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

Evaluation for the European Commission

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Structure of presentations

✓ Presentation 1: Findings
✓ Presentation 2: Conclusions
✓ Presentation 3: Recommendations
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2. Recommendations per cluster
   • Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes
   • Service delivery/ Government take-up
   • Managing aid modalities
Recommendations: Overview
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5. Increasing focus on quality improvement
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7. Indicators: examination results
8. Integrating overall governance issues
9. Encouraging countries to establishing conditions for budget support
10. Developing tools for strategic planning and budgeting
11. Strengthening NSAs
12. Supporting partner governments’ lead role
13. Enhancing EC capacity for dialogue
14. Improving analysis for aid modality selection
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Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements
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- 1. Increasing funding, reconsidering priorities
- 2. Engaging with FTI
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- 7. Indicators: examination results
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

Recommendation 1: Increase overall funding towards the education sector, possibly by reconsidering sector priorities (C3)

This means: Reconsider sector priorities and overall funding to education.

✓ This concerns the share of aid to the various sectors.
  • Risk that achievements related to increasing access and enrolment are jeopardised if low quality of education and learning achievements do not improve as well.
  • EC has made clear commitments to address the MDGs, EFA goals.

✓ Outside the scope of this evaluation to make a judgment on which sector(s) need greater support, but strong needs in education remain currently unmet by the international community.

Who: EC HQ
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

How could this materialise?

- Assess share of EC support to various sectors:
  - in light of international commitments;
  - in light of funds already invested in education, mainly for enrolment.

- Possibly reconsider overall sector priorities for upcoming period:
  - in the formulation of the new/revised financial instruments;
  - in country-level programming and choices made on focal sectors.
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

Recommendation 2: Engage more actively with FTI, at both HQ and country levels, to promote ongoing reforms and honour the implicit commitments in the compact (C3)

This means: Support the FTI in its efforts to fulfill the ambitious reform agenda currently in process.

☑ FTI’s goals and ambitions remain relevant and worthy of EC support.

☑ In particular, support the governance, implementation and accountability reforms.

Who: EC HQ dealing with FTI at global level, EUDs
Promoting FTI relevance and impact - both global level and at country level:

- Improve the mutual accountability aspects of the compact.
- Aim to make FTI’s alignment efforts more ambitious, as the EC itself has done.
- Explore expanding FTI’s focus beyond planning for endorsement.
Recommendation 3: Refocus EC education sector support

This means: Introduce differential approaches with a view to refocusing support.

This would include:

- Further differentiate between support to LDCs, middle-income countries and fragile states in terms of resource packages and modalities;
- Within SBS, focus more on pro-poor system reform.

This would allow:

- Stressing quality dimension in EC support (with a combined agenda of access and quality).
- Increasing flexibility in EC support to cater for requirements of middle-income countries and emerging economies (focusing more on competitiveness).

Who: HQ, education specialists, desks, EUDs
LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa: Use GBS indicators to strengthen focus on education.

- Where relevant, consider strengthening the capacity of ministries responsible for education through sector support programmes.
- Focus to be on primary education, with more emphasis on quality improvement, and on lower-secondary education, possibly complemented by SBS.

Complement the existing SBS approach by focusing on pro-poor quality-driven system reform – decentralisation as a major issue, capacity building support of sub-national administrations.
Clustering 1: Policy focus and achievements

Recommendation 4: Empower the age cohort completing primary to proceed to further education and employability (C6)

This means: In close dialogue with partner countries and DPs, gradually shift resource shares in sector programmes from primary education to diversified secondary education:

- especially in middle income countries, helping partner countries to make a shift from the enrolment agenda to quality improvement,

Who: HQ, education specialists, desks, EUDs
Strengthen competencies related to secondary education.
  • External and internal expertise on secondary education finance, quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring.
  • Assisting partner governments to identify and specify strategies and resource envelopes for the different education sub-sectors.

Renew emphasis on competency development linked to Public-Private Partnerships
  • Accreditation and quality control of public and private institutions as a basis for resource allocation.
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

Recommendation 5: Increase focus on quality improvement (C5&10)

This means: Consider new approaches for EC support to ensure triggering of quality improvements.

- Make current commitments more effective in terms of their support for quality improvement through focusing policy dialogue and performance assessment on quality.
- Demand-driven TA linked to EC SBS assisting in improving design, implementation and monitoring of quality improvement programmes.

Who: HQ, education specialists, desks, EUDs, ....other DGs
Three dimensions to arrive at a stronger focus on quality improvement:

1. Possibly apply a focused sliced area approach, e.g. concentrating on 10% of the districts.
   - Increased likelihood of better results in the improvement agenda as a basis for extending the piloted approaches nation-wide.

2. Further focus SBS on quality improvement, through setting relevant and realistic quality-related indicators.

3. Based on specific demand, provide TA to ministries of education in GBS recipient countries.
   - EC education-related TA in GBS countries could assist MoEs with their quality improvement agenda. → increasing levels of influence of MoEs.
This concerns: PTR, completion rates, drop-out rates and non-teacher salary share of the recurrent education budget.

To note: PTR and non-teacher salary share of the recurrent budget impact on the overall budget.

Who: HQ, education / GBS/SBS specialists, desks, EUDs
Two strands → aiming at quality-related indicators that are reliable, realistic, and consider the recurrent budget:

1. In design, formulation and preparation of support, e.g. by:
   • Assessing partner country quality improvement strategies, and potential strategies for efficiency gains.
   • Assessing reliability of key indicators.

2. In ongoing sector support programmes and SBS and GBS with learning achievement indicators by:
   • Assessing partner country strategies for quality improvement.
   • Assessing budgetary implications of indicators.
Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

Recommendation 7: Reconsider indicators related to examination results for variable tranche release

This means:

- Ensuring the validity and usefulness of examination results.
- Develop approaches to use these as indicators for quality improvement.

Who: HQ, education / GBS/SBS specialists, desks, EUDs
Main strands:

- Design, formulation and preparation for sector support and budget support:
  - Assess partner country learning assessment and examination systems including validity and reliability issues.
  - Design and implement competency building programmes, including test item design, validation, and setting up test item banks.

- In ongoing support with focus on learning achievement indicators
  - Assess scope, standardisation and validity of learning assessment and examination systems.
Cluster 2: Service delivery/ Government take-up
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Recommendations

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Cluster 2: Service delivery/Government take-up

Recommendation 8: Integrate overall governance issues into support to education sector reform (C8&10)

This means:

- Integrate efforts to promote overall governance reform into support to education sector reforms, particularly including decentralisation and public finance management (PFM) reform.
- Increase efforts to capitalise on synergies between decentralisation and PFM reform.

Who: HQ, education / GBS/SBS specialists, desks, EUDs
At EUD level:

- Strategically review areas where linkages between education sector reforms and other reforms can be strengthened.
- Reinforce country-level contacts with other donors and other stakeholders, including civil society and parliament.

Formulate guidelines on how to increase synergies between education sector reforms and wider reforms.
Cluster 2: Service delivery/ Government take-up

Recommendation 9: Further encourage countries in meeting the conditions for budget support (C8&9)

This means:

✓ Continue to use incentives to support committed governments.

✓ Continue encouraging other governments not (yet) meeting criteria to step up their efforts.

- Move to GBS or SBS for education has served as an incentive for partner countries’ efforts at putting in place sector frameworks, MTEFs, etc., with often positive effects on governance in the education sector.
- If demanded, provide capacity development support to accelerate necessary reforms.

Who: EUDs, HQ services dealing with GBS/SBS
How could this materialise?

✓ For countries preparing for budget support: Provide additional encouragement/incentives to pursue reforms in the education sector or overall.

✓ At the country level:
  • Maintain constructive dialogue with the sector ministries with a view to reach agreement on milestones in the reform process.
  • Make available appropriate capacity development support to help advance the technical aspects of the reform agenda.
Cluster 2: Service delivery/ Government take-up

Recommendation 10: Support the process of development of strategic multi-annual planning and budgetary tools in partner countries (C8)

This means:

✓ Step up efforts to work out the operational details of strategic multi-annual planning and budgetary tools in countries that are struggling.

✓ **Aim:** Making these results-based tools work appropriately.

**Note:** Development of a sector MTEF is a gradual process.

Who: HQ level to start
How could this materialise?

- Conduct in-depth review of country experiences in introducing results-based budgeting frameworks / MTEFs in education.
- Disseminate findings to EUDs/staff.
- Develop and disseminate guidelines and case studies on “best practices” for supporting operationalisation of multi-annual planning and budgetary tools, including MTEFs.
This means:

- Enhance efforts aimed at strengthening the watchdog role of NSAs in the education sector through, for example, civil society surveillance projects.

- Strengthen NSA involvement in education sector policy dialogues and monitoring and evaluation.

Who: HQ level, especially services dealing with NSAs, SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view, and EUDs
 ✓ Develop guidelines on principles and good practices for the involvement of NSAs in the education sector.
   • Include specific tools, such as NSA mapping, NSA consultations and capacity building.
 ✓ In the absence of strong NSAs: devise strategies for strengthening them, e.g. calls (international and/or local) for proposals.
Recommendation 12: Support partner governments’ lead role in sector co-ordination (C11)

This means: Assist in improving capacity of partner government to assume a leading role in co-ordination.

✓ Aim: Enhance leadership of governments.

Who: EUDs as main stakeholders, with support from HQ level, especially services dealing with SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view.
Cluster 2: Service delivery/ Government take-up

How could this materialise?

✓ Resources: Allocation of sufficient resources to work on improving co-ordination.

✓ Framework: Support government in establishing clearly-defined co-ordination mechanisms around a sector plan/strategy, and agreeing upon roles and responsibilities.
Cluster 3: Managing the aid modalities
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Recommendation 13: Enhance EC capacity to engage in education sector dialogue (C12)

This means: Further build EC capacities to engage in multi-actor and sector-specific dialogue created by new aid delivery methods.

✓ Achievable through:
  • an increase in, and better planning of, available resources;
  • further development of staff competencies.

✓ Who: Strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with SBS and GBS and by services in charge of human resources.

✓ Close collaboration with the representatives of the EUDs required.
How could this materialise?

- Assessing the resources required at an early stage (in the programming phase).
- Ensure adequate human resources over the long term.
- Build and share specific capacities related to policy dialogue
  - Addressing high turnover of staff;
  - Enhancing understanding of stakeholders interests and capacities,
  - Develop capacity for analysing contextual factors influencing the development of the education sector in the country.
Cluster 3: Managing the aid modalities

Recommendation 14: Improve analysis being used for aid modality selection (C2&13)

This means: Further improve analytical basis for aid modality choice, taking into account country needs and the state of the education sector.

✓ Especially relevant within a fragile context and with weak governance at service delivery level.

Who: Strong involvement at HQ level (sector, desk officers), EUDs
Cluster 3: Managing the aid modalities

How could this materialise?

✓ Keep sound analysis and documentation related to each major intervention on the choice of aid modality, explicitly discussing the degree of alignment possible.

✓ Consider disaggregating alignment so it does not become an “either/or” question of providing budget support or projects.

✓ Further improve the analysis of the feasibility of supporting non-state actors in contexts of weak commitment to improve governance at service delivery level.

✓ In fragile contexts, ensure that chosen modality and channel are not undermining current or future system (or state) building.
  → Shadow alignment may be useful.
1. Enhance efforts aimed at shaping indicators.

**Who:** Mainly EUDs, strong involvement at HQ level (services dealing with SBS and GBS, with UN agreements dealing with education, in charge of FTI).

2. Reduce the “learning curve” when introducing SBS and GBS.

**Who:** Strong involvement at HQ level (services dealing with SBS and GBS), and EUDs (with SBS and GBS operations, but also those in fragile states).
First recommendation:

- Use the entry through SBS and GBS to address potentially contentious areas affecting service delivery, including the establishment of indicators.
- Resist mechanistic adoption of global goals as country indicators (e.g. MDG2), but anchor indicator-setting in the local context so as to structure incentives appropriately.

Second recommendation:

- Seek to learn from other SBSs in the country, and from similar SBSs in other countries, to avoid the pitfalls that lead to unnecessarily low efficiency.
- Establish indicators and triggers that promote efficiency.
Priorisation of recommendations, schematic overview

1. Increasing funding, reconsidering priorities
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14. Improving analysis for aid modality selection
15. Realistic indicators
Thank you!