priorities

Resource allocation for meeting MDG and EFA targets still required

FTI has not consistently delivered on its aspirations

EC investments successful in increasing access, but quality of education and learning achievements remain in crisis

Emphasis on primary education should now shift to basic education

Integration and linkage required to wider public sector reforms for successful education reforms

BS as a catalyst for improved resource management, MTEFs as a basic tool remain a challenge

Matching capacity development and ownership

Strengthening the role of NSAs

Enhanced support to government-led co-ordination mechanisms

Qualified staffing for policy dialogue (& sector management)

Aid modalities selection process

Appropriateness of indicators
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements
### Evaluation Questions

**Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes**

- **EQ1 on relevance**
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**Service delivery/Government take-up**

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**Managing the aid modalities**

- **EQ8 on co-ordination**
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### Conclusions

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The EC policy framework for supporting education in partner countries adequately evolved and was adjusted to allow addressing of existing and emerging needs.

**Commitments to specific education-related goals:**
- MDGs, EFA goals

**Changes in the way development assistance is delivered:**
- Commitment to the 2005 Paris Declaration
- Emergence/affirmation of new aid modalities
- New funding mechanisms, such as the FTI-CF or other MDTFs

Considerable effort made by the EC to cope with new trends and requirements.
✔ EC successfully improved alignment.

✔ *Exceptions*: primarily *fragile states*.

- Two-pronged approach of supporting peace and stability, as well as making efforts related to human development, including education – often through NGOs.
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

Concluding 3: Resource allocation for meeting MDG and EFA targets still required

- Substantial and significant EC contribution to education (€ 1.9 bn).
- Increasing commitments, reflecting strong policy emphasis.
- **Shift in the share of education support from direct to more indirect support.**
  - Share for education in direct support **decreased** especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.
To keep in mind: Global financing gaps in basic education

✓ Financing gaps towards EFA are large and unlikely to be eliminated by current donor pledges
  • Highest needs in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a gap of USD 10.6 bn
  • Costs of lower secondary education ➔ Increase to USD 25 bn

✓ “it is clear that the role of donors is critical because governments in the poorest countries lack the resources to close the Education for All financing gap”.

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The FTI has not consistently delivered on its compact and alignment aspirations, undermining partnership and accountability.

- “FTI has remained a weak partnership, with weak accountability”. (FTI evaluation).
- Focus on implementation, capacity development and M&E has been neglected.
- Governance configuration of FTI has also been problematic.

Need to accelerate ongoing reform efforts of its architecture and focus in order to strengthen the mutual accountability aspects and to reduce aid fragmentation.
The EC has effectively assisted partner countries to accommodate enrolment expansion, thus improving capacity to meet MDG 2, 3 and EFA goals.

- LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states lag behind.
- Especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, EC support appears to have been used mainly to meet the bare necessities of system survival.

However, goals often restrictively defined in quantitative terms, with an emphasis on enrolment.
✓ Quality of education is often low, and learning achievements remain in crisis - more schools has not resulted in better learning.
✓ Comparative international and regional learning assessment surveys and school leaving examination results reveal poor scores, tendency to deteriorate rather than improve.
✓ EC made efforts to assist in coping with quality crisis.
  • In all programmes, irrespective of channels and modalities, support to both access and quality,
  • → In general: without systematic quality improvements.
✔ Without a stronger response to this crisis, quality deterioration will continue.
  • Confronting crisis requires government ownership, political will and adequate funding.
✔ The EC already made steps to move towards a quality improvement agenda:
  • From the 10th EDF onward, a clear shift is seen in SBS and GBS education-related indicators for flexible tranche release towards quality and outcome indicators.
  • Countries that score relatively high on the HDI tend to receive EC support through sector support and SBS – these countries systematically attempt to improve quality, efficiency, and to reach out to out-of-school youth.
Enrolment increase is not fully matched by increasing completion rates and progression rate to secondary is still low, especially in LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Secondary education has not featured strongly on the education priority agenda of developing countries.
- In countries with near-universal primary school enrolment pressure for secondary education created.
- However, secondary education systems in most countries are not ready to accommodate students everywhere.
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

Conclusion 6: continued

- EC support focused on the primary level, with only a small share for direct assistance to secondary education, mostly in middle-income countries.
- EC contributed to secondary school construction, but mainly in LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and in fragile states.
Cluster 2: Service delivery/ Government take-up
**Evaluation Questions**

1. EQ1 on relevance
2. EQ2 on access
3. EQ3 on secondary education
4. EQ4 on quality
5. EQ5 on skills

**Service delivery/ Government take-up**

1. EQ6 on service delivery
2. EQ7 on transparency & account.

**Managing the aid modalities**

1. EQ8 on co-ordination
2. EQ9 on modalities

**Conclusions**

- Integration and **linkage** required to wider public sector reforms for successful education reforms
- **BS** as a catalyst for improved resource management, **MTEFs** as a basic tool remain a challenge
- Matching **capacity development** and ownership
- Strengthening the role of **NSAs**
- Enhanced support to **government-led co-ordination mechanisms**
Such reforms often focus on decentralisation, PFM reform, civil service reform.

- This requires dialogues with and support of key stakeholders outside the education sector.

Roles and mandates of most Ministries of Education and Culture are now confined to policy making, standard setting, accreditation and quality control.
In Uganda, a combination of public sector reforms are forming a reasonably effective system that is trusted by donors and the government:

- Performance assessment,
- Sound sector policy,
- Effective inter-governmental fiscal transfer system.
✓ EC shift to sector and general budget support acted as a trigger to set up education sector resource management systems.
✓ EMIS systems usually are operational, but not always linked to FMIS.
  • EC TA assisted in improving EMIS, FMIS and PETS.

Conclusion 8: Shift to budget support enhances improved resource management, but operational MTEFs as a basic tool remain a challenge (EQ6)
Challenges:

✓ Ensuring that MTEFs are operational in sector budgeting, planning and implementation.
  • Low country ownership of documents – MTEF not sufficiently integrated into the planning and budgeting procedures of the partner country.
  • MTEF mechanism worked reasonably well only in a minority of the sample countries (positive examples: Tunisia and South Africa, in both cases with EC support).

✓ Aid predictability: Donors also have to ensure that they play their part in creating an enabling environment for sound financial planning in the sector.

✓ Fragile states - but in some cases successful efforts being undertaken.
Capacity development towards improved service delivery impeded by lack of resources, incentives and unrealistic timetables.

- Over-optimistic assumptions on conducive environment for capacity development.
- Costs and time necessary for improvements is often underestimated.

Resultant operational pressures can have adverse effects on the degree of ownership of the capacity development agenda.
Budget support requires transparency and accountability

→ beneficiaries of EC education sector support at all levels need to know how it is utilised.

In this process, NSAs can be an important ingredient.

• Providing monitoring/watchdog function.
• Enriching the policy dialogue.
• Delivery of services as pilots.
• Support to NSAs to be linked to EC support, including SBS – e.g. local call for proposals.
Increased complementarity and co-ordination with EU MS and other donors.

Co-ordination mechanisms strengthened by increased use of common approaches covering the whole sector.

Partner government with increasing role in co-ordination activities.

However, little support to enhancing the capacity of the partner government to assume a leading role in the co-ordination of the development activities
Cluster 3: Managing the aid modalities
Evaluation Questions

Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes

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Conclusions

Qualified staffing for policy dialogue (& sector management)
Aid modalities selection process
 Appropriateness of indicators
Introduction of GBS and SBS provides great potential and challenge policy dialogue on education-related issues.
- SBS allows for more in-depth dialogue and focus on subject matters.
- GBS operations provide a better link to wider macro-economic and PFM issues also affecting the education sector.
- Both types of budget support are more instrumental than projects in providing scope and entry points for policy dialogue.

Also clear indications that policy dialogue can facilitate initiating reforms.

Stronger capacity is required at EUD level to deal with these types of aid.
Challenges:

✓ Taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the new policy dialogue platforms.

✓ Required: Time, resources (workload, staffing levels), specific competencies (e.g. on PFM issues).
Selection of modalities is increasingly anchored in robust analysis of country context.

Ambition to align as closely as possible with its partner government has not been translated into forms of mechanistic selection on a particular aid modality (e.g. GBS).

- EC is one of the most coherent and persistent development partners in this respect.

**Challenge:** choice of aid modality in fragile states - both for the EC and for other DPs.

- Required: appropriate modalities that can ensure (future) alignment for fragile states.
- When to insist on using government as service provider or find alternative channels.
Introduction of GBS and SBS deepened dialogue on systemic issues related to resource allocation and achieving pro-poor educational outcomes

- SBS allows for in-depth dialogue and focus on subject matters.
- GBS operations probably provide a better link to wider macro-economic and PFM issues also affecting the education sector.

Both types of budget support provide better entry points for policy dialogue than project support.
✓ To consider when defining appropriate indicators and triggers.
  • They should provide appropriate structure to the dialogue and to subsequent implementation efforts.
  • Aligning too closely to internationally-defined goals (MDGs) may not be realistic or conducive.

✓ SBS and GBS can promote efficiency, as can NGOs in fragile contexts.
  • SBS efficiency associated with considerable learning costs, and has to be based on a robust partnership.
  • Shared commitment required to the same objectives, mutual trust and transparency.
  • In absence of such partnerships, NGOs can often be efficient channels.
Thank you!