

The background of the entire cover is a photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a young girl in a blue school uniform with white trim is looking towards the right, smiling slightly. Behind her, another student is visible, also in uniform, with their hand raised. The classroom has a corrugated metal ceiling and bright light coming from windows in the background.

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In collaboration with
Cambridge Education

The UNICEF Education Think Piece Series:
Innovative Thinking for Complex Educational
Challenges in the SDG4 Era

Edited by
Shiraz Chakera
Sharon Tao

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These Education Think Pieces are available online at: <https://www.unicef.org/esa/reports/education-think-pieces>.



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Introduction from the Editors

In 2018, the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Regional Office commissioned a series of *Education Think Pieces* by leading researchers and practitioners for the promotion of fresh and cutting-edge thinking on how to improve the quality of education in ESA. These Think Pieces aim to broaden expertise and knowledge, stimulate dialogue and encourage new ways of thinking to address significant educational challenges facing the region. Whilst the Think Pieces are rooted in evidence, they are not research papers, evidence briefs or literature reviews; instead, they are concise, engaging and provocative pieces that aim to stimulate debate and challenge the status quo.

This Think Piece series, developed in collaboration with Cambridge Education, provides sharp analysis and innovative, pragmatic and at times provocative strategies to address the following ten issues:

1. Girls' education: Sharon Tao acknowledges the tremendous progress in girls' access to education but notes that girls continue to be disproportionately affected by multiple constraints and, in many contexts, progress is decelerating. Sharon provides easy-to-use strategic tools to help ministries of education and girls' education programmes build a coherent and coordinated approach to improving girls' education.

2. Pre-primary education: Elizabeth Spier, Paul Oburu and Hirokazu Yoshikawa note that despite strong evidence of impact, support from policy makers and demand from communities, most children in sub-Saharan Africa do not access pre-primary education; and where they do, quality issues persist. They provide concrete strategies to ensure quality pre-primary education for all.

3. Parents and caregivers: Amy Jo Dowd, Lauren Pisani, Caroline Dusabe and Holly-Jane Howell show that around three-quarters of a child's waking life is out of school and that, during this time, parents and caregivers shape their learning environments and opportunities. This valuable time can be harnessed with government and civil society support to parents, but rarely is this low-cost intervention strategically planned and budgeted for.

4. Teacher performance: John Martin argues that investment in teacher training has rarely had the desired impact on children's learning and that a broader approach is needed that places teacher accountability and merit-based career progression at the heart of improving teacher performance. Furthermore, John argues for radically improving pre-service teacher training.

5. Curriculum reform: Roger Cunningham finds that reforms towards outcome or competency-based curricula (i.e., student-centred and focused on skills and capabilities) have done little to improve learning outcomes. This is not a critique of curriculum choices, but examines how such reforms require reforms in other parts of the education system (i.e., teacher training, textbook development, inspection) in order to be successful.

6. Accountability and the Delivery Approach: Robin Todd highlights that education system actors face a common set of challenges when it comes to translating education sector policies and plans into results. These include turning policy into practice, unclear accountability structures and delivery across a fragmented system. He summarizes the 'Delivery Approach' as a possible strategy for achieving change on pressing educational priorities in political cycle timeframes.

7. Inclusive education: Emma Sarton and Mark Smith note that children with disabilities still face challenges in accessing education in part due to the tensions within the inclusion debate which inhibit the journey towards better educational experiences for these children. In response, they present a powerful and practical 'Wave' model that provides teachers, schools and ministries with a phased approach to creating more inclusive education opportunities.

8. School improvement: Steve Baines recognizes the need to establish a consensus on what school improvement means and how this affects the direction of effort and the allocation of resources. He argues that school improvement which avoids repeating the ineffective efforts of the past will be driven by a combination of public pressure, school-level changes and government reform underpinned by strong political will.

9. Learner-centred education: Michele Schweisfurth draws from a synthesis of the findings from every article on learner-centred education (LCE) published in the International Journal of Educational Development to show that, despite its popularity in development education contexts, LCE isn't working. She provides key principles that can be adopted and which draw on the best of learner-centredness while respecting context and avoiding failure.

10. Delivering education in emergencies: Mary Mendenhall addresses the challenges within the humanitarian-development nexus in the education sector. She identifies opportunities for education partners to seize the momentum around this nexus, particularly with regard to learners, teachers and national education system actors. Mary also notes the types of skills and competencies that educationalists need to effectively navigate this nexus.

These Think Pieces have been published as individual pieces with a blog, video presentation and webinar targeted at UNICEF ESA Education Specialists. We have been pleased to see the impact the series has already made, informing and influencing key discussions and decisions, such as curriculum reform in Ethiopia, sharpening gender education programming in Kenya, improving teacher management in Malawi and designing quality education programmes across the ESA region. Through the publication of this book, which contains insights, lessons and guidance for beyond ESA, the series has now been made available to a wider audience.

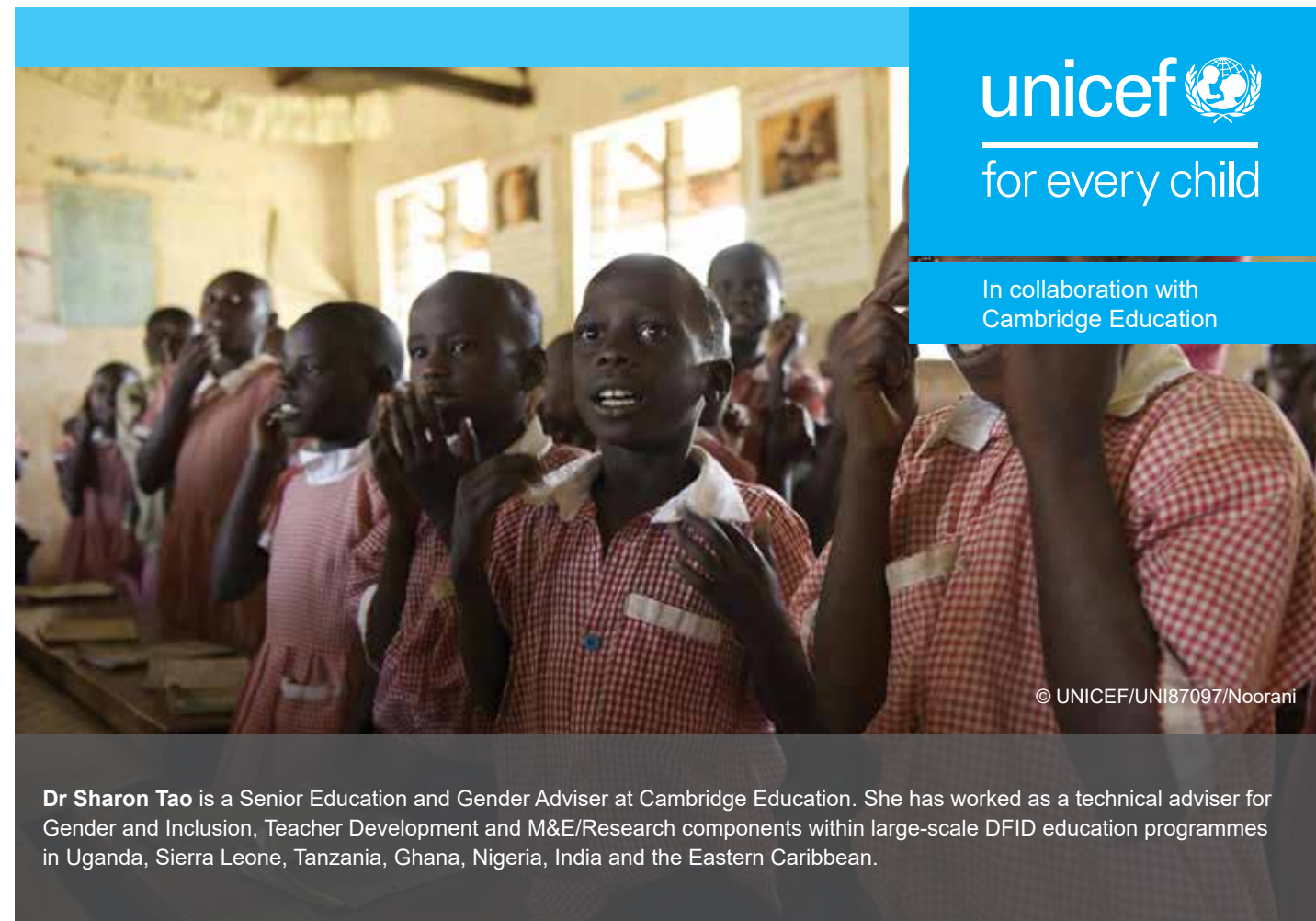
Those who are interested in innovative thinking around difficult educational challenges – including education ministry actors, donors, development partners, non-governmental organisations, academics, students, consultants, etc. – can focus specifically on the pieces that are relevant to their field of interest or they can explore the series in its entirety. Either way, we hope you enjoy this book and that you will take away fresh ideas and new ways of thinking about how we can improve learning for all children, now and for years to come.

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Girls' education is improving, but not for all girls – how can we accelerate change?

Dr Sharon Tao

Throughout the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region, there are countless groups of children who experience significant constraint on their capability to learn¹. These include children with disabilities, children from an ethnic minority, children displaced by emergency or conflict and children living in extreme rural and/or impoverished conditions. While both boys and girls make up these excluded groups, the constraints that are experienced – be it due to extreme poverty, displacement or disability – *are compounded and multiplied when they are experienced by girls*.

Both boys' and girls' education suffers if they are expected to work and bring income to the family, but girls will have the added constraints of extra domestic duties, vulnerability to sexual harassment, menstruation and in some contexts, expectations of early marriage². These are the reasons why this Think Piece will have a definitive focus on girls' education. It will unpack why girls' educational achievements remain low, despite the number of girls' education programmes in the ESA region. It will also put forward a new approach to girls' education – one that aims to galvanize and coordinate such efforts so that more comprehensive, accelerated and sustainable change can be achieved.

¹ In 2010, around 9 million primary aged children in ESA were out of school. UIS Data Centre, 2012.

² King & Winthrop, *Today's Challenges for Girls' Education*, 2015 p. 24-34.

Why girls’ educational achievement suffers: multiple forms of constraint

A great deal of documentation and evidence demonstrates that girls’ education is an enshrined human right³ and contributes significantly to a country’s development⁴. As a result, a focus on girls’ education features in most ministry of education sector plans⁵. Tremendous progress has been made towards achieving gender parity in the first few years of primary school; girls are often well represented in year 1-3 classrooms in the ESA region.

However, over the following years, girls’ presence and participation in school starts to drop, leading to very poor completion and transition rates⁶. Clearly, girls are not attending and learning to their full potential. They are not empowered to gain the benefits that education brings in terms of livelihoods, social status and self-fulfilment. Thus, girls, as well as their nations, suffer from a terrible waste of potential.

Girls’ poor completion and transition rates are due to the multiple forms of constraint they experience both inside and outside schools, particularly as they grow older. Household poverty is a significant constraint that both *pulls* girls and boys out of school (due to costs of uniforms, materials, exam fees), and also *pushes* them into providing labour to benefit the family (either at home or in the informal economy). For girls however, these challenges are compounded by additional constraints, such as extra domestic chores (cooking, cleaning, collecting water, caring for siblings, etc.), having inadequate support and sanitary products for menstruation, and the prospect of an early marriage, as dowries often offset family poverty.

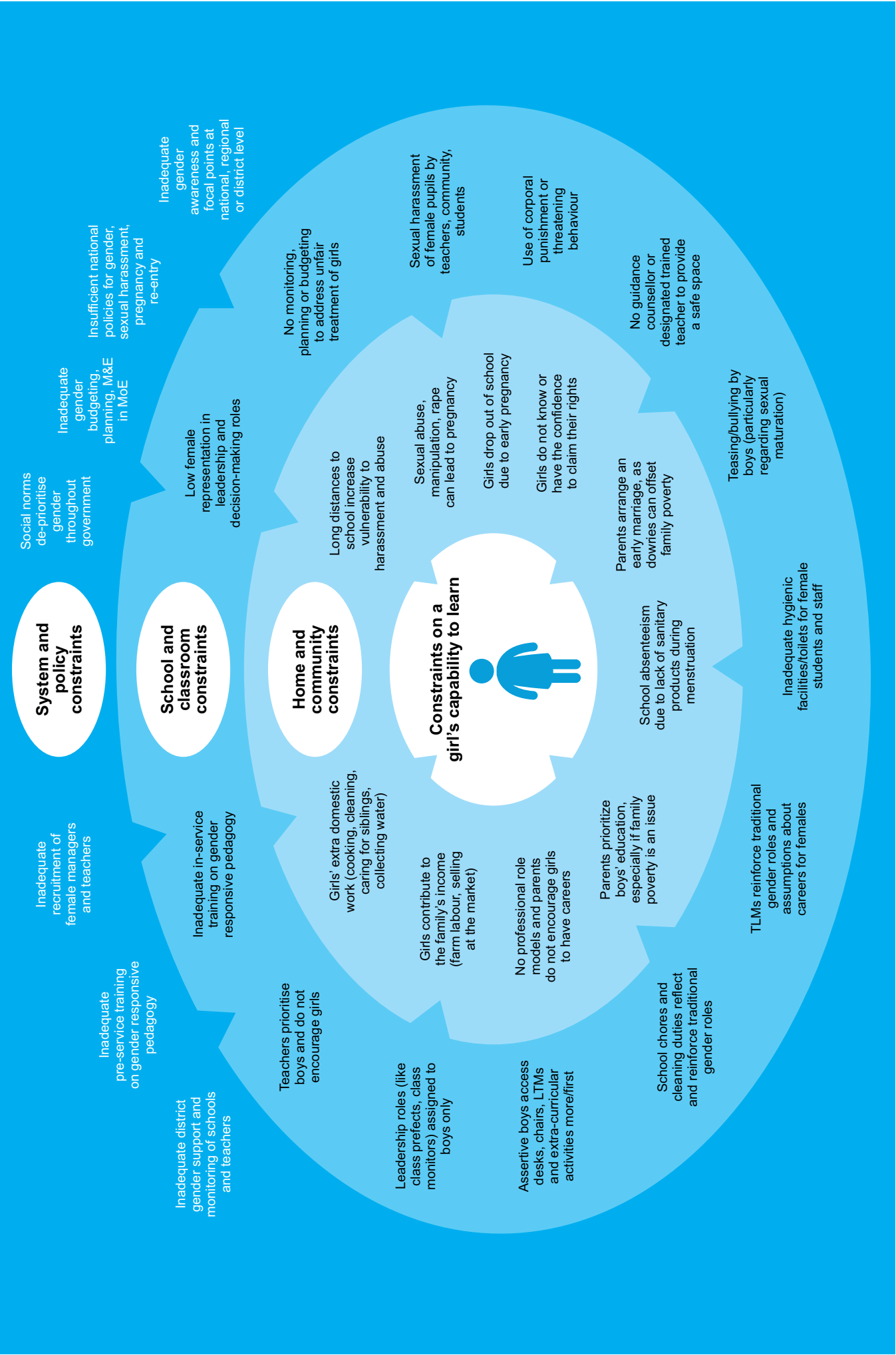
Additional barriers within schools and classrooms add to constraints at the household level. Teachers frequently have unconscious or conscious preferences and biases towards male pupils⁷. Textbooks often depict men in positions of power and authority, thereby shaping and limiting girls’ aspirations.

School cleaning protocols frequently reinforce gender norms and girls’ domestic roles and duties. These are just some of the subtle ways that girls and boys are treated differently at school. More extreme differences occur when sexual harassment, predation or violence is directed towards girls by teachers, students or community members⁸. Girls do not often have the knowledge, life skills and confidence to claim their rights in such instances; and insufficient protection and reporting systems leave girls vulnerable to sexual advances.

Such insufficient systems are frequently tied to failings at district and national levels, whereby policies regarding gender, sexual harassment or codes of conduct are poorly drafted, disseminated or enforced (if they in fact exist). These inefficiencies are often due to a lack of gender prioritization and political will within governments, which can be a result of broader social, cultural and/or religious norms that do not recognize or value equality between women and men.

Figure 1 on the following page outlines these and other constraints that affect girls’ education in the ESA region. It locates constraints within the different levels of the education system: the home and community; school and classroom; and system and policy levels. Such an analysis helps to illustrate how inequalities that affect girls’ education are complex, interconnected and compound each other from the macro- to micro-level⁹.

Figure 1: The different types and level of constraint on girls’ capability to learn



³ Right to Education, Understanding Education as a Right, 2018.
⁴ Plan, Paying the Price: The economic cost of not educating girls, 2008.
⁵ Global Partnership for Education, Girls' education and gender in education sector plans and GPE-funded programmes, 2017.
⁶ Global Education Monitoring Report, Gender Review: Creating sustainable futures for all, 2017, p. 17.
⁷ Mbilinyi & Mbughuni, Education in Tanzania With a Gender Perspective: Summary Report, SIDA, 1991, p. 17.
⁸ Parkes & Heslop, Stop Violence Against Girls in School: A cross-country analysis of baseline research in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique, ActionAid, 2011.
⁹ It should be noted that positive effects can be seen when certain significant constraints are not an issue. For example, amongst well-off families where poverty is not a constraint, girls' primary completion rates are actually higher than that of boys. This is the case in Burundi. DHS, 2010.

Many international partners, civil society organisations, donors and governments have designed and implemented interventions that aim to address the myriad of constraints that lead to girls' poor educational achievements. However, these interventions have had varying degrees of success. Generally speaking, they focus on only one or two particular constraints at a particular level of the education system. This can be problematic, as projects focusing on constraints at school can easily be undermined by constraints that still exist within the home (or vice versa). This often occurs when education programmes that have girls as their sole beneficiaries automatically assume they are 'gender responsive' and thus overlook other forms of constraint. Robust research has evaluated many such programmes and interventions; and has concluded that the impact on girls' education is greatest when a combination of different kinds of intervention comes together to provide a holistic approach to constraints¹⁰.

¹⁰ Unterhalter et al., Education Rigorous Literature Review: Girls' Education and Gender Equality, DFID 2014, p. 15.

Pre-primary, P1-3			P4-5		P6-7		Lower/Upper Secondary intended age				Interventions to address constraint		
P1-3 (delay)			P4-5 (absenteeism)		P6-7 (drop-out no transition)								
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
HOME & COMMUNITY CONSTRAINTS													
Parents do not have funds for school costs (uniforms, materials, exam fees), home environment, food													
Parents have low level of education, low confidence/status, de-prioritization of education													
Prioritization of boys' education due to cultural norms, family poverty, too many children													
Girls responsible for domestic work (cooking, cleaning, collecting water, care for siblings)													
Girls contribute to family income (farm labour and selling at the market)													
Long distances to school increases vulnerability to abuse by community members													
Belief in/need for dowry (early marriage), risk pregnancy													
Lack of sanitary products and info on SRH													
Transactional sex for school fees - risk of pregnancy													
Early pregnancy w/ no support - drop out to care for child													
Complex process for abuse - parents avoid reporting													
Lack of awareness of rights, pregnancy re-entry policy													
CLASSROOM & SCHOOL LEVEL CONSTRAINTS													
Inadequate in-service training on gender responsive pedagogy													
Teachers prioritize boys and do not encourage girls													
Use of corporal punishment or threatening behaviour – demoralizes pupils													
No guidance counsellor or designated trained teacher to ensure that the school is a safe space for girls													
Teacher absenteeism and low number of female teachers and role models													
TLMs reinforce traditional gender roles and assumptions about careers for females													
School chores and cleaning duties reflect/reinforce traditional gender roles													
Assertive boys access desks, chairs, TLMs and extra-curricular activities more/first													
Leadership roles (like class monitors, prefects) assigned to boys													
Inadequate hygienic facilities/toilets for female students													
Teasing/bullying by boys (regarding sexual maturation)													
Sexual abuse/harassment by teachers/students													
Transactional sex with teachers for grades													
No school safety/reporting policy for cases of abuse													
DISTRICT AND NATIONAL LEVEL CONSTRAINTS													
National policies for enrollment, harassment, pregnancy not disseminated, implemented or enforced by districts													
Inadequate recruitment/deployment of female teachers and managers													
Inadequate gender structures/officers/support at district and national level													
Inadequate reporting systems, law enforcement, national hotline for cases of sexual abuse/harassment													
Inadequate gender budgeting, planning, M&E at district and national level													
Inadequate pre-service training on gender responsive pedagogy (GRP)													
Gender responsive policy and ESP development, dissemination, main-streaming; bursaries for female teachers; training for District Gender Officers													
Pre-service training on GRP													

Within the ESA region, there are many examples of interventions that aim to address particular constraints, such as cash transfers to parents to keep girls in school¹¹, provision of sanitary products¹² and Girls' Clubs¹³. There are also general education programmes that try to mainstream gender within their broader capacity development with teachers, communities and district education officers¹⁴. These examples are laudable; however, often these interventions are uncoordinated. Their targets, beneficiary age range, timeframes and geographical scope vary, and together they do not add up to a holistic response to the challenges girls face. In addition, organisations frequently work in isolation from each other, leading to a fractured landscape of girls' education projects that can involve duplication and overlap.

In addition to this, there are examples of interventions aimed at addressing national level constraints. Most notably, the work that the Global Partnership for Education, UNGEI and UNICEF are doing to support ministries of education to address gender in their education sector plans (ESP). In 2016, they developed *Guidance for Developing Gender Responsive Education Sector Plans*¹⁵, which provides practical tools to support: 1) a gender analysis of a country's education sector; 2) using the analysis to plan and design interventions, allocate human and financial resource and define monitoring approaches; and 3) appraising the extent to which a country's education system and ESP address gender concerns.

These are very important objectives that target many of the system and policy level constraints identified in Figures 1 and 2. When these objectives are achieved by ministries of education, many more countries will have sector plans, policies, budgets and monitoring systems that are significantly more gender responsive¹⁶. However, the guidance document does not acknowledge that in most contexts there are many donor and NGO partners already implementing girls' education interventions at the grassroots level. It would be helpful to harness these programmes in order to ensure a harmonized approach, as well as facilitate ESP implementation.

Thus, there is a need for a coordinated strategy in which gender responsive sector plans and grassroots interventions, however small and specifically targeted, are part of a combined response that provides a comprehensive approach to constraint on girls.



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Addressing constraint - a different approach to implementation

As discussed, grassroots efforts to tackle constraints on girls' education can often be too narrowly-focused and too disparate to have major impact. Research also suggests that silver bullet solutions do not work. Gender responsive sector plans may have more broadly-focused analysis, vision and strategies to address constraint; but they do not often harness, coordinate with or require the alignment of grassroots girls' education programmes that are being implemented.

An approach that looks at the problem in the round and coordinates both macro- and micro-level interventions towards a common strategy may be the way forward. This would require supporting ministries of education to: 1) develop a comprehensive Theory of Change (ToC) to underpin their gender responsive sector plan or national gender in education policy¹⁷; and 2) use the ToC to guide implementation as it provides a common strategy and coordination mechanism for both system actors and like-minded organisations working on girls' education interventions.

Developing a transformative approach to change

As discussed, the *Guidance for Developing Gender Responsive Education Sector Plans* contains many tools that support ministries to conduct a gender analysis of their education sector and use the analysis to plan and design appropriate interventions. What may strengthen this process is the development of a robust theory or approach to change, that takes into account all the different types/ levels of constraint along with corresponding interventions. This can then be used to provide a comprehensive roadmap to harness and coordinate girls' education programmes operating on the ground.

Figure 3 on the following page is an illustrative and generic theory of change that aims to do this by starting with the different levels of constraint identified in Figure 1, and the relevant interventions that were identified in Figure 2. Both constraints and interventions should be tailored to the context in which it is being used. This can be done through discussions with key stakeholders, particularly girls, to contextualize, validate and elaborate on constraints, and to prioritize which constraints are the most significant in particular districts or regions¹⁸.

Based on prioritized constraints, interventions can also be prioritized at all levels, from the individual to institutional. If interventions are implemented simultaneously and in the same context, the hypothesis is that more gender responsive systems, schools, homes and communities will begin to develop. And when that happens, girls' educational access, completion and transition will be significantly improved. This is not just a theory of change, but a theory of system transformation.

That said, transformation is not straightforward or linear and this approach is predicated on assumptions regarding a climate of support for girls' education (politically, culturally, economically and socially). These factors significantly influence the development and implementation of interventions for girls' education. But even if levels of support are wanting, this transformative approach can be used as a roadmap to galvanize any support that does exist, by ensuring that all interested parties remain focused and aligned.

After the approach has been contextualized and used to underpin a gender responsive sector plan or policy, who within the ministry should own it? Particularly in order to harness and coordinate the various girls' education interventions being implemented? In most ministries of education, the gender 'unit', 'division' or 'desk' has a mandate for implementation, but they are often institutionally weak, under-staffed and under-resourced. Inadequate strength and resourcing has often led to power imbalances between ministry gender officers and donors, whereby officers end up 'following donors' money' and getting pulled from one project to another. However, such power asymmetries and unproductive outcomes can be reduced if gender officers were supported to oversee the implementation of the ministry's transformative approach and roadmap, and ensure that all system actors, donors and NGOs were working towards it. This is where those working to strengthen education systems and system actors, such as UNICEF education specialists, are key.

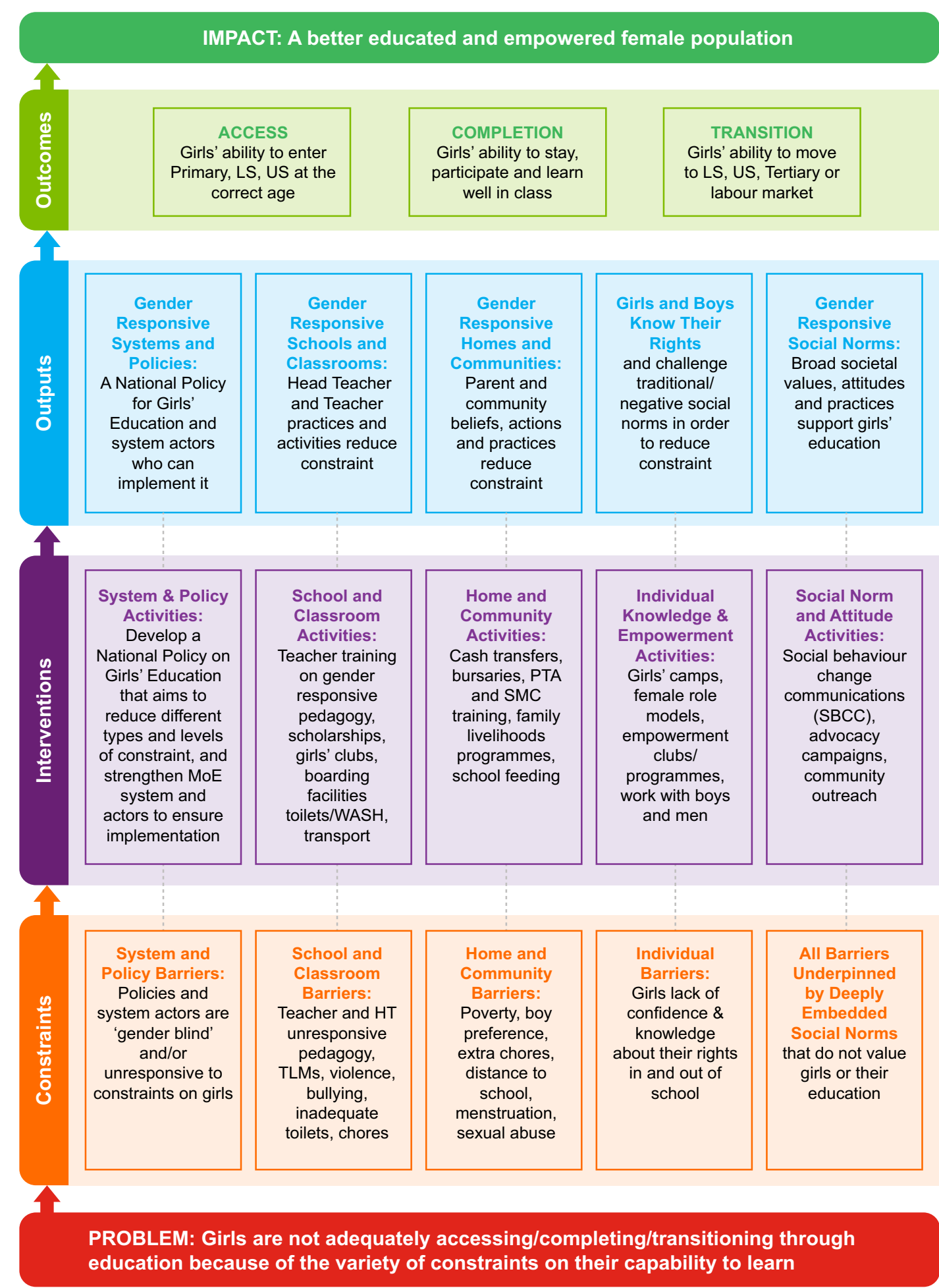


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¹¹ Girls' Education South Sudan
¹² Zana Africa Foundation
¹³ Girls' Clubs and Empowerment Programmes, ODI, 2015.
¹⁴ Education Quality Improvement Programme in Tanzania
¹⁵ Guidance for Developing Gender Responsive Education Sector Plans, Global Partnership for Education, UNGEI, UNICEF, 2016.
¹⁶ Regional training workshops to provide orientation on the guidance document began in 2017 and runs through 2018. Thus, the actual implementation of gender responsive sector planning may not yet be occurring, but will hopefully come to fruition in the coming years.
¹⁷ Since the guidance document on gender responsive ESPs is relatively new, the development of gender responsive sector plans may take time to bear fruit. Thus, if there is scope to support a ministry of education to develop or amend a gender in education policy, a ToC tool could be used in this instance.

¹⁸ If ministry planners use this ToC to underpin the development of a gender responsive sector plan or policy, they should also be the ones to conduct these discussions.

Figure 3: A transformative approach to improve girls’ educational achievements



Using the approach to map current projects as a roadmap for future coordination and implementation

As discussed, there are many good organisations addressing specific constraints on girls, but they are not always coordinated with each other, or with a national policy or vision for girls’ education. In order to make these efforts work more powerfully, projects should align with a ministry’s transformative approach in order to ensure the greatest reach, scope and reduction of duplication. One way to do this is to support ministry implementers, particularly gender officers, to map current girls’ education projects against the ‘Interventions’ level of their contextualized approach to determine who is doing what/ where; and whether there are any gaps (i.e. geographical, type of intervention, target ages, etc.), misalignments or duplications. This can be done in consultation with projects so that they too can see where they may need to revise their activities to align with the approach.

In order to fill any gaps that appear, gender officers could be supported to develop an application process and vetting criteria for future activities and interventions. Those organisations planning to implement a girls’ education project should be sensitized to the ministry’s transformative approach, and then asked to submit a proposal or application detailing how and to what extent they address the gaps that have been identified. The ministry has every right not to permit organisations that are not approved (either because they have not addressed gaps or refuse to apply), to proceed with their projects. Such a process is not meant to promote a culture of over-regulation; rather, the aim is to ensure that donor, international partner and civil society organisation priorities and projects are aligned with a coherent and holistic ministry vision for girls’ education.

Although change is not straightforward or rapid, this transformative approach can be used as a clear roadmap to keep the ministry, system actors, organisations and projects focused and aligned. One way to ensure this is for gender officers to create a Girls’ Education Network that allows for stakeholders and approved/potential projects to meet to: 1) share progress, knowledge, materials, best practice; 2) get updates on new and current projects contributing to the approach; and 3) coordinate efforts where relevant. Such a network could exist at both national and district levels in to ensure that all parties aiming to improve girls’ education are aligned with the transformative approach/roadmap, and as a consequence, with each other.

Conclusion

It is promising to see that quite a lot of work is being done to improve girls’ education and that a lot is known about ‘what works’ in certain circumstances. But the problem of poor learning outcomes for girls persists. Part of the reason for this is that there are multiple types and levels of constraints on girls and some of these, particularly cultural and religious norms, take a great deal of time and care to shift. Another part of the problem is that efforts to tackle constraints at the grassroots level are often too disparate, too narrowly-focused, too short-term and too small to have major impact on their own. And efforts at the national level do not adequately harness or coordinate these efforts at the grassroots.

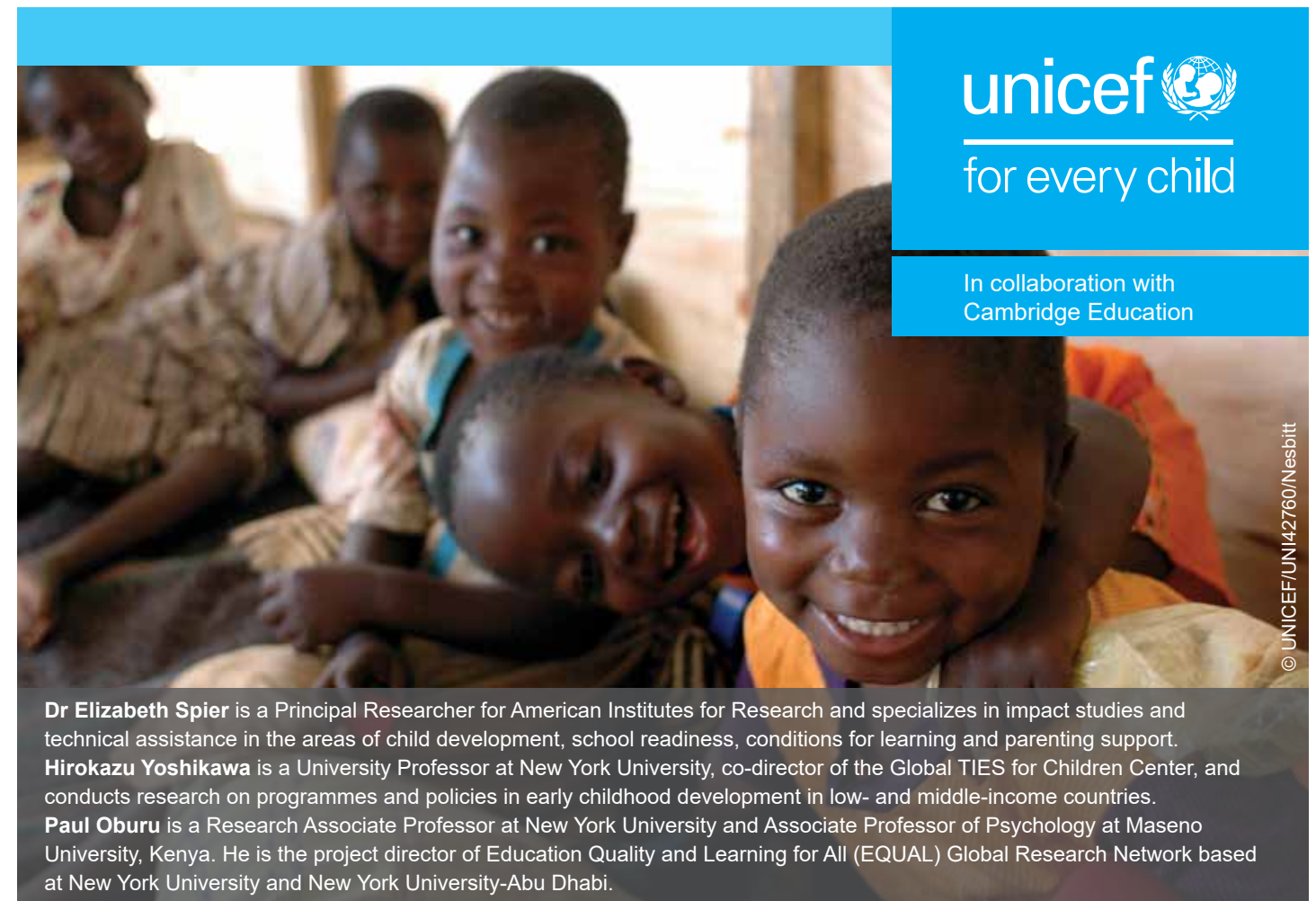
That is why this Think Piece has put forward a new approach to girls’ education. One that:

- 1. Brings together gender responsive sector plans/policies with grassroots actors through use of a comprehensive and transformative approach to change
- 2. Uses a consultative process to prioritize constraints and the interventions needed to address them
- 3. Uses this transformative approach as a common roadmap and coordination mechanism to ensure that all project interventions are contributing to the same objectives and goal

That said, transformation is not easy. The development and ownership of an integrated and coordinated approach to girls’ education and the driving of change requires a great deal of leadership and political will from multiple actors within ministries of education. UNICEF education specialists are well positioned to support ministry planners, international partners and civil society to use this transformative approach; and to empower gender officers to ensure that all girls’ education programmes/interventions are aligned with and contribute to it. It is also imperative for girls’ education programmes themselves, and the donors and NGOs supporting them, to actively engage in and promote a coordinated effort through this approach. Because it is only through working together – from the macro- to micro-level and through government and non-governmental partners – that we can truly accelerate, sustain and transform our investments in the education and lives of girls. Now, and for years to come.



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List of Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
HT	Head Teacher
JHS	Junior High School
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBCC	Social Behaviour Change Communications
SHS	Senior High School
SMC	School Management Committee
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
ToC	Theory of Change
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Further reading

1. Global Education Monitoring Report, [Gender Review: Creating sustainable futures for all](#), UNESCO, Paris, 2016.
2. King & Winthrop, [Today's Challenges for Girls' Education](#), Global Economy and Development at Brookings, Washington DC, 2015.
3. Sperling & Winthrop, [What works in girls' education: Evidence for the world's best investment](#), Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2016.
4. [World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education](#), UNESCO, Paris, 2012
5. Unterhalter et al., [Education Rigorous Literature Review: Girls' education and gender equality](#), DFID, London, 2014.

Quality and equitable access grounded in local knowledge: Bringing pre-primary education to scale

Elizabeth Spier, Paul Oburu, & Hirokazu Yoshikawa

A great deal of evidence demonstrates the significant effects that quality pre-primary education can have on a child's cognitive, social and emotional development, growth, school readiness and future economic potential. However, only 42 per cent of children in sub-Saharan Africa participate in any organized pre-primary education before the typical enrolment age for grade one. Such education is often only available to wealthier children, and is not of consistent quality,¹ nor does it incorporate the local knowledge of learning processes that pre-school children should be exposed to before commencement of formal schooling.² We believe that the focus of pre-primary education must go beyond access to include quality and equitable access in terms of focus, processes, stakeholder involvement and integration of local knowledge into quality programming. It is a mistake to prioritize access alone: both quality and equitable access matter.

This Think Piece on pre-primary education, while acknowledging the need to increase access for children in vulnerable situations, also aims to elaborate on what constitutes quality pre-primary education. We will ask why focusing on quality and equitable access is imperative in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and why it unfortunately does not happen. And we will explore what is the implication of the increased focus on access on the provision of quality pre-primary education, as evidenced in a global indicator for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.2. For example, we know that programmes that emphasize access first, with the idea that quality will come later, do not work and further perpetuate inequities. The UWEZO (2010) report, while not specific to pre-primary education, indicated that increasing access without incorporating quality considerations, especially in Kenya's public primary schools, perpetuated inequities between pupils from poor and rich households, led to disappointing levels of learning in public schools and further increased the dominance of private over public schools.

¹ UNESCO, Global education monitoring report 2017/18, 2017.

² Wadende, Oburu, Morara, African indigenous care-giving practices, Stimulating early childhood: development and education in Kenya, South African Journal of Childhood Education 6(2), a446, 2016.

The result of not simultaneously focusing on both access and quality has been substantial investment in national pre-primary programming that may have a wide reach but is largely ineffective.³ And right now, most countries in the region have a patchwork of multilateral NGO and for-profit providers focusing mainly on increasing access but inadvertently leaving out most children (especially those in lower-income households) with no availability of any pre-primary, let alone quality pre-primary education. These foreign or for-profit entities also tend to operate outside of government control, leading to very inconsistent access, oversight and quality.

What is quality pre-primary education?

We believe the discussion must be around how to provide access to quality pre-primary education, with access and quality considered simultaneously. But what does quality and equitable pre-primary education look like? While there is no one single definition of quality nor equity especially in the context of pre-primary education, at minimum quality education must meet stakeholder expectations and comprise a child-friendly and rights-based environment where children's developmental and learning needs are effectively supported.

The stakeholders are varied but have a common interest in ensuring that all children (including the vulnerable and marginalized), from conception to age of school entry achieve their full developmental potential. They include caregivers, communities, government agencies, civil society and Non-Governmental organisations. For example, UNICEF's Early Childhood Development Framework calls for "safe, stimulating and nurturing learning environments".⁴ And UNICEF's guidance on the provision of a rights-based educational environment focuses on nurturing care and distribution of educational opportunities to all children to benefit from quality education irrespective of their gender, wealth status and ethnicity. The framework also adopts multi-sectoral intervention packages that incorporate stakeholders' engagements in the provision of early learning, caregiving and child protection.

For the purpose of this Think Piece, we will define quality pre-primary education in terms of resource availability, organisation and management of learning processes, and the extent to which the early childhood and education programmes currently offered meet children's developmental needs as well as meet the expectations and requirements of stakeholders. Another broad issue for quality is a competent workforce with proper/standardized qualifications, supply and retention of qualified teachers, and system capacity to train and mentor these teachers, and assuring quality across providers.

Emphasis on equitable quality pre-primary education should thus be placed on the provision of an educational environment that is participatory, holistic, incremental (e.g. builds on skills already acquired at home), relevant (home learning is interrelated to institutionalized school learning), welcoming, gender sensitive, healthy, safe and protective. In addition, provision of equitable quality education requires integration of school preparation skills with life acquisition skills, creates room for leveraging of communal knowledge in the generation of expected learning outcomes, treats all children with respect; and actively supports children's play-based learning needs and human rights.⁵ For example, developers of pre-primary education programmes need to integrate school preparation skills with local knowledge about life skills acquisition, and incorporate interrelated aspects of home and institutionalized school learning and cultural precepts regarding all forms of learning as preparation for life. An example of this is the Madrasa experience in Kenya where religious learning and formal schooling were incorporated into early childhood education programmes.

Yet the provision of such an environment has proven challenging for most countries in ESA. Often when pre-primary education is offered, it is delivered like education for older children, with children spending the school day sitting still and receiving rote instruction. We know that children learn best through play and hands-on experiences, with guidance from a caring adult.⁶ Yet a study in Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar found that children had very limited access to materials that supported imaginative and free-choice play.⁷ Overall, pre-primary education has been poorly implemented in ESA.

Why is high quality pre-primary education important?

There is substantial evidence from low- and middle-income countries that low-quality early childhood education has limited or even negative effects on children's development.⁸ Poor quality early care and education environments can elevate children's stress responses in ways that inhibit the acquisition of higher-order cognitive and social skills.⁹ In contrast, in quality programming where children can develop supportive and trusting relationships with teachers, they typically have lower and better-regulated levels of stress hormones.¹⁰ Having a positive and responsive caregiver also buffers the effects of adversity and fosters young children's positive development and learning.¹¹ In low- and middle-income country contexts, there is also evidence that a quality pre-primary education has a significant impact on developmental skills important to primary grade success and helps to ensure on-time enrolment in primary school.¹² This is particularly important for the most vulnerable and excluded children.



Why is quality pre-primary education that incorporates local knowledge lacking in ESA?

There are multiple reasons why there are both access and quality issues with pre-primary education in ESA.

1. The region has widespread misconceptions and erroneous belief systems about quality pre-primary education.

There is a lack of experience with quality pre-primary education among educators and parents alike. They may believe that they are doing the right thing by replicating the kind of education they know, resulting in developmentally inappropriate models that emphasize rote learning.

2. Early childhood is undervalued as a critical period of development.

There are unhelpful attitudes and belief systems that affect how pre-primary education is viewed in the ESA region. For example, early childhood is not often viewed or understood as a period of development where children are autonomous learners and active participants in their learning. In addition, early childhood education is frequently perceived as a female-dominated, non-professional enterprise associated more with basic caregiving than with learning. This makes pre-primary peripheral and a low priority when it comes to funding, teacher recruitment, training and deployment. This situation may be further compounded by the variation between local practices at the grassroots level that facilitate child socialization and learning and current perceptions of pre-primary education as a Western pedagogical practice. For example, amongst the Turkana pastoralist community of Northern Kenya, the limited uptake of pre-primary education has been linked to the inability to ground early childhood development (ECD) programmes and services within local or cultural conceptions of learning, values and belief systems.¹³

Social mobilization components of ECD policies and programmes may address some of these attitudes.¹⁴

³ van der Berg et al., The impact of the introduction of Grade R on learning outcomes. Stellenbosch, South Africa: University of Stellenbosch, 2013.

⁴ UNICEF, Program guidance for early childhood development. New York, 2017a.

⁵ UNICEF, A human rights-based approach to education for all. New York, 2007.

⁶ Maulik & Darmstadt, Community-based interventions to optimize early childhood development in low resource settings. Journal of Perinatology, 29(8), 531–42, 2009

⁷ Dirks et al., Preschool quality and child outcomes in East Africa. Presentation at the biennial meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX, April 2017

⁸ Rao et al., Early childhood development and cognitive development in developing countries: A rigorous literature review. London: Department for International Development, 2014; Rosero & Oosterbeek, Trade-offs between different early childhood interventions: Evidence from Ecuador. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam and Tinbergen Institute, 2011.

⁹ D'Angiulli & Schibli, How neuroendocrinology can contribute to early childhood education and care: Cortisol as a supplementary indicator of quality. Quarterly Review of Comparative Education, 46, 281–299, 2016.

¹⁰ Lisonbee, Mize, Payne, & Granger, Children's cortisol and the quality of teacher-child relationships in child care. Child Development, 79, 1818–1832, 2008.

¹¹ Jones & Boufard, Social and emotional learning in schools: From programmes to strategies. Social Policy Report, 26, 1–33, 2012; Egeland, Risk and resilience in infants and young children. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association. Chicago, 1997.

¹² Young, State of early child development research, practice, and policy for most vulnerable children: A global perspective. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 158, 11–23, 2017.

¹³ Ng'asike, African early childhood development curriculum and pedagogy for Turkana nomadic pastoralist communities of Kenya. In R. Serpell & K. Marfo (Eds.), Child development in Africa: Views from inside. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 146, 43–60, 2014.

¹⁴ Yoshikawa et al., Achieving high quality early childhood development programme and policies at national scale: Directions for research in global contexts. Social Policy Report of the Society for Research in Child Development, 31(1), 1–31, 2018.

3. Focusing on access alone is short sighted and compromises quality.

A focus on the quality of pre-primary education in national policy and donor investment is still very limited. The long-term payoff of quality pre-primary education can be incompatible with the short-term interests of policy makers as well as funding cycles of international donors. If pre-primary education is considered, investments often focus exclusively on access as this can be demonstrated relatively quickly. Especially when developing low-cost models of pre-primary education to achieve access, inadequate attention to quality may create equity issues where the most marginalized populations experience the lowest levels of quality in pre-primary education. Although some evidence suggests that attendance at such programmes may still benefit children's development, positive effects are smaller than when greater investments in quality are implemented.¹⁵ It may be important to consider an approach in which investments in quality are targeted first to the most marginalized populations.

4. Early learning and pre-primary education gets lost in fragmented systems.

Early learning and pre-primary education may be de-emphasized with multiple stakeholders dominate the early childhood care and development space. An uncoordinated agenda can lead to sectors such as nutrition, health, education, social protection and child protection having their own priorities. The new Nurturing Care Framework may benefit from promoting further integration of early learning and education into parenting or home-based caring techniques, especially in the second 1,000 days.¹⁶

5. There is a lack of accountability for the provision of quality and equity in pre-primary education across public and private sectors.

Countries rely upon a mixed economy of providers, and there is poor regulatory oversight. Insufficient human and financial resource can lead to governments relying on non-state and private organisations for pre-primary provision. This can lead to inconsistent access and quality, and a tendency to rely upon foreign models rather than context-driven approaches that value and leverage the needs and assets of the country, region or community.¹⁷ This reliance on foreign actors also disempowers governments from providing adequate oversight to ensure quality, and does not encourage their attention to and investment in their own systems.

Quality pre-primary education: Some promising approaches

To be scalable and sustainable, quality pre-primary education models must address the very significant and pervasive issue of insufficient human resources at a cost that is affordable for governments. Fortunately, there are some promising approaches that address these challenges:

1. Training local community members (usually women with a secondary school diploma) to serve as pre-primary teachers. Examples of this include, CONAFE,¹⁸ BRAC,¹⁹ Hippocampus,²⁰ and Save the Children's Emergent Literacy and Math.²¹ These models reach into underserved communities, where teachers with formal professional qualifications typically do not wish to work. These pre-primary teachers become very respected within their communities and serve as a community resource for child development.

2. Accelerated school readiness programmes train and incentivise existing grade one teachers or community volunteers to provide a school readiness short course during the summer months when the classrooms otherwise empty.²²

3. "Hub" based models of pre-primary education where a high quality village becomes a model and a resource for surrounding villages. For example, the Kidogo model used in Kenya establishes quality ECD centres that serve as "best practice" models for a community, providing training, resources and mentoring for local women who then start their own centres. While this is a for-profit enterprise, the model itself demonstrates how quality ECD programming can be scaled.²³

4. In-service professional development on pre-primary for teachers, head teachers and officers at district and regional levels can be supported with innovative methods such as telephone-enabled mentoring and coaching. We are not aware of this model being used yet to support pre-primary teachers in the region, but it has been very successful in sub-Saharan Africa to support agriculture.²⁴

5. Developing a mechanism for language-minority, indigenous and/or remote populations to propose culturally based approaches to quality indicators and implementation within a national quality standards system.²⁵ For example among the Turkana pastoralist groups of Northern Kenya, where relevant learning is geared towards acquisition of life skills, integration of school preparation skills with life skills acquisition in early childhood education is one such mechanism.

6. Inclusive approaches to ECD policy development and implementation that incorporate social mobilization (e.g. utilizing local networks and systems such as women co-operatives as entry points for change), communications and media campaigns, and recruitment of a diversity of subnational and municipal, not just national, political leaders.²⁶ Diversity of leadership at all levels can help ensure that approaches to providing quality pre-primary education are appropriate and feasible for all of a country's populations (not just the majority).



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7. Approaches to measurement that centrally capture aspects of ECD systems functioning, programme-level process quality and culturally grounded measures of child development, in order to inform programmes and systems improvement. Process quality refers to the quality of teacher-child interactions and pedagogy, rather than infrastructure or staff formal qualifications. Building the capacity of researchers from these countries to engage in such measurement work is critical and is being carried out by the African Early Childhood Network (AFCEN) and the New York University based Education Quality and Learning for All (EQUAL) Network for SDG 4's ESA section.²⁷
8. Investing in systems development. A comprehensive approach to quality ECD encompasses all the above approaches in governance and finance. These include attention to community and stakeholder involvement in quality improvement; workforce development systems; data systems incorporating quality formative and summative learning assessments; robust financial systems to track expenditures; and links across municipal, subnational and national level that are not simply about compliance but about quality improvement.²⁸



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¹⁵ Rao et al., Early childhood development and cognitive development in developing countries: A rigorous literature review. London: Department for International Development, 2012.

¹⁶ WHO and UNICEF, Nurturing Care Framework, Geneva: WHO, 2018

¹⁷ Dubeck et al., Designing a programme of teacher professional development to support beginning reading acquisition in coastal Kenya. International Journal of Educational Development, 41, 88-96, 2015.

¹⁸ <https://www.gob.mx/conafe>

¹⁹ <http://www.brac.net/education-programme/item/760-brac-pre-primary-schools-bpps>

²⁰ <http://hlc.hippocampus.in/>

²¹ <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/elm-emergent-literacy-and-math-toolkit>

²² <http://www.equip-t.org/>

²³ <https://www.kidogo.co/>

²⁴ Centre for Learning Resources, Formative evaluation of a large-scale capacity-building intervention to integrate care and stimulation content into the Mitani Programme. Chhattisgarh, India: UNICEF, 2017.

²⁵ Motta & Yoshikawa, Challenges of Sustainable Development Goal 4 for a culturally diverse world: Infusing culture in ECD policy in Colombia's "Modalidad Propia." In S. Verma & A. Petersen (Eds.), Developmental science and the 2015-2030 Sustainable Development Goals. New York: Springer, in press.

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²⁸ Yoshikawa et al., Achieving high quality early childhood development programme and policies at national scale: Directions for research in global contexts. Social Policy Report of the Society for Research in Child Development, 31(1), 1-31, 2018.

How can we ensure quality pre-primary for all?

There is a need to acknowledge that limited attention to pre-primary education is a real problem, with real consequences for excluded children who already face significant risks for poor educational outcomes. So, what can we do?

First, policymakers and other stakeholders will not change the status quo without a good reason to do so. There are roles for UNICEF education specialists and other international partners to engage in information-sharing and advocacy with those who have the power to drive system-level change – whether they are politicians, educators, families, the public, or all the above – at subnational, national, and regional levels. The ultimate purpose is to reach a critical mass of demand for quality pre-primary education, so that once established, it cannot be easily taken away when the political winds change direction.

Second, beliefs and practices that perpetuate the low status of pre-primary education and educators should be challenged, both at the level of policymakers and among parents and the general public. What is required are creative solutions and innovative approaches aimed at understanding reasons for, and how to deal with, misinformation and inherent belief systems specific to the early childhood period. These approaches could include addressing belief systems that assume a lower status for women and children, and increasing male involvement in early care and education to challenge gender stereotypes. Challenging beliefs that perpetuate the low status of pre-primary education may require creative development of locally relevant demand-side interventions.²⁹ For example, social mobilization campaigns have been successful in Latin America to raise awareness of national ECD programmes and policies.³⁰

Third, pre-primary education must become embedded in larger systems if it is to receive the oversight, funding, and other resources required to reach all children. Only a handful of countries in the region have any system of standards or oversight to ensure the quality of pre-primary education. System support for pre-primary education requires national quality standards, leadership and data systems; local level training and monitoring systems to ensure programme quality; and subnational governance that can effectively coordinate between the national and local levels.³¹

And fourth, the region needs substantial and long-term investment from governments and donors to address the current constraints to providing universally-available, quality pre-primary education in the region. There is a need to identify and adapt effective models that are feasible within the available (or potentially available) human resources, infrastructure, and material resources – including within the context of low-resource or marginalized communities. Adaptation should also be responsive to the needs, values, and assets of children, families, communities, and educators. The process of implementing at scale also requires the support of civil society organisations and researchers, along with partnerships with the public sector and policy makers. Clearly, there is a need for up-front and ongoing investment in capacity building for measurement and evaluation purposes. Additionally, we need to invest in identification of best practices, adaptation to work at scale, and development of the necessary support systems to manage and sustain a quality pre-primary system.

In Conclusion

There is a strong need for quality, universally-available pre-primary education in ESA. The desire for “quick wins” among governments as well as donor organisations perpetuates a focus on access, with easily-cited enrolment figures. The current focus on access alone is insufficient, and heightens the risk that large investments will continually be made in programming that does not benefit children. The tendency of donors to focus on the next exciting innovation also leaves little funding for bringing what works to scale.³²

Donors and partners to governments can best help countries improve their children’s equitable access to quality pre-primary by focusing on building enabling environments and capacity (rather than continuing to invest directly in programming). Establishing quality, sustainable pre-primary education systems requires societal level changes in beliefs and practices that perpetuate the low status of pre-primary education and educators, longer-term investment, and a willingness to abandon quick wins in favour of longer-term gain. Children will not have quality pre-primary education on a large scale without this shift in priorities, combined with investment in the development of strong systems to provide quality pre-primary education for all.



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²⁹ UNICEF, Early moments matter for every child. New York, 2017b.
³⁰ Government of Colombia, De Cero a Siempre: Atención integral a la primera infancia (from Zero to Always: Integrated Care in Early Childhood), 2017.
³¹ Yoshikawa et al., Achieving high quality early childhood development programme and policies at national scale: Directions for research in global contexts. Social Policy Report of the Society for Research in Child Development, 31(1), 1-31, 2018.

³² Robinson & Winthrop, Millions learning: Scaling up quality education in developing countries. Washington, DC: Brookings, 2017.



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List of Acronyms

AFECN	African Early Childhood Network
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
EQUAL	Education Quality and Learning for All
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

Leveraging the enthusiasm of parents and caregivers for lifewide learning

Amy Jo Dowd, Lauren Pisani, Caroline Dusabe, Holly-Jane Howell

Parent and caregiver support for schooling

Parents and caregivers in every region of the globe enthusiastically support their children's education, but constraints related to poverty, mobility, doubts about school value or school safety, and myriad other factors can act to limit their positive engagement on a day-to-day basis. While enthusiasm for schooling fuelled the incredible increase in primary school enrolment over the past 25 years, more recent priorities highlight not just schooling, but learning. As the World Bank Education Strategy 2020 notes, "The driver of development will ultimately be what individuals learn, both in and out of school, from preschool through the labor market."¹ UNICEF's 2016 State of the World's Children echoes this sentiment: "Education is not just about getting through school; learning is what counts."²

This focus on learning throughout life and the enthusiasm of parents and caregivers for education necessitates a new analysis of educational investment using a frame of lifewide learning,³ which not only encompasses the concept of lifelong learning but also suggests that children should engage in enjoyable, cognitively demanding activities both in school *and* their homes and communities.⁴ This Think Piece will detail the extent of parents' and caregivers' influence on learning and review evidence about efforts to proliferate ideas and mechanisms for concrete, feasible parent support by age group. We offer evidence of impact, propose best practices and end with a call to action.

¹ World Bank, World Bank, Learning for All Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development, Author, Washington, DC, 2011.

² UNICEF, UNICEF, State of the World's Children, p.16, Author, New York, 2016.

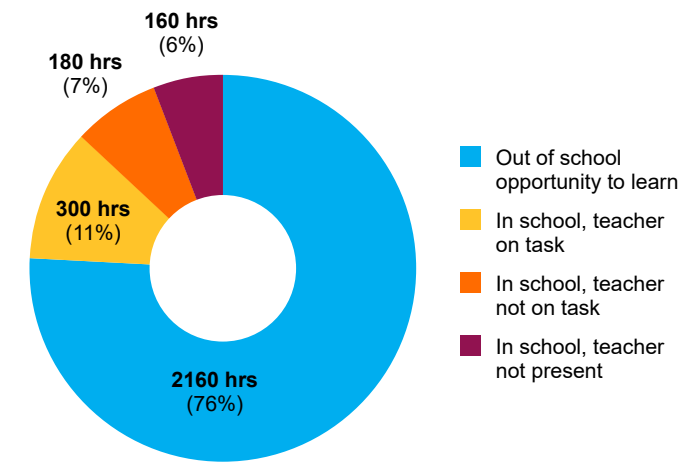
³ Lifewide learning refers to children's engagement in enjoyable, cognitively demanding activities not only in school but also in their homes and communities. This term is used by Save the Children, World Vision and other colleague organisations to promote a broader view of and frame for investment in children's opportunities to learn.

⁴ Dowd, A. J., Friedlander, E., Jonason, C., Leer, J., Sorensen, L. Z., Guajardo, J., D'Sa, N., Pava, C. & Pisani, L., Lifewide learning for early reading development, 2017. In A. Gove, A. Mora, & P. McCardle (Eds.), Progress toward a literate world: Early reading interventions in low-income countries, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 155, pp.31–49.

Parents and caregivers dominate opportunities to contribute to learning

The amount of time a child spends outside of school is greater than the time they spend in school, and it is parents and caregivers who shape children’s learning environments and opportunities during this time. Consider a primary school child in Malawi. When they go to school, they spend about four hours a day during eight months of a year in the classroom. School effectiveness research shows that during a quarter of that time, the teacher is not there; and during a third of the time when both the child and their teacher are in the classroom together, neither the child nor the teacher are attending to the task of learning.⁵ In the end, the child’s opportunity to learn is effectively two-and-a-half hours of on-task time a day for six months – or roughly 300 hours of in-school learning opportunity a year. In contrast, the child has over 2000 hours of opportunity to learn during waking hours outside of school. Assuming four of the 10 waking hours in a day could be time for learning via sharing books, singing, or telling and discussing stories, for example, then these hours can be used building vocabulary, literacy and social emotional skills as well as local and cultural knowledge. The 300 hours in school and on task in Figure 1 represent just over a tenth of a child’s lifewide opportunity to learn.

Figure 1: annual hours of opportunity to learn for a primary school child



In order to fully support children’s learning, we must leverage all available opportunities. Many programmes and policies prioritize the 24 per cent of time a child spends in school. Investments aim to reduce wastage in the 6 per cent of time the teacher is not present, decrease the 7 per cent of time teachers are not on task, or raise the quality of the 11 per cent of time teachers and students are jointly on task. Many such programmes include parents and caregivers only as schooling supporters or parent teacher association (PTA) participants and at most call for parents and caregivers to monitor learning,⁶ but the evidence shows that most often the impact of these community accountability efforts is on intermediate outcomes like social capital and parental advocacy, not on learning.⁷ These are worthwhile investments, but as Figure 1 shows, the opportunity to learn outside of school represents much more potential time on task to the direct benefit of children’s learning. Evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa suggests greater attention to parents’ and caregivers’ role in learning itself as a child’s first and constant supporters of learning can greatly benefit learning outcomes in the region. Parents and caregivers are central to facilitating lifewide learning and engaging children in enjoyable, cognitively demanding activities during the 76 per cent of the time when they are not in school.

Strategies to help parents and caregivers support learning throughout a child’s life

Parents and caregivers can improve children’s learning through concrete, feasible activities that they can implement at home, regardless of their own education level. Simple additions to daily tasks can transform children’s chores into teaching moments: helping with cooking can apply maths by counting vegetables or measuring ingredients; or expand vocabulary with a discussion of where each vegetable comes from or how and where it grows. Research has shown that the quantity of parental talk is directly related to children’s early vocabulary, and that gaps in early language skills vary by socio-economic status and widen over time.⁸ Promising evidence from Tanzania shows the quantity of parental talk can be manipulated through raising awareness among parents to the benefit of children’s development.⁹ Dissemination and modelling of such messages, as well as orchestrating groups through which neighbours can share their experiences as they test messages with their children, enable greater learning for parents, caregivers and children alike.

Early childhood learning and development

Pre-primary enrolment is on the rise, but many children still do not have access to classroom-based learning. Fortunately, there are also many ways to reach parents and caregivers of young children with important messages that can strengthen early learning and development. For example: both community members and teachers in Rwanda as well as community members in Ethiopia were trained to deliver sessions to parents and caregivers about how to engage with their children in learning and play activities during their daily routines. Study results from Ethiopia showed the home-based learning led by parents and caregivers was as effective in improving children’s school readiness as the government supported O-classes.¹⁰ In Rwanda, similar results¹¹ influenced the inclusion in the national pre-primary curriculum teacher training guide of a module on parenting education and the role of parents in early learning, as well as a module on these topics in the pre-service teacher training curriculum.

In Zambia¹² and Rwanda¹³ interactive radio instruction has been used to encourage caregivers not just to attend community-based parenting sessions or send children to school, but has reinforced positive parenting practices. Clear and easy activities parents can do with their children focus more on the practical and actionable rather than mere sensitization on the role of parents. In addition, educating parents about quality media for children is increasingly important, as in Tanzania where four weeks of exposure to an educational cartoon significantly improved drawing skills, shape knowledge, number recognition, counting and English skills.¹⁴ Media interventions, whether targeted at parents and caregivers or children should be carefully tested and costed as they hold promise for effectively and efficiently shifting learning for those without access to learning institutions in the earliest years, as well as for children in humanitarian settings.

All of these initiatives take advantage of the many hours of lifewide learning opportunities available to young children.

In pre-primary settings, increasing parental awareness and capacity to support children’s foundational academic and life skills can boost the learning outcomes of millions of children currently without access to centres. As noted in the Think Piece on quality pre-primary education in the region, social mobilization may be needed to address parental attitudes and understanding of learning in the earliest years. For example, Figure 2 offers messaging about promoting key emergent numeracy skills in simple daily activities.

Figure 2: Emergent Literacy and Math at Home Card: Example parent education card for use in spreading messages about concrete activities with young children to expand early learning



The use of this card and two dozen additional cards with parents in Ethiopia promoted learning impact comparable to that of centre-based early childhood development (ECD) classes; while similar cards used to promote quality in ECD centres also optimized children’s learning (see Figure 3). Raising ECD centre quality using these cards has also been documented in Malawi¹⁵ and Rwanda¹⁶. Figure 4 implies that the greater gains in learning for children who do not have access to early childhood centres may relate to their parents’ and caregivers’ uptake of every day, lifewide learning inputs to their children’s development.

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¹¹ Save the Children, Early Literacy & Maths Initiative (ELMI) Rwanda Endline Report, Author, Kigali, 2015a.

¹² Matafwali, B., Evaluation of the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Pilot Programme In Early Childhood Education In The Eastern Province Of Zambia, Ministry of Education, Science Vocational Training and Early Education, Lusaka, 2014.

¹³ Pisani, L. & Dusabe, C., First Steps 'Intera za Mbere' Holistic Parenting Education Programme for families of children aged 0-3 years in Rwanda, Save the Children, Kigali, 2016.

¹⁴ Borzekowski, D.L.G., A quasi-experiment examining the impact of educational cartoons on Tanzanian children, Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, Volume 54, January–February 2018, pp. 53-59, EDC, 2012. Tikwere Final Report USAID, Washington, DC, 2018.

¹⁵ Phiri, P., Nkhonjera, J., Mabeti, F., Kamiza, K. & Seiden, J., Malawi ELM & HEART Endline Analysis, Author, Lilongwe, 2016.

¹⁶ Save the Children, 2015a. Early Literacy & Maths Initiative (ELMI) Rwanda Endline Report. Kigali: Author.

Figure 3: Ethiopia. Quality ECD raises child development outcomes in homes and centres

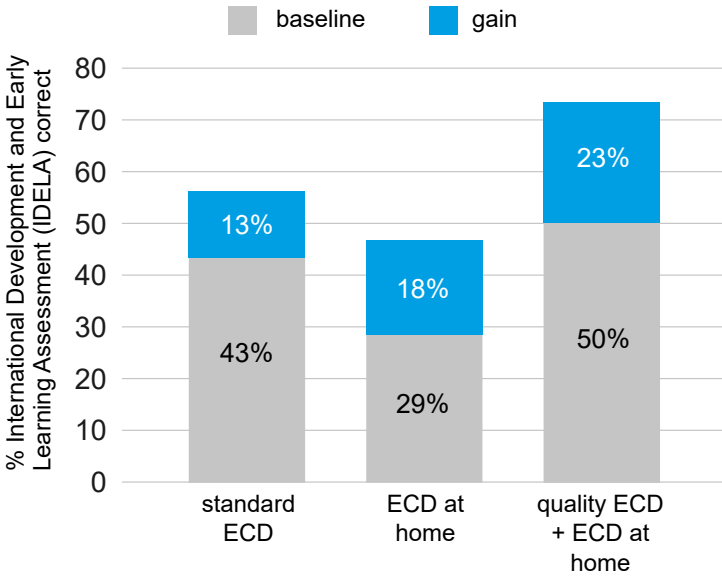
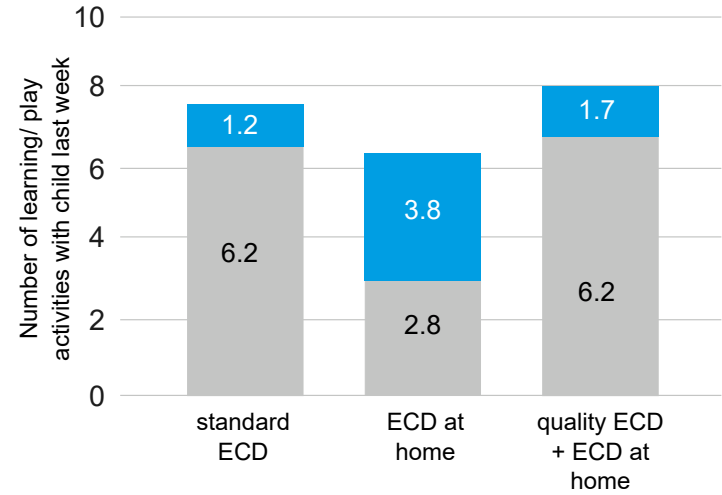


Figure 4: Ethiopia. Quality ECD raises parent/caregiver inputs to child development



As can be seen by the baseline values in both Figures 3 and 4, the children whose caregivers were receiving messages about how to support learning at home were also the children who were the most at risk for starting formal education behind their peers who had greater access to formal early learning opportunities. With intervention, the risk of starting so far behind is diminished. Further, to address equity, ongoing inquiry asks not just whether children are learning more and parents are interacting in support of learning, but follows up with analysis of who is still struggling and how well they are supported in order to inform programme and policy improvement options. For example, a recent Rwandan study found that among children not in early childhood centres, those with literate fathers gained 18 percentage points in early literacy over the course of a year, while those with illiterate fathers gained only eight percentage points.¹⁷

This finding suggests routes to greater equity to be: effort in centres to support children without literate parents and/or innovative support for stimulating parenting skills in illiterate fathers themselves. In this way, such programmes leverage lifewide learning to achieve an equity impact and use ongoing inquiry to pursue learning for every child.

The collective evidence to date suggests that for children aged four to six years, the greatest impact on learning and development comes from a combination of quality ECD centres and quality parenting approaches – and that in the absence of realistic ECD centre coverage, working to ensure parenting practices that support learning of foundational academic and life skills can substantially improve children’s school readiness.

Primary school-aged children’s learning

As children grow, the simple teaching opportunities between caregivers and children found in early childhood can easily extend in their complexity. But support for children’s learning during the school years need not be limited only to academic activities that require special materials, like reading a book with a child. Showing children maths in daily market chores or herding animals, telling stories to expand vocabulary and content knowledge, or even just encouraging children to attend school consistently and to do their homework is valuable as well. Beyond this, life skills and competencies like communication, collaboration, creativity and team work can also be developed with support from parents and community members through participation in community projects, read-a-thons, reading and maths contests, having study buddies outside school, etc.

Often parents and caregivers who cannot read and write themselves are doubtful about their own ability to support children’s learning, but messages encouraging their concrete oral support¹⁸ as well as mechanisms for other community members to provide support¹⁹ are crucial. Indeed, parents and caregivers do not need to know how to read in order to prioritize time for homework and create spaces for reading. Further, a recent study from Rwanda showed that from children’s perspectives, they were likely to read if they had good books and if parents and caregivers gave them time – an important point in a region where children often do chores both before and after school.²⁰ These supportive attitudes and the actions they promote are crucial to pursue with all parents and caregivers in support of both girls and boys equally. Encouraging local conversations about whether chores might keep boys from practising reading while herding or girls from doing so while gathering wood are invaluable because these barriers to greater learning are not universal and their solutions are similarly local.

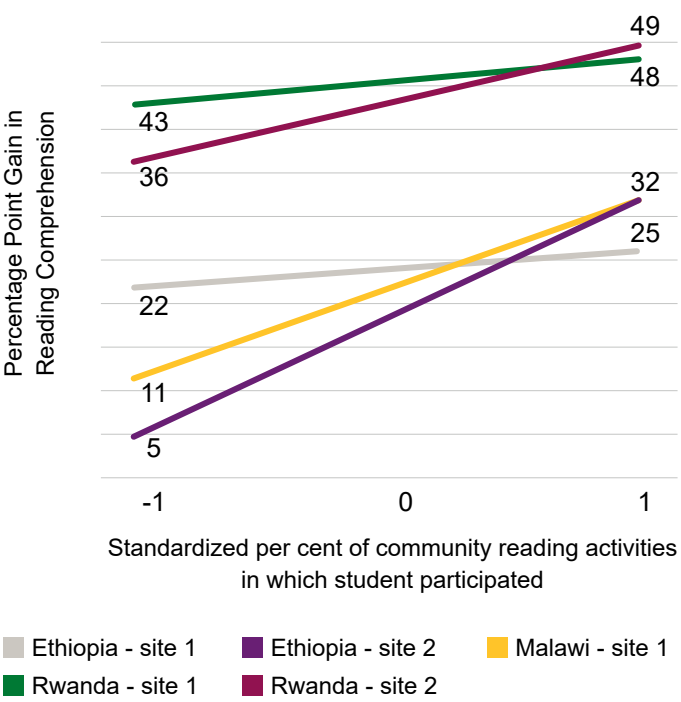
Primary school interventions aimed at ensuring learning need to consider how to promote practice opportunities outside of school as well as the array of delivery mechanisms they have available for spreading these messages. Interactive radio instruction has been effectively used for this in Malawi for students in grades 1 to 4.²¹ As children age, supporting attendance at community learning events like read-a-thons, establishing time each day for homework, and creating a reading corner at home with materials are all opportunities for parents and caregivers to enhance their child’s learning. Of course, the mechanisms reviewed above in the ECD realm apply, but given the strength and omnipresence of schools, parent teacher associations as well as district outreach offer additional resources to bring to bear in leveraging investment for lifewide learning.

During primary school years, a stronger culture of reading and discussion in and around the home supports greater learning. Community reading activities like meeting in groups to read and discuss stories, reading in pairs in which one reader is more skilled than another, borrowing books, and participating in literacy celebrations represent practice time as well as modelling the importance of literacy outside of school.

Implementation of these activities alongside teacher training in five sites in the region show a positive relationship to gains in reading comprehension (see Figure 5 from Malawi, Rwanda, and Ethiopia).²²

A randomized control trial in Rwanda tested the added value of including these types of community reading activities alongside teacher training on how to teach reading and found greater gains for children who had quality opportunities to learn both inside schools and out in the community.²³ Such investments can level the playing field as evidenced in Malawi, where investment in learning at school and in the community led to the greatest gains for children for low literate households.²⁴ But a hostile home environment can negatively affect learning of a child in any context. Examples from rural Rwanda²⁵ and Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya²⁶ show that academic learning is mediated by factors at play in the socio-emotional environment, with more negative perceptions of that environment and more negative behaviours linked to lower skills. Promoting lifewide learning via parent and caregiver-focused programmes, policies, and advocacy requires grappling with the reality that parents and caregivers are often stressed or in crisis too. It is essential to adapt to the learners’ context by considering both how best to respond to children’s learning needs as well as how to support parents and caregivers.

Figure 5: Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda. Predicted reading comprehension gains by participation in community reading activities like reading clubs, reading with buddies, book borrowing and literacy festivals



Taking the importance of reading outside of school hours to scale has been a recent shift in USAID-funded reading programmes in Malawi,²⁷ Ethiopia²⁸ and Rwanda – moving away from solely school-based investments to those that acknowledge the importance, prominence and potential of the opportunity to learn outside the school walls. Indeed, the 2018 World Development Report proclaims, “Communities can leverage the many hours spent outside the classroom to boost learning.”²⁹ Education sector planning efforts and consultations should include investing in this way as well as collecting data on the cost benefit of parent support programmes so that ministries of education can make informed choices that marry primary sub-sector provision with broader parent and community-led learning support.

¹⁷ Pisani, L., Dusabe, C., & Abimpaye, M., First Read Rwanda: Children Aged 0-6 years, Save the Children, Kigali, 2016.
¹⁸ Save the Children and World Vision, Community strategies for promoting literacy, Washington, DC, 2010.
¹⁹ Save the Children, Literacy Boost Community Action Creating a Culture of Reading Outside School Walls, Author, Washington, DC, 2011.
²⁰ Nzabonimpa, J.P., Jonason, C., Abimpaye, M., Schubert, H. & Cozzolino, S., Rwanda: Baseline Survey Tracking Literacy Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices at the School and Community Level, USAID, Washington, DC, 2016.

²¹ EDC, Tikwere Final Report. USAID, Washington, DC, 2012.
²² Dowd et al, 2017.
²³ Friedlander, E., Arshan, N., Zhou, S., & Goldenberg, C., Life-Wide or School-Only Learning: Approaches to Addressing the Developing World’s Learning Crisis. Manuscript under review, 2018.
²⁴ Save the Children, TiANA Project 2013 Endline Report For St Anthony and Namadidi Education Zones, Traditional Authority Mlumbe Zomba Rural, Malawi, Author, Lilongwe, 2013.
²⁵ Tusiime, M., Friedlander, E. & Malik, S., Literacy Boost Rwanda - Literacy Ethnography Baseline Report, Stanford University, 2014.
²⁶ Bett, L. & Jonason, C., Effects of the EU-SERD II Project on Students’ Literacy Levels: The Case of Dadaab Refugee Camp, Save the Children, Nairobi, 2017.
²⁷ RTI, Assistance to Basic Education: All Children Reading (ABE ACR) MERIT: The Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity Annual Progress Report, October 1, 2016, to September 30, 2017, USAID, Washington, DC, 2017.
²⁸ Save the Children, USAID READ Community Outreach (READ CO) Quarterly Report (Q2 Y1), USAID, Washington, DC, 2015b.
²⁹ World Bank, LEARNING to realize education’s promise, Author, Washington, DC, 2018.

Learning for young people

Strategies for supporting the learning of secondary school and out of school young people in the region reflect the need to support academic progress and also to support parents and caregivers as they encourage social and emotional competencies. In addition, strategies should also reinforce linkage to employment opportunities and networks of local skilled tradespeople. This view of positive youth development engages parents, caregivers and community members to mobilize an enabling environment in which youth maximize assets and agency, access to services and opportunities and promote their competence in avoiding risks, staying safe and being protected.³⁰ Again, the context must be considered and in this case the programme and policy stakeholders must ask whether all youth are being supported, as sometimes parents' and caregivers' norms favouring boys' education or approving early marriage can act as barriers to learning support.

Drop-out rates for secondary school students (and in some contexts upper primary as well) remain high in Eastern and Southern Africa and data display that this is largely driven by the cost and quality of schooling, as well as early marriage.³¹ Overall, early marriage disproportionately affects girls, but recent data from the region suggests that different trends exist in different communities, which affect both girls and boys. While additional research is needed to identify more concrete strategies for decreasing early marriage, current evidence suggests that promoting education, including reducing cost and increasing quality, is one of the best ways to prevent early marriage.³² In addition, studies find that programmes which include conditional cash transfers and community engagement are the most likely to be successful.³³



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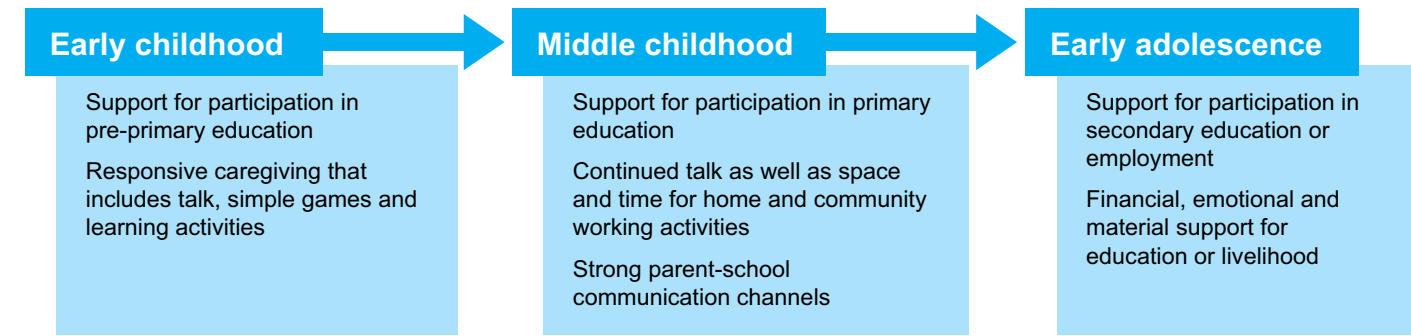
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For secondary school students and out of school young people, families determine participation in formal and non-formal education and support use of skills in developing their livelihood. For example, evidence from a partnership between Save the Children and The MasterCard Foundation aimed at improving the socio-economic status of 40,000 rural out of school boys and girls in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda,³⁴ found that families in all five countries magnified the support that youth received from the programme by providing additional financial, emotional, and material support. This support actively involved relationships in the immediate community and offered youth the opportunity not only to learn but also to establish a reputation for being hard-working and responsible. The programme concluded that having more strategic and explicit involvement of the family in development programmes for adolescents can determine not only how well the adolescents use the skills they have learned but also the longer-term sustainability of the livelihoods that the adolescents select. While high quality evaluations of positive youth development programmes are scarce and tend to be mono-sectoral (showing impact on health knowledge or financial behaviours), lessons to date point to the need to include youth and local community involvement from the design.

How can education ministries support lifewide learning for all?

The planning and policy implications of greater support for lifewide learning are that ministries and donors alike should ensure their early childhood and education systems investments no longer ignore children's opportunities to learn outside of classrooms. Investments must include action points that assist parents and caregivers to support children's learning outside of institutions – be they preschools, primary schools, secondary schools or non-formal settings (see Figure 6 for summary by age).

Figure 6: Parent and caregiver support for lifewide learning



For example, in Rwanda following the mid-term review of the Education Sector Plans as well as other sector analyses in 2015-2016 there is now a stronger emphasis on the role of parents and community in learning. The Education Sector Strategic Plan³⁵ emphasizes the engagement of parents and community. It includes an output on parenting education and sensitization under one of the strategic areas. The Rwanda ECD policy also includes a strategic focus on parenting education and commitment to roll out a national parenting programme. In addition, the draft Literacy Policy emphasizes the use of children's out of school time for activities such as participation in reading clubs. At school and teacher level teachers have been trained using the new competency based curriculum teacher guide which includes a specific module on the role of parents. Similarly, at pre-service level, there is a module on roles of parents and parenting education. Save the Children Rwanda has also developed for the Government of Rwanda a training for PTAs which can be used to train parents on how to support children's learning; and at coordination level, local leaders are expected to include sensitization of parents and parenting education in district plans as well as in their own performance contracts.

Realizing an integrated and coordinated vision for learning will require partnership. Across the region, ministry staff at local levels have key roles to play in reaching parents and caregivers with messages about concrete, feasible options for promoting children's learning in daily life. Coordination with local civil society can aim to expand their efficacy in promoting local solutions to barriers parents face in taking up their role in supporting learning. Donors, NGOs and development agencies should ensure all their education efforts promote national learning action plans with components that promote lifewide learning. Planning efforts to realize this vision will need to bring together many relevant stakeholders not internal to education ministry systems from the national media, libraries/publishing industry, local civil society and related government entities, like health, social welfare, women and families and local government. For older children, relevant actors may also include employers and skilled trades' professionals with apprenticeships. Look around the planning and policy tables at which you sit and consider additional partners who affect children's learning. Make a start by defining the steps to take to bring them to the table.

³⁰ Alvarado, G., Skinner, M., Plaut, D., Moss, C., Kapungu, C. & Reavley, N., A Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development Programmes in Low-and Middle-Income Countries, Youth Power Learning, Making Cents International, Washington, DC, 2017.
³¹ Wodon, Q. T., Male, C., Nayihouba, K.A., Onagoruwa, A.O., Savadogo, A., Yedan, A., Edmeades, J. et al., 'Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: Global Synthesis Report.' Working Paper No. 116829, World Bank and International Center for Research on Women, Washington, DC, 2017.
³² Kalamar, A. M., Lee-Rife, S. & Hindin, M. J., Interventions to Prevent Child Marriage among Young People in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review of the Published and Gray Literature, Journal of Adolescent Health, 59, 2016, S16- S21
³³ Erulkar, A., Medhin G., Weissman E., The Impact and Cost of Child Marriage Prevention in Rural Tanzania, Population Council, Addis Ababa, 2017; & Lee-Rife, A., Malhotra A., Warner A. & Glinski A. M., What works to prevent child marriage: A review of the evidence, Studies in Family Planning, 43(4), 2012, pp.287-303.
³⁴ D'Sa, N., Gebru, E., Scales, P.C. & Wu, C., Effect of Youth in Action on Work Readiness and Socioeconomic Outcomes: Findings from Uganda, Save the Children, Washington, DC.

³⁵ Education Sector Plan 3 final draft

Attention to lifewide learning in Education Sector Plan preparation can be promoted via the use of the many Eastern and Southern African examples in this Think Piece for how to promote and ensure that parents and caregivers can play an effective role as learning supporters. Countries can also follow Rwanda's blueprint for thinking about intentionality by including parenting in different strategic documents and plans both at policy level and for implementation; by developing dedicated tools like parenting curricula, teacher training modules, and a PTA training guide and by ensuring budget for these activities. Ensuring that all children learn requires setting out how these investments help children furthest behind make progress so our efforts reduce equity gaps. Effective policy should develop and test innovative supports for parents and families struggling to enable their children's educational success, engaging local researchers and universities to build an evidence base around the costs, impact and equity associated with these efforts. Including lifewide learning in national education plans leverages the power of an additional 76 per cent of opportunity to learn in a child's life; it fuels a powerful partnership with parents and caregivers to address the current learning crisis.



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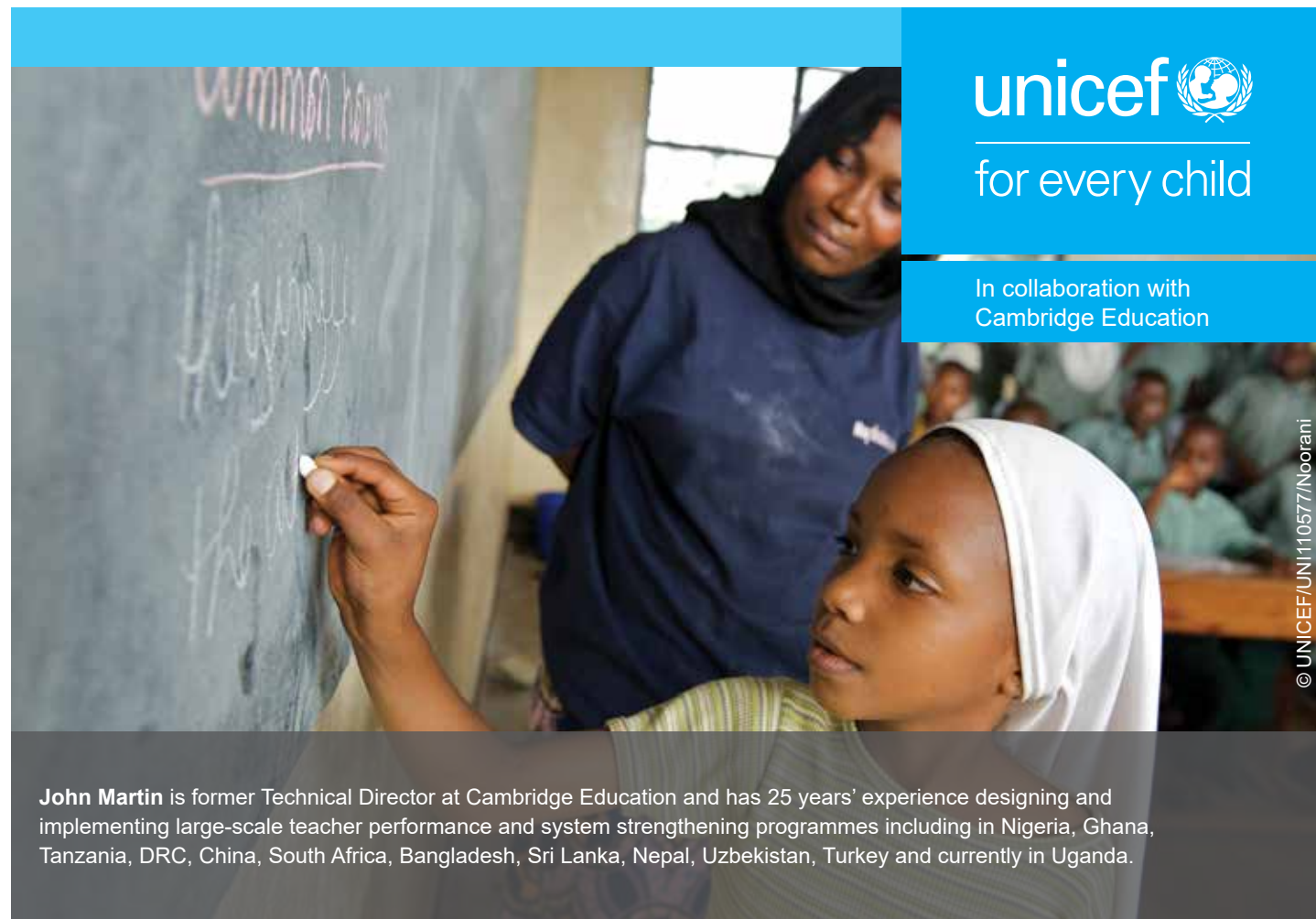
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Further reading

1. [Borisova, I., Pisani, L., Dowd, A.J. & Hsiao-Chen, L., Effective interventions to strengthen early language and literacy skills in low-income countries: comparison of a family-focused approach and a pre-primary programme in Ethiopia, Early Child Development and Care Volume 187, Issue 3-4: Research in Young Children's Literacy and Language Development, 2017.](#)
2. [Dowd, A. J., Friedlander, E., Jonason, C., Leer, J., Sorensen, L. Z., Guajardo, J., D'Sa, N., Pava, C., & Pisani, L., Lifewide learning for early reading development, 2017. In Gove, A., Mora, A., & McCardle, P. \(Eds.\), Progress toward a literate world: Early reading interventions in low-income countries, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 155, pp.31–49.](#)
3. [Friedlander, E. W., Dowd, A. J., Guajardo, J., & Pisani, L., Education for All or Literacy for All? Evaluating student outcomes from Save the Children's Literacy Boost programme in sub-Saharan Africa. In A. Abubakar & F. van de Vijver \(Eds.\), Handbook of Applied Developmental Science in sub-Saharan Africa, Springer, New York, 2017.](#)
4. [Matafwali, B., Evaluation of the Interactive Radio Instruction \(IRI\) Pilot Programme in Early Childhood Education in The Eastern Province of Zambia, Ministry of Education, Science Vocational Training and Early Education, Lusaka, 2014.](#)
5. [Pisani, L. & Dusabe, C., First Steps 'Intera za Mbere' Holistic Parenting Education Programme for families of children aged 0-3 years in Rwanda, Save the Children, Kigali, 2016.](#)
6. [Save the Children, Literacy Boost Community Action. Creating a Culture of Reading Outside School Walls, Author, Washington, DC, 2011.](#)
7. [Save the Children and World Vision, Community strategies for promoting literacy, Author and World Vision, Washington, DC, 2010.](#)

List of Acronyms

ECD	Early Childhood Development
IDELA	International Development and Early Learning Assessment
PTA	Parent Teacher Association



Putting the spotlight on teacher performance

John Martin

Despite the significant investments made by Eastern and Southern African (ESA) governments, supported by development partners, into improving the performance of teachers, evidence that these investments have been successful is sparse. Indeed, the evidence points in the opposite direction and suggests that there is a crisis in both teaching and learning¹ across ESA countries. Teacher absenteeism is high – a third to a half are absent at any one time² – and teacher quality is low: many do not possess the basic literacy and numeracy skills they are attempting to impart to their pupils,³ let alone possess the pedagogical skills to do so. Neither is there a great deal of unequivocal evidence of what works to improve 'teacher performance'. Clearly the strategies that 'we' (governments, development partners, stakeholders

and 'experts') have collectively been applying have not worked. At worst we have been doing the wrong things; at best we have not been doing the right things.

The author has more than 30 years of experience of working across ESA on more than 50 education programmes, and is as guilty as everyone else in this respect but has hopefully learnt some lessons that will be useful to others.

Building on those experiences, mistakes made and lessons learnt as well as research, grey literature and practitioner accounts, this paper looks at the reasons why we have got this so wrong and makes some suggestions as to what we could change in the future.

This Think Piece puts forward three main arguments:

First. By focusing so strongly on teacher development (i.e. teacher training) over the past 20 years, we have collectively allowed ourselves to be distracted from the main goal of improving teacher performance. (We define teacher performance as a set of attitudes and behaviours that result in learning for children. The more that children learn, the better we judge the performance of the teacher to be.) This is not to say that teacher development and training is not important, but that it is only one of a complex set of factors affecting teachers' attitudes and behaviours. Other factors include motivation and morale, incentives and rewards, accountability and responsibility. These should ideally all be linked together in a system for performance management.

Second. Even when working on teacher development, the focus has been mainly on In-service training; Initial Teacher Training (ITT) has been largely neglected. Few, if any, ESA countries have conducted major reforms of their ITT delivery system. There are some ongoing initiatives in Ghana⁴ and Nigeria⁵ but lessons from these are only just beginning to emerge.

Third. Most of the in-service training currently offered is remedial, in that it seeks to deliver the training that should have been delivered during initial teacher training. More worryingly, most in-service training initiatives have failed to gather evidence of their impact and those few that have done so have at best been able to show only small gains. This is despite the large investments that have been made into in-service training in most ESA countries over the past 25 years.

These three statements are examined in more detail in the following sections and suggestions are given for what might change and how such change might happen.

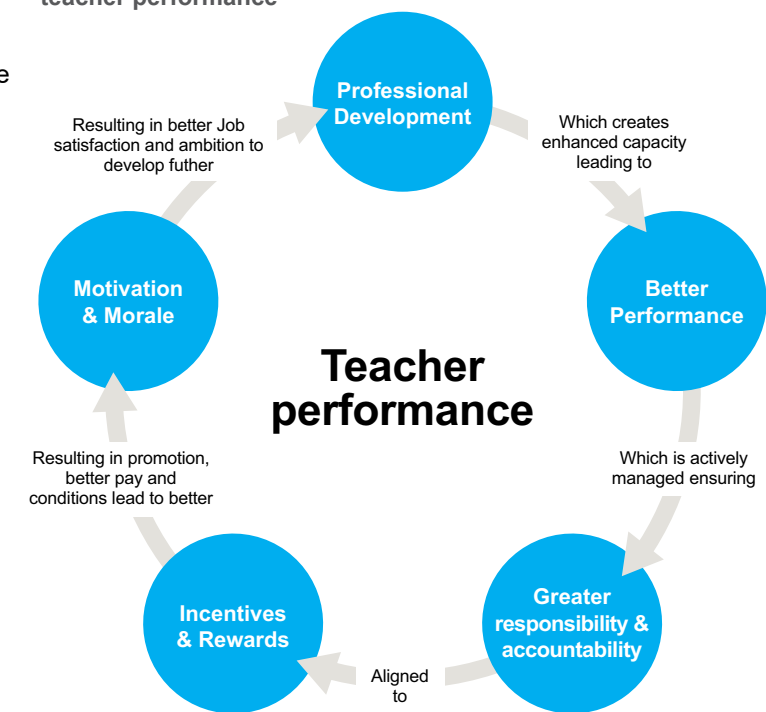
What makes teachers perform better?

There is a tacit and longstanding assumption that if we want better teachers all we need to do is give them more training and/or on-the-job support: the more the better. However, even a few moments reflection on one's own experience should be enough to convince most readers that this is not true. Yes, we might come back from (good) training invigorated and with new ideas, but it is not too long before what we have learnt begins to fade, unless we have other drivers to make us continue to apply such learning. Professional development is necessary both at the beginning of a teacher's career and throughout that career, but it is not sufficient to ensure high (or better) levels of performance. Performance needs to be actively managed. In any job, not just teaching, the other things that drive us to do better are: how motivated we are; whether we feel valued; how high our morale is; what roles we fulfil; whether our performance is aligned to the incentives we receive; and whether we are held to account for our performance.

Figure 1 shows how these factors relate to each other and, when occurring properly, form the basis for a cycle of continual improvement of teacher performance that should be built into a teacher's career path. In the diagram, we can see that professional development should lead to better performance but only if that performance is properly managed. This should ideally be a school based function managed by headteachers or their senior staff. Improving performance should bring with it extra responsibility and accountability, which should be aligned to rewards and incentives available in the teacher's career pathway. This in turn is likely to increase the teacher's motivation both extrinsically (better pay) and intrinsically (a sense of feeling recognised and appreciated). That motivation brings about a wish to do better which leads to a demand for further professional development and more responsibility.

Part of the reason that we have not addressed some of these factors is because they are politically difficult. No government is likely to refuse training for its teachers, but not many are ready to take the difficult decision to reform career paths or tackle issues of accountability.

Figure 1: Cycle of continual improvement of teacher performance



Unfortunately, in many ESA countries this cycle does not exist, or is broken. Teacher development is not effective, performance is not managed, teachers are not held to account. Their promotion, pay, and conditions are not linked to their performance but instead are linked with their age. Neither do they feel valued or respected. Generally, teachers are demotivated. More training will not fix this. The following sections consider each of the elements of this cycle in more detail.

¹ The Education Commission Learning Generation Report highlights a learning crisis whereby under current trends by 2030 in low-income countries only one out of 10 young people will be on track to gain basic secondary-level skills. Available from: <http://report.educationcommission.org>

² World Bank Group, Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa, Regional Study on the Quality of Basic Education, IIEP, Paris, 2 May 2018 <https://box.iiep.unesco.org/index.php/s/ZRjXtEZf288sLTZ#pdfviewer>

³ Ibid.

⁴ See www.t-tel.org

⁵ See www.tdpnigeria.org

Teacher Development

We all intuitively believe that a trained teacher is better than an untrained teacher, although the evidence for this is far from conclusive, especially in ESA countries.⁶ More importantly the evidence around what sort of training is the most effective is scarce in these countries. What evidence exists is generally small-scale and linked to specific in-service training initiatives rather than initial teacher training systems. This is despite the fact that most donor funded education programmes spend an estimated average of 40 per cent of their gross investment on in-service training of teachers in one form or another.⁷

Initial Teacher Training

In the case of Initial Teacher Training (ITT), there is little or no systematic research or evidence from ESA countries that shows whether two or three years spent in a Teacher Training Institution has any impact at all.⁸ On the contrary, the very low levels of learning outcomes in many of these countries point to the fact that these systems are demonstrably failing.⁹ If we add to this the fact that such systems are very expensive to implement (relative to the overall level of education spending in low-income countries), then there is even more reason to ensure ITT systems are effective.¹⁰ Unfortunately, and despite this, reforms of Initial Teacher Training have been largely missing both by ESA governments and donors alike over the past 25 years.

In practice, most initial teacher training systems in ESA are outdated and disconnected from the realities of the classrooms in which their graduates will find themselves. The following list generalizes and summarizes the characteristics of these systems.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

- Courses are generally content-laden and what pedagogy is included is generally focused on the theory of teaching, with little link to the realities of the classroom. Student teachers are rarely given any practical strategies for contending with classroom conditions common to ESA countries, such as overcrowded classrooms and a lack of teaching and learning materials.
- Worse still, the level of content is often inappropriate to the level at which teachers will teach. Much of the curriculum is taken up with re-teaching content from senior secondary school curricula on the basis that students have not mastered this sufficiently well the first time around. Trying to solve one problem has created a new problem.
- Pedagogy and practice teaching often take up much less than half of the curriculum. At best trainees develop theoretical knowledge but not practical skills.
- Practice teaching is usually in a single block in a single semester. It is poorly supported and monitored, and not linked to pedagogical courses. Innovative approaches to teaching, such as weekly tutoring with small numbers of children or acting as a teaching assistant for a few hours a week at nearby schools, are rare.
- Often the ITT curriculum includes no specific courses on either numeracy or literacy. If they appear at all, these are often combined into content-laden English, local language, or general mathematics courses. A particular effect of this is that many in-service programmes focus on giving teachers very basic skills to teach numeracy and literacy; skills they should already have.
- The curriculum is often set externally, usually by a single university or institution. This dependence on a single academic institution has often created curricula that are ‘protected’ by an academic elite that itself is out of touch with schools and appropriate pedagogic approaches.
- In some countries, examinations are also set and marked externally every semester (or annually) by a single university. The funds generated and dispersed to institutions, invigilators, and markers involved in this system can create a vested interest to resist change. Exams also tend to focus on content recall rather than demonstrations of pedagogy, thereby reinforcing the need for content-laden courses.
- In some countries there is no differentiation of training to teach at different age ranges. Training is general across both primary and lower secondary.

Structure and systems

- The supply of teachers from institutions rarely matches the demand from schools either in quantity or in areas of speciality.
- There is little or no tracking of ITT graduates to see where they go or how they cope. Most teacher training institutions have no idea about the quality of their graduates and therefore miss an important opportunity to improve their training.
- ITT institutions generally have very little autonomy to change things themselves. In many countries staff are centrally posted to colleges, not appointed by colleges and paid from a central payroll. Curriculum, course structures, and exams are imposed externally.
- Staff at ITT institutions are generally required to hold a degree or higher degree, but this is often subject-based rather than based on a professional area of expertise (early childhood development, primary etc.). This means that they do not have the necessary knowledge of the relevant pedagogies.
- Experience of teaching in a school may not be needed to become an ITT tutor. Many ITT tutors responsible for conducting courses for prospective primary teachers have no practical experience of teaching in a primary school themselves.
- There is little or no external quality assurance of ITT institutions.
- A large proportion of students never end up teaching, nor had any intention of becoming teachers in the first place. At best this wastes scarce funds; at worst it produces unmotivated and poor teachers.
- The ‘worst’ qualified often end up teaching at the lowest grade levels. Arguably this should be the other way around as research is overwhelming that investment in education at younger years has most lasting impact.

Value for Money

- Most ITT courses consist of a two- or three-year residential programme. This is a very expensive training model, especially given the lack of evidence for its effectiveness in many countries.

Clearly not all these characteristics apply to every country, but a significant proportion apply to most countries which have collectively resisted change for many years.

As such, tinkering with existing ITT systems by merely trying to improve the capacity of tutors through more training would be insufficient (as it is for teachers). In most ESA countries, ITT systems are long overdue for major systemic reform. To inform such reform more research, experimentation and investment in the area of ITT is required.

One option to ‘fix’ such systems is to take them as they are and fix their component parts; reforming curricula, training tutors to better deliver training, increasing the time students spend in real classrooms, giving institutions more autonomy and helping them to mature into self-improving tertiary institutions, increasing the levels of quality assurance and accountability etc. This type of reform is currently being attempted in Ghana and Nigeria but it is too early to judge how successful these will be.

An alternative would be to consider other innovative and more cost-effective systems for initial teacher training such as school-led training.¹¹ Such systems now exist in countries like the United Kingdom alongside more traditional routes. In such systems, schools (or districts) recruit their own teachers and are then responsible for their initial teacher training. They do both on-the-job training using trained mentors, and short releases to teacher training institutions – instead of the other way around. The advantage is that schools have more control over the quality of the teachers they recruit and can therefore be made much more accountable. Such systems are likely to be much more cost effective with less attrition. However, it should be stressed that such innovations will not work any better than existing systems without: 1) investment to create a strong cadre of mentors from existing teachers; 2) ensuring that existing ITT institutions are properly prepared to re-task themselves; and 3) creating strong management and leadership within the new system.

In some countries these two approaches have converged towards one another. In the UK for instance, training institutions have developed strong relationships with schools, students spend a large proportion of their time in these schools and teacher training institutions train and pay school mentors. Some schools in the UK have been allowed to train their own teachers and buy services and training from ITT institutions as required. This sort of innovation has not been tried in ESA and whilst reform of institutions of a radical kind always faces strong resistance, the potential for strengthening the quality and increasing the efficiency of ITT might be a game changer. Whilst it will require strong political vision, the appetite for change might be whetted with a few small-scale pilots.

In general, current ITT in ESA countries is not working well, making it an area ripe for research, innovation, and focused experimentation from countries and donors alike.¹²

⁶ Mahendra, S.; Baxter, S. Helpdesk Report: Impact of Teacher Training on Students’ Learning Outcomes. Human Development Resource Centre, UK, 2011

⁷ Estimated from expenditure profiles of six large DFID education programmes. UNICEF programmes are likely to be at least this proportion, and USAID programmes are likely to include a much larger proportion.

⁸ Lewin, Keith, The pre-service training of teachers – does it meet its objectives and how can it be improved? Backg round paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005

⁹ Junaid, Muhammad, I., and Maka, Francois, In-Service Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Synthesis Report, p.43, 2015

¹⁰ In the case of Ghana, 6% of the 35% public expenditure on education is spent on ITT. Given Ghana’s targets for national enrolment and pupil teacher ratios, an expansion of the current ITT system to produce enough teachers is not financially viable. See Lewin (2004) p.21.

¹¹ In 1997, Malawi drastically reduced the time and cost of ITT through its MIITEP programme in order to rapidly certify 18,000 unqualified teachers. It provided a flexible ITT model that used short college-based courses linked to school-based training. Although progressive in aims, it suffered many tensions in the didactic way in which it was implemented. See Stuart, J, S, and Kunje, D, The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Project: an analysis of the curriculum and its delivery in the colleges MUSTER Discussion Paper No 11, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, 2000.

¹² Emerging examples of ITT reform can be seen in West Africa in Nigeria and Ghana. But lessons learned are just beginning to be produced. See more at: www.tdpnigeria.org and www.t-tel.org

In-service Teacher Training

In-service Teacher Training abounds in ESA and, whilst it is not within the scope of this Think Piece to examine the effectiveness of all the many models that exist, there are three broad points that can be made:

First. Almost all in-service training in ESA is essentially remedial in that it seeks to give teachers training that they should already have been given during their ITT experience. Such training does not really fit in the category of Continuous Professional Development (CPD)¹³. While remediation is not necessarily a bad thing because weak ITT systems mean that many qualified teachers still need remedial training, there should be a shift in the balance of investment towards ITT systems reform.

Second. While some in-service training is paid for and delivered by ESA governments themselves, a larger proportion is paid for, managed, and delivered by development partners.¹⁴ Again, this is not necessarily a bad thing as it does give a necessary boost to teachers’ skills. However, this rarely leads to a sustainable system of in-service training. To create that would take much greater ongoing investment from governments themselves, which would have to be weighed against other pressing priorities both within and without the education sector. The real question, then, is whether or not it is better to spend available funds on improving ITT.

Third. The reason that most in-service training is not sustainable is because the levels of investment and external inputs cannot realistically be matched by governments in ESA. However, the emergence of low-cost, or no-cost, school-based in-service training models show much more promise in this respect.¹⁵ Such models probably do not have as great an impact in the short-term compared to expensive, well designed and delivered, one-off training courses. But the fact that they are potentially sustainable at the local level means that they have the potential for a greater long-term impact.

A possible solution to this and the ITT issues discussed above would be to create an integrated teacher training system that combines both ITT and CPD. To be affordable, this would be based on much greater in-school training combined with outreach programmes from teacher training institutions. This would, however, require re-tasking those institutions. Such significant reforms would be best piloted on a small scale both as proof of concept and as a chance to shift ingrained attitudes.

Accountability and Responsibility

Better teacher training, unfortunately, is not guaranteed to ensure better performance in the classroom. For this to happen teachers must also be accountable, and if they wish to progress up the school management structure they must be expected to take on more responsibility. This means that their performance must be actively managed in some way. This might be through formal appraisal approaches, or through regular monitoring by head teachers, other senior staff, or district level inspectors, or a combination of all of these.

Devising such a performance management system is not difficult, but the issue then arises as to how this is linked to the teacher’s progression along their career path. This in turn is dependent on who makes the decisions about promotion. In many ESA countries, this is decided by a committee or district officials who have never seen the teacher perform and therefore rely on an interview or inconsequential paperwork. In an ideal world, the person or persons who are best able to regularly monitor the teacher’s performance should be contributing to such decisions. The main decision maker should be the headteacher. However, to avoid favouritism or nepotism, and to increase the validity and reliability of the headteacher’s evaluation, others such as senior teachers, inspectors, and/or other education professionals that regularly visit the school should also contribute their views. Decisions should then be ratified by School Management Committees and at the district level.

There is also the question of what a teacher is being promoted to do. In many ESA countries, grades are not linked to responsibilities as might be expected. Teachers are promoted to a higher grade and title, not to a more responsible role. Promotion is more often based on getting older (years of experience) than performance.

For example, in Ghana a teacher can reach the grade of Principal Teacher after a minimum of 11 years of service, and the descriptor for this grade is:

*Can serve as head of basic school and/or a resource person, coach other teachers and implement strategies that lead to improving classroom teaching and learning. Able to interpret and implement educational policies. Ability to mobilize resources, to have negotiation skills.*¹⁶

Apart from the fact that this definition includes a mix of competencies and grade descriptors, it is not clear what new role that the teacher will play: it provides some vague guidance as to roles the teacher might play, but no certainty. In practice, a promoted teacher will only take on extra duties in a school if they are not already being done by someone else, and might take on no extra duties at all. Many other ESA countries have systems that are comparable to this. We should be moving towards a system where the expectation is that promotion is strongly and transparently based upon performance, and carries with it very clearly defined extra duties. It is worth noting that in some OECD countries, grades are linked to roles in such a way that promotions can only happen when there are vacant roles to be filled either within the teacher’s own school or within other schools by application and selection. In most ESA countries they are not.

Incentives and rewards

A career structure which properly bases career progression on performance, and then provides adequate incentives to advance up this career structure, is far more likely to result in all-round better performance by teachers. This is not so much about absolute levels of pay and conditions, but about whether at each stage of advancement the incentives are sufficient for teachers to want promotion, and are willing to take on the burden of extra responsibilities. This is often not the case. In Uganda, for instance, a headteacher at the top of the pay scale earns approximately 1.95 times that of a newly qualified teacher. In the UK, this multiplier is approximately 4.8. It is a reasonable hypothesis that teachers will want promotion, be more willing to take on extra responsibility and accept less pay early in their careers if the rewards grow greater the further they progress. This is especially true when they have increasing personal responsibilities such as growing families. Such an incentive will only work however if performance and promotion are closely linked. (It should be noted that this hypothesis is largely untested but could prove a fruitful area for research.)

Clearly ‘fixing’ this is not difficult from a technical point of view. It would be relatively easy to create a new career structure and performance management system that links pay and promotion to performance. The difficult aspect is to persuade politicians and high-level decision makers to embark on such a politically sensitive course of action when they know they will face intense opposition to change from those with vested interests in the current system. Teachers’ unions are often perceived to be the most likely opponents to such change (although this perception has not really been tested). If a career structure based upon a performance framework could be shown to be advantageous to most teachers then why would they object? A good strategy for government might be to enter into such discussions during the regular pay review/ negotiation process and be prepared to offer a one off exceptional increase in salaries to achieve what would be permanent structural changes.

This requires sufficient political will at the highest level of government, detailed forward planning, and a strategy to persuade key stakeholders of the benefits to all. The donor community’s role is to influence and persuade government, possibly offering incentives or funding to kick start change. They can also help to work out the technical detail of such change. UNICEF or other donors might help broker such discussions.



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Motivation and Morale

A teacher’s state of mind is also important, and motivation can come in several forms. It can be driven by extrinsic incentives as described in the previous section, or it can be intrinsic in the form of job satisfaction, and feeling valued, appreciated, and respected. Both are important. While a system should focus on positive reinforcement of good performance, there needs to be consequences if a teacher deliberately does not do their job and sometimes if they are unable do their job.

A real and recent example related to the author by a headteacher in an East African country was of a teacher who was repeatedly absent or turned up to work drunk. The headteacher spoke to them numerous times and then eventually started to issue written warnings. After three warnings, the School Management Committee took up the case and spoke the teacher several times. Eventually it was escalated to the District level, who then called them in several times for further discussions and warnings. This process took at least six months and the outcome was that the teacher was eventually posted to another school: the reason given was that they might do better under someone else’s guidance. The result was that they became someone else’s problem and different children are now suffering from his indiscipline.

¹³ CPD seeks to refresh and expand the skills of practising teachers throughout their careers. This assumes they have a set of basic pedagogical skills to begin with.
¹⁴ Junaid, Muhammad, I., and Maka, Francois, In-Service Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Synthesis Report, p.81, 2015.
¹⁵ Such as JICA’s peer-to-peer school-based professional development. See Hung et al., Lesson Study: Scaling up peer-to peer learning for teachers in Zambia, Center for Universal Education at Brookings, 2015.
¹⁶ Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana

The reader can make their own judgement about the above example, but the processes involved are typical in many ESA countries. While this is an extreme example of what should have been a disciplinary matter (with immediate suspension), there are many other more subtle instances where teachers are not doing their job well, and headteachers and schools are powerless to deal with these decisively and quickly. Underperforming teachers should be offered support and encouragement in the first instance but if they do not react positively to this then there must be options to discipline or remove such teachers. While this may seem harsh, our priority should be safeguarding the rights of children first.

Increasing levels of intrinsic motivation ('I want to do my job well because it matters to me') is easy to do with some teachers but harder for others, especially if teaching was not their first choice of career. However, this option is less politically contentious. Many programmes now create 'soft' strategies to try to build this intrinsic motivation. Because such initiatives do not require major systemic change or large amounts of funding they are not resisted politically. STIR Education¹⁷ for instance is implementing such an initiative in Uganda, where the government has asked them to scale to national level.

Extrinsic motivation, however, relates back to the previous section – aligning performance with incentives, accountability and responsibility. Creating a career structure that does this is not a difficult task in principle, but persuading governments and unions that this is necessary is politically contentious. This requires a major system change that few if any governments in ESA have attempted, and which most donors have actively avoided. Nevertheless, these are issues that need to be tackled if we really want to drive teacher performance. Perhaps such issues might be addressed by the Education Workforce Initiative Advisory Group,¹⁸ recently formed under the auspices of the Global Partnership for Education.



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¹⁷ See: <https://stireducation.org>
¹⁸ See: <http://educationcommission.org/education-workforce-initiative>

Conclusion

This Think Piece has set out three basic arguments about teacher development:

- It is only one of several factors affecting the broader notion of teacher performance. Other factors including motivation, alignment of incentives with performance, accountability, and responsibility should also be addressed if true progress is to be made.
- Thus far, the focus has been mainly on in-service training and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) has been largely overlooked and neglected. The time has come to switch the focus to the reform of ITT.
- We have attempted to remediate ineffective initial teacher training with in-service training that seeks to give teachers the sort of training that should have been given during ITT. While this has been a necessary short-term measure, the aim now should be to create affordable and sustainable systems for genuine continuous professional development – probably school-based, and preferably linked much more closely to ITT systems.

The overarching conclusion is that the performance of teachers – as measured through improved learning of children – will only significantly improve if all aspects affecting that performance are addressed.



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Further reading

1. [World Bank Group, Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa, Regional Study on the Quality of Basic Education, IIEP, Paris, 2 May 2018.](#)
2. [Mahendra, S.; Baxter, S. Helpdesk Report: Impact of Teacher Training on Students' Learning Outcomes. Human Development Resource Centre, UK, 2011.](#)
3. [Junaid, Muhammad, I., and Maka, Francois. In-Service Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Synthesis Report, p.81, 2015.](#)
4. [Hung et al., Lesson Study: Scaling up peer-to peer learning for teachers in Zambia, Center for Universal Education at Brookings, 2015.](#)
5. [Stuart, J. S. and Kunje, D. The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Project: an analysis of the curriculum and its delivery in the colleges, MUSTER Discussion Paper No 11, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, 2000.](#)
6. [Lewin, Keith, The pre-service training of teachers – does it meet its objectives and how can it be improved? Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005.](#)

List of Acronyms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



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Busy going nowhere: Curriculum reform in Eastern and Southern Africa

Roger Cunningham

Despite repeated attempts to reform the basic education curriculum in many countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region, learning levels have remained stubbornly low. The general movement away from a traditional curriculum (broadly defined as being 'academic' and teacher centred with a high degree of subject content) towards a 'competency' or 'outcome' based curriculum (i.e. learner centred and focused on developing skills and capabilities), has disappointingly done little, if anything, to improve learning outcomes. Changes to the curriculum have largely failed to change what goes on in classrooms: teaching remains largely didactic and pupils' acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy, the foundational skills on which future learning is built, is woefully low¹.

The challenges of curriculum reform have been well documented across many ESA countries – Namibia²; South Africa³; Botswana⁴; Ethiopia⁵; Malawi⁶ and Uganda⁷. Deep-seated and long-standing structural faults that run through many education systems, such as large class sizes, low levels of teacher competence and motivation, and books in the wrong language, are frequently ignored in the process of curriculum reform.

These elements of the delivery system are too often assumed to be working during reform. But a new curriculum is inevitably quite different, probably more difficult, and certainly more demanding than what the system has been used to. Given that it fails to deliver the familiar, why do we expect it to deliver the unfamiliar? Curriculum reform therefore all too frequently seems designed for a reality that does not exist.

This Think Piece challenges the current approach to primary curriculum reform, drawing evidence from a number of ESA countries. It takes as its central tenet that curriculum reform should never exceed the capacity of the education system to deliver. Largely politically driven, overly ambitious aspirations for curriculum change have very often ignored the prevailing context. Anticipated or assumed changes across other elements of the delivery system have not happened. Future directions for curriculum reform must be built on this starting point and be based on past lessons and experience. A new curriculum on its own will not transform learning.



New curricula are overly complex: a step too quick and too far

Almost all ESA countries have attempted to reform their primary education curriculum over the past two decades. Without exception, new curricula have all embraced one or more of the following underlying concepts: competency based, outcome based, learner centred, child centred, or thematic. While it is important to recognise that these are not the same, they do often share key methodologies and features that aim to change what and how children learn and to make learning more relevant to the social and economic needs of the twenty-first century. National aspirations for education are largely built around notions of transformation into knowledge economies: a transformation that is not happening at any speed or scale in the majority of ESA countries. Meanwhile, education systems – the structure, organisation and delivery – continue to be rooted at best in the mid twentieth century.

As a result of these curriculum reforms, we can see they are struggling on two counts:

- it frequently complicates an already fragile learning process, adding further layers of difficulty where simplicity and greater concentration on fundamental basic skills are needed;
- the process fails to provide the basket of reforms required to deliver change. The interrelated challenges, such as teacher skills, appropriate teaching and learning materials, effective assessment as well as responsive support and supervision (e.g. school leadership, inspection, outreach programmes), are not addressed by curriculum reform and thus fail to lead to classroom change.

New curricula have generally proved too ambitious for the education systems in ESA countries; change needs to focus more on what can realistically be delivered. The acquisition of basic competencies in literacy and numeracy forms the essential basis on which much of the rest of the curriculum depends. Given the high proportion of children who are failing to achieve even minimal levels of literacy and numeracy⁸, this remains the single biggest challenge for any curriculum reform.

¹ Chisholm, L. et al, Curriculum Reform in post 1990's Sub-Saharan Africa, International Journal of Educational Development Vol 28, 2008.

² O'Sullivan, M', Reform Implementation and the realities within which teachers work, Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, Vol 32 Issue 2, 2002.

³ Rogan, J. and Aldous, C., Relationships between the constructs of the theory of curriculum implementation, Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 2005.

⁴ Tabulawa, R., Teachers' perspectives on classroom practice in Botswana, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education Vol 11, Issue 2, 1998.

⁵ Serbessa, D., Tension between traditional and modern teaching and learning approaches in Ethiopian primary schools, International Co-operation in Education Vol 9, no. 1, 2006.

⁶ Chirwa, G. et al, Curriculum change and development in Malawi: an historical overview, Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 5 No. 16, 2014.

⁷ Altinyelken, H., Curriculum change in Uganda: teacher perspectives on the new thematic curriculum, International Journal of Educational Development, Vol 30 (2), 2010.

⁸ Bashir et al., Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa, World Bank, 2018.

New curricula have required a number of changes to classroom practice, changes that for the most part teachers are ill prepared for and resistant to make. With perhaps the single exception of changes in language of instruction, where use of learners’ mother tongue in the initial years is increasingly the norm, observations of classroom practice today are worryingly similar to those of 30 or more years ago. Curriculum reform has not often led to the desired changes in the classroom, nor has it resulted in greater learning. Unrealistic curricula may well have inhibited more incremental change.

More specifically the curriculum reform process needs to consider:

- **Matching political expectation and the reality on the ground.** The initial impetus for curriculum reform is derived from longer term national development strategies with the general aspiration to shift economies from their long-standing agrarian basis to ‘knowledge based economies’. The most common role models for this transformation are the tiger economies of South East Asia, most notably South Korea, where very different economic and cultural factors drove an intense effort to improve human capital. South East Asia is a long way from Africa, where persistent under-investment in education and failure to tackle the underlying malaises of corruption and performance widen the gulf between political aspiration and what can be, and is, achieved. Political aspirations must be tempered with the reality of education systems, and resources devoted to fixing chronic and persisting problems, if curriculum reform is to succeed.
- **The underlying cultures and practice of teaching and teachers, including their participation in curriculum reform.** New curricula require pedagogy to shift from didactic ‘chalk and talk’ routines, text reliant note taking and whole class methods with predominantly passive learners, to far more varied approaches that are child centred, involving activities that require learners to actively engage with a range of stimuli to foster understanding. Teachers have been ill prepared, unsupported, and poorly resourced. Ensuring teachers effectively participate in the curriculum reform process would raise these and other practical implementation issues early and have the positive externality of securing buy-in from teachers for the changes.
- **New curricula frequently demand teaching and learning materials beyond standard textbooks.** This has proved a major challenge, and materials to suit new curricula are frequently not available in time or are inadequate. Teachers have often lacked the motivation to create more interactive classrooms, and large class sizes have significantly restricted what is feasible. Teachers struggle to identify, source or create the additional materials often required to enrich the delivery of a new curriculum.

- **Ensuring reform to examination and assessment systems.** High level exams and tests drive the system: change to the way learners are formally assessed must be aligned to new curricula and is critical in changing teaching.
- **New curricula have placed emphasis on continuous assessment.** This requires teachers to constantly track pupils’ acquisition of the curriculum. Teachers generally lack the necessary skills and resources to do this, and even capable teachers would still find it impossible with very large class sizes.
- **Use of mother tongue instruction in the early grades.** The majority of ESA countries now pursue policies of teaching in pupils’ mother tongue in the lower primary years, a move away from national languages and/or English, French and Portuguese. Whilst this is strongly backed by research and evidence, both parental and political pressure for English often pulls in the other direction. Implementation is frequently hampered by factors including lack of orthography in minority languages, lack of appropriate written materials including textbooks, and deployment of teachers who do not have the required language⁹.

Uganda’s thematic curriculum: a familiar story of over ambition and implementation failure.

Uganda started to implement its thematic primary curriculum in 2007. It was a response to the acknowledged failures of the existing curriculum to deliver adequate levels of basic literacy and numeracy. The thematic primary curriculum is built on three perfectly laudable principles: to rapidly improve early literacy and numeracy, to integrate learning around themes meaningful and relevant to learners and to use learners’ mother tongue as the initial language of instruction and literacy. Ten years on, the problems of low levels of literacy and numeracy persist: a familiar tale of ambitious design undermined by failure of implementation. Training of teachers was deemed severely inadequate, poorly delivered and confusing; guidebooks were available but not textbooks; none of the many prescribed materials (flash cards, wall charts etc.) were available; on-going support and supervision remained ineffective. Uganda has 37 recognised language communities, 12 of which are used in schools to establish early literacy. This restricted coverage inevitably disadvantaged many children; even where mother tongue instruction was provided, the availability of books and teachers was varied. The net result: only one in four children has achieved a primary grade 2 level of literacy by the end of seven years of primary school¹⁰.

Keep focus, avoid complexity: Viet Nam’s success.

The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2013/14 drew attention to Viet Nam’s primary curriculum reform¹¹. There are a number of key messages behind their success:

- Don’t overload the curriculum: better to offer fewer subjects (they have six)
- Prioritise foundational language and numeracy
- In maths they focus on the application of basic arithmetical skills, avoiding more complex, higher order skills until these are mastered
- Employ language assistants to support minority language learners in the language of instruction.

There are other salient issues that need to be considered before or during a curriculum reform process.

Who leads reform? The curriculum development department or unit within many ministries of education is generally under resourced. Staff are usually not recruited with any specific acumen for, or experience in, curriculum development and subsequently have limited access to professional development. Budgets are sufficient to cover staff salaries and basic running costs; but there is very little for research and development particularly with teachers who are the ones expected to implement any new curricula. Reform therefore tends to be supported by external agencies with teams of international experts, with all the risks of policy borrowing^{12,13}. Tensions exist between curriculum departments or units and other critical agencies e.g. assessment, teacher training, textbook production/ procurement. Given that successful curriculum reform requires concurrent changes across the entire education system, why is this not led by those with that wider oversight and authority such as departments of educational planning?

Teachers’ schemes of work emphasise coverage not learning. Perhaps the single biggest structural fault that fails to convert the curriculum into learning is the inflexible practice of ensuring teachers prepare and stick to schemes of work. Most if not all ESA countries require teachers to prepare schemes of work which set out week by week, term by term, how they will cover the curriculum. Supervision of teachers by their headteachers and inspectors often focuses on whether these schemes align with what the curriculum specifies and whether the teacher (not the child!) are at the point where they should be at any given time, and therefore on target to deliver the prescribed curriculum in the allotted time. Thus, the system ensures that curriculum is taught but not necessarily learned. The persistence of this ritual undermines a mockery of any notion of child centred learning, as most children are demonstrably not learning! Fixing this is far from easy. Simply removing the requirement for schemes of work will not help unless and until: 1) teachers have the skills to teach to the diverse needs of the children in front of them; 2) class sizes are reduced to allow this; and 3) additional resources (teaching assistants and materials) are in place to allow this to happen.



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⁹ Trudell, Barbara, The impact of language policy and practice on children’s learning: Evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF, 2016.
¹⁰ Strengthening Education Systems for Improved Learning (SESIL) data pack slides. Extrapolated June 2018.

¹¹ UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2014/15
¹² Pritchett, L., Woolcock, M. & Andrews, M., Capability Traps? The mechanism of persistent implementation failure. Centre for Global Development, working paper 234, 2010. The authors refer to ‘isomorphic mimicry’ in a wide range of contexts to describe inappropriate copying of processes and practice from more developed contexts in the expectation that they will work in a developing country context.
¹³ Chirwa, G., ibid, 2004 - cited as a cause of curriculum failure in Malawi.

Deliver the whole package: curriculum reform requires other concurrent reforms

A new curriculum will go nowhere unless serving, as well as future, teachers are oriented, trained and supported to be able to teach it. Instructional materials (textbooks, teacher guides and resources etc.) need to be developed and put in place before the new curriculum is introduced. Scripted lesson plans can be an effective way to ensure consistency and help teachers with new approaches. The assessment system needs to be revised to reflect the changes. The effect of not delivering the whole package increases the probability that the teaching and learning process will worsen in the confusion between the old and the new.

Governments, aided and abetted by donors, all too frequently approach change in education systems in a piecemeal way: ‘doing’ teacher training, or textbooks, or assessment, or data, or curriculum! There seems to be an underlying assumption that if you fix one part of the system the rest will follow, or there will be some ‘collateral benefit’ felt by other parts of the system. Although this might hold true for some parts of the system (more and better text books, for example, might improve teaching), the opposite holds true for curriculum reform: trying to fix the curriculum without fixing the other parts has the potential for ‘collateral damage’. Much of the responsibility for unsuccessful curriculum reform is due to this singular approach, typically with curriculum departments or centres leading the charge. Other critical areas of the reform process are marginalised, and once the new curriculum is developed, the resources to assure delivery are unavailable. Also, there are often underlying institutional tensions between curriculum development and other areas (e.g. teacher education, textbook procurement or assessment) as each competes for scarce resources, protecting their specific interests. Such struggles over turf do little to help the wider cause of effective curriculum design and delivery.

The South African journey

In April 1994, the newly elected South African government inherited a racist, divisionary and conservative curriculum. It needed major reform to help move the country forward in terms of reconciliation and nation-building, which in turn required a new philosophical and pedagogical approach to education. The primary school curriculum in South Africa was revised several times during the 1990s and Curriculum 2005 emerged, “characterised by abstruse language and a host of new concepts for schools and teachers to digest” with virtually no content. The 2012 National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is the current revised curriculum strategy, which includes the national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (akin to syllabi) that make the curriculum more accessible and effective for teachers. Every subject in each grade has a comprehensive and concise CAPS which details what content teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade by grade and subject by subject basis. National Curriculum Assessment guidelines are prepared for teachers to provide them with specific information on assessment for a particular subject. The Department of Basic Education has a five-year plan to support teachers, which includes in-service training. However, there remains continued concern over falling standards in South African schools through a failure to redress persisting problems of poor parental engagement, weak school governing bodies and poor school leadership¹⁴.

Although there are some laudable efforts being put into curriculum reform, this Think Piece has argued that reform should never assume the education system’s capacity to deliver. Thus, the table below looks at key elements of the system through which the curriculum is delivered, and provides key questions that can determine whether a system is ready to support reform. Unless the reform works concurrently rather than sequentially, to strengthen, orient and prepare in these areas, it is unlikely to work.

This table therefore might be useful for those working with ministries of education that are planning curriculum reform. UNICEF Education Specialists could use this table as a basic checklist to raise awareness among all stakeholders of the technical and financial requirements, as well as design and implementation risks. Early consideration of these may help avoid the repetition of mistakes that have yielded such poor results in many curriculum reform efforts to date.

Curriculum reform: key considerations and mitigating risks

Area	Key considerations	Mitigating the risks
Teachers and Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What is the current assessment of teachers: their motivation, knowledge and pedagogy?To what extent will teachers be able to embrace and deliver the new curriculum? What additional support is needed? Can this be made available?What are the risks around teacher deployment, attendance, support and supervision?	<p>Consider and assess each aspect of the system’s capacity to deliver.</p> <p>Do not try to implement beyond the capacity of all parts of the system to deliver.</p> <p>Reduce the scope of curriculum change if necessary to align with demands on each aspect of the delivery system.</p> <p>Develop strategies to address identified risks and challenges.</p>
Teacher training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What orientation and further training is needed for teachers?Is there capacity (human and financial) to deliver this?Will pre-service/initial teacher training institutions be able to accept and adopt the new curriculum?	<p>Consider a phased introduction, monitor and adapt on evidence.</p>
Textbooks and other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What are the processes, timelines and costs of producing new textbooks and supplementary materials aligned to the new curriculum?Are these aligned to the planned roll out of the new curriculum so that teachers and pupils are not left stranded and frustrated?Are materials available in all major languages?What provision is being made for minority language speakers?	<p>Estimate the total resources required for introduction and roll out. Don’t embark on introduction if this is at risk.</p>
The school environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is current school leadership capable of promoting the desired change?Are classrooms suited to new demands, particularly in terms of class size and teacher pupil ratios?Can teachers adapt teaching to different class sizes?	<p>Initial success is vital in building ownership, belief and confidence across the system.</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To what extent do high stakes examinations drive the system?How will the new curriculum be assessed? Are examination bodies involved at the start of the process and reforming assessment to align with the new curriculum?Do teachers have the necessary skills and resources to understand their pupils’ learning processes?	<p>Fully engage all stakeholders from the outset (teacher training institutions, teachers and school leaders, textbook writers and publishers, assessment agencies, inspectorate, teacher unions etc.) – not as passive observers but tasked with design tasks for assured delivery.</p> <p>Communicate. Keep everyone informed about what is going on and what to expect.</p>



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¹⁴ Modisaotsile, B., The Failing Standards of Basic Education in South Africa. Africa Institute of South Africa, Policy briefing No. 72, 2012.

Conclusions

Where does this leave curriculum reform? What do we need to think about when involved in curriculum reform?

- There is no magic bullet! Curriculum reform is complex with many interdependent factors that will affect its success. Success requires a far broader set of changes across the delivery system.
- Insufficient attention is paid to the underlying context and culture in which education is delivered, resulting in an aspirational rather than feasible curriculum.
- Devote a far higher proportion of initial time and resources to considering the readiness of the system to accommodate the required change. This is an iterative process as the new curriculum takes shape; constantly test the feasibility of delivery, assessing strengths and weaknesses. Adapt the roll out to fit the resources.
- Ensure all children develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. This should be the core focus, so avoid the temptation to overload the curriculum which might detract from this fundamental objective. Focus heavily on the early grades that lay the foundation for future learning.
- Ensure that the curriculum is a ‘curriculum for all’ which considers the needs of girls and boys equally.

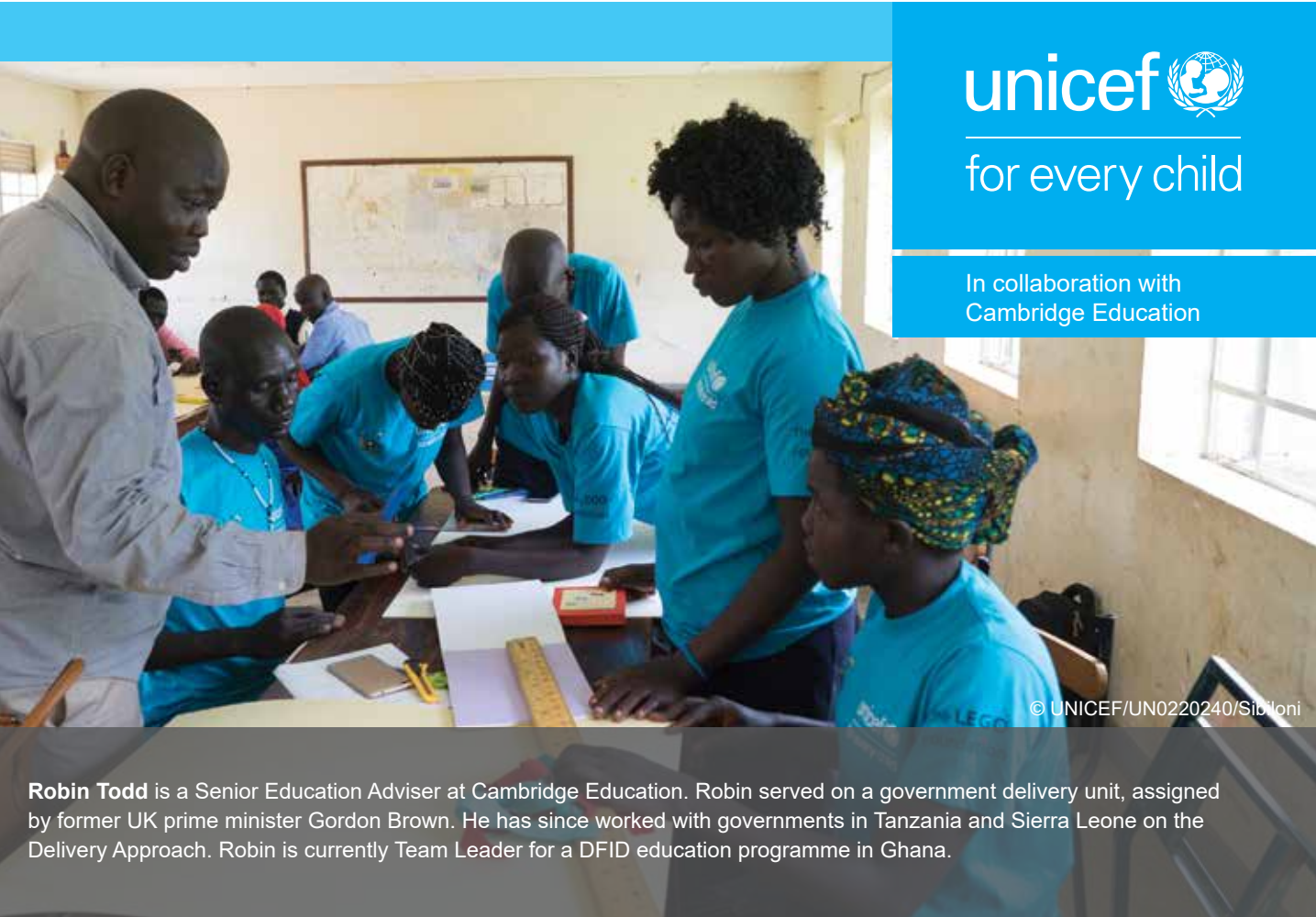
Reforming the curriculum so that it reflects what a nation wants to pass on to the next generation and reflects the world that children will grow up in is important. And thus it can be right to advocate for curriculum to be updated. However, it is vital that those working with governments on curriculum reform ensure that such reform is undertaken in a way that is congruent with the education system and does not add to the complexity and inefficiencies of already stretched education systems in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Recommended reading list

1. Westbrook, Jo, et al., [Pedagogy, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Teacher education in Developing Countries](#), Final Report, Education Rigorous Literature Review, Department for International Development (DFID), 2013.
2. International Bureau of Education-UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO), [‘Training Tool for Curriculum Development: A Resource Pack’](#), accessed June 2018.
3. International Bureau of Education-UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO), [‘Curricula Resources’](#), links to 1600 curricula (including curriculum frameworks) from over 100 countries, accessed June 2018.



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The Delivery Approach:
a panacea for accountability and system reform?

Robin Todd

Education system actors across Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) face a common set of challenges when it comes to translating education sector policies and plans into results. These include:

1. Lack of clarity as to the practical steps needed to turn national policy commitments into tangible outcomes.
2. Lack of joined-up working at national level; policy priorities falling across or between various councils, boards or agencies with unclear accountability for results.
3. The national-level challenge of ensuring the quality of service delivery when responsibility is devolved to local level. If results are poor in a local area, it is still often the national government which gets the blame for this.
4. Focus across government on processes and procedures rather than outcomes. This leads to a limited sense of urgency to make a positive difference within schools.
5. Lack of sufficient human and financial resources throughout the system and a general sense of acceptance that these constraints mean that policy goals may never be achieved.
6. Lack of local-level understanding of national commitments means that intended results are frequently not realized.
7. Lack of understanding at the centre of government and among other stakeholders as to what is needed at an institutional level (school, college, etc.) to deliver high-quality services as well as lack of awareness of the constraints faced by front-line professionals in delivering these services.

These issues can sometimes seem overwhelming and can compound each other, leading to a sense of resignation amongst civil servants and stakeholders across the education system that radical change and improvements in educational outcomes are simply not possible. Once this attitude sets in, it can be exceedingly difficult to challenge. Pessimism becomes reinforcing and certain facts (such as private schools consistently outperforming government schools) are accepted as the norm. These accepted norms are then used to mitigate accountability: “How can the public education system be expected to perform better when this is just how things are?”

Overcoming these challenges is not easy but, with the right level of political will and commitment, there are a set of practices, tools and techniques which governments can harness to bring about rapid improvements in specific areas of the education system. These tools comprise what is called the ‘Delivery Approach’ and this Think Piece aims to set out the key principles of the Approach, examine the growing body of evidence around it and demonstrate how governments can use it to strengthen the accountability of their education systems and improve learning for all.

The Delivery Approach – why are people talking about it?

In recent years, there has been growing interest across governments and across multilateral and bilateral development agencies in looking beyond the formulation of best practice policies and in focusing on implementation and ‘getting things done’. At the heart of this interest has been a set of ideas and structures which can be termed the ‘Delivery Approach’. This was initially popularized in the early 2000s by the UK Government’s Prime Ministerial Delivery Unit (PMDU).

The World Bank, under the leadership of President Jim Yong Kim, has played a key role in advancing thinking on the Delivery Approach or what it initially termed the ‘science of delivery’.¹ Dan Hymowitz from the Africa Governance Initiative (AGI) think tank points out that achieving results through the Delivery Approach is as much of an art as it is a science, as it requires a shrewd understanding of politics and incentives.² The Education Commission, through its Pioneer Country Initiative, has been working with Ministries of Education worldwide since November 2016 to examine how they can use the Delivery Approach to improve educational outcomes.

The Delivery Approach has gained such purchase because it is intended to bring about a transformative shift in attitudes and behaviour towards public service delivery. That said, it is more than just a narrow, technical approach to implementation challenges. The Delivery Approach consists of a set of tools and techniques which can certainly assist in ‘getting things done’, but the important thing is how these tools, and the incentive structures and accountability mechanisms which surround them, are applied. What works in one country, district or region will not necessarily be successful if rigidly applied elsewhere.

Principles of the Delivery Approach

Over the past decade, the Delivery Approach has been implemented across various sectors, including education, in a diverse range of countries, such as Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, UK and USA. These experiences have led to a growing body of literature on the Delivery Approach and the principles behind its successful application.³

In addition to this, the World Bank’s report ‘Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa’ talks of the need to close the gap in institutional capacity in order to enable effective service delivery. The report identifies five capacity areas which are required, if Ministries of Education are to strengthen the link between science and service delivery. These specific areas are consistent with the principles of the Delivery Approach, which are summarized below:⁴

Figure 1: Principles of the Delivery Approach



¹ Gonzalez Asiz, M. & Woolcock, M., Operationalising the Science of Delivery Agenda to Enhance Development Results, 2015.

² Hymowitz, D., Too much science, not enough art, Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative, 2016.

³ See for example Barber, M., The origins and practice of delivery”, McKinsey Voices on Society Vol.5, The Art and Science of Delivery, 2013; World Bank, GET Note: Center of Government Delivery Units, 2010; Shostak, R. et al., When Might the Introduction of a Delivery Unit be the Right Intervention? 2014; Todd, R. & Attfield, I., Big Results Now! in Tanzanian Education: Has the Delivery Approach delivered? 2017, Todd, R.; Martin, J. & Brock, A., Delivery Units: can they catalyse sustained improvements in education service delivery? 2014.

⁴ The five specific capacity building areas identified by the World Bank (2018) are the generation and use of data; technical capacity; coordination among institutions; accountability and incentives; and negotiation and consensus building with stakeholders.

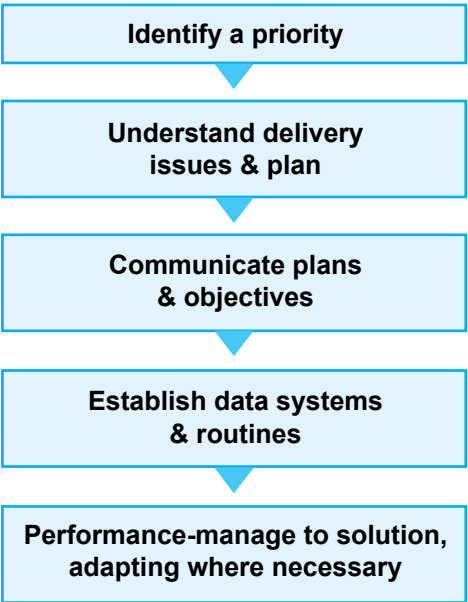
None of the principles set out in figure 1 are particularly revelatory, complex or exceptional. These are common sense things which every government should be seeking to do in one form or another. However, it is interesting to note that, in so many countries, these principles are not being effectively applied. Thus, countries should start from an assessment of their existing strengths and weaknesses. Building on existing strengths, rather than focussing predominantly on weaknesses, is an important part of the approach. It is also critical that any priorities, processes and structures are genuinely country-owned rather than imposed from outside.

One of the most difficult things when introducing the Delivery Approach is trying to explain how it differs from what ministries and stakeholders have been doing already. In many ways it is not completely new, and actors in any education system are likely to have been applying some of the key principles in aspects of their work.

What is different about the Delivery Approach, however, is how the four principles come together in a coordinated, catalytic manner to address a specific problem or issue, focussing ‘like a laser’ until performance has improved.⁵

The Delivery Approach process, as set out in figure 2, will not work unless there is a genuine desire from system leaders to achieve results and a willingness to devote significant time and effort to ensuring that accountability flows throughout the delivery system.

Figure 2: Delivery Approach Process Flow



The Delivery Approach can therefore be effective in scenarios where system leaders have a genuine desire to bring about change but are constrained by the ability, capability and willingness of the delivery system to achieve results. In such instances, the Delivery Approach can reflect the accountability of system leaders through tight performance monitoring and feedback mechanisms to bring about real change at a local level. If system leaders are not genuinely committed to change or if the delivery system does not recognize or respect their authority, then structures such as steering committees or similar accountability mechanisms will become ineffective talking shops or examples of ‘isomorphic mimicry’.⁶

The need for total commitment to the steps above cannot be overemphasized. The initial prioritization of issues is not an easy task for system leaders who are used to listing large numbers of priorities. Genuine prioritization means accepting trade-offs, focussing on success in one area to the detriment of others and, by implication, de-prioritizing important areas. However, this prioritization is a necessary first step if the Delivery Approach is to achieve results.

Once prioritization has been carried out, the steps in figure 2 can be followed. This will involve establishing accountability structures such as a committee or board to oversee progress. To be effective, this will need to be chaired personally by the system leader and take place on a very regular basis. During Sierra Leone’s response to Ebola, President Koroma chaired a weekly meeting where ministers (including the Minister of Education) would present on progress against their Ebola Recovery Plan Priorities. This weekly accountability routine helped deliver real change in the education system by forcing the minister to establish a similar weekly structure within the ministry where all directors would meet every Monday to review progress and identify obstacles. This in turn meant that directors needed to engage with District Education Offices, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders on a weekly basis to ensure that progress was being made. UNICEF’s RapidPro SMS system was then used to gather monthly performance data from schools to identify issues and blockages which the minister and president could then seek to resolve.

The Delivery Approach and Education Sector Plans

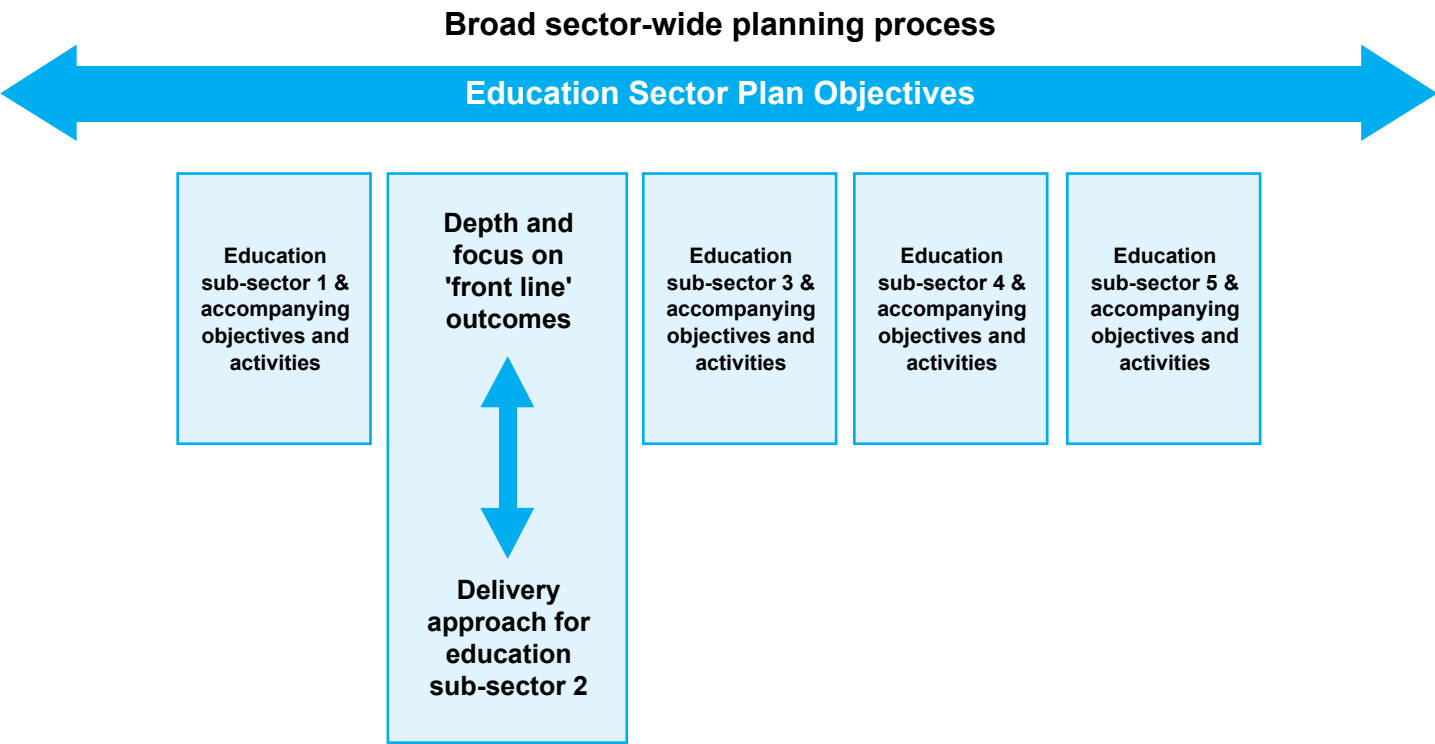
There are strong linkages and complementarities between the Delivery Approach and wider Education Sector Planning approaches. It can be helpful to see the Education Sector Plan (ESP) as an overall framework for educational improvement whereas the Delivery Approach involves a set of specific tools and a focussed accountability approach which can be used to deliver results within the ESP framework. It is important from the start of the planning process to recognize the synergies of aligning the two, rather than viewing them as separate or parallel processes.

An ESP is a comprehensive medium-term planning document which sets out the full range of initiatives, goals and objectives which countries want to achieve, linked to international commitments. These initiatives are costed and linked inextricably with the budget and planning process. One of the possible drawbacks of ESPs is that, by their nature, they can be both incremental in approach (rather than setting out a radical transformation plan) and all-encompassing in nature (covering all aspects of the education system in such a comprehensive manner that it is not clear what are truly government priorities or what hard choices or trade-offs will be made to adequately resource and achieve these priorities).

By contrast, the Delivery Approach focusses on a small number of key priorities within an identified sub-sector of the education system. It therefore has an exclusive rather than an inclusive focus and operates to a short-term timescale: aiming to bring about meaningful and measurable results over a period of months (up to a maximum of three years). It has a very explicit focus on transformational change in delivery and working culture to address areas of underperformance in the education system. The potential drawbacks of this approach are the possible loss of focus on non-priority (but still essential) areas of the education system, a concentration on short-term, easily measurable results and the possible generation of new sets of activities without an adequate financing or resourcing plan.

The T-shaped diagram below illustrates how an alignment of ESPs with the Delivery Approach can help to ensure that countries benefit from the advantages of both approaches. In essence, such an alignment entails placing a transformational set of culture-change activities within a broader, comprehensive and fully-costed ESP. Sierra Leone provides a good example of a country which attempted to align the Delivery Approach with its Global Partnership for Education (GPE) application and Education Sector Planning process in 2017.

Figure 3: The Delivery Approach in Education Sector Planning



⁵ “It [the Delivery Unit] would focus like a laser on an issue, draw up a plan to resolve it working with the department concerned, and then performance-manage it to solution. It would get first-class data which it would use for stocktakes that I took personally with the minister, their key staff and mine, every month or so.” Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister from 1997 to 2007, writing in his autobiography ‘A Journey’ in 2010.

⁶ Andrews, Pritchett & Woolcock, (2012) explain how countries can fall victim to ‘capability traps’ when they practice ‘isomorphic mimicry’ (deliberately imitating the external appearance or characteristics of best-practice structures without any intention of achieving their stated purpose) by introducing reforms which enhance an organisation or agency’s external legitimacy without improving performance.

Applying the Delivery Approach in education

In **Sierra Leone**, the President’s Recovery Priorities (2015-17) were overseen by the President’s Delivery Team and proved successful at delivering on several basic building blocks for the education system, including classroom construction, production and dissemination of lesson plans to all primary and junior secondary schools, completion of a national payroll verification exercise and the introduction of a national school feeding programme. The programme was led by the government but involved multiple stakeholders, including UNICEF and several NGOs (Education Commission, 2017).

Given the depth and focus that the Delivery Approach can bring, many ministries of education have established Delivery Units as part of their application of the Delivery Approach principles to education.⁷ Such units can add real value in driving change but they should not be adopted just for the sake of having one.⁸ Any reform which starts with a focus on structures rather than purpose and objectives is at risk of creating parallel processes which may ultimately be counter-productive. There are as many (if not more) examples of failed Delivery Units as there are of successful ones.

What is important, though, is ensuring that the priorities selected and the data collection methods are congruent with the country’s state of educational development. During the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, the focus of the Delivery Approach was on ensuring that the basic provisions for an effective education system were put in place: classrooms constructed, lesson plans available in every school, a teacher payroll which reflected reality, etc. In many ways, the Delivery Approach, with its focus on rapid data collection and measurable priorities, lends itself to measuring simpler, more tangible results.

In Punjab, Pakistan, the initial focus of the Delivery Approach was on ensuring that teachers were present in schools, that basic infrastructure was in place and that pupils were attending. Once this had achieved results and the system was responding well to the new accountability processes and mechanisms, the Delivery Approach was extended to focus on improving early-grade learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. There was a natural evolution to this process. If the Delivery Approach had been used to focus on learning outcomes before addressing these more basic issues, it would have failed.

In **Punjab** the Education Reform Roadmap commenced in late 2010, led by the Chief Minister and with an initial focus on teacher attendance, student attendance, provision of school facilities and monitoring visits to schools. Bi-monthly stocktakes chaired by the Chief Minister made effective use of real-time performance monitoring through ‘heat maps’ to drive accountability and behaviour change. The Approach has subsequently focused on improving Primary Grade 3 literacy and numeracy outcomes. By 2018, this has started to yield tangible results and Punjab is the only province in Pakistan where public schools have narrowed the performance gap against their private counterparts (Jhagra, 2018).

Likewise, in country contexts where capacity and capability are more developed, a less prescriptive approach to change can be taken, with the Delivery Approach being used to set and monitor objectives and targets which local government units (and schools in some cases) then have the freedom to apply their local ingenuity to in order to achieve them. Recent studies have shown that this approach played an important role in promoting economic growth and development in China over the past two decades.⁹

The Delivery Approach can play a role in addressing equity and targeting the most marginalized children, but this has to be an explicit priority and focus. Setting targets related to equitable access and using the Delivery Approach to identify barriers and improve performance can be successful. However, if targets are set without paying explicit attention to equity issues, there will be a danger that results may be achieved by disregarding marginalized groups and inadvertently widening inequalities.

In **Tanzania** Big Results Now! (BRN!) was introduced in early 2013 to deliver transformational change in the education sector through a set of nine activities aimed at increasing resource flows to schools, and at improving pass rates and attainment levels in the early grades in reading, writing and arithmetic. An Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) showed that the proportion of Standard 3 students classed as ‘non-readers’ declined from 28% to 16%, whilst the proportion of students classed as ‘progressing readers’ increased from 22% to 31% between 2013 and 2016 whilst, from late 2015, there were significant improvements in the regularity and size of financial flows to schools (Todd and Attfield, 2017).



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⁷ Examples include Ghana, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, UK and USA. In a number of these countries (notably Ghana and Uganda), the Ministerial Delivery Units have just recently been established.
⁸ The World Bank has written a useful paper which contains a checklist for countries to decide whether a Delivery Unit is necessary to oversee successful implementation: Shostak, R. et al., When Might the Introduction of a Delivery Unit be the Right Intervention? 2014.

⁹ Ang, Y.-Y., How China Escaped the Poverty Trap, 2017.

Potential Drawbacks of the Delivery Approach

It is important to recognize that adopting the Delivery Approach and establishing structures such as Delivery Units may have negative as well as positive consequences for national education systems. The Delivery Approach is not a ‘magic bullet’ or a panacea for education system problems. Possible negative consequences of adopting the Delivery Approach include:

- There may not be genuine political commitment, and the establishment of a Delivery Unit may actually be an example of ‘isomorphic mimicry’. Isomorphic mimicry is where governments establish best practice structures to tackle delivery issues, but underlying incentives or ways of working remain unchanged. Establishing new structures is almost always easier than tackling entrenched and intransigent delivery issues.
- The introduction of a Delivery Unit and a new delivery plan may create parallel structures, systems and processes. Rapid data gathering systems which are established purely for the purposes of monitoring performance against new targets can undermine existing systems. There is a danger that this will ultimately reduce the accountability and pressure on existing structures to report and monitor progress.
- The danger of concentrating on structure rather than substance. When introducing the Delivery Approach, it is important to focus on the interface between services and citizens and then work backwards to look at the most appropriate structures and processes required to support this interaction and unblock obstacles to delivery. Some education systems will be centralized and require significant central intervention to address issues, whereas others may be more decentralized and require different types of support.
- Target-setting has been proven to be an effective means of stimulating performance improvements. It is important to note, however, that any new target runs the risk of creating perverse incentives and being subject to gaming. It is very important, therefore, to think through the potential unintended consequences of targets before introducing them. As an example, in Tanzania, the primary and secondary examination targets for Big Results Now!¹⁰ were expressed as a pass rate percentage. This involves two numbers – the number of students sitting the exam and the number of students passing the exam – and is therefore open to gaming. Introducing linked targets and performance measures can be one way of reducing the potential for perverse incentives and gaming.
- On occasion, the Delivery Approach can focus on the easily measurable rather than the genuinely important. The Delivery Approach can play an important role in transforming public sector culture to focus much more on results and impacts. This can lead to strengthened systems and improved results. However, it is important to recognize that focussing on short-term, measurable changes could run the risk of overlooking more substantive issues which would take longer to address. Viewing the education sector through a succession of short-term improvement plans can potentially relegate longer-term issues to secondary importance.



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What could UNICEF’s role be in applying the Delivery Approach?

UNICEF is an influential body which has strong relationships with ministries of education across multiple countries. UNICEF Education Specialists can play an important role in assisting countries to apply the Delivery Approach, where the conditions are appropriate, by:

- Identifying those countries where there is genuine high-level political commitment to achieving improved educational outcomes and working with ministers and senior officials to raise their awareness of the Delivery Approach.
- Encouraging countries to consider which activities within their ESP can be prioritized and used to trial an application of the Delivery Approach. Achieving success in one specific area can be very influential in encouraging a culture of positivity where officials and the public believe that genuine change is possible.
- Providing capacity building support and expert advice to those countries that wish to apply the Delivery Approach

The Delivery Approach, therefore, can provide a useful set of tools and techniques which UNICEF country offices can utilize to improve focussed educational outcomes within their specific country contexts.



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¹⁰ This was a programme that brought the Delivery Approach to seven ministries in government.

In summary

In returning to the list of challenges that education system actors face across ESA, this think piece has demonstrated how the Delivery Approach may help to address them:

Challenges	How the Delivery Approach addresses these challenges
The issue of lack of clarity as to the practical steps needed to turn national policy commitments into tangible outcomes.	Focussing on a specific set of priorities and drawing up a detailed delivery plan based on a solid understanding and analysis of issues.
Lack of joined-up working at national level: policy priorities falling across or between various councils, boards or agencies with unclear accountability for results.	Establishing performance monitoring and oversight structures drawing upon the reflected authority of the senior system leader.
The national level challenge of ensuring the quality of service delivery when responsibility is devolved to local level. If results are poor in a local area, it is still often the national government which gets the blame for this.	Instituting quality performance management and data systems through the collection of regular information on a small number of priorities. This information is then used to hold local authorities to account for results.
Focus across government on process and procedures, rather than on outcomes with little sense of urgency to make a positive difference within schools.	A sense of urgency is instilled through performance monitoring arrangements which involve regular progress updates and reports. Data and metrics focus on meaningful activities which lead to improved outcomes.
A lack of sufficient human and financial resources throughout the system and a general sense of acceptance that these constraints mean that policy goals will never be achieved.	Focussing on a small number of priorities allows for targeted capacity building for those individuals working in these areas. These people can then become champions for wider culture change within the education system.
Lack of local-level understanding of national commitments means that intended results are never realized. Lack of local-level understanding of national commitments means that intended results are never realized.	Communications and stakeholder engagement is key to successful implementation of the Delivery Approach as is ensuring that there is accountability throughout the education system.
Lack of understanding at the centre of government as to ‘what good looks like’ at an institutional level (school, college, etc.) where services are actually delivered and a lack of awareness of the constraints faced by front-line professionals in delivering these services.	The process of understanding delivery issues and blockages will involve stakeholders from across the system, from national down to school level. This links the centre of government to real issues at local level. Data and metrics can then be used to make targeted and impactful front-line visits to further strengthen understanding.



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Further reading

1. Barber, M., [The origins and practice of delivery](#). McKinsey Voices on Society Vol.5, The Art and Science of Delivery, 2013.
2. Gonzalez Asiz, M. & Woolcock, M., [Operationalising the Science of Delivery Agenda to Enhance Development Results](#), World Bank Group, 2015.
3. Hymowitz, D., [Too much science, not enough art](#), Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative, 2016.
4. Shostak, R. et al., [When Might the Introduction of a Delivery Unit be the Right Intervention?](#), 2014.
5. Todd R. & Attfield, I., [Big Results Now! in Tanzanian Education: Has the Delivery Approach delivered?](#) 2017.
6. Todd, R.; Martin, J. & Brock, A., [Delivery Units: can they catalyse sustained improvements in education service delivery?](#), 2014.
7. World Bank Group, [Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa](#), 2018.
8. World Bank Group, [GET Note: Center of Government Delivery Units](#), 2010.

List of Acronyms

BRN!	Big Results Now
AGI	Africa Governance Initiative
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PMDU	Prime Ministerial Delivery Unit



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Mark Smith has worked on school improvement both in the UK and overseas for the last 20 years. In the UK, he has worked for two Local Authorities advising schools on literacy improvement, inclusive education and general school improvement. He has implemented projects in Ethiopia and Uganda with focus on disability, school improvement and literacy.

The challenge of inclusion for children with disabilities – experiences of implementation in Eastern and Southern Africa

By Emma Sarton and Mark Smith

Despite the fact that the right to education for all is enshrined in myriad national and international treaties¹, there are still challenges for children with disabilities² with regard to accessing education, being socially included in education and experiencing quality education. UNESCO identifies the disability prevalence rate in populations to be between 10 and 16 per cent³, yet the reported number of children with disabilities in schools is much lower (e.g. 1.79 per cent of total school enrolment in Uganda, 1.1 per cent in Rwanda and 0.7 per cent in Ethiopia). This indicates that a large number of children with disabilities are not in school⁴, or if they are, they are unidentified within current school populations.

Moreover, this gap in enrolment widens as boys and girls with disabilities progress through educational phases, highlighting the fact that serious attention is needed to 'ensure learning opportunities for all' (Sustainable Development Goal 4 or SDG 4). In addition to these gaps, there is also a lack of research into what works in inclusive education in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA).⁵

Given the deficiencies in education provision for children with disabilities, the financial and human resource constraints present in many countries, and the unclear discourse surrounding the definition and scope of inclusive education, this Think Piece will present a practical and pragmatic approach to increasing inclusion for both boys and girls with disabilities⁶.

What do we mean by *inclusive education* and *disability*?

It is worth defining what is meant by 'inclusive education' and 'disability' as there are many facets to discussions in this arena and language is often used interchangeably. The authors use 'inclusive education' to mean education that does not exclude anyone – be it on grounds of disability, language, gender, class, ethnicity or any other barrier that prevents a child from accessing, participating and engaging in education and the benefits thereof. The Wave Model detailed in figure 1 is used to promote inclusive education and can be used effectively to reduce any barriers that children may face; however, it has been tailored for this Think Piece to specifically address disability.

'Disability' refers to how children experience barriers to education through the environment disabling them. We do not define the various forms of disability but do recognise that there is a broad spectrum of disability from severe and profound difficulties to largely hidden, high-functioning difficulties. The Wave Model responds to this spectrum through generating graduated changes in how schools and classrooms are organised and function so as to address specific needs and have positive impacts for all children.

The impetus for this Think Piece has come from a growing despair of the rhetoric around disability at policy and national levels, where discussion is characterized by deadlock, misunderstanding and disagreement, and aspiration is set against reality; meanwhile the numbers of children with disabilities learning remain shockingly low and the prospect for increasing them can appear distant.

This Think Piece starts by identifying three tensions within the inclusion debate that inhibit and constrain the journey towards more inclusive schools and better educational experiences for disabled children. It then moves on to provide a practical model that aims to reduce these tensions and that teachers, schools and ministries of education can use to create more inclusive education opportunities. The Think Piece will conclude with a summary of the implications for the model at different levels within the education system.

Tensions within the inclusion debate

Three forms of tension exist that prevent coherent inclusion policies from being created and implemented on a school level in many countries in ESA:

1. Aspiration rather than action:

Most countries around the world are legally obliged to provide inclusive education as a result of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994), and 162 countries have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), effectively tying inclusive education to the Education for All agenda. These commitments not only include the right of all children to attend a regular or mainstream school but also to access a 'child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting [their] needs'.⁷ Nevertheless, despite the clear legal imperative, more than 20 years after the Salamanca Statement, in most parts of ESA inclusive education is legislated rather than planned for.

2. Theoretical versus practical

Another element that prevents inclusive education policies from being designed and implemented is the theoretical discourse that frames inclusion and people's attitudes toward disability. While the authors are not suggesting that discussion on theoretical models (i.e. medical model versus social models of disability) is not important, the discussion itself prevents a move towards implementing practical applications which result in educational change today. The medical model sees disability as an issue relating to the child and not the environment in which they are in, which results in a deficit approach towards disability and inclusion. The persuasion and re-education of those who see disability in medical terms takes time at the expense of the education of children with disabilities. The question that needs to be addressed is not whether to include children, but how to do it effectively and in a timely fashion.

3. Lack of cohesion

The term disability covers a multitude of different needs which can vary enormously from a child with a mild hearing impairment to a child with cerebral palsy and complex needs. This gives rise to many groups who lobby for specific and unique interests, the unintended consequences of which can be that the design of inclusive education policy becomes a lengthy process and that policy implementation is delayed. There is a real need to find a mechanism where various groups can come together effectively, without the need to compete, in order to collectively create and influence policy.

¹ Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994), The Jomtien Conference for Education for All (1990), Dakar Framework for Action on EFA (2000), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Incheon Declaration at World Education Forum (2015) and General Comment #4 on the CRPD (2016).

² There is a debate around language that is ongoing. Many organisations use 'CwD' but 'disabled children' is preferred by others (see Khochen 2017, <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1538596/>). For the purposes of this Think Piece, CwD will be used in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

³ However, it is worth noting that there are four levels of disability commonly used according to difficulty and the top two categories (moderate and severe) comprise 5.1 per cent of children (WHO 2011) who in many cases are not in school.

⁴ UNESCO 2012 Position paper on education for children with disabilities - https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/UNICEF_Right_to_Education_Children_Disabilities_En_Web.pdf. For the purposes of this Think Piece inclusive education explicitly refers to disability-inclusive education.

⁵ This is based on the authors' extensive experience in conducting evaluations of education and in disability programming into inclusive education provision and best practice; as well as in developing and implementing education programmes in ESA, primarily in inclusive education and literacy.

⁷ UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education viii.

Reducing tensions and improving good practice in inclusive education

The tensions outlined above often mean that debates around how to improve inclusive education provision are characterized by deadlock and do not progress beyond trying to resolve said tensions. This can make the prospect of improving inclusive education provision daunting and can make it hard to even identify where to begin. The authors have used a ‘Wave Model’ in inclusive education programming and research as a response to these tensions and the barriers which are created. The Wave Model was developed in the UK⁸ and reflected the challenge schools were facing in meeting the different needs of children with disabilities. The Wave Model proposed a **graduated response** in which the child was at the centre. The response started with the **universal** (i.e. what was available for all), to then move to the **targetted** (the additional support that children needed to access the universal) and on to the **specialist** (highly tailored intervention to support children reach their potential).

When the authors observed practice in ESA, they saw little evidence of this graduated response.⁹ Instead, most commonly, an ad hoc approach was observed, usually categorized by a ‘universal offer’ with children with disabilities expected to fit into what was available for all, and then by a specialist approach for a select number of children with disabilities, when often a more targetted approach would have better met their need in a more cost-effective manner. This led the authors to develop a pragmatic approach to inclusive education using the Wave Model to provide an accessible framework for ministries of education and practitioners to use in order to plan practical steps for inclusive education implementation.

It starts with a first wave of strategies which focus on mainstream classrooms and are predicated on the understanding that educating children with disabilities can first be done by improving teaching and learning for all children. Generally speaking, there is agreement that effective teaching for children with disabilities is the same as effective teaching for all.¹⁰ Thus, this first wave focuses on the majority of mainstream teachers and aims to dispel the common assumption that teaching boys and girls with disabilities requires extra disability training and skills. To support inclusive education, the role of the classroom teacher is to deliver high quality teaching: doing this will benefit all learners including children with disabilities and children with special needs.

Wave 2 of the model recognizes that children with disabilities have the potential to work at and above their peers, but to do so they will need direct intervention which is time-specific. Wave 2 strategies are not to be seen as sequential to Wave 1; rather they run in parallel and are primarily in place to support children in accessing the mainstream quality teaching implemented in Wave 1.

Finally, Wave 3 interventions recognize that some specific complex impairments make it impossible for learners to achieve at the same rate as their non-disabled peers and that, as a result, different provision is needed. This is where more specialist strategies come into play, albeit for a smaller number of children who have severe disabilities.

Figure 1 outlines the Wave Model and also offers inclusive education strategies that can work in parallel. The strategies are not necessarily new, however, they are re-framed in a way that allows ministries to identify what they have already achieved, and what pragmatic steps need to be taken to support all forms of disability. Most education ministries have, in some way, shape or form, implemented strategies found in all three of these waves. However, many inclusive education interventions only focus on highly specialized Wave 3 strategies or attempt to implement targetted Wave 2 strategies without first achieving some of the quick-win actions that make mainstream teaching more inclusive.





Figure 1: The Wave Model of intervention



⁸ The Wave Model was taken from the UK National Strategies: ‘Leading on Intervention’ (2006) accessed: <http://www.complextneeds.org.uk/modules/Module-1.2-The-legislative-context-edition-2/All/downloads/m02p062b/leading-on-intervention-dfe.pdf>
⁹ This is documented in ‘Inclusive Education in Uganda: Examples of Best Practice’ accessed: <http://afri-can.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Inclusive-Education-in-Uganda-examples-of-best-practice-March-2017..pdf>
¹⁰ Norwich, B. and Lewis, A., Mapping a Pedagogy for Special Educational Needs, British Educational Research Journal, 27, 2001, pp. 313-329.

The Wave Model in practice

Wave 1



Wave 1 is about what should be on offer for all children: the effective inclusion of all pupils in high-quality everyday teaching in mainstream classrooms. Wave 1 seeks to capitalize on relatively simple 'wins' which would significantly improve the teaching and learning process.

Key change makers: These are the classroom teachers who become the focus of any programming/intervention – often in the form of training.

Without doubt, two significant challenges in an ESA context are the large class sizes (in some cases of 100 plus) and limited resources (often just a blackboard). However, the key issue is not the quality of teaching of children with disabilities but the quality of teaching of all children.

- The authors' work in Uganda¹¹ found that:
- The vast majority of lessons observed are teacher-led lessons where the teacher either lectured or asked questions which children would answer through raising their hand (meaning only one child at a time participated).
 - In only some lessons do teachers use learning aids (a pre-prepared resource) other than the blackboard and in far fewer lessons are learners using learning aids.
 - Generally, very few classrooms have displays on the walls and when displays were present, they were not related to the curriculum or lessons.



1. **Increased group work/child to child work:**
- This is when the teacher gives the learner the opportunity to work in groups or pairs in the lesson. The teacher asks a question and, before collecting responses, asks the students to turn to the person sitting next to them and share their answer. This is vital: it allows all children to answer the question instead of just one, less able children have learnt from more able and less confident children have had the opportunity to orally rehearse their answer. Once this is done, the pupils can raise their hands and share their answer with the rest of the class.

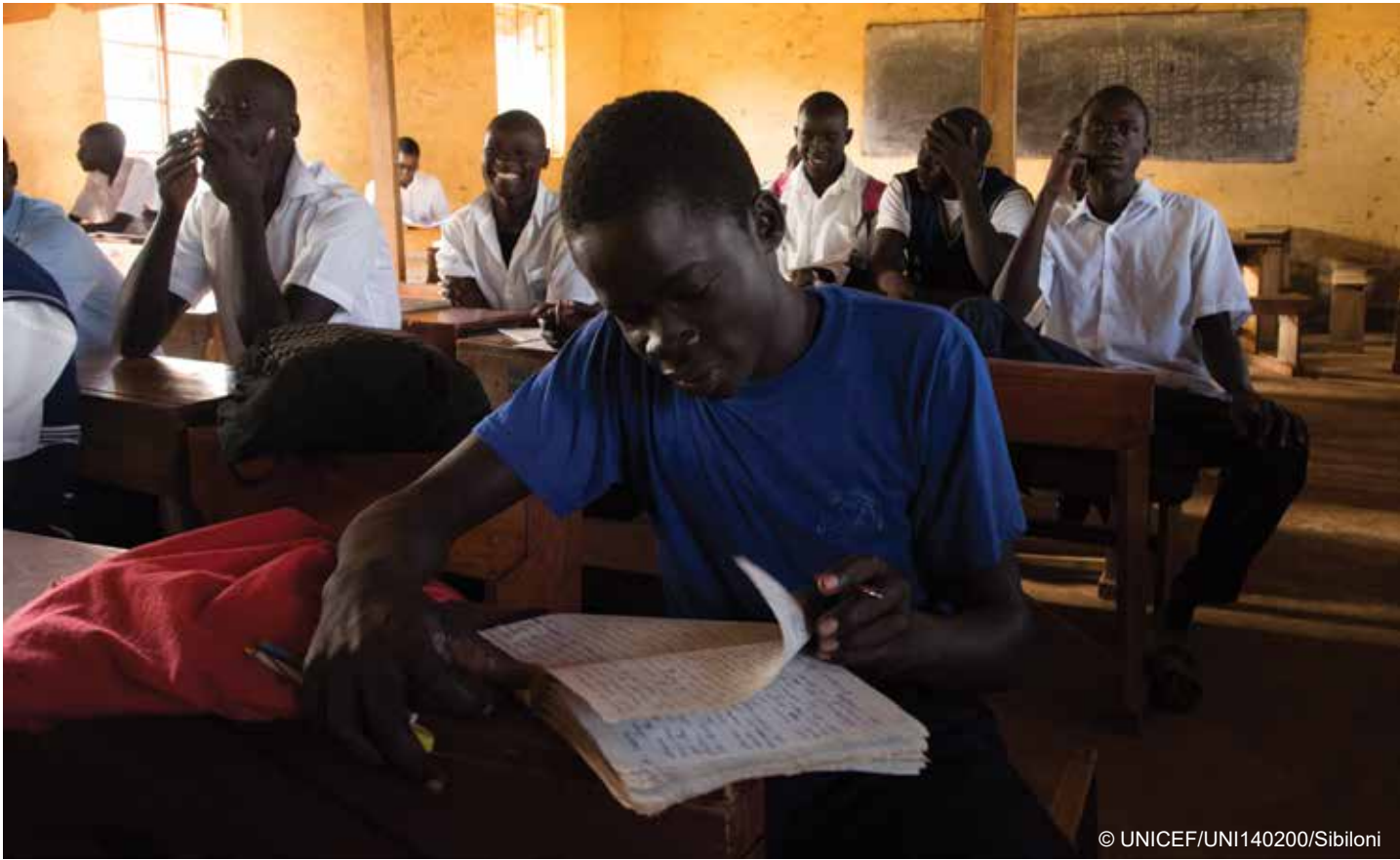
Similarly, an effective teaching process most often observed was when the teacher modelled how to answer questions and then encouraged the students to do the same independently. A collaborative element can be introduced between these stages in which the students start by answering the questions together (in pairs or in small groups) before they go on to work independently. Many pupils will still not fully understand and when they do follow up exercises independently, they make mistakes. By asking children to do things together orally, the stronger pupils will support the weaker pupils. This is vital in particular for children with special needs.

In addition, group work fosters social inclusion and builds a welcoming ethos. For example, in a rural school in Uganda where a significant amount of group work was observed, children with disabilities were integrated in friendship groups and playing together with their non-disabled peers during break and lunch times.

2. **Improved use of learning aids made out of locally available resources:**
- In the vast majority of lessons, the absence of learning aids results in learning being abstract. Where learning aids are used, they support learners in gaining a more concrete understanding of the concepts and enable the vast majority of children (including those with special needs) to access the learning objectives. Examples observed include the use of counting sticks in mathematics to support an understanding of basic operations, and the use of bottle lines (see photos below) to model the blending together of sounds to support reading.

Non-specialized materials can further support children with disabilities. For example, mini-blackboards allowed a teacher to give a spelling test to all the children in their class. The visually impaired children orally spelt their answer to a supportive buddy who then wrote their answer for them on a mini-blackboard, allowing the teacher to assess if the visually impaired children knew the answers.

From the authors' observations, much work on disability both at a national and non-governmental organisation (NGO) programme level focuses on enabling children to access school and not on the quality of the learning. Teachers often express reservations around inclusive education primarily because they believe they do not have the necessary skills to teach children with disabilities. Underlying this is the assumption that boys and girls with disabilities need 'something different' in the classroom. Sometimes disability programmes actually exaggerate and exacerbate this assumption further by training classroom teachers in Wave 2 interventions, such as the use of sign language or braille. This is, in the authors' opinion, not the role of the mainstream classroom teacher. To support inclusive education, the role of the classroom teacher is to deliver high quality teaching: doing this will benefit all learners, including children with disabilities and children with special needs.



¹¹ This is documented in 'Inclusive Education in Uganda: Examples of Best Practice', accessed: <http://afri-can.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Inclusive-Education-in-Uganda-examples-of-best-practice-March-2017..pdf>

Wave 2



Wave 2 recognizes that disabled children have the potential to work at and above the age-related expectations of their peers, but to do so they will need a direct intervention which is time-specific. It also runs alongside Wave 1.



Key change makers: These are individual schools (primarily the headteacher and if available SEND teacher), sometimes working in partnership with NGOs or district level education offices

It is possible in an ESA context to subdivide these further into interventions that support **access** (getting children with disabilities into school), **engagement** (keeping children with disabilities in school rather than letting them drop out) and **quality** (enabling children with disabilities to learn at or above the age-related expectations of their peers).

Improving access

1. Use of data in schools and nationally:

At school level, use of data allows headteachers to effectively target groups of children and track progress. At national level, an exploration of data allows investigation into issues around disability both scale and geography and subsequently target gaps. Key points learnt through the examination of national data were:¹²

- i. 'Missing children': In Uganda (2015 data), children with disabilities enrolled into school made up 1.79 per cent of total enrolment in primary school with a prevalence rate of 13 per cent.¹³ This would imply that there are approximately 925,000 children with disabilities 'missing', either because the children are not accessing school or because they are accessing school but are not identified as disabled. The reality would be a mixture of both.
- ii. Variation with disability groups: National data would indicate that certain groups find it harder to access school, e.g. children with multiple impairments, or females with physical/multiple impairments or learning difficulties. Geographical differences also exist: poorer, more marginalized areas have a lower rate of access to school than other areas. Programming and interventions should at least be aware of this for monitoring purposes and should target specific vulnerable groups. National data in many contexts has also shown a gap between primary and secondary education and that transition is not occurring for children with disabilities.¹⁴

At a national level, understanding the gaps in data can improve access, as identifying those children that cannot even access education can lead to targeted interventions which get them into school, in addition to identifying children with disabilities already in school. There are clear limitations to these data sets and

exploring where children with disabilities are located has largely been restricted to identifying obvious disability. However, the process of identification has received an increased focus through the use of tools such as the Child Functioning Module¹⁵ not only capturing a wider range of disability/functioning but also variation in severity allowing much 'hidden' disability to be identified.

2. Working with parents:

A common perception is that parents' and communities' negative attitudes inhibit children with disabilities from attending school. However, during the course of the authors' work, an alternative view of parents emerged: parents of boys and girls with disabilities want their children to attend school but feel that they will suffer from bullying by other students and staff and, in addition, that the school will not be able to provide the level of care/education that their child needs. This feeling by the parents of the child being better off/safer at home is not reflected in much of the literature, and programming will often have many sensitization elements aimed at persuading parents to change their attitudes rather than listening to their concerns.

In many contexts, the authors found a link between the presence of an active Parent Support Group (PSG)¹⁶ and increasing numbers of children with disabilities in school. Examples of best practice included PSGs that conducted community visits in order to encourage other parents to enrol their children into school or follow up on drop out. Particularly successful examples also included income generation activities which were often done through the setting up of a Voluntary Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) to support parents. Through this, parents save on a monthly basis and can subsequently borrow money from the savings pot. Parents highlighted how the VSLA enabled them to cover certain pinch points in their economic situation, which otherwise might have necessitated the removal of their child from school.¹⁷

3. Improved identification of disabled children in school:

When schools are trained and resourced to begin the process of carrying out screening of their students in order to identify children with disabilities (for example, basic hearing and eye screening and those traditionally labelled as slow learners who may have a cognitive disability or development delay), there is the potential to significantly increase the amount of identified disability in schools.

An example from a project in Ethiopia: Trained a lead teacher and headteacher in each of 123 schools in carrying out screening and improved identification. On average, an additional 18 children were identified per school, and across the project the proportion of children with disabilities rose from 0.7 per cent to 3.5 per cent which exceeded the government target of 2.7 per cent.

In some areas, there is partnership between education and health services which enables children who are identified as disabled in hospitals to be referred by the hospital to a school, if currently out of education. Where this happens schools report much higher percentages of children with disabilities accessing and attending school. Going beyond a simple yes/no classification by using a functional difficulties model will further enhance school data sets and also enable teachers to make a more detailed choice of Wave 2 and 3 interventions.



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Improving Engagement/Ethos

A visibly welcoming, inclusive ethos has traditionally been facilitated through sensitization and awareness training that NGOs build into programming. While important in some cases, the authors do not believe that it drives changes in attitudes towards disability. One of the most striking pieces of learning is that the strongest advocate for inclusion comes from the physical presence of children with disabilities in educational settings. Both teachers and children without disabilities report that their notions of what people can and cannot do were challenged. Many teachers that the authors have interviewed felt that before they had taught a child with disabilities in their classroom, it was somehow impossible to do so, and that they lacked training, skills and confidence. In many instances, they also believed that the presence of boys and girls with disabilities would lower the standards of achievement in their classrooms. Additionally, the vast majority of teachers teaching in an inclusive setting felt that inclusive schools were the best option for children with disabilities. This was further strengthened when clear and strong leadership driving an inclusive ethos was present.

1. Signage and making the physical environment more accessible for disabled children:

Despite finance being a barrier, there are easy-to-implement and cost-effective adaptations that can be made.¹⁸ Many Disability Persons Organisations (DPOs) when consulted on how to make more schools accessible reported that it should be law to only build accessible classrooms, e.g. when a classroom is built on a slightly raised level, a ramp needs to be constructed rather than stairs. This has no cost implications; it just needs to become usual practice. Signage can have a huge impact on the environment and on raising awareness. Schools which are successful in engaging students will encourage staff and students to design these, making the conversation around the signage the learning.

2. **Setting up of disability clubs:** Disability clubs have proved very successful at strengthening the role of both girls and boys with disabilities and young people in school, to improve their social interaction and facilitate their integration into school. Clubs also carry out disability awareness and prevention activities within the school and community. The most successful ones also carry out income generation activities, with the income being used to support children with disabilities in the school (e.g. to buy pens or textbooks). Examples include the development of a school garden to grow vegetables, the production of fuel-efficient stoves and the provision of animals to fatten and sell.

¹² Ugandan data have been used here but the authors have also investigated national data from Ethiopia and Rwanda with similar results.

¹³ Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Ugandan Population and Housing Census, Fountain Publishers, Uganda, 2005, quoted in United Nations Children's Fund, Uganda Study on CwD Living in Uganda: Situational Analysis of the Rights of CwD in Uganda, UNICEF, 2014

¹⁴ Ugandan data from 2015 showed that, at primary level, enrolment of disabled children was 1.79 per cent of total enrolment, whereas at secondary level, it was 0.6 per cent.

¹⁵ UNICEF has developed the Child Functioning Module (CFM) to support governments to identify children with disabilities through household surveys. Any national statistics office is welcome to adopt the CFM to collect data on children with disabilities

¹⁶ School management committees (SMCs) can also take the same role as PSGs and be equally successful. However, key to the PSG is the fact that in some countries they are seen as more autonomous than SMCs, and that the monies raised and decisions made are not influenced by school management. This can be crucial for trust and transparency between school and community.

¹⁷ E.g., to cover the hidden costs of schools such as uniform and stationary at the start of the academic year, medical or transport costs to support their child to access school or simply seasonal factors such as buying seeds for planting.



¹⁸ For example, the construction of a hand rail to offer support by a pit latrine - see <http://unapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/chapter8.pdf> for example designs and pictures

Improving Quality

Wave 2 interventions around the quality of education directly support the learner to access Wave 1 quality-first teaching. At a basic level, this could be through the provision of an assistive device such as a pair of glasses or a hearing aid to enable a child with a partial impairment to access learning. Partnership with medical services or NGOs is essential for this. For a child who is completely blind, it might be through a braille machine or other ICT support.

Other Wave 2 interventions can involve additional support, for example, the provision of a sign language interpreter in lessons or the organisation of additional tutorials either outside of classroom hours or by withdrawal from some lessons for a specified week.

Wave 3



Wave 3 interventions recognize that some specific complex impairments make it impossible for learners to achieve at the same rate as their non-disabled peers and that as a result a different provision needs to be set up.

Key change makers: These are the government, DEOs and NGOs working in partnership with schools and those responsible for inclusion/special educational needs and disability (SEND) teachers.

There is little doubt that Wave 3 interventions (often in the form of a unit within school to support children with complex learning disabilities) have a vital place in inclusive education. However, there are some pre-requisites for units to work effectively:

- Children accessing them have a cognitive disability, which prevents them accessing mainstream learning. In some cases, children with other disabilities are placed in these units, although these do not support them in reaching their potential.
- Teachers provide a varied curriculum, which is monitored by the headteacher to ensure it is being accessed by children.
- Opportunities are still provided for the children in the unit to integrate with other children, for example through gardening projects, drama or in PE lessons.
- Teachers have an understanding of the next steps in learning for each child. An example where this is happening is a Sense International project in Uganda, which has set up a unit for students who are both deaf and blind in a mainstream school. The Sense International project has developed a curriculum for the deaf/blind, which supports the teacher in identifying next steps for each learner.

Key to the success of Wave 3 inclusion is someone who is responsible for leading on inclusion. However, this is not always a realistic expectation as there is usually a very limited group of teachers qualified in SEND¹⁹, and if schools do have a SEND teacher, they can only carry out a limited number of activities and prefer to support children in their unit. This can mean that the SEND teacher could be seen as a potential barrier to inclusion rather than as a facilitator of inclusion. Research into the role of the SEND teacher by the authors has identified the following as barriers to effective SEND teacher provision:

- The perception amongst SEND teachers can be that their training focused on running a unit rather than being a facilitator of inclusion and that they need to develop this role.
- SEND teachers can be overwhelmed with the huge challenge of supporting a large number of children with disabilities in different year groups. This is particularly the case where there was no targetted planning, no mapping of time and no provision map.²⁰

In order to develop inclusive schools, the SEND teacher needs to be continually assessing the needs of the children with SEND and to manage their timetable to deliver interventions that support them. To equip SEND teachers with the skills to do this may require additional training and support from the headteacher.

Working with local/district level government can help to support the process of developing more inclusive schools and is a good example of effective Wave 3 interventions. For example, in Ethiopia, one project worked with the education office to ensure SEND teachers were released from teaching commitments for three days in a week so that they could support other teachers and schools.

The authors also argue that there is a place in Wave 3 interventions for special schools. The special school sector has been marginalized in the debate around inclusive education as it is seen as redundant in a fully inclusive education system. However, for inclusion to work, the special school sector needs to be engaged and working with mainstream schools for the benefit of children with disabilities, especially in the arena of providing suitable education that is not just vocational but also supports particular kinds of disability. Special schools have a wealth of knowledge and experience that could be shared to make inclusion work better and provide quality education for all and indeed ensure that children are learning in the most suitable setting. Examples of best practice include heads of special schools working with mainstream schools in the same catchment to ensure children can move between them when necessary. The authors have consistently found, when interviewing children with disabilities, that the children themselves were huge advocates of inclusion and much preferred being in the mainstream school. They also highlighted the low academic expectations often found in special schools.²¹

¹⁹ A note on terminology, SEND and SEN are often used interchangeably, the former though makes explicit the inclusion of children with disabilities with educational needs.
²⁰ A provision map is a way to show provision which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the school's curriculum. It provides: an overview of the programmes and interventions used with different groups of pupils and a basis for monitoring the levels of intervention, and their impact on pupil progress.
²¹ A video made by Enable-Ed collating the views of children can be found here https://youtu.be/ckG_K6sQhEM

Conclusion

Inclusion is not a simple one-size-fits-all intervention that can be implemented in schools, rather it is a response to the population that the school serves and interventions are along a continuum. Concepts surrounding progressive universalism are very much present in the Wave Model as schools become progressively more inclusive, enabling all of their school population to achieve. It is clear that schools are working hard to provide inclusive education and there are many examples of this in this Think Piece. However, this model demonstrates that they are largely ad hoc and in isolation from each other. When effective, they are also supported by (or have been initiated by) an NGO working with the school. However, not one example of a school that effectively carried out all three waves of intervention was found.

The implications of the Wave Model vary according to level, and an examination of what can be done at each level is needed to ensure education is inclusive.

1. **At a central level:** The Wave Model allows central governments to link inclusive education with quality of teaching for all (Wave 1) and free up the SEND experts to focus on the Wave 2 and 3 interventions. If Wave 1 quality-first teaching for all was the emphasis, many more children would experience a positive change in the quality of their education. This represents value for money in that it tackles the greatest number of children, there is no specialist pedagogy or equipment to embed in schools and it builds on the capacity of one of the most important elements of the teaching and learning process – the teacher. Moreover, it can be built into existing teacher training provision.
2. **At a district level:** For the Wave Model to work, teachers with responsibility for inclusion and a new way of working in an inclusive setting are needed. District leaders need to ensure that SEND teachers are allocated strategically (ideally one per school or given an itinerant role to support more than one school) and given non-class teaching time to timetable the interventions. The headteacher needs to monitor and support this to ensure that it is happening effectively. Additional training may be needed for SEND teachers in this new way of working and school inspectors will need to monitor this. Also, at this level, the accessibility of schools and infrastructure needs to be monitored and it needs to be ensured that children with disabilities are considered, e.g. by building a rail in any new toilet, or, if a classroom is on a higher ground, by building a slope rather than step.

3. **At a school level:** Much of the above discussion is at a school level. What the Wave Model can do for schools is to provide a roadmap for future interventions. It can show how inclusion is possible and how it can be done. It can also help a school in prioritizing and supporting decisions in relation to spending their SEND budget (where available) or eliciting support from parents/ community and identifying next steps. Furthermore, international partners and NGOs play a critical role in reinforcing, supporting and supplementing central, district and school-level services.
4. **Implications for NGOs:** Alignment between NGO programming is largely missing, and NGOs tend to work on only one of the waves. There is a need for partnership to maximize impact, for example NGOs who are working on Wave 1 quality-first interventions could work in partnership with NGOs with Wave 2 interventions, which would generate a greater holistic change. It would also generate greater efficiencies as it would allow programming to capitalize on the skills, knowledge and presence of others. Value for money is an area that NGOs can potentially work on as disability programming often has high costs per school/individual, which results in a relatively small number of schools being supported. This has significant impact on their potential to scale up across whole districts and across countries. Considering the high numbers of schools, it could be argued that a more cost-efficient model of practice needs to be used, focussing on interventions that have low unit costs.²²
5. **Implications for international partners, especially UNICEF:** There is a clear need for higher level collaboration to support the coordination of efforts to realize the potential of the Wave Model, in particular, for supporting and bringing together partners who specialize in different wave interventions to create a more cohesive model (e.g. those working in access, engagement and quality). In addition, overview and insight at the level of international partners can collate evidence and address some of the tensions outlined at the start of this Think Piece. Generating an evidence base that is accessible and shared among actors from schools to governments can also reveal cost effective interventions that can be scaled up. Lastly, international partners can also champion the learner and keep them at the centre of interventions, resulting in inclusive education for all.

It is clear that, when children with disabilities access educational provision and are engaged meaningfully in this process with quality teaching and learning, their outcomes are enhanced. These are not only academic outcomes but also those relating to socialization, health, future economic potential and cohesive societies. When policy-makers, planners, schools and communities understand differences within the student population, this helps to promote social equity and leads to more inclusive societies.



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Further reading

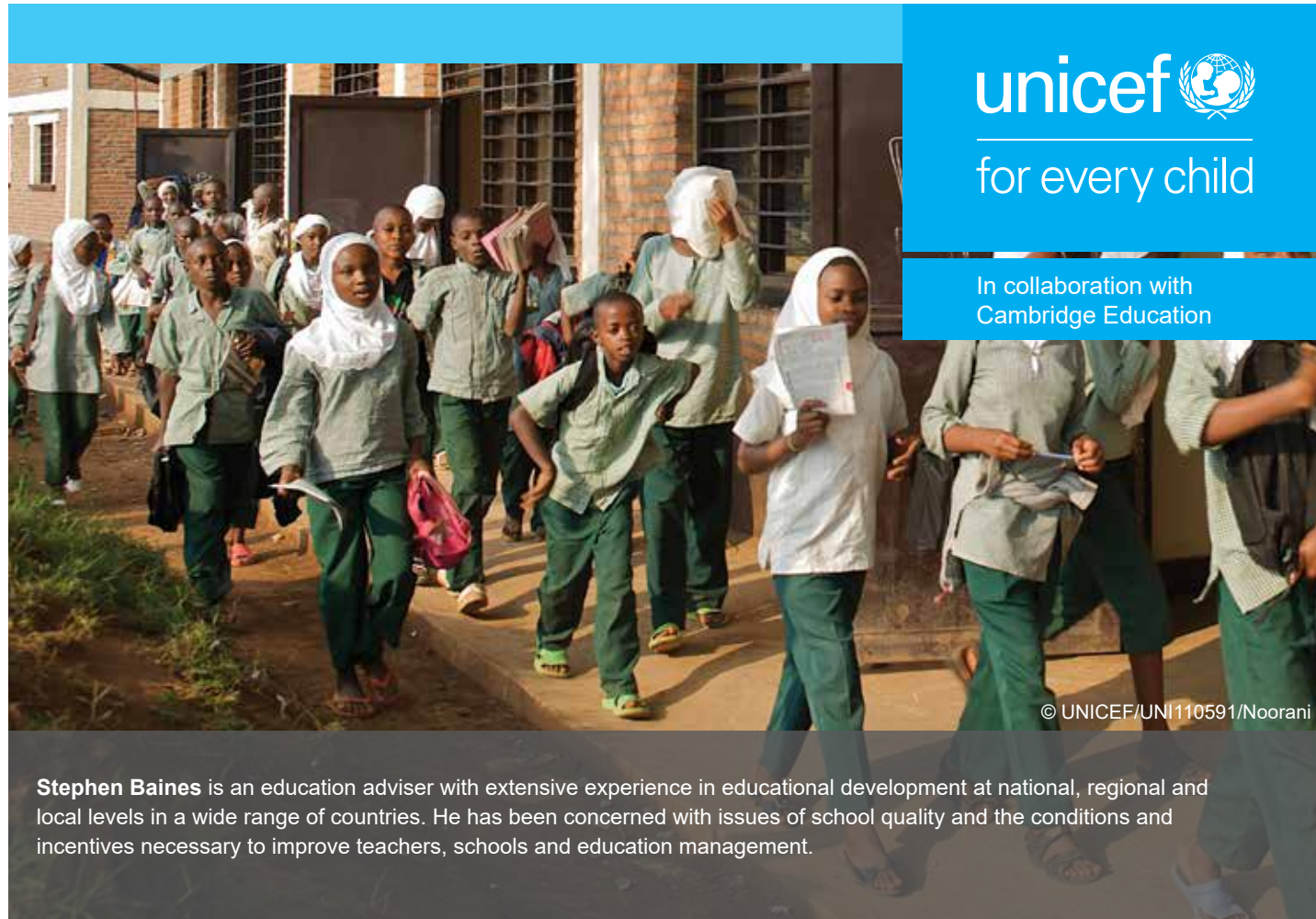
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List of Acronyms

CFM	Child Functioning Model
DEO	District Education Office
DPO	Disability persons organisation
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
PSG	Parent support group
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
SMC	School management committee
VSLA	Village savings and loan association

²² This is not to suggest that all interventions can be low-cost, some require large resource inputs on an individual level.



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A story of matafors and smiles: reflections on school improvement

By Stephen Baines

“Explain the difference between a matafor and a smile”.

This instruction, barely legible on a chalk-covered blackboard, was to occupy a class for much of the morning. The classroom was relatively new, but there was very little furniture and no books for the eighty-five children, who mostly sat on the floor. Their teacher was absent and the classroom unsupervised, although other teachers sat chatting outside. As this was a ‘project school’, the head teacher was away undergoing management training.

The reason this otherwise unremarkable primary school in a corner of Sub-Saharan Africa has stuck in my memory could be because of the eccentricity of the instruction on the blackboard. It could also be because of the absurdity of the task in the context in which few of the children could communicate in English, let alone distinguish misspelt grammatical concepts. However, this single fragment of a school visit seems to typify many of the elements that make school improvement a major challenge.

This Think Piece examines the general challenges exemplified in this single instance. It acknowledges the fundamental problem of raising school standards at scale in resource-poor environments, and recognizes the need to establish consensus on what school improvement means and how this affects the direction of effort and the allocation of resources. Some of the remedies that have been tried in the past have only scratched the surface; they have been too short-term, too diffuse in their objectives, and too aspirational in relation to the resources available to sustain any changes made.

The Think Piece concludes in the hope that integrated approaches to school improvement will be adopted, as much through public pressure as through endogenous government actions, and that these approaches will avoid repeating the ineffective efforts of the past.

A sea of troubles

The scene just described illustrates a number of issues:

- The school was facing rapid enrolment expansion due to migration from rural areas and the successful *education-for-all* policies of the government. Government funding was erratic and did not keep up with enrolments. Most of the available funds were devoted to the payment of salaries and simply maintained an under-performing system.
- Even though the classroom was new, it was overcrowded, lacked furniture and there was no meaningful activity going on. However, the head of the School Management Committee (SMC) was proud of the physical appearance of the school. His view of quality was associated with bricks and mortar.
- The unsupervised classroom was a consequence of teacher absenteeism, linked to low levels of motivation, ineffective management, and a general lack of accountability. As the instruction on the blackboard suggested there were also issues with the teachers’ levels of education. Successive programmes of in-service teacher upgrading had not yet succeeded in compensating for years of under-investment in the teachers’ own education.
- The head teacher’s management training did not appear to have had any practical impact on the daily organisation of the teachers. Nothing in his experience or prior training had prepared him for a leadership role. His promotion had come through length of service. He had very little autonomy, no say in decisions relating to the deployment of teachers, and had a very restricted school budget, over which he had little discretion.
- The school supervisor who accompanied my visit made no comment on the class. Tasked with the role of supporting the school, he saw this role primarily as ensuring administrative compliance on behalf of the local education authority. He visited schools infrequently. He was only able to join me because the agency that funded my visit paid him a transport allowance.
- The school lacked a sense of purpose. Despite participating in a school improvement project, it was difficult to see in what ways the school was getting any better. The tragedy for the children was not only that none of the adults I encountered seemed to recognize what a good school should be, they also failed to appreciate just how bad their school was. Low contact time, lack of stimulation, and low expectations were accepted as the norm.

Identifying ‘good’

School improvement is the process by which schools become more effective, not just in terms of academic outcomes, but in terms of developing the social and cultural wellbeing of the children and adults within the school. It describes conscious efforts to raise school achievements by modifying classroom practices and adapting management arrangements to improve teaching and learning. School improvement is important because schools are a major investment in any country and matter for children’s learning and life chances.

The specific challenges faced by the school in my example are not unusual. Although the particular nature and degree of intensity of the problems may vary, they are indicative of more general challenges that inhibit school improvement everywhere. Much of what we know about school improvement leans heavily on research into school effectiveness in economically developed countries.¹ However, to some degree, schools everywhere face similar challenges. As David Hopkins put it, “raising levels of achievement, enhancing the learning repertoires of students and the creation of powerful learning experiences are educational challenges that are independent of gross domestic product (GDP).”²

The literature on school effectiveness has identified key ingredients in school improvement, which vary as successive research puts more emphasis on different elements of the mix. The conceptual framework developed by Heneveld and Craig³ in 1995 is included here, not because it is the last word on the subject, but because it encapsulates, in a convenient diagrammatic form, most of the aspects affecting the effectiveness of schools.⁴

One of the merits of this model is that it distinguishes between those parts of the mix that are to do with the environment in which the school is situated and those that are within the capability of the school to change. The model recognizes that the nature of the school intake is significant; schools in affluent areas have more advantages over those in poor areas and there is little they can do about this.

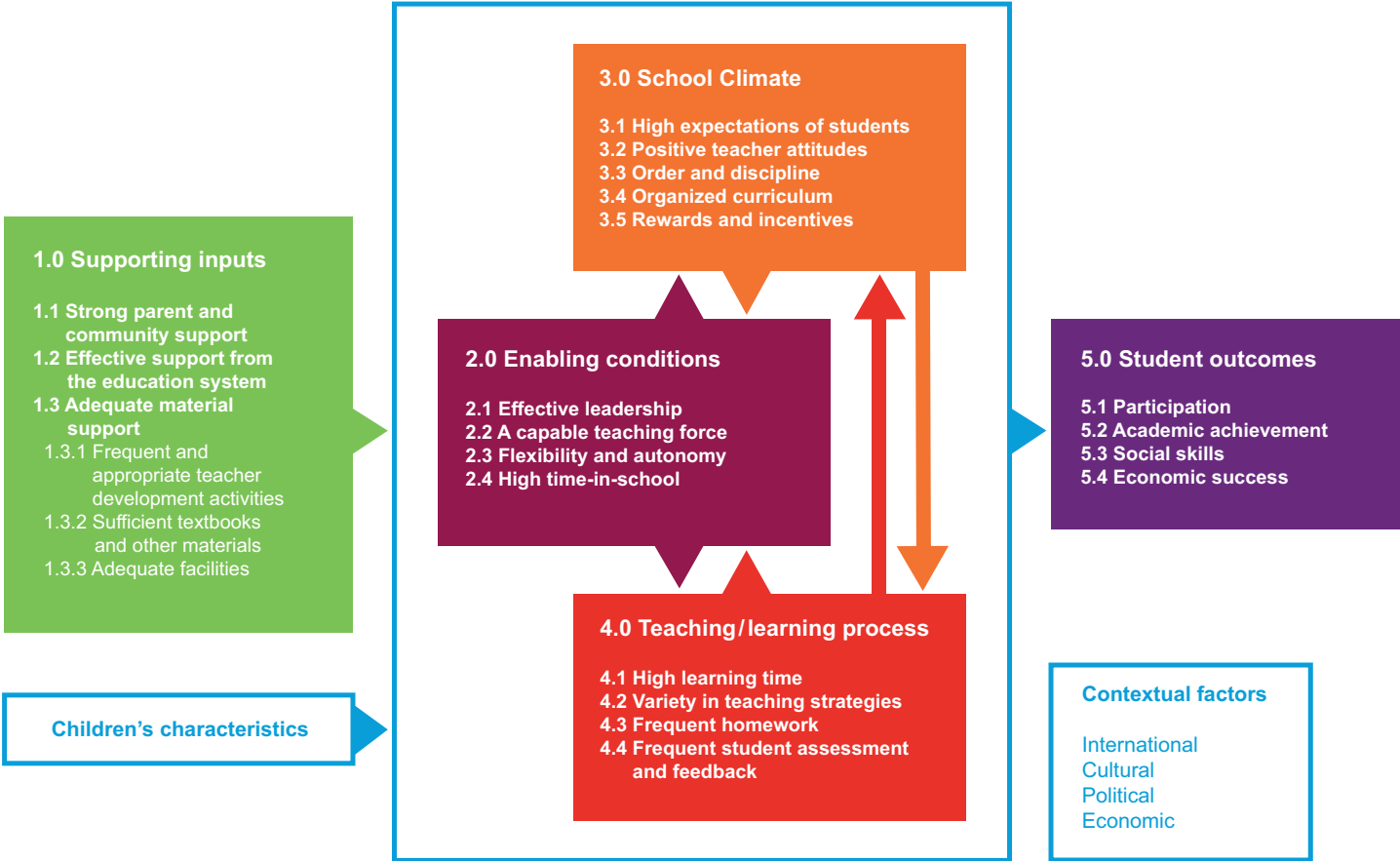
¹ Although the terms school effectiveness, school improvement and higher quality have different meanings, they are used in this Think Piece interchangeably, as they commonly are in normal discourse and in some of the literature.

² Hopkins, D, School Improvement for Real, Educational Change and Development Series, 2001.

³ Heneveld, W and Craig, H, Schools Count: World Bank Project Designs and the Quality of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank Technical Paper No. 303, 1995.

⁴ EdQual Working Paper No. 12 Research evidence of school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2007 gives a useful, if slightly dated, overview of relevant literature.

Conceptual Framework:
Factors that determine school effectiveness



Source: Heneveld and Craig 1995

Resourcing also matters. Decent physical facilities and the availability of teaching and learning materials positively affect the attitudes and receptiveness of pupils, teachers and parents. Poorly resourced, run-down schools can have the opposite effect. However, the level of resourcing is only one amongst many interrelating factors determining school quality. School improvement, which leads to better student outcomes, is a product of both in-school changes and changes in the supporting environment.

In-school changes are to do with the school climate and the enabling framework in which teaching and learning takes place, as well as the process of teaching and learning itself. Becoming 'better' involves creating and maintaining an ethos of expectation and sense of purpose, exercising leadership, promoting teacher quality, and ensuring effective management.

Meanwhile, the supporting environment includes the quality of relations with parents and the community. It also includes the level of support provided by education management institutions and systems at national and sub-national levels, in terms of funding, data management, and administrative and pedagogical support. The idea of developing the 'whole school' and its environment of support networks is a familiar theme and one that informs most school improvement initiatives. UNICEF has encapsulated this in the Child Friendly Schools model.

Heneveld and Craig's (1995) conceptual framework includes the various elements and their interconnections that contribute to school effectiveness. However, the problem with this framework – and other versions subsequently developed in the literature – is that while they can list the ingredients of school improvement, they cannot specify the precise quantities of ingredients necessary, nor identify the relative importance of each. They are lists of ingredients without a recipe. The fact that there are so many ineffective or failing schools suggests that ensuring all the ingredients are available and defining appropriate recipes is not as easy as it sounds.

The difficulty of replicating 'good'

Although it might be difficult to find the right recipe that transforms poor schools to good schools, education authorities can often identify 'model' schools, which are exemplars of dynamic leadership, better financial management, close ties with the community and places where children learn measurably more, in more stimulating and enjoyable ways. Invariably, however, these successes are predicated on a concentration of resources and effort, where clear objectives and multiple coordinated inputs are applied. Much more elusive is the goal of improving schools generally, on a self-sustaining basis and on a scale necessary to cope with challenges of population growth, resource constraints, and the need for higher levels of knowledge and skills in a changing world.

Because school improvement is resource-intensive, requiring clarity of purpose and coordinated effort, it is often subject to diminishing returns. The wider its central messages are disseminated and the thinner available resources and capacity are spread, the weaker are the ensuing benefits. Governments in poor countries face this dilemma. They can accept that scarce resources and limited capacity mean that, to be effective, school improvement strategies have to be restricted in scope or geography and rolled out over a long timescale; or they can dilute the solution and hope for the best.

However, by wanting to do something for everyone, they tend to under-estimate the depth of the problems they are addressing, imagine unrealistic rates of change, or assume unlikely levels of future funding. There are also capacity issues. Education ministries and local authorities are generally better geared to system maintenance, rather than reform. In addition to the difficulties of working at scale, over-ambitious government initiatives are often supported by donors, whose funding cycles are not well suited to the long timescales involved in transforming schools and driving learning outcomes on a sustained trajectory. Donors need to show results relatively quickly for the money and effort they expend. This encourages a focus on 'quick wins' and on outputs that can be easily counted. While these may contribute to longer-term goals, they may not be sufficient to bring about sustainable change.

In addition to this, the problem with rolling out familiar donor-funded programmes, which have had some – but limited – success in the past, is that it encourages the perception amongst governments that school improvement is separate from, and additional to, the normal business of education management. It also encourages the view that school improvement is an expensive process, one that always requires additional budgetary provision and is therefore reliant on external funding.



Back to basics

The need for school improvement is self-evident. Few governments around the world would exclude school improvement in their list of policy objectives. What then, is the solution to improving schools? The unsurprising fact is that there is no magic solution that will work for all schools. Serious efforts to improve schools would however need to take into account some basic considerations.

- 1. Context matters** and there is no universal checklist that can guide school improvement. Schools all differ for a raft of different historical, cultural, and financial reasons. They are not all at the same level of development, so it does not make sense to treat them as a homogenous mass. Programmes that aim to improve schools must be flexible and capable of adaption to individual schools' circumstances.
- There needs to be sufficient **political consensus** on the importance of improving education to raise the level of expectation, marshal public support, and allow hard economic choices to be made. Improving schools requires a long-term approach based on honest assessment, political commitment and leadership, realistic ambition and long-term commitment of resources.
- 3. Public opinion behind a campaign for better schools could be a force for change.** Most education development projects look to ministries of education for political leadership and drive. This is not always forthcoming. Political economy analysis might reveal that the power to get things done resides elsewhere, in or beyond government. In many countries, public awareness of the inadequacies of state schools already exists. The growth of private schools and private tutoring are indicators of parental dissatisfaction in state schools. Bodies such as Uwezo in East Africa, that have an established 'voice' based on solid research, could help to orchestrate campaigns for better government provision. 'No child left behind' is a powerful message. 'Every lesson counts' might become a rallying cry for school improvement.
- The focus of attention needs to be **the school as the unit of change**. This is not to say that individual components of a school improvement programme should not focus on teachers, school committees, or school supervisors, but that these sub-components should be developed and implemented in the context of the development of the school, and not allowed to become programmes operating in their own silos.
- If schools are to improve, it is the **people within the schools themselves who have to do most of the hard work of changing**. This implies the need to integrate capacity development of school staff within the development of the school. This training should be school-based, or at least cluster-based, rather than off-site and should be inclusive, ensuring that as many as possible of the people involved in the school are included in training. Above all, it needs the people who have to change to be aware of what has to happen, why, and what role they are expected to play. This may seem obvious, but it would be interesting to research just how much of the big picture those most intimately involved in school improvement actually have. Any programme for school improvement should therefore include a communications component to inform and to inspire those most affected and to act as an upward channel for concerns.
- Efforts to bring about school improvement should involve movement on **several fronts simultaneously**, working at different levels of the system. The internal management and governance of the school, relations with parents, and capacity building can be dealt with at the level of the individual school or community. Other aspects require system change at district and national levels.

- The direction of change needs to be aimed towards **greater school autonomy**. With this goes the need for **greater accountability**. Making schools better implies making them better able to 'stand on their own feet', manage their own development, and at the same time take responsibility for their actions. This is not always acknowledged in school improvement programmes. Whilst this has implications for the role of education authorities, it should be embraced, not seen as a threat to the established order – greater school autonomy is a positive opportunity for government to concentrate efforts on setting frameworks of standards and accountability and monitoring results. Movement towards greater school autonomy has been made in many countries, with the introduction of grant funding and forms of school governance involving community representation and local talent. Setting standards, however, tends to be restricted to the laborious business of curriculum development, rather than school, teacher, headteacher, and school management committee standards, and few countries can boast an inspection regime that promotes school improvement or encourages self-discipline. Inspectors act ineffectively as external policemen and are currently more likely to get in the way of reform. A shift in government mindset from the business of system maintenance to one of setting and enforcing standards will not be easily achieved, but it could be a fortunate consequence of higher public expectations for better schools.

- Raising expectations prompts a question about what a school is for. Answering this requires a restatement of **children's learning as the central purpose**. While most people would list learning as a function of schools, in practice, in too many cases, the prime function is childminding. It would be hard to argue that the eighty-five children tasked with distinguishing a "matafor" from a "smile" can have received any intellectual stimulation, acquired any social, cultural, and interpersonal skills or, indeed, learned anything from the experience. In the last decade, the focus of attention has been on literacy and numeracy as the foundation for life and further learning. This is a reflection of the concern that what and how children learn at school is woefully inadequate. Schools should be prepared to meet different learning needs and support different learning pathways. At the core of school improvement is the imperative that it is time to stop wasting children's precious time.



When considering, in practical terms, **what will make schools better geared to children's learning and development**, three areas stand out:

- **More inspired school management.** Schools need competent managers, but they also need leaders who can energize pupils, teachers, and the community by creating a purposeful ethos and a shared set of values. Four essentials of school leadership – setting direction, managing teaching and learning, developing people, and developing the organisation – assume that head teachers have both the authority and the responsibility to influence the school.
- **Higher standards of teacher professionalism.** The interaction of teachers and students is key in determining the efficacy of learning. No efforts to circumvent poor teachers through structured lesson plans or highly prescriptive teachers' guides will provide more than a temporary fix, unless there is additional, long-term support to help teachers master effective pedagogies on their own. For children's learning to increase on a sustained basis, teachers – both existing teachers and those entering the profession – must get better. This requires more than gaining greater subject knowledge and proficiency in teaching methods, which are the traditional foci of teacher training. It involves teachers having motivation, pride in their work and earned recognition. Moreover, higher levels of professionalism require more competent teacher management. Teachers cannot be expected to perform better if their employers treat them unfairly, subject them to arbitrary redeployment, or fail to pay them regularly.
- **Higher expectations on schools, backed up by a more supportive supervisory function, and a more demanding inspection regime.** Setting standards at a national level, making better use of regional and local school supervisors, and developing an inspectorate capable of driving up school performance are often underdeveloped aspects of school improvement programmes. They are placed in the 'too difficult' basket.
 - Standards are key to the business of setting schools objectives to which they can aspire and benchmarks against which they can rate their performance. Setting standards is a proper function of national ministries of education, but it rarely commands as much attention as setting policy or managing funds.
 - The flip side of setting standards is quality assurance. Yet too often the inspectorate is underfunded and treated as a career backwater.
 - Local authority school supervisors constitute a largely untapped resource. Invariably they exist in large numbers. Most have teaching experience, but have been promoted into administrative roles. With reorientation of their roles and capacity building, they have the potential to provide close-to-school support to teaching and learning and make a meaningful contribution to school improvement.



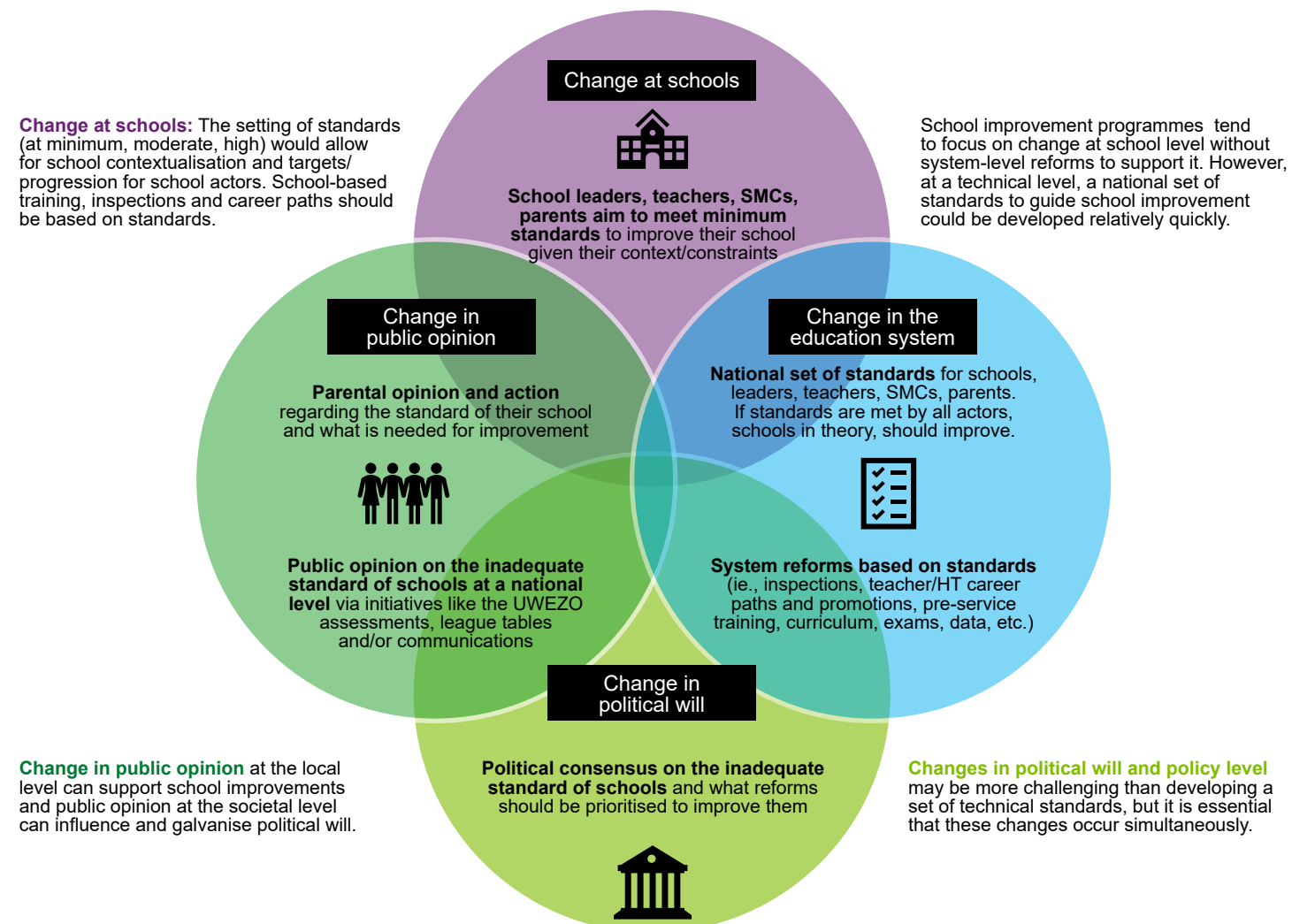
The points above would provide a basis for a programme of school development. It is no coincidence that these outline points are recognizable as design components in any number of education development programmes around the world. Although no two schools are the same, the basic characteristics of schools throughout the world are remarkably similar. They may differ in appearance, but the basic infrastructure, personnel, organisation, and modes of operation are common. Consequently, there are not that many different ways to transform schools into more effective and purposeful entities.

However, it is not just what is done, but how it is done that makes the difference. It is my contention that school improvement initiatives have been insufficiently focused on children's learning, too disparate in their objectives and approaches, too short-term, too dependent on government initiative, and too opaque to capture the public imagination.

The following figure aims to demonstrate how school improvement involves movement on several fronts simultaneously, working at different levels of the system. This means that change at the school level must be supported by system-level reforms, which would include setting, communicating and supporting a national set of standards to guide improvements that focus on children's learning and development. These standards can provide concrete examples of what constitutes inspired school management and teacher professionalism.

They can also be used to guide quality assurance and support. Standards could be set at minimum, moderate and high levels, which would allow for contextualisation and the development of realistic targets and managed progression. A set of progressive standards for schools, head teachers, teachers and SMCs, which are systematically communicated and for which support is provided to the school is an essential prerequisite for school improvement. Schools, head teachers and teachers need support first to work out where they stand and then to move to higher levels through agreed “contracts” to raise standards. Such “contracts” would ensure that all those involved in schools understand what is expected of them. Their performance would then be accountable. Teacher and head teacher training and career paths should also be based on performance standards.

Such school and system-level reforms are predicated on political will and a galvanised public voice that can influence this. The usual assumption is that school improvement will come through top-down government initiatives. Political leadership and bureaucratic orientation towards a reform agenda certainly give impetus to the process of change. Without these drivers, no school improvement strategy would be possible. However, relying on government initiative alone to drive change in schools may not be the best course of action.



Governments, for all their good intentions, have a mixed track record when it comes to improving schools. Political direction from above needs to be complemented by bottom-up pressure for change. The mechanisms by which this dialectic operates vary from country to country. In those countries where there is insufficient government capability and a significant donor-agency presence, there are implications for donor policy. For donors to support ‘voice’ would mean they directly engage with non-government institutions and the public, highlight the inefficiency of the school system, channel public disquiet and celebrate good practices where they exist. Pressure from below would encourage responsive changes within government. School standards can, in addition to enable the system to promote school improvement, act to engage parents and the community in contributing to a virtuous circle of improvements: clear indicators about learning outcomes and the learning environment can be shared with parents/guardians/communities so that they can hold their schools to account and provide bottom-up pressure for change.

In summary, standards are key to the business of setting school improvement objectives to which schools can aspire and establishing benchmarks against which they can be held accountable to education authorities and the public. Setting standards is a proper function of national ministries of education, but it is rarely afforded sufficient priority. A shift in government mindset from the business of system maintenance to one of setting and enforcing standards would be a fortunate consequence of stronger public opinion and expectations for better schools, creating a virtuous cycle of improvement.

Conclusion

The theme of this Think Piece has been that school improvement is difficult and there are no instant solutions. This is hardly cutting-edge thinking. School improvement is a prolonged and continuous uphill struggle and is dependent on political will, funding, and human capacity. This makes it particularly difficult for poorer countries with growing populations and under-developed governmental capacity. In the absence of clear political leadership and reform-minded state institutions, pressure for change has to come through enhanced public consciousness of the parlous state of education and the consequences of not doing anything about it.

Gearing up public opinion is not easy for development agencies. It is not their natural territory, as they see their main role as supporting governments. Governments rarely welcome this sort of intervention, seeing it as destabilising interference. The prize for donor-assisted school improvement would come from successfully igniting public concern, while at the same time, coopting government to ride the wave of public support by actively engaging in reform. This would mean committing both internal and external funding to support integrated approaches, intelligently aimed at transforming schools.



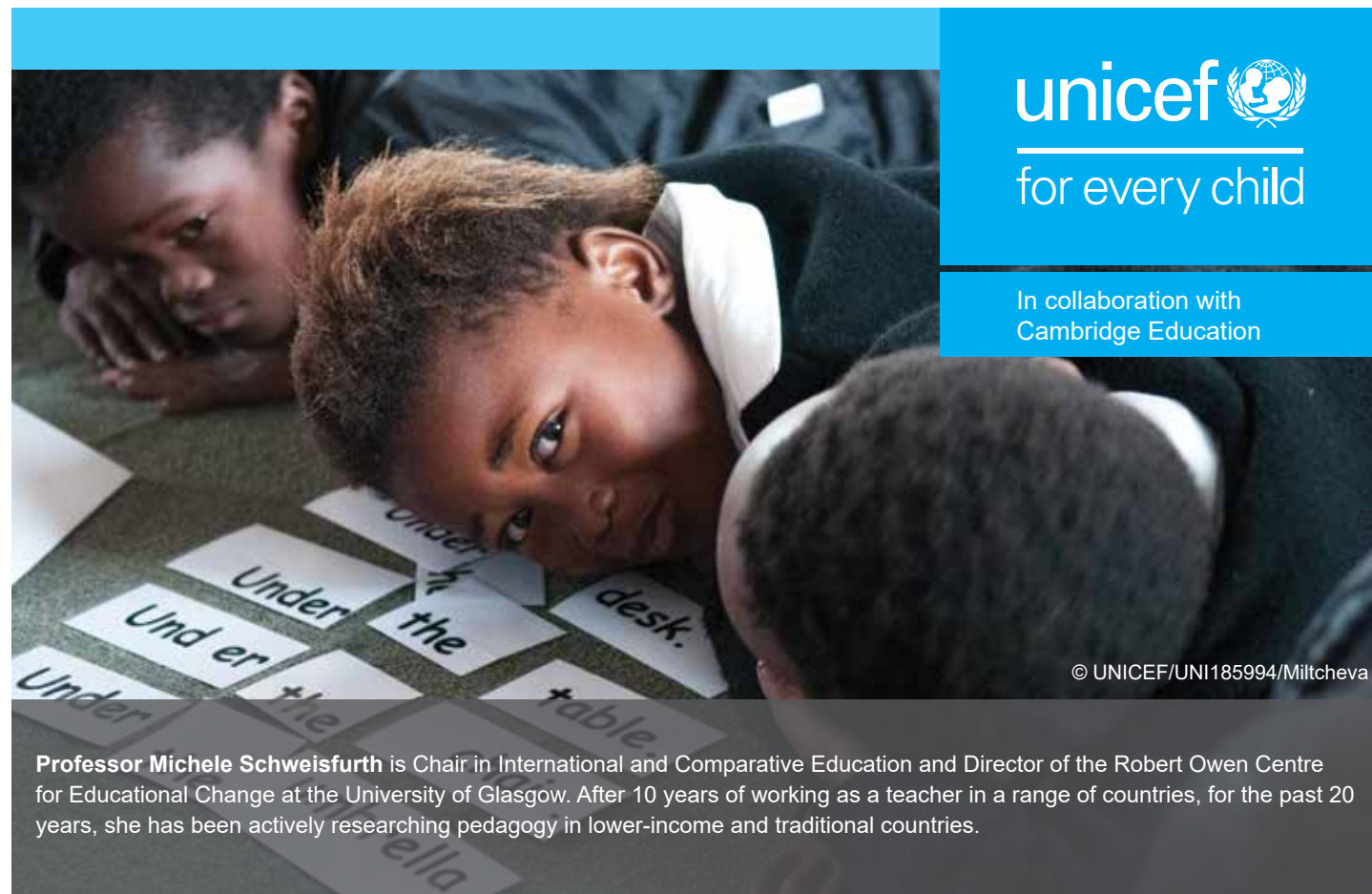
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List of Acronyms

SMC School Management Committee



Professor Michele Schweisfurth is Chair in International and Comparative Education and Director of the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change at the University of Glasgow. After 10 years of working as a teacher in a range of countries, for the past 20 years, she has been actively researching pedagogy in lower-income and traditional countries.

Is learner-centred education ‘best practice’?

By Professor Michele Schweisfurth

Learner-centred education (LCE) and related specific methods such as activity-based, inquiry-based and problem-based learning are widely promoted internationally as examples of ‘best practice’ pedagogy. While it can be a slippery term with different understandings and associated practices, a widely-used and simple definition of LCE describes it as “... a pedagogical approach which gives learners, and demands from them, a relatively high level of active control over the content and process of learning. What is learnt, and how, are therefore shaped by learners’ needs, capacities and interests.”¹

LCE has become a ‘travelling policy’ in that it has moved around the world and taken root in many different contexts. Its origins as an idea go back as far as Socrates in ancient Greece, with the Socratic dialogue enquiry method.² In England, its child-centred version was part of education policy reform in the late 1960s; it was also central to the progressive movement in the USA and had expression in Europe through specialist approaches such as Montessori and Steiner schooling. More recently, it has been described as a ‘policy

panacea’³ in the Global South, because it is believed to contribute to development in several ways, as we shall see below. Based on this promise, international development organisations and agencies, including UNICEF, have been active in promoting LCE in the Global South. As a result of the widespread faith in LCE and enthusiasm for it, a 2008 analysis of Sub-Saharan African national education policies demonstrated that since the 1990s, it has appeared virtually everywhere, at least at the rhetorical level.⁴

The aim of this Think Piece is to provoke readers to think critically about the claims regarding LCE, and its suitability for different cultural and resource contexts. It will firstly unpack some of the main arguments in favour of LCE that have made it a travelling policy and ‘best practice’. It will then draw on a wide range of evidence to show some of the problems that have arisen when LCE has been introduced in situations where teachers are unfamiliar with it, where classes are large and poorly-resourced, and where cultural practices work against the kinds of relationships and attitudes to knowledge that underpin LCE.

It will also examine some of the Western critiques of LCE; even in relatively luxurious school settings with well-educated and prepared teachers, questions have been raised about it.

LCE is something of a sacred cow and the aim of this Think Piece is not to kill it outright. Rather, it is to encourage readers to think about when and where aspects of it may be possible and appropriate, for whom, and for which learning goals, particularly in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. Part of the problem with LCE is that it is often polarised against teacher-centred or rote learning. In reality, many good teachers draw on a range of methods in their pedagogical practice, which are suited to the cultural and resource contexts in which they work. In addition to this, the implementation of learner-centred practice by teachers can vary a great deal, meaning that a weak use of LCE will not necessarily be any more effective than lecturing or drilling. And although ‘effectiveness’ should be judged by children’s learning in the widest sense, it is often predicated on results in high stakes exams, for which drilling and other intensive rote-learning methods may be more effective. One thing is certain: teachers unaccustomed to learner-centred practice in their own educational experiences or in the systems in which they work are very unlikely to use it effectively based on short-term training interventions or outsider recommendations. These can make things worse as well by undermining teachers’ established practices. In the light of these issues, this Think Piece will provide a set of flexible principles that are broadly learner-centred but can be adapted to different contexts in order to build on the best of teacher motivations, beliefs and practices.

Why has LCE been promoted as a policy and practice?

In my experience of teaching and researching in a wide range of countries, LCE is widely seen as a ‘modern’ pedagogy that is superior to ‘old-fashioned’ teacher centred practice. Individuals on the ground state these beliefs, and they are often embedded in policy as well. My study of education policies and research across the Global South uncovered the following narratives about LCE, all of which help to fuel it as an advocated practice:

1. The emancipatory narrative suggests that by putting more decisions in the hands of learners, learner-centred approaches free them from teacher authoritarianism and from strict curricula that do not reflect their personal needs. By doing this, LCE is believed to protect learners’ rights and develop the skills and attitudes that promote democratic citizenship.
2. The cognition narrative suggests that everyone learns more effectively when lessons build on their capabilities and interests and are based on problem-solving and application rather than pure individual rote learning. There is also an assumption that LCE is more activity-oriented and engaging for students, thus prompting more meaningful learning.
3. The preparation narrative is increasingly common in national policies. It refers to the need for learners to develop ‘21st century skills’ for life in the ‘knowledge economy’. These include abilities and attributes such as critical thinking, independent research, and flexibility. LCE is believed to support the development of these by reducing the content basis of learning and encouraging independence and collaboration rather than reliance on the teacher and text.

I have used the term ‘narrative’ purposefully, because the evidence that any of the above is entirely true is limited. That they are beliefs, rather than proven facts, doesn’t seem to make the narratives any less powerful.



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¹ Schweisfurth, M, *Learner-Centred Education in International Perspective: whose pedagogy for whose development?* London, Routledge, 2013.

² Cited in Brandes and Ginnis P, *A Guide to Student-Centred Learning*, London, Simon and Schuster, 1996

³ Sriprakash, A, ‘Child-centred education and the promise of democratic learning: pedagogic messages in rural Indian primary schools’, in *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30, 2010, pp. 297-304.⁴ UNESCO 2012 Position paper on education for children with disabilities - https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/UNICEF_Right_to_Education_Children_Disabilities_En_Web.pdf

⁴ Chisholm, L and Leyendecker, R, ‘Curriculum reform in post-1990s sub-Saharan Africa’, in *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol 28, 2008, pp. 195-205.

What does the evidence tell us about the implementation of LCE? What critiques help to explain this?

In 2011, I synthesised the findings from every available article on LCE published in the International Journal of Educational Development, which is the main academic journal on education in developing country contexts. I reviewed 72 articles on this theme and almost every single one carried the same strong message: LCE isn't working. Whether it was a case of full-scale policy changes, or smaller-scale interventions by individual programmes or agencies, even when teachers were apparently enthusiastic about the ideas, there were not the expected changes to practice or learning. The evidence for this lack of change was, frankly, overwhelming.

There were a small number of success stories. In a few cases, a multi-pronged approach to implementation, which supported teachers in a range of ways over a long period, did bring about some changes. But the prevailing story was what different researchers called 'implementation failure', or, metaphorically, 'tissue rejection' (as in when a transplanted heart is rejected by the body). In some cases, there was little if any lasting change to practice. In some worrying cases, the intervention made things worse. For example, in contexts where group work was being advocated, teachers sometimes put learners physically into groups but continued to teach from the front. The net effect on learning was that fewer learners could see or hear what was going on. Some teachers, who were not clear on the concept or on their responsibilities, implemented independent learning in ways that left too many decisions to unprepared learners, and classrooms became unfocused and unproductive.



Some of the articles put this lack of change or inappropriate change down to a range of problems with the implementation process and barriers to it in schools. A number of explanations were put forward for this. The main categories were:

- Unrealistic expectations for change from policy
- Lack of information dissemination on policy changes
- Minimal preparation – for example, expecting teachers to change their longstanding practice through a short intervention or workshop
- Low teacher capacity – for example, in terms of initial training, pedagogical or subject knowledge, or motivation
- Teacher preparation which teaches about LCE but does not model it
- Resource shortage in terms of teaching materials
- Large classes and crowded conditions
- High-stakes assessments which remain based on content which promote rote learning and teaching to the test
- Management and inspection regimes which were unsupportive of LCE
- Language of instruction (usually English) being uncomfortable for teachers and making them prefer text-based or scripted lessons.

The list of barriers is a long and convincing one and demonstrates that there are factors beyond teachers that can affect whether LCE can be sustainably implemented. But some other critiques strike at the heart of LCE itself, asking some challenging questions about whether it is actually suitable for all cultural or resource contexts. In many African cultures, for example, respect for elders is ingrained; in such contexts where children do not question adults or the texts they have written, the critical and independent thinking and questioning attitudes demanded by LCE do not come easily. Others have argued that LCE is a Western import and a form of neo-colonialism. Botswana researcher, Richard Tabulawa, for example, has written extensively on why this 'paradigm shift' is not appropriate in African contexts. He argues that authoritarian adult-child relationships are deeply held from both traditional and colonial roots, and that changing classroom practice in learner-centred directions is not just a case of modifying teaching technique but also cultural beliefs and practices.

It is not only in the Global South that questions have been asked both about how widespread learner-centred practice is, and whether it fulfils all its foundational promises. Even when it was inscribed in policy in England, practice differed between teachers and many remained quite teacher-centred in their practice. This remains the case in many countries in the Global North, where, ironically, many countries look for pedagogical inspiration from Asian countries such as Singapore with successful results on international tests. On a more foundational level, children from less educated families are likely to be disadvantaged by LCE. If they are left to choose what they wish to learn, such children will not have access to the 'powerful knowledge' that might help to promote social mobility and redress the imbalances that stem from the home environment.⁶

Are there some basic principles that can be adopted that draw on the best of learner-centredness while respecting context and avoiding failure?

This list of failures and critiques may be uncomfortable reading for professionals who, for sound reasons, are committed to LCE. The human rights basis of LCE will be particularly powerful for UNICEF staff given UNICEF's mission, commitments and ethos. However, the evidence of the risk of failure needs to be acknowledged and the issue of fitness-for-purpose in low-income contexts also needs to be addressed. One response is to say that LCE should not be promoted at all, but that instead teacher development programmes should focus on making existing teacher-centred practice more stimulating and learning-oriented.⁷

However, I have argued that if we combine the rights basis of LCE with the evidence concerning pedagogy that stimulates learning, it is possible to create a flexible set of principles that might be helpful in improving practice everywhere. Using such a set of principles would help to ensure that the best promise of learner-centredness does not get lost because of the problems with previous attempts to implement it. The principles are intended to be adaptable to all local contexts. They are also intended to take us away from prescriptions about specific learner-centred classroom techniques toward a more holistic and context-sensitive approach. Some of them are addressed to teachers and teacher educators, but some require the engagement of policymakers and cannot be tackled at the classroom level alone.

The seven principles to make current teacher practice more learning-oriented are:

1. **Lessons should be engaging to students, motivating them to learn.** In some contexts, this might include the use of technology or experiment equipment, for example, but this is not always available. In some contexts, this might involve games, for example, but in other contexts this might be seen as insufficiently serious for the classroom. There is considerable evidence that engagement does enhance learning, even though what constitutes engagement may vary between contexts. I have observed lessons in China, for example, where a variety of carefully-timed, intensive activities reinforce the same learning goal, with short bursts of physical activity in between.
2. **Atmosphere and conduct reflect mutual respect between teachers and learners.** Interactions and punishments must not violate rights, and so corporal punishment or humiliation have no place. It is worth noting, though, that in some cultures the tone of interaction may not be as relaxed as in others – this does not mean there is not mutual respect. Teachers with serious demeanours may be the norm in contexts of higher power distance between elders and children, and this can potentially inspire affection as well as trust and respect in those settings. UNICEF's Child-friendly Schools Framework⁸ is an excellent basis for the realisation of this principle.
3. **Learning challenges build realistically on learners' prior knowledge.** There is considerable evidence that many syllabi are too demanding for many learners and that accountability to higher authorities means that teachers' first priority is to get through the syllabus. This leads to 'flat learning profiles'⁹ when learners cannot keep up. This is a real dilemma for many teachers, but policymakers also need to engage with this reality so that teachers do not have to teach at the expense of learning. Recommended interventions include early remedial work with learners at risk of falling behind. Given the limits of teacher time and attention to individual learners, successful experiments in India have used volunteer community teachers to help bridge the learning gap.¹⁰

⁶ See Michael Young 'The curriculum and the entitlement to knowledge', 2014 for a discussion of 'powerful knowledge'. He argues that all children should be entitled to learn content that can help them to succeed in school and in life, especially since this knowledge is not evenly distributed among them if they are not taught it explicitly in school.
⁷ Gerald Guthrie is an example of such a critic. See: Guthrie, G, The Progressive Fallacy in Developing Countries: in favour of formalism, New York, Springer, 2011.
⁸ https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Friendly_Schools_Manual_EN_040809.pdf
⁹ Pritchett, L and Beatty, A, 'Slow down, you're going too fast: matching curricula to student skill levels', in International Journal of Educational Development, 40, 2015, pp. 276-288.
¹⁰ Banerji, R, 'Poverty and primary schooling: field studies from Mumbai and Delhi', in Economics and Politics Weekly, 35 (March), 2000, pp. 795-802.

4. **Authentic dialogue is used, including open questions.** Drills and whole-class chanting serve purposes in reinforcing some learning and pulling the class together. However, dialogic teaching requires a fuller engagement and has been shown to have a greater impact on learning. Dialogue is not only stimulating to learners by engaging learners and making space for creativity. It also makes the learning visible to teachers so they can formatively assess the extent to which individuals and the whole class are ‘keeping up’. Above all, teacher education at both pre-service and in-service levels should model it, as interventions in South Africa have demonstrated,¹¹ since teachers who have not personally experienced dialogic pedagogy cannot simply be told how to do it.

5. **Curriculum is relevant to learners’ lives and perceived future needs, in a language accessible to them (home language preferred).** This is not always possible in multilingual contexts, but dialogic teaching will be facilitated by this and teachers will be more confident to respond to learners and be flexible in their teaching. This is in part a policy issue and the (mistaken) belief persists that colonial languages such as English can be learned through using them as language of instruction, and that this will lead to better employment opportunities for learners. However, if teachers are not fully proficient in the language of instruction, they will use more closed pedagogies and be unable to teach dialogically.¹² And if learners cannot understand lessons, then their learning is jeopardised. Where teachers have no choice regarding the main language of instruction, code switching should not be seen as poor practice.

6. **Curriculum is based on skills and attitudes but does not ignore content.** These should include skills of critical and creative thinking and attitudes related to national and global citizenship. It is difficult for teachers who have not personally experienced such teaching in their own education to know how to approach it. Evidence reviewed points to the need for in-service training which not only teaches about these approaches, but, again, models them.¹³ Most teachers are used to teaching knowledge. The proposed framework is not asking them to stop doing that, but not to focus exclusively on content or to do so only through rote methods.

7. **Assessment follows these principles by testing a wide range of thinking skills.** Exams should not be purely content-driven as success is often based on rote learning. Where systems are driven by high-stakes examinations that are largely based on knowledge, policymakers need to consider whether these reflect the kind of citizens the country needs, and also to note that these examinations will have a powerful impact on teaching practice. In most contexts, teachers have the freedom to introduce formative assessment that adheres to these principles, but if learners are concerned primarily with passing common examinations, alternatives may not be perceived as a good use of time. Assessment for learning¹⁴ is a helpful general principle, while keeping in mind that assessment can be happening informally on a daily basis in a dynamic, dialogic classroom. It needn’t add unduly to the teachers’ formal marking load but does require he or she to be attuned to the learning constantly taking place.

UNICEF professionals may not have control over all of these principles, but it is worth reflecting on how they might be implemented in the contexts where they work and what changes, if any, this would mean to teaching and learning. UNICEF may have a role at country levels to convene government and partners to review the evidence around the critiques of LCE and the implementing of it and encourage a shift, building on these principles, to more context-relevant and evidence-based teaching and learning methodologies and approaches. The ultimate goal is LEARNING, and respect for rights, rather than superficial (and probably doomed) changes to classroom techniques.



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Further reading

1. Atwal, K , ‘[Dialogic teaching: 10 principles of classroom talk](#)’, TES 19 January 2019:
2. Cooper, A, ‘[We Need to Talk About Learning: Dialogue and Learning Amongst South African Youth](#)’, in J Wyn and H Cahill (eds), Handbook of Children and Youth Studies, 2015, Ch. 29, pp. 419 – 433, Singapore, Springer. Downloaded from
3. Schweisfurth, M, ‘[Learner-centred education in international perspective](#)’, in Journal of International and Comparative Education, Vol 2. 2013.
4. Tabulawa, R, [Teaching and Learning in Context: why Pedagogical Reforms fail in Sub-Saharan Africa](#), African Books Collective, 2013. Downloadable at:
5. Young, M, ‘[The curriculum and the entitlement to knowledge](#)’, 2014.

¹¹ Banerji, R, ‘Poverty and primary schooling: field studies from Mumbai and Delhi’, in Economics and Politics Weekly, 35 (March), 2000, pp. 795-802.

¹² Cooper, A, ‘We Need to Talk About Learning: Dialogue and Learning Amongst South African Youth’, in J Wyn and H Cahill (eds), Handbook of Children and Youth Studies, 2015, Ch. 29, pp. 419 – 433, Singapore, Springer.

¹³ Westbrook, J; Durrani, N; Brown, R; Orr, D; Pryor, J; Boddy, J; Salvi, F Pedagogy, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Teacher Education in Developing Countries: a rigorous review. London: Department for International Development. 2013.

¹⁴ Black, P and William, D, ‘Lessons from around the world: how policies, politics and cultures constrain and afford assessment practices’, in Curriculum Journal (16) 2, 2005, pp. 249-261.



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Navigating the humanitarian-development nexus in forced displacement contexts

By Mary Mendenhall, Ed.D.

Reforms regarding humanitarian action and development approaches, particularly with regard to the high levels of forced displacement within the Eastern and Southern Africa region, have taken multiple forms over the years. The 1980s aimed to bridge the ‘gap’ by linking humanitarian relief and development; the 1990s focused on the relief-development ‘continuum’; the 2000s saw the emergence of the cluster system; and, in recent years, the humanitarian and development spheres have focused on ‘resilience.’¹ Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Coordination across the humanitarian-development nexus is hindered by internal divisions and dual mandates within organisations, limited human resources prepared to work across the nexus, as well as different project timelines, funding cycles, and sources of funding.²

Today’s reforms, inspired by the World Humanitarian Summit, focus on the ongoing quest to find ‘new ways of working’ that bridge humanitarian action, development, peace, and security amidst protracted global displacement.³

This approach acknowledges that humanitarian and development actors need to collaborate side-by-side at global and country levels. For education, this means that education specialists, Ministry authorities, donors, and policymakers, amongst others, need to find ways to improve coordination across their humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities as they consider both short- and long-term education responses.

Humanitarian-development reform efforts by decade ⁴	
1980s	Linking humanitarian relief and development
1990s	Re-framing as relief-development ‘continuum’
2000s	Initiating the global cluster system
2010s	Focusing on ‘resilience’
~2020s	Developing ‘New Ways of Working’

¹ Peer 2 Peer Support for Humanitarian Leaders in the Field. (Producer). Humanitarian-Development Nexus: What is the New Way of Working? Part 2, 2017 [Video webinar]. Retrieved <www.deliveraidbetter.org/webinars/humanitarian-development-nexus>

² The European Union and the UK’s Department for International Development have both announced and/or are supporting multi-year projects, which is a promising step in the right direction.

³ OCHA. New Way of Working. (n.p.). OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch, 2017.

⁴ Peer 2 Peer Support for Humanitarian Leaders in the Field. (Producer). Humanitarian-Development Nexus: What is the New Way of Working? Part 2, 2017

Of course, the ‘new ways of working’ approach is not without its critics, and opponents express concerns about reforms that have been undertaken too quickly and fail to tackle the weaknesses of the humanitarian system. There are also concerns about upholding core humanitarian principles – *neutrality, impartiality, and independence* – within peace and security agendas⁵.

This Think Piece aims to locate this humanitarian-development nexus within the education sector, and to identify opportunities for key partners to seize the momentum around this nexus, particularly with regard to learners, teachers, national education system actors affected by forced displacement. There is no easy answer for how UNICEF or other organisations might balance their simultaneous focus on humanitarian and development objectives, but education specialists inevitably inhabit this space as they consider both the short- and long-term needs in the education sector. Thus, this Think Piece will also address the types of skills and competencies that education specialists (and key partners) may need in order to strike this balance.

Education and the humanitarian-development nexus

There has been long-standing consensus across both humanitarian and development agencies that “education reconstruction begins at the earliest stages of a crisis... [and should be] undertaken concurrently with humanitarian relief.”⁶ Amidst the global push for national integration of refugees into education and other sectors, and the need for alternative options for many young people who still cannot access national systems, the need to overcome historical gaps remains paramount. Education specialists, ministry authorities, donors, and policymakers need to find ways to establish purposeful and coordinated practices and policies that work across their humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities, and embrace conflict sensitive approaches in the process.

While there are real structural barriers (e.g. different project timelines, funding cycles, and sources of funding and compartmentalized humanitarian and development divisions within institutions), the time has come to move the agenda forward and make changes in both practices and policies that support learners and teachers now and in the future. To do this, education specialists need to be prepared to push some of these changes forward within their own organisations and across the larger education sector to effect more sweeping policy and system-wide changes.



⁵ Bennett, Foley & Pantuliano. *Time to Let Go: Remaking Humanitarian Action for the Modern Era*. London, UK: Overseas Development Institute, 2016

⁶ World Bank. *Reshaping the Future: Education and Postconflict Reconstruction*. The World Bank, Washington, DC, 2016

Bridging the gap for learners, teachers, and education system actors

There are many improvements that need to be made to strengthen the provision of education across the humanitarian-development nexus. This section provides select illustrative (and inevitably limited) examples of key issues about how we can improve our approaches to supporting the individuals most directly involved: learners, teachers, and education system actors, such as ministry officials, district officers, and teacher educators.

Learners: Recognizing and validating learning

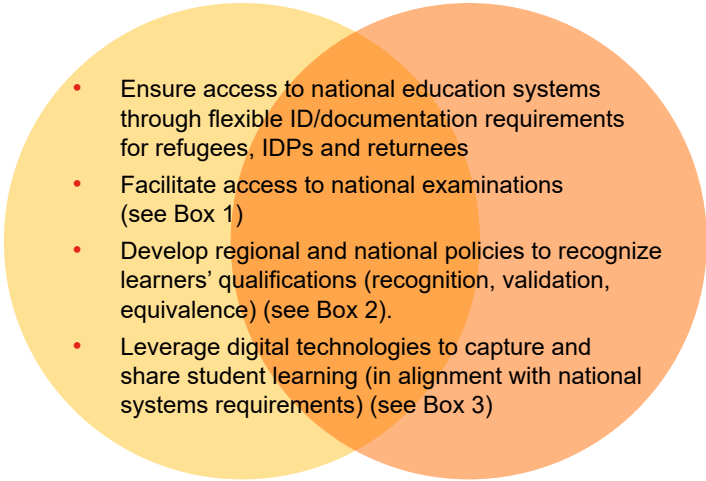
Children, adolescents, and youth in emergency contexts face numerous challenges in accessing and obtaining a quality education. A focus on strengthening a coordinated humanitarian-development approach to supporting learners is needed. One key element is how the learning that young people acquire during conflict, crisis, or displacement is recognized and validated over the longer-term and across different national contexts. How can international actors make decisions about learning attainment and certification during the humanitarian response phase that are forward-looking and attempt to anticipate protracted crisis and longer-term development needs? Recognizing and validating learning across the nexus has involved strategies to (see diagram on the right):

The range of technical challenges that have inhibited states' accreditation or validation of learning attained by displaced learners include:

- curriculum and teacher training that may be different than the host countries
- validation of authenticity of learning certifications
- issues comparing and establishing equivalencies across different education systems
- language of certifications and need for translations
- disrupted education and how to credit partial learning due to interruptions in the school term caused by displacement
- administration of exams, rules, and exam schedules that are not flexible enough to take into consideration diverse ages and needs of learners
- security issues that serve as barriers for sitting for exams and costs of administering the exams.⁷

There are laudable examples of efforts to address some of these issues (see Box 1).

Humanitarian-Development Nexus



Box 1: Refugee learners access schools and examinations in Kenya

There are successful examples of how host countries can facilitate access to schools and exams for refugee learners. Refugee learners living in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya access schools that are recognized by the national Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Learners study the Kenyan curriculum and sit for the school-leaving exams (e.g. Kenya Certificate for Primary Education and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education). In recent years, refugee learners have achieved high marks on these exams, in many cases surpassing the national average.⁸ Refugee learners residing in urban areas are also able to access national schools and sit for examinations. Recently, the Ministry of Education, with support from UNHCR, UNICEF, and key non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners created *Guidelines on Admission of Non-citizens to Basic Education and Training in Kenya* to ensure easier access to national schools by elaborating and expanding the types of documentation that refugee learners could use to register and gain access to schools.

We cannot afford to let young people languish as we struggle to put effective policies and practices in place to recognize learning they acquired during displacement and after overcoming immense challenges to go back to school. It is also a shame when young people have successfully completed primary school in their home countries, for example, but due to a lack of documentation are unable to prove their credentials in countries of asylum. When these learners find that the only option is to start their schooling again, through either traditional primary education or accelerated education programmes, we are using the sector's limited resources inefficiently while also potentially contributing to the young person's frustrations about their current and future prospects, regardless of their personal motivation to go back to school.

Despite these significant challenges, there is increasing political will in some regions to overcome these obstacles. The *Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education*⁹ was signed by eight countries in East Africa in 2017. The subsequent Action Plan that was developed and endorsed by these countries laid out specific points about accreditation and certification of education programmes, both for learners and teachers (see Box 2).



Box 2: Djibouti declaration on regional refugee education and action plan

The Heads of State and Government of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) committed to carrying out the following actions in the IGAD region, which includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda:

- Develop regional and national policies for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees and returnees, including teachers and learners to enable integration into national education systems and access to social services.
- Put in place a regional mechanism for recognition of qualifications for the IGAD region based on: Mutual recognition of formal qualifications obtained throughout the education systems of all IGAD Member States; Mutual recognition of accreditation of qualifications obtained through informal learning and professional skills training; Cross-border education collaboration between neighbouring districts.
- Develop a regional IGAD framework for establishing the equivalency of education qualifications, including mechanisms to enable refugee students, who do not possess certification of prior school attainment or other documentation, to pursue education at the level at which they left through appropriate means rather than high-stakes examinations.
- Develop a common regional approach for teacher accreditation including accelerated programmes for refugee and returnee teachers.
- Establish a technical working group consisting of IGAD Member States and representatives of all relevant stakeholders to: Assess the status of recognition in each Member State; Describe criteria for a mechanism for recognition of academic qualifications; Elaborate the criteria for recognition and equivalency including quality assurance tools and mechanisms. Generate a proposal, including a financing strategy, on a framework and mechanism for mutual recognition and equivalency that will be presented to the IGAD ministerial meeting in 2019.¹⁰

⁷ Talbot, C. Education in Conflict Emergencies in Light of the post-2015 MDGs and EFA Agendas. Geneva, Switzerland: NORRAG, 2016.
⁸ See *South Sudanese Girl in Kakuma Shines in Kenya's National Examination* <www.unhcr.org/ke/14623-south-sudanese-girl-in-kakuma-shines-in-kenyas-national-examination.html>

⁹ Djibouti Plan of Action on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States, 2017, Retrieved <<https://igad.int/attachments/article/1725/Djibouti%20Declaration%20on%20Refugee%20Education.pdf>>
¹⁰ Djibouti Plan of Action on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States [Annex to the Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education], n.d., Retrieved <www.globalcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Djibouti-Plan-of-Action-on-Refugee-Education-in-IG.pdf>

There is momentum to build on as a result of this emphasis on regional and cross-border collaboration. Efforts need to be made to document the success stories that emerge at the policy and practice level from the Djibouti Declaration. UNICEF education specialists could capture these success stories through short case studies or webinars that explain what was accomplished, who was involved, and what and how challenges were overcome. There also needs to be an accompanying focus on the quality of learning experiences that children, adolescents, and youth access in displacement contexts. This includes the academic and social emotional learning outcomes they might obtain. With strong systems in place, which could be supported through technological solutions (see Box 3), national and international actors would also be able to better verify prior learning for young people who have been displaced.



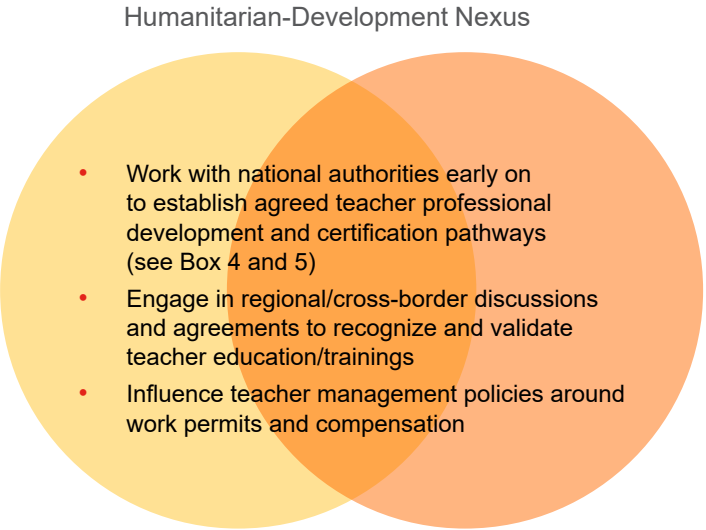
Box 3: Role of technology: Verification of learning

We still have a lot to learn about the potential role of technology and how it can support and complement teaching and learning in displacement contexts. The one way it might be most immediately useful would be to capture and make available student learning records, particularly among displaced populations on the move. Programmes like YOBIS or OpenEMIS “allow for the production, reproduction and digital display of school certificates,” and OpenEMIS links students’ individual digital profiles with their educational achievements.¹¹ Challenges remain in documenting educational achievements obtained *prior* to displacement and in ensuring ethical approaches are in place to protect students and their families.

UNICEF is involved in a global partnership, Generation Unlimited, which aspires to have every young person aged 10-24 in some form of education, employment, or training by 2030. One of the ten promising and potentially transformative ideas put forward through this initiative is ‘portable certifications’ that would recognize both prior learning and work.¹² This work is under development now and there are consultations taking place with international educational service providers/certifiers; regional bodies; academic institutes and training organisations; and multinational companies poised to scale up promising models.

**Teachers:
Recognizing and validating experience**

Teachers working in crisis and displacement contexts face numerous challenges in continuing their work as teachers, gaining access to appropriate professional development opportunities as new or continuing teachers, and finding pathways toward formal certification of their training and expertise that would be recognized in host countries, countries of origin, or other countries in which they might seek asylum in the pursuit of longer lasting settlement. Refugee teachers face barriers in the education sector due to the reluctance of ministries of education to provide and recognize teacher education and related credentials obtained prior to and during displacement. They also face employment barriers since most countries do not allow refugees to work.¹³ That said, there are strategies for recognizing and validating teachers’ experience across the humanitarian-development nexus, which include:



One notable example is the case of refugee teachers from the Central African Republic and Sudan who find themselves in Chad. The Chadian government, with support from national and international organisations, created opportunities for refugee teachers to acquire certified training and work in public schools. Various stakeholders have also taken steps to ensure the teaching certification is recognized when Sudanese teachers are able to return home (see Box 4 for more details). There are still challenges related to levels of compensation that refugee teachers receive in this context, but it is a promising move to bridge humanitarian and development work.

Box 4: Refugee teachers: Finding a place within national education systems¹⁴

Chad boasts one of the most promising examples for professional pathways for teachers. The country has hosted refugees for over 13 years¹⁵, predominantly from the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan. There are currently 193,872 school-aged children (6-17) in refugee camps in eastern Chad, 86,295 of whom are enrolled in primary education (UNHCR, 2017d). Given the protracted crises in neighboring countries affecting refugee inflows into Chad, the government, with support from national and international organisations, shifted its focus from a humanitarian to a development-oriented strategy.¹⁶ This strategy change entailed transitioning the refugee schools to a Chadian curriculum; deploying more Chadian teachers to refugee camps to teach French, civics, and geography; and up-scaling refugee teachers’ qualifications. Refugee teachers now have opportunities to become fully certified by the Chadian education authorities and to work in public schools in Chad. From 2012-2016, 341 Sudanese refugee teachers have been certified by the Abéché Bilingual Teacher Training College, after completing a two-year teacher training course offered during the summer months. Additional cohorts of teachers are currently undergoing training, and a small number of teachers in Djabal camp are working as temporary teachers in Chadian national schools. From 2012-2014, 98 refugee teachers from CAR participated in a similar certified training offered by the Doba Training College. Furthermore, the Chadian government, Sudanese government, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR signed a joint agreement to ensure that certification and equivalency is recognized when Sudanese teachers are able to return home.

Despite these promising policies and practices on certification and equivalency, refugee teachers in Chad express concerns about the compensation structures in place for refugees. These continue to be based on incentives rather than salary scales commensurate with certification. UNHCR has recently increased the amount of the incentive pay for teachers and started offering cash incentives for training activities in an effort to motivate teachers to pursue the training and remain in the profession. The Chadian case is an encouraging example for other countries, particularly those facing teacher shortages. It illustrates promising practices for training and certifying, and demonstrates the benefits that stem from the contributions that refugee teachers can make to national education systems. However, it also highlights the complexity of compensation due to restrictive labour policies in many countries hosting refugees.

¹¹ UNESCO. Lifeline to Learning: Leveraging Technology to Support Education for Refugees. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2018.
¹² More information about Generation Unlimited available at <www.generationunlimited.org>

¹³ Mendenhall, Gomez & Varni. Teaching Amidst Conflict and Displacement: Persistent Challenges and Promising Practices for Refugee, Internally Displaced and National Teachers [Background Paper for 2019 GEM Report, Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls]. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2018.
¹⁴ This case study example is drawn directly from: Mendenhall, Gomez & Varni. Teaching Amidst Conflict and Displacement: Persistent Challenges and Promising Practices for Refugee, Internally Displaced and National Teachers [Background Paper for 2019 GEM Report, Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls]. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2018.
¹⁵ UNHCR. (2018). Global Focus: Chad. Retrieved <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2533>
¹⁶ UNHCR. 2015b. Chad: Curriculum Transition Overview. Available at: <www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/operations/56a0a0e49/chad-curriculum-transition-overview.html>

There are other examples of progress related to certified teacher professional development initiatives as national governments and their partners recognize the need to fill gaps among the teaching corps working in protracted displacement settings. In Kenya, international organisations have partnered with a Kenyan tertiary institute to extend teacher education programmes to refugee teachers working in the camps. Refugee teachers can earn a formal Diploma in Primary Education (see Box 5). This is a promising initiative since the diploma is granted by a Kenyan institute. However, challenges remain, as refugee teachers are unable to put that diploma to work in Kenya due to work restrictions for refugees. The diploma programme focuses on important and fundamental teaching competencies, but it could also do more to address the specific needs of working with refugee learners.

Box 5: Certified teacher education programmes for refugee teachers in Kenya¹⁷

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) has offered diploma and certificate programmes to refugees in Kakuma refugee camp since 2010, in partnership with UNHCR and the Lutheran World Federation. One of the academic programmes entails a Diploma in Primary Education, which refugee students (mostly full-time primary school teachers) complete over the course of a year. The diploma consists of foundation courses (e.g. curriculum studies) and subject-specific courses (e.g. social studies, science, life skills, and peace education). Graduates are awarded diplomas directly from the MMUST, which one could argue is significantly more valuable than any certificate of participation awarded by UN agencies, NGOs or other partners. Given the overall success of the initiative, MMUST expanded its academic offerings and opened a campus in Turkana, the district that hosts the refugee camp, in 2016. The hope is that the MMUST credential will prove useful when and if refugees are able to return to their country of origin (though additional research and evaluation are needed on the transferability and recognition of credentials across borders). While the training contributes to developing teaching competencies, the credential itself is not as useful for refugees in the immediate-term; refugees do not have the right to work in Kenya and the credential is not recognized by the Kenyan Teachers Service Commission.

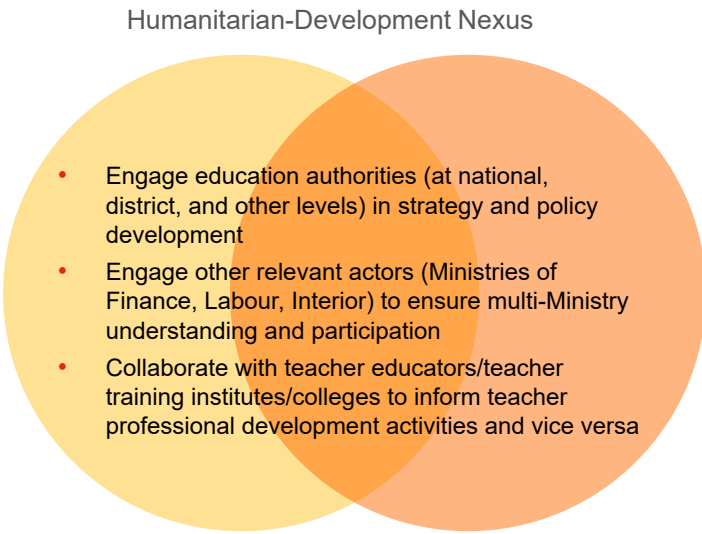
Another teacher management issue that needs to be addressed proactively is what plans and processes need to be put into place, in collaboration with national governments, to support and/or absorb the number of teachers often recruited, trained, and paid by humanitarian organisations in the transition toward development work. Teachers in humanitarian settings are often paid small stipends through project funds that are unsustainable and lead to high turnover rates. In the transition to development, national governments not only need to recognize teachers’ skills and experience, but also increase their budgets to cover the recurrent costs of teacher salaries. This continues to be one of the most significant obstacles to supporting teachers during the transitional period between humanitarian response and development. Poorly coordinated efforts and insufficient budgets can lead to closures of schools and learning spaces, increased numbers of out-of-school children, and attrition of talented teachers to other employment opportunities outside of the education sector. The early hiring, training, and compensation of refugee, IDP, and/or host teachers needs to be undertaken with a longer-term perspective and humanitarian, development, and national actors need to engage in these discussions.

The Djibouti Declaration (see Box 2) captures the growing recognition that agreements and structures need to be put into place for both learners and teachers. The declaration cites the need to “develop a common regional approach for teacher accreditation including accelerated programmes for refugee and returnee teachers,” which would open up more plausible pathways toward certification and the recognition of the training teachers have acquired during displacement.¹⁸ More work needs to be done by both humanitarian and development actors, inside and outside of the education sector, to put these practices into place and to help teachers find gainful employment during displacement or upon the return home.



Education system actors: Supporting early decision-making

To improve policies and practices that support learners and teachers in displacement settings in both the short- and long-term, the international community needs to provide more support to ministry officials, district officers, and teacher educators.



Ministry officials need to be included early on in decisions about when, where, and how to provide educational access to learners. These national actors need to lead discussions about the challenges facing the education system, help engage government officials from other relevant sectors (e.g. Finance, labour, interior/security), and identify openings for advocacy and policy influencing. District education officers also need to be consulted and engaged early on as they are responsible for the successful implementation of any existing and/or new policies that are rolled out during both the short-term humanitarian response and longer-term development work. They can help identify and explain the barriers and opportunities to improving education for displaced (and host community) learners at the local level.

Teacher educators and those working in national teacher training colleges are often forgotten until much later in the process. They play a critical role and will be there long after the humanitarian response has ended. Teacher educators bring an important skill set to the mix as they are well versed in the national curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and disciplinary practices. They would also greatly benefit from additional capacity building that addresses the academic and social-emotional needs of displaced learners and the harmful practices that might exist in some contexts, as well as the needs of IDP/refugee teachers, with which they might be less familiar.

Engagements with national actors can be challenging when they are accompanied by a lack of capacity and political will, but they also bring opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas, capacities, and improvements. Take teacher professional development approaches for example. On the one hand, you have international and national actors (UN agencies, NGOs at various levels) providing teacher professional development activities to support displaced learners, including psychosocial support, second language learning, social cohesion, and inclusive pedagogical approaches (to name just a few). On the other hand, you have national teacher training institutes that are better placed to provide support on the national curriculum. If we could find more opportunities to bring the work of these two sets of actors together, teachers and learners in both refugee and host communities, as well as the larger education system, would benefit. A hybrid approach would leverage the strengths of these different actors, not to mention provide longer-term capacity building opportunities for national actors.



¹⁷ This case study example is drawn directly from: Mendenhall, Gomez & Varni. Teaching Amidst Conflict and Displacement: Persistent Challenges and Promising Practices for Refugee, Internally Displaced and National Teachers [Background Paper for 2019 GEM Report, Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls]. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2018.

¹⁸ Djibouti Plan of Action on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States [Annex to the Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education], n.d., Retrieved <www.globalcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Djibouti-Plan-of-Action-on-Refugee-Education-in-IG.pdf>

Strengthening the Humanitarian and Development Nexus: Next Steps

In order to bridge the gap for learners, teachers and system actors, coordination within and across the humanitarian and development nexus is imperative. This continues to be challenging, but the following efforts can accelerate change:

1. Developing shared and complementary skills across humanitarian and development actors

Education specialists focused on the earlier phases of humanitarian action need to begin thinking from day one about the longer-term implications of their programming and policy-influencing decisions related to learners, teachers, and education system actors.¹⁹ They need to consider how best to liaise with national authorities earlier in the process to start supporting broader institution and system strengthening. Other important skills for facilitating this work include risk-informed programming, diplomacy, and consensus-building, amongst others. Whereas many development actors may already obtain these skills, they would benefit from a better understanding of experiences, opportunities, and challenges learners and teachers faced during displacement and protracted crises, including their ongoing academic, psychosocial, and/or professional needs.



Capacity Development for Education Specialists

- Short and long-term education planning
- Early engagement with national authorities
- Develop skills for:
 - Communications
 - Conflict sensitivity
 - Risk-informed programming
 - Diplomacy
 - Consensus-building
 - Negotiation

2. Adjusting institutional ways of working

There are different coordination mechanisms in humanitarian vs. development work. Within the humanitarian cluster system, implementing organisations coordinate among themselves, but there is no donor coordination within the sector. In development, local education groups (LEGs) coordinate donors and other larger actors supporting government programmes, but not the diverse range of implementing organisations working in the sector. These distinctions can be confusing for both national governments and implementing organisations. UNICEF’s mission and work across the humanitarian-development nexus can play a key role in mitigating some of this confusion and building strong partnerships. UNICEF’s strategic position representing the education cluster at the Humanitarian Country Team level, sitting on the United Nations Country Teams, and serving on and/or often coordinating cluster and LEG activities can help contribute to programme alignment and key linkages across activities and actors. More opportunities for developing trusted and transparent partnerships need to be forged to maximize these coordination efforts.



Institutional Ways of Working

- UNICEF’s unique role in education clusters and local education groups (LEGs) can help facilitate programme and policy alignment across the nexus; need to leverage this work even more

3. Bridging the data gaps

Findings from a study conducted in the Middle East found that the “well-established humanitarian/development divide in EiE is reproduced by data systems that collect different types of indicators, at different intervals, and disseminate them on distinct platforms.”²⁰ Efforts need to be made to create a more coherent data and evidence-generating system that effectively collects and shares data among diverse actors for both humanitarian action and development responses.

For education personnel involved in early response or cluster activities to begin thinking about the longer-term needs among displaced teachers (and learners), more opportunities will be needed to lay the foundation for this work. Given the protracted nature of current crises, attention to these issues needs to begin earlier in the design and implementation process and take place through direct consultation and collaboration with national authorities. When there is agreement and commitment to collecting this type of information, forward-looking discussions and plans can get underway.



Collecting Better Data and Evidence

- Facilitate coherent data collection among actors for both humanitarian response and development
- Develop and implement education indicators that encompass long-term planning

4. Reflecting and planning together

Leads for country-level education clusters should facilitate critical discussions with diverse stakeholders to encourage humanitarian-development thinking early in their response planning. Broader, systemic changes are needed, but we also need to leverage committed education specialists poised to move things forward. These strengthened approaches will lead to the collective outcomes envisioned in the New Ways of Working agenda to reduce risk, vulnerability, and need while also positioning learners and teachers who have acquired significant knowledge and skills during displacement to benefit from the formal recognition of their hard work. Table 1 poses reflection and guiding questions for education specialists working in different humanitarian and development organisations to reflect on together as they work in this space.



¹⁹ Mendenhall, M. Education sustainability in the relief-development transition: Challenges for international organisations working in countries affected by conflict. International Journal of Educational Development, 35 (67-77), 2014.

²⁰ Buckner, Smiley & Cremin. (2019). A New Way of Thinking about Education in Emergencies Data. In M. Mendenhall (Ed.), NORRAG Special Issue No. 2, Data Collection and Evidence Building to Support Education in Emergencies. Geneva, Switzerland: NORRAG

Table 1: Reflection and planning questions to strengthen education across humanitarian-development nexus

Learners and teachers	What decisions or decision-making frameworks can be made during early humanitarian responses to ensure recognition and transferability of learning and/or training attained during displacement?
	How can humanitarian, development, and national actors proactively engage in discussions about teacher management, recruitment, and compensation that establish plans for increased and sustainable financial support for teachers across the humanitarian-development nexus?
	When and how can national education authorities best lead or be centrally involved in these discussions?
	What type of cross-border/regional support for teaching and learning certification can be provided? Who is best placed to oversee those linkages?
	What technological solutions are available to support recognition of learning and training across borders?
Education system actors	What tools/approaches are available to quickly assess the capacities and political will of national education authorities with whom you might partner? What internal champions are well placed in the Ministry (central and district) to help education specialists develop relationships and move discussions forward?
	How can national education authorities be supported to examine and share both the challenges and the opportunities present in their education system for improved policies and practices for displaced learners and teachers?
	What role(s) could teacher educators working in teacher training colleges/institutes play in supporting both short- and long-term education support? What types of capacity building opportunities would further strengthen their work? What knowledge and skills can they provide to other international/national actors?
Education specialists	What kind of capacity building do education specialists (and other colleagues) need to work more effectively with national actors and across the humanitarian-development nexus?
	How are you/your organisation engaging local individuals, organisations, or communities in education planning processes for the short- and long-term?
Institutions	What internal barriers (structures, policies, practices) need to be improved to better connect education planning around humanitarian and development work? How can you advocate and/or develop action plans to make these changes?
	What external barriers (structures, policies, practices) need to be improved to better connect education planning around humanitarian and development work? How can you advocate and/or develop action plans to make these changes with donor agencies and others?
	What types of partnerships can be initiated that facilitate collaboration and cross-fertilization of skills and expertise? What types of incentives and/or assurances are needed to help partners engage in a transparent, inclusive, and participatory process to build capacity and strengthen systems?
	How can you/your institution more effectively address the humanitarian-development nexus at cluster and/or other education working group meetings?
Processes for data and evidence	What role can your organisation play in collecting, managing, and sharing education data that spans the humanitarian-development nexus?

This checklist provides a way for education specialists, Ministry authorities, donors, and policymakers to establish purposeful and coordinated practices and policies that work across their humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities and embrace conflict sensitive approaches in the process. There are still many improvements to be made, but collaborative and concerted action by education specialists working across the humanitarian-development nexus, and with key partners, will go far in improving the situation and supporting learners, teachers, and education system actors in their future pursuits.



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Further reading

1. Bennett, Foley & Pantuliano. (2016). [Time to Let Go: Remaking Humanitarian Action for the Modern Era](#). London, UK: Overseas Development Institute.
2. [Constructive Deconstruction](#): Podcast series (connected with papers) that explores Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group's two-year research project on reimagining the humanitarian system.
3. [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) webinar - Humanitarian-Development Nexus: What is the new way of working?](#) (Part 1 and Part 2)
4. Mendenhall, M. (Ed.) (2019). NORRAG Special Issue No. 2, [Data Collection and Evidence Building to Support Education in Emergencies](#). Geneva, Switzerland: NORRAG.
5. Mendenhall, M. (2014). [Education sustainability in the relief-development transition: Challenges for international organisations working in countries affected by conflict](#). International Journal of Educational Development, 35 (67-77).
6. [OCHA. \(2017\). New Way of Working](#). (n.p.). OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch.
7. The World Bank. (2017). [Displaced: Toward a development approach supporting refugees, the internally displaced, and their hosts](#). Washington DC: The World Bank.

List of Acronyms

EiE	Education in Emergencies
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
LEG	Local Education Groups
MMUST	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations



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