

2009 Annual Joint Review Way Forward

The Annual Joint Review (AJR) presented the achievements, challenges and way forward on a range of issues within the areas of access/infrastructure, quality and management. The presentations were followed by discussions, enabling the participants to express ideas on the Way Forward in the education sector. Furthermore, the semi-annual report January-June 2009 and Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) were distributed during the AJR. From these two important documents lessons can be drawn for the Way Forward. This Way Forward-document therefore can be seen as a summary of relevant ideas and new activities to concentrate on in the near future and which need to be integrated in the current National Education Action Planning for the last half year of 2009 and the new NEAP, 2010-2012.

Access

- The Fee Free Basic Education (FFBE) policy will be reviewed (including its name) with the aim to improve its effectiveness and sustainability. More studies on the impact of the Fee Free Basic Education therefore, in particular in the rural areas, are needed. Ministry and Education Authorities must make continuous efforts to raise awareness through all kinds of media and means. Disciplinary measures will be put in place for schools and Education Authorities not adhering to the principles of the policy. Finally, the Ministry must ensure that school grants are disbursed on time.
- There is still no complete gender balance in access to schools; the Ministry needs a special programme to get more/all girls to schools.
- The Net Enrolment Rate has gradually increased for Primary and Junior Secondary Education. However, the drop out rates for these levels has increased and therefore, it is now urgent to implement a Study on Barriers to Education to assist the Ministry with informed decision making on school drop out.
- At the moment the Ministry has very few or no facilities for students with disabilities. The *National Education Action Plan, 2010-2012 and FFBE*, should capture inclusive education and education for students with disabilities.
- There is no gender balance in the teacher profession. There are more male than female teachers, with the exception for Early Childhood Education. The Ministry in collaboration with the School of Education will develop strategies for attracting more females to the teacher profession.
- ECE-centres are ideally developed as part of a primary school and within every community. Stand alone ECE's must be registered.

Infrastructure

- The impact of the growing school population and the FFBE is placing demand for more classrooms and other school infrastructure (specialised classrooms,

storage, libraries, teacher houses, water and sanitation facilities). The Infrastructure Co-ordination Unit will produce a National Infrastructure Action plan in 2009, which will capture specific provincial needs expressed in the Provincial Education Action Plans, 2010-2012 and which will address the PAF-key findings.

- The introduction of mapping exercises in the provinces will assist to collect more details about school infrastructure.
- Specialised classrooms are needed for CHS. EA's have an important task to identify the specific needs in infrastructure and reflect these in the PEAP, 2010-2012.
- All PSS need upgrading of their facilities after many years of negligence.
- There should be one fully equipped RTC in every province.
- Ideally, TVET and secondary practical subject teachers and students are actively involved in the construction, maintenance and repair of classrooms and other facilities in a mode of 'learning by doing'.
- EA's are urged to closely monitor and support the implementation of the infrastructure plans and projects.

Quality

- The Pearson book publishing project managed by CDC should get the highest budget priority, also in this time of economic downturn. TA support to CDC needs to be continued for 2 years.
- The education sector has a high percentage of unqualified teachers, in particular at primary education level. The Ministry will pursue with the conversion of the TIT-materials into DFL-mode to address the urgent need for training of untrained teachers.
- SoE/SICHE must integrate the newly developed curriculum materials into the pre-service training of teachers.
- All in-service training should be co-ordinated by TTDO which must organise regular NTED-committee meetings as suggested in the TTD-policy.
- Attendance and absenteeism of teachers is an issue and the Ministry will therefore seek to implement the recommendations of the teacher effectiveness project, which will lead to a review of the Teacher Service Handbook and a new policy for teacher attendance.
- Due to remoteness, class sizes in remote schools are often below official teacher pupil ratio. The introduction of multi-grade teaching in primary schools would improve teacher utilisation
- Drop out rates increase at higher levels in the education system. The Ministry will finalise the development of a school assessment policy and the regular use of ARTTLe (Assessment Resource Tool for Teachers and Learners) at all levels in the system in order to improve quality of teaching and learning.
- Complete the review of the Inspectorate Framework to encourage active involvement of other stakeholders, such as Education Authorities, school managers and school boards and committees in the assessment of the quality

of learning and teaching at schools. It also will gradually develop into a semi-autonomous commission under the Ministry.

- Promotion and establishment of libraries is urgent. Develop School Library Policy and aim for every school/centre to have a functioning library.
- EA's could organise more regular exchange between schools in school breaks in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the provinces.

Management

Policies

- Finalise the Basic Education, Tertiary Education policy, National Curriculum Statement and the review of the Education Act in 2009 and forward these to NEB and Cabinet for approval.
- Develop a policy for school assessment, language in education and senior secondary education.
- A national minimum standards policy for school infrastructure should be developed, which includes the concept of an adaptable design related to the available resources in the community.

Planning and Budgeting

- Finalise the review of NEAP II 2010-2012 and all Provincial Education Action Plans 2010-2012,
- Develop a Medium Term Expenditure Framework for the education sector 2010-2012
- The Ministry will put mechanisms in place to better utilise the available financial support from the development budget and improve the implementation and monitoring of development projects.
- The findings from the PER and SWAp-review will be integrated in the NEAP and annual work planning. The continuous improvement of data base management for teacher establishment and scholarships will be included in the NEAP.
- Seek to rebalance the proportion of SIG expenditure on tertiary scholarships compared with basic education, and tighten management of the tertiary scholarship expenditure.
- The Ministry will investigate the feasibility for outsourcing tasks within NTU and TSD.
- Both the new NEAP and PEAP's should include an adequate arrangement for emergency relief, recovery and rehabilitation to enable quick and effective reaction from the Ministry and province on disasters.

Implementation

- The Ministry must strongly focus on the implementation of all these new policies, plans and recommendations from different reviews or reports. The implementation will depend on:
 - Adequate budgeting, funding and support from government and development partners;
 - Recruitment, continuous capacity building of human resources and other HRD-support;
 - Strong co-ordination and co-operation between different levels (Ministry and among different divisions, province and communities);
 - Leadership, effective management.
- The current global economic crisis resulted in 35% budget reservation and freeze on recruitment. Therefore prioritisation of activities and new ways of efficiently utilising human resources are important tasks for stakeholders at the different levels; Ministry, EA's and schools.
- Team work, collaboration is needed between the different levels to implement the new programme and plans. Also co-ordination teams in the provinces are needed to implement the PEAP. Finally, adequate funding and technical support is needed to assist the EA's with implementation of the PEAP.
- Ownership of the PEAP is weak, which effects implementation. Ideally the PEAP's are captured in the Provincial Strategic Plans and there must be sufficient awareness raising on the purpose and content of the PEAP and timely distribution of the PEAP before 2010.
- Increase the participation of communities in the education sector - through school committees and boards by providing capacity building, as well as greater engagement of civil society more broadly.

Monitoring

- The Ministry will continuously aim to improve its monitoring system by improving rate of returns from schools for SIEMIS, production and updating of PAF, organisation of monitoring tours, implementing research and generally by regular capacity building of all staff, in particular the SIEMIS-team to encourage increased utilisation of education data for decision making and planning.
- Monitoring of all new policies to ensure effective implementation by EAs, schools and stakeholders
- The Ministry will continue with the financial grants training to school managers and Education Authorities to improve the return rate of retirements for school grants and grants to EA's and generally improve financial management at schools of all revenues.

HR-management

- The Ministry will improve on its HR-management with the aim to increase commitment, motivation and performance of staff. Review of job descriptions will continue, job rotation and incentives corresponding with performance will be introduced. Development of a disciplinary process, stronger monitoring of

staff performance and the introduction of staff appraisals will be an intrinsic part of HR-management.

- The Ministry to complete study on teacher demand, supply and deployment and to implement the findings and recommendations of the report.
- The Ministry must initiate studies on increased efficiency and outsourcing opportunities for NTU and TSD.
- Review the allocation and appointment of probationers to ensure a fair distribution of qualified teachers over all islands. The Education Authorities are requested to be more pro-active and to create stronger pull-factors.
- Provincial staff has been working without any incentives for a long time. They need incentives. However, these incentives should be based on appraisals of performance measured against new job descriptions. The Ministry will introduce IOA and HRD-planning for the EA's. It will maintain its provincial grant support, but only for EA's which adhere to the EA-grant policy which requires
 - bi-annual financial and narrative reporting on the implementation of the PEAP,
 - annual work plans and
 - follow up on SIEMIS-formats sent to schools.
- Increased number of MEHRD-staff trained through DFL and not through face-to-face training abroad.
- The Ministry will seek closer co-operation with volunteer organisations to increase capacity building and training to Education Authorities and school managers in financial and education management.

Communication

- More attention at ESCC/AJR for the auditing process and reports.
- Continue public communication and awareness programmes on SIBC and explore other ways to improve public awareness and support for education.
- A teacher gazette to be published providing teacher positions in all schools per province.
- Improve communication and information sharing with provinces by installing e-mail and SIEMIS on their computers.

Relationship management with development partners

- Launch of the partnership principles.