



Access & Quality thematic group

Notes from 6th February 2013

Introduction

The Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda is a national coalition of civil society organisations working to bring about education rights in Uganda. This document outlines notes made at the meeting on 6th Feb 2013

Notes from meeting

The first Access and Quality thematic group meeting on 2013 took place at the Save the Children Offices on 6th February 2013.

Update and discussion on the Education Sector and Sports Review 2012(ESSR)

The ESSR is the process where the Ministry of Education and Sports reviews the progress on the priorities in the previous year's Education Sector plan and drafts new targets for the following year. It is therefore important that civil society feeds into the ESSR. Last year FENU coordinated key recommendations from members which were fed into the ESSR.

FENU updated members on the progress of the recommendations made to the ESSR; out of the 42 recommendations made, 11 were included in the aide memoire.

The meeting discussed the fact that there has been a fall in the percentage of the budget allocated to education. It was highlighted that this was of particular concern given the low completion rate of students in primary education.

The group discussed whether the money that is allocated to education is spread too thinly; meaning priorities are set but never met. We discussed whether civil society should be calling for government to scale back and complete what it has started, even if that means doing less overall. Members felt this might lead to more effective change in the long term.

There was discussion around what we actually mean by the term 'quality education'. It was felt that it would be beneficial for civil society to come up with more concrete, evidence based ways of talking about quality education. It may be beneficial to use Ministry language when we talk about quality education. As a group we may want to pull together a list of the most important priorities for improving quality education ahead of the next ESSR.

Update on Global Partnership for Education

The [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE) is the former Fast Track Initiative (FTI), a catalytic fund that supports developing countries make progress towards the attainment of the education for all goals (EFA by 2015). Uganda is currently at the stage of developing the country concept and this is done through the local partnership group (LEG) that is made of the Education development partners (EDP), Ministry of Education and Sports (MiES), civil society, the teachers union and the education private sector.

To be eligible to receive the funds of \$100 million for three years countries must have sound education strategic plans, have annual reviews on sector performance with representation from key education stakeholders and show commitment to education funding by having 20% of the GDP allocated to the sector.

Uganda meets the first two criteria and though the education funding falls below 20% it seems the country has got the go ahead to develop a country concept for funding that has been submitted to the GPE secretariat in Washington.

The Uganda concept Note developed through a stakeholder workshop identified the following priority components:

1. Strengthen the 'enabling environment' for the provision of quality ECE
2. Supporting teachers to improve instruction
3. Strengthening teacher motivation and accountability
4. Strengthening school management to support learning

The meeting was informed that FENU secretariat, Save the Children (representing international NGOs), GEM (representing local NGOs) were part of the LEG process that made input into the country concept note. Save the Children informed the meeting that they volunteered this year to be part of the process and hoped that this position would rotate to another FENU member next year.

Discussion on the Ministry of Education and Sport's budget framework paper

The draft budget demonstrates a worrying cut to the education sector. The total draft budget allocated to education has been reduced by 80 billion USh (-5.2%) for 2013/14 compared to 2012/13. This cut may also increase as negotiations around the budget continue. Primary education is losing out the most from these cuts, with a reduction of 16.5%.

The Ministry of Education and Sport also have a list of commitments they have made which are not currently budgeted for. These 'unfunded priorities' would need additional funding of 192.86 billion Ush if they were to be implemented.

The meeting agreed that there was a need to do further analysis on the budget to understand what the Ministry of Education and Sport are prioritising and why. Questions were raised as to what impact the funding cuts will have on the GPE, given that it further reduces the percentage of the budget that the Government has committed to education. It was reiterated that although the budget framework paper is very detailed, the budget is always an estimate.

Last year when FENU gave recommendations on education financing to the social service committee in parliament that were adopted in the committees report. Nonetheless the cuts to last year's budget were still passed without any changes. FENU is currently working with Parliamentarians who will be launching the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education (UPFQE). This is a cross-party forum where MPs will be campaigning on education issues. There is hope that this forum will help increase the debate on education policy and financing in parliament to ensure the sector achieves its intended targets.

The budget framework paper also outlines how much money that has already been allocated has not been spent. By December 2013 only 379 billion Ush of the 1,806 billion Ush allocated to education for 2012-2013 had been spent. The meeting commented that budget performance is affected by many factors that include

delays in the payment of teacher’s salaries and recruitment of new teachers. This is often due to problems at local, rather than national government level. It was felt that we could learn from the work that CSOs in the health sector have done, focusing on the key bottlenecks to spending the money already allocated.

Update on Quality Public Education Campaign

Last year the Quality Public Education Campaign was launched by civil society, demanding urgent action by all stakeholders on the future of public education. The campaign stressed that public education is in crisis, and that urgent action is needed. There is a need for everyone to contribute to this campaign in any way they can. Many different types of contribution are possible.

The meeting agreed that there was need to take advantage of this years global week of action (GWA) with the theme “every child needs a teachers” and this be proposed to the coordinators of the Quality Public Education Campaign. It was suggested that the theme could be extended to: ‘every child needs a good teacher’.

AOB: Best practice and case studies

It was felt that there is a need to document much of the excellent work being done by CSOs on education issues. It was agreed that these should take the form of case studies which could be posted on FENU’s website and published as a booklet. This would give civil society evidence-based examples of the work that is being done and what is working in the field.

Actions that came out of this meeting

<u>Actions agreed upon</u>	<u>Responsible person</u>
Work on cooperating to improve evidence-based advocacy through sharing information from programme reports, research and field visits	Whole group – Secretariat to include in future meetings
The meeting agreed that the membership needed to join the joint monitoring visits with MoES.	Secretariat to find out more
Work on a list of joint priority advocacy messages ahead of the next ESSR	Secretariat will coordinate nearer to the time
Highlight which recommendations made by FENU to the ESSR were taken up in the review.	Secretariat (John) will send round most up-to-date aide memoir with FENU recommendations highlighted
Work on ways of ensuring reports and research from different organisations can be better shared	Secretariat (Anya) to work on FENU website to create section where member reports can be uploaded Ms. Rebecca Kukundakwe from Action Aid to

	send secretariat report on public financing for circulation
Send members the schedule for the MoES field trips.	Secretariat (John)
Share information on the budget	Secretariat (John) will e-mail round budget papers
Keep members informed about the Quality Public Education Campaign and feed back to NGO Forum and Uganda National Teachers Union suggestion of action during education week in April	Secretariat (Frederick)
Keep members updated on Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Quality Education (UPFQE)	Secretariat
Take forward the idea of printing a booklet of case studies on civil society best practice	Jackie Okao, Geoffrey Katende, Sarah Milburn, Anya Whiteside, Els Heijen-maathius

Next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 6th March at Plan international