



Early Childhood Education (ECD) thematic group

Notes from 13th March 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 from the ECD meeting on 13th March 2013 at VSO.

Notes from meeting

Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education

FENU informed the group that the new Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education (UPFQE) was launched on 25th February.

UPFQE is an important new development, especially in relation to the education budget, which has to be voted on by Parliament. Last year FENU made recommendations on the budget to Parliament and although the Parliament accepted all the recommendations, these were not then implemented and the education budget was cut.

FENU secretariat has helped to provide technical support to UPFQE, which is keen to work with NGOs. Any FENU members who are interested in working more closely with the MPs and in particular involving MPs in visits to schools should get in contact with the Secretariat.

NCC informed the group that two MPs, Hon. Kabahenda Flavia and Hon. Muwuma David were chosen as the ECD champions during the launch of the Parliamentary Forum for Children. The group agreed that these MPs should be contacted to tell them about UPFQE and see if they want to join the forum.

Engaging key stakeholders

It was agreed that key stakeholders on ECD issues needed to be contacted and better relationships built. The FENU secretariat will look back at the stakeholder analysis done by the group some time back and at the next meeting we will discuss which decision-makers we want to contact/ try to meet.

Update and discussion on Global Partnership for Education

The [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE) is the former Fast Track Initiative (FTI). It is a fund of \$100 million to be spent over three years. The fund is designed to support developing countries make progress towards the attainment of the education for all goals (EFA) by 2015.

Uganda has developed a concept note for the funding through the local partnership group (LEG) that is made of the education development partners, Ministry of Education and Sports, civil society, the teachers union and the education private sector. The project concept note has now been officially accepted and focus is now on designing the activities for the funding to be spent on.

Originally the GPE proposal had a strong ECD element. This looks like it is being quietly dropped, something that members of the group were concerned about. The meeting agreed that the group's role in the GPE process is to help develop the areas that the government should focus on.

The programme planning for GPE funding will take place through existing working groups within the Ministry for Education and Sports. The timetable for these meetings is being set at the moment. The FENU secretariat will circulate the list of meetings once it is finalised.

A more detailed briefing on GPE and the current situation can be found in Annex 1.

ECD Comprehensive Policy

The ECD comprehensive policy is being developed by the Ministry of Gender as an overarching policy to guide ECD policy in different Ministries. A consultant was appointed to draft the policy but has since left. Many felt that the original draft was not sufficient and a new consultant has now been employed to consult with all the different Ministries and produce a new draft. Members were aware that there had been limited consultation when the first draft was produced, but not much since.

The group discussed whether the Ministry of Gender was best placed to coordinate ECD work, but overall it was acknowledged that it is too late to do much about this.

The group felt that they wanted to be more involved in the development of the education section of the ECD comprehensive policy and it was agreed that the FENU secretariat would get in contact with the consultant to discuss this. The new draft will be available and discussed at the NCC retreat. Members were concerned that there needed to be enough time for NGOs to read and discuss the draft before giving feedback. They would also ideally like to be consulted before the draft is produced.

National Council for Children (NCC)

NCC is a child-based technical forum that deals with national level advocacy and monitoring.

Lydia Mubiru from NCC informed the group that the National ECD forum is a cross section of all stakeholders that meet on a quarterly basis to discuss various issues concerning ECD. The forum advocates for ECD at national level and tries to ensure better coordination of ECD. The forum is comprised of government officials, CSOs, private sector among other representatives from the education sector.

The National Early Childhood forum initially suggested the idea of a Comprehensive ECD policy, as it was felt that there needed to be more harmonisation of ECD between the different Ministries. NCC is currently pushing the Ministry of Gender to finalise the policy.

NCC has met with the planning authority to ask them to ensure that ECD is included in the National Development Policy during its mid-term review. NCC has also met with Local Government to ask them to do inspection and data collection of ECD centres when they are visiting schools. Lydia is currently following up on these actions and will keep the group informed.

NCC's national ECD stakeholder meeting will take place 2-5th April. The theme is 'investment in ECD, a collective responsibility' and members should be receiving invitations soon. The agenda will include presentations from the ECD champions, discussion on the situation of ECD in Uganda, sharing with other countries what has been achieved and discussion on private-public partnership.

Priorities for 2013

The group agreed that there is need to focus on priorities that are achievable in a certain period instead of setting too many goals that may not be achieved. Anya from FENU secretariat agreed to pull together some of the discussion to summarise some of the priority actions raised for discussion at the next meeting.

Actions that came out of this meeting

Action agreed upon	Responsible person/ organization
<p>Ensure all relevant NGOs are invited and encouraged to be involved in the thematic meetings.</p> <p>Update databases to ensure all the contacts are accurate.</p> <p>Contact various NGOs to access the contact person in charge of ECD</p> <p>Always send the agenda of the ECD meetings with invitations so that invitees realise the importance of attending the meetings.</p>	Anya & James (FENU Secretariat)
Get in contact with Harriet on whether the group can meet to discuss the comprehensive policy.	FENU secretariat and Lydia Mubiru (NCC)
Find out timetable for ECD technical group and ensure that members attend so that FENU is represented at every meeting	Lydia NCC, Anya (FENU Secretariat)
Circulate previous stakeholder analysis for discussion at the next meeting	Anya (FENU Secretariat)
Draft the group's 2013 priorities based on discussion in the meeting for further discussion at the next meeting	Anya (FENU Secretariat)
Contact ECD champions and invite them to join UPFQE	Frederick (FENU Secretariat)
Circulate the committee meetings which will be discussing GPE activities to the group once they are available	John (FENU Secretariat)

AOB

The group provisionally agreed to hold an extra ordinary meeting to give input on the ECD comprehensive policy in time for the ECD stakeholders' workshop to take place 2-5 April. This will be confirmed at a later date.

Next meeting

The group agreed to hold the next meeting on 7th May 2013.

Annex 1.

Update on the GPE Process

On the 27th of February 2013 the MoES called a LEG meeting at the MoES to receive feedback from the GPE Secretariat and the World Bank on the project PCN submitted in December 2012. The meeting was called to specifically look at the following issues:

1. Emerging issues for consideration going forward on the PCN

GPE – QAR 1	World Bank – PCN Review
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education budget: On average, countries benefiting from GPE support dedicate around 18% of their national budgets to education. Uganda falls short of that average. the program document would be expected to show that GPE financing through a Program Implementation Grant would not substitute for domestic resources. 2. Resource inefficiency and wastage in education system is of significant concern and planned MoES actions to both address and mitigate such inefficiency and wastage should be elaborated in the program documentation. 3. Funding modality. Secretariat supports the LEG’s decision to propose discreet project support at this time given the Uganda context. The Secretariat requests, however, that the MoES and DPG consider possibilities for moving towards a more aligned aid modality. 4. Mapping of early grade work. While the CN includes a focus on teaching competencies and training around literacy and numeracy, the Secretariat would encourage a clear mapping out of GoU and development partner work in early grade reading and numeracy to ensure adequate coverage of these areas through GPE resources or otherwise. 5. Complementarity with ongoing projects. Clarity needed on how the program’s proposed (sub-) components, will effectively compliment the work of the GoU and other development partners 6. Sustain transparency. The Secretariat encourages Irish Aid and the members of the LEG to sustain a transparent and collaborative process going forward. 7. Gender. Elaboration in the program document on how program activities will address the localized/regional gender disparities at primary level where they exists with targeted interventions. 8. Strong Results Framework and M&E Framework. Program documentation also elaborate how the program’s contributions to implementation of the ESSP will be monitored through annual Joint Sector Reviews already conducted within the education sector 9. Northern Uganda. There may be need for fragility or vulnerability assessments to be undertaken. In addition, there is need for some reference in the program document as to how the program will impact the northern region. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PDO: consistency of the part of the PDO on Early Childhood Education with project activities and expected results. In addition, the team should revisit the country relevance of the proposed ECD activities enhancing quality of provision given that only 7% of children currently attend ECD. 2. Design and scope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify project design - ‘classroom’ and the ‘School’ as the central target, with consideration for implementation capacity, rigidities in behavioral change, project duration. • Design of Teacher Interventions - feasibility and sustainability proposed interventions esp. teacher motivation aspects; focus on strengthen existing accountability structures; use of ICT for community monitoring and teacher training. • Financing instrument – If pursued, focus on a limited number of strategic Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs); integrate third party monitoring mechanisms; review absorptive and implementation capacity of Government in light of the 3-year or explore longer implementation time; incorporate Technical Assistance component. 3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit inclusion of the ‘theory of change’ that underlies the project; review of the existing M&E system and consider strengthening program as part of the project 4. Risks and mitigation measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For updating based on procurement and financial management assessments; additional risks: The declining funding (real capitation and budget to sector in the MTEF), governance environment, teacher perceptions about motivation measures and poor information flow. Mitigation measures to be identified and planned for. 5. Safeguards – assessments will guide progress.

2. The Revised project description- Revised Components

As a result of the emerging issues above the components for the GPE process were revised to reduce the number to three from four.

Agreed position:The meeting looked at the merged components below and strongly noted that ECD betaken care of as a separate component on its own to ensure that it does not get lost and overshadowed by other component issues.

Component 1: Effective teachers for learning

1.1: Support for pre-service training of teachers

1.2: [In-service teacher training \(including ECD instructors\)](#)

1.3 Teacher motivation

1.4 Provision of Instructional Materials

Component 2: Effective schools for learning

2.1: Training of SMCs and Head-teachers to strengthen school accountability and school support to teachers

2.2: Information-on-accountability for school performance (school report cards and possibly EMIS) and school supervision

2.3: School Grants for meeting basic infrastructure and input standards

Component 3: Implementation Support and Capacity Building

3.1: [Policy review for ECD](#)

3.2: Communication strategy for: [\(a\) increasing community awareness regarding the importance of ECD;](#)
(b) performance-based incentives for teachers

3.3: Implementation support, Capacity building, M&E, and program implementation

3. The proposed GPE Working Groups to develop the Programme proposal

Agreed position: It was agreed in the meeting that instead of creating new working groups to develop the GPE programme proposal, the process use the already existing working groups in the MoES. The conveners of the meetings will set a timetable for each working group to start developing the programme outline.

NOTE: This gives us an opportunity to influence the programme focus for the GPE through the working group meetings in the MoES once we get the schedule of meetings.

The working groups identified include:

Working Group	Cross-cutting working group LED by Education Planning Department	Focus areas	Convener
ECD (<i>Sub-Components 1.2; 3.1&3.2</i>)	Project finances, monitoring and evaluation for results (results framework, financing modality, project monitoring, impact evaluations, ESSP update,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECD policy review and dissemination of minimum standards Community outreach and parental awareness 	Ass. Commissioner Pre-Primary
Teacher training and instructional support (<i>Component 1: Sub-components 1.1 & 1.2 & 3.3</i>)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for pre-service In-service teacher training with special focus on pedagogical skills literacy and numeracy content delivery Implementation support and capacity development 	Commissioner TIET
Instructional Materials (<i>Component 1 – sub component 1.4</i>) Teacher Motivation and school accountability (<i>Component 1 - sub-component 1.3 & 3.2b & 3.3; and</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional materials Performance-based incentives for teachers Strengthening head teacher pedagogical and administrative support to teachers SMC training 	Commissioner Pre-Primary and Primary in close Collaboration with Ministry of Public Service and instructional

<i>subcomponents 2.1)</i>			materials unit
Effective schools (Component 2: subcomponents 2.2 & 2.3 & 3.3)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School grants for meeting basic infrastructure and input standards • School report cards initiatives including possible CSO involvement • School supervision & data tracking system 	Directorate of Education Standards (DES)

4. Review of TORs for three important consultancies namely:

- a. Recruitment of a consultant to support the MoES develop an implementation plan and operational manual that will guide the implementation of GPE in Uganda
- b. Recruitment of a consultant to support Government undertake a comprehensive stock taking of the implementation status of the primary education curriculum reform program
- c. Recruitment of a consultant to establish the implementation status of teacher motivation strategic reforms, and results including whether or not they have had significant impact on proximate determinants of student learning.

Agreed position: The meeting agreed that the MoES and supervising entity go ahead and start the process of looking for consultants to take up these important assignments as the procurement process in government is lengthy and time is not on our side.

5. Action points by government led by coordinator

The meeting also looked at key action points that needed to be completed by government to ensure that the GPE project is included in the MoES plans and that funds/programmes do not duplicate already on-going programmes or replace activities/areas where government has pulled out funding.

Agreed position: The meeting felt that this was important and looked at the following action points below. The list is not exhaustive and other issues could be added to ensure maximum utilisation of the GPE grant.

- Implementation status of ESSP including budgetary provisions

- Updating the ESSP and financing model to embrace all planned interventions and extending it to cover the project period (it would help to know how it will be done and support required)
- Matrix of ongoing and planned interventions on pre-primary and primary education by various development partners by funding levels and scope (technical and geographic) – in partnership with Ireland Aid
- Project Logframe with SMART indicators at various levels
- Ensuring functionality of the working groups as indicated by activity status of the working groups guided by the questions provided in the worksheet
- Ensuring draft reports on the commissioned technical areas are available by Mission time to inform working groups and technical discussions
- Development of mission schedule in consultation with the Coordinating Agency
- Ensuring active participation of relevant parties in the mission activities including field work to identified sites (public non-core PTCs, primary schools, districts, etc)
- **etc**

Conclusion of the Meeting:

1. The meeting noted that the components identified act as guides for the working groups to develop the actual programme activities for the project. The meeting also noted that special interest groups should not be worried, as the time to ensure that their issues are included in the programme will be during the working group meetings.
2. After the development of the programme by the working group and consultant a LEG meeting will be held to review the programme document.
3. The programme document will need to be ready by the end of May 2013 and this implies that March and April will be very busy months to ensure that programmes are developed.