



## **FENU feedback GPE Project Appraisal Document, June 30**

The Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda (FENU) is made up of a network of NGOs, CBOs and CSOs who work on education. FENU has helped to coordinate feedback to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grant proposal, including providing suggestions and feedback on what activities the grant money could fund.

This briefing provides feedback from FENU to the second Project Appraisal Document (PAD), June 30<sup>th</sup> 2013.

### **General Feedback**

FENU commends the large amount of work and effort put in by many different actors to produce the PAD. Many of the activities that the PAD outlines are badly needed, and we hope they will have the catalytic impact intended.

We are particularly pleased with the elements of the PAD that focus on developing and improving systems, as civil society has consistently pointed out that improvements in systems, not just infrastructure, is needed to achieve quality public education in Uganda.

### **Funding**

Central to GPE funding is the commitment for the grant to be an additional catalytic fund. It must not, therefore, replace Government funding for education. The Government of Uganda is already falling behind the normal expectation for countries eligible for GPE. This is that Governments should be pledging 20% of their budget to education. The PAD notes on p5 that the share of education within the national budget has actually been declining over the last six years.

FENU members believe that to fulfil the criteria that GPE will not substitute Government funding, education's share of the budget must not decrease over the three year period of GPE funding. We would like the Government to commit to maintaining the percentage of the budget allocated to education, and for this to be clearly outlined in the PAD.

The PAD currently notes that FENU has made this contribution previously. In the final Annex on p93 it states that 'FENU shared valuable contributions on the ongoing application process (including the need to ensure that GPE funding does not substitute the government education sector budget'.

Although it is good that FENU's contribution is noted, this does not constitute a commitment by Government to ensure that education's share of the budget is not decreased over the next three years. At the wrap up meeting of the aide memoire for the mission in June, FENU reinforced this point and questioned why it was not included in the aide memoire. At that meeting it was agreed that this could be added. We are therefore disappointed to see that it has not been included as a Government commitment in the PAD and hope that it can be included.

## **Gender and disability**

We were pleased to see that there is more reference to gender and disability in the most recent PAD. Nonetheless, we feel that it would be beneficial if gender and disability could be mainstreamed throughout the whole document. In particular we are keen to ensure that sex disaggregated data is mainstreamed throughout the PAD.

## **Risks and mitigation**

FENU is pleased to see that risks and mitigations have been addressed on p13-14. The overall implementation risk is rated as substantial, and in light of this suitable mitigation is particularly important.

One risk that has not been covered in this section, and has therefore not been mitigated is the risk of a 'silent' teacher strike. Teachers may enforce an official strike, and the possibility of this is covered in the risks and mitigation section. It is however possible that there may not be an official strike, but that more and more teachers take part in a 'silent' strike over teachers' salaries by not turning up to schools on a non-official basis. It would be good if this risk could be included in the PAD and appropriate mitigation detailed.

## **Component 1- Effective teachers**

Effective teachers are at the heart of every education system and FENU members are pleased that this is one of the key areas that GPE funding could be spent on. We are also pleased to note that training of ECD instructors and caregivers is a key element of this component. Lastly, we are pleased that part of the funding will go towards improving the teacher scheme of service and improving teacher supervision.

## **Payroll**

The PAD quite rightly highlights low teacher motivation as a key problem. On page 3 the PAD notes 'In a teacher survey (2007), when asked to provide information on important sources of low attendance, as many as 40 percent of teachers listed poor remuneration as being the most important issue, showing low motivation.'

Given this situation, FENU members were pleased that in the first PAD a commitment to providing 'technical assistance to improve the functioning of the current payroll system' (P10) was included under component 3. FENU members in the access and quality group have agreed that ensuring that the problems in the payroll system are addressed is central to ensuring better teaching in Uganda. We cannot expect teachers to teach if many of them are not even receiving the small salary they are entitled to. FENU stressed at the wrap up meeting of the aide memoire for the June mission that payroll remains an important issue and should stay central to the GPE funding proposal.

In the most recent PAD, payroll issues have been moved from component 3 to component 1 and included in 1.3 alongside reforming the teacher scheme of service. We agree that this is a sensible change, as the scheme of service and improving teacher payroll are both key to improved teacher motivation. Nonetheless we are concerned that throughout the whole PAD there is very little detail on how the payroll system will be improved. We believe payroll is only mentioned in the following on p42:

'In Year 2 and 3, provide technical assistance to the District Service Commission (DSCs) and the district human resources departments around the issues affecting transparent and timely management of the teacher payroll system (20 Districts)'.

Although this is an excellent start, we are concerned that there is far less detail for this activity than for many of the others. We would be keen for the PAD to provide detail on what kind of technical support will be provided. Detailed information is also needed on how activities will ensure that the payroll system in the targeted districts is improved and clear measurements included.

We also have questions as to why these improvements will only begin in the second year, whether it would be possible to expand these much needed activities to more than 20 districts and whether \$4 million is enough money to reform both the scheme of service and the payroll effectively.

### **Training of early childhood education instructors**

FENU is pleased that training for early childhood education instructors is included in the PAD. We would, however, be keen to know how many of the registered caregivers will be targeted to receive the Community Child Care Program.

FENU members would also be keen to know whether it would be possible to increase the funding to this element and train all 3000 registered caregivers. On a similar note, although it is good to see that 600 ECE instructors will be trained, members would be keen for this number to be increased so that it will be more likely to make a difference to the provision of early childhood education in Uganda.

### **Teacher supervision**

Teacher supervision and effective school inspection are central to improving the standards of teaching. FENU is therefore pleased that this is included in component 1.

We feel, however, that teacher supervision needs to focus on both support and accountability of teachers and head teachers. School inspectors and the district service commission must be enabled to both support teachers and hold them to account.

In particular, cases of deliberate misconduct (defilement, corruption, fraud etc) by teachers and head teachers must be followed up and appropriate action taken. When working with the Districts, they must be expected to demonstrate how they are following up on deliberate misconduct and persistent failure if they are to also receive additional funding and support.

## **Component 2 – Effective Schools**

### **Grants for basic school facilities**

FENU recognises that infrastructure is important, and that it is very difficult for students to learn without adequate facilities. Nonetheless, it is well understood that GPE is an opportunity for funding improvements to systems, which are much more likely to have a catalytic impact on the education sector. This is particularly appropriate as GPE is implemented directly by Governments, who are best places to lead systematic change. After all, there is no point in having a beautiful school if the teacher has not been paid and therefore is always absent.

We recognise that some of the GPE money should be spent on improving infrastructure. Nonetheless, throughout the process civil society has made the point that the majority of the funding

should be spent on improving systems, not eaten up funding infrastructure improvements. We are therefore somewhat disappointed to note that a very large proportion (\$43 million of the \$100 million) has been allocated to school facilitation grants.

We think that this is a missed opportunity and would be keen for some of the activities that currently have much smaller allocations (early childhood education training, improvements to scheme of service, technical assistance for sorting out the payroll etc) could be increased from the substantial amount currently allocated to school facilitation grants. Alternatively it could be possible to increase the geographic coverage of some of the other activities if they received a larger allocation of the funds.

### **Component 3 – Implementation support and capacity building**

FENU recognises that much of the success of the entire GPE proposal relies on the implementation support and capacity building outlined in component three. We are therefore keen that this proposal receives as much focus as the other two components. We would like to see further detail on exactly what activities this component will fund and how the technical support will be provided.

### **Conclusion**

FENU would be keen to get additional clarity on the GPE process from here. We would like to know how the LEG, which is supposed to be the advisory and coordinating group for GPE, is going to get the opportunity to feed in and make changes to the latest PAD. We would also be keen to gain more clarity on how our comments on the PAD are going to be incorporated, given that this PAD was submitted to the GPE secretariat before being sent to civil society or the LEG.

FENU would like to thank all those who have been active throughout the GPE process for their hard work, and for enabling FENU members to be involved in the process. We appreciate just what an extensive and difficult job it has been to come up with the current PAD and commend all those who have put so much work into it.

Lastly we hope that, having asked for our feedback, the comments we have made will be listened to and the PAD will be revised accordingly.