Improving Learner Outcomes: Quality Issues

Professor Leon Tikly
Outline

• Conceptual framework
• DfID support for quality
• Context matters
• Current issues
• A new approach
• Some priorities
• Discussion points
The Meaning of Quality

The central focus ought to be on the processes of teaching and learning in formal and non-formal settings that give rise to desired cognitive and affective outcomes and the range of inputs, policies, management and monitoring arrangements that are required to promote these.
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Factors that Determine School Effectiveness

1.0 SUPPORTING INPUTS
1.1 Strong Parent and Community Support
1.2 Effective Support from the Education System
1.3 Adequate Material Support
  1.3.1 Frequent and Appropriate Teacher Development Activities
  1.3.2 Sufficient Textbooks and Other Materials
  1.3.3 Adequate Facilities

1.0 SUPPORTING INPUTS
2.0 ENABLING CONDITIONS
2.1 Effective Leadership
2.2 A Capable Teaching Force
2.3 Flexibility and Autonomy
2.4 High Time-in-School

3.0 SCHOOL CLIMATE
3.1 High Expectations of Students
3.2 Positive Teacher Attitudes
3.3 Order and Discipline
3.4 Organized Curriculum
3.5 Rewards and Incentives

4.0 TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS
4.1 High Learning Time
4.2 Variety in Teaching Strategies
4.3 Frequent Homework
4.4 Frequent Student Assessment and Feedback

5.0 STUDENT OUTCOMES
5.1 Participation
5.2 Academic Achievement
5.3 Social Skills
5.4 Economic Success

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS
International Cultural Political Economic

CHILDREN’S CHARACTERISTICS
DfID support for the quality of basic education

• DfID investment in the quality of basic education is often subsumed within an overall emphasis on access issues;
• This is true of bilateral assistance and multilateral partnerships such as UNGEI and FTI;
• Investments in quality rarely linked to outcomes including those for disadvantaged learners;
• Emphasis on primary rather than lower secondary and pre-primary;
• Lack of coherence in quality investments between sectors e.g. focus on reading in early years; link between the quality of HE and that of basic education.
## Existing priorities and context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Emphasis within quality debate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-conflict; newly founded</td>
<td>Subsistence, <strong>security, trust</strong> - school system, curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td><strong>Access</strong>, livelihoods (coping; lasting; flexibility) - primary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle income</td>
<td><strong>Continuation</strong> - secondary school Disadvantaged groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong>, responsibility, lifelong learning, sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A changing global context

• A focus on quality must take account of:
  – New demands for skills in a globalised economy;
  – Growing digital divide;
  – Increasing levels of poverty and inequality within and between countries and regions;
  – Globalisation impacts on different groups in different ways, e.g. men/women, rural/urban, minority/majority culture etc.;
  – Increasing levels of conflict including religious conflict;
  – Growing environmental risk;
  – Increasing risks from disease;

• Need for a quality education to support sustainable livelihoods and well-being.
Key Current Issues

• Curriculum content
  – too much content,
  – not enough competences/skills,
  – generally out of date
  – Imported models have not taken account of context
• Teaching and learning
  – Pedagogical styles
  – Lack of instructional materials
  – Subject knowledge/pedagogical skills of teachers
  – Class sizes
  – LOI issues
  – Rigid assessment
• What can be done in large classes with few resources with teachers with limited subject/pedagogical knowledge and materials?
A new approach

• Interventions have largely been at input level – need to focus on *processes* of teaching and learning that a) raise achievement and b) close the achievement gap;
• Linking investments in quality to outcomes including those for disadvantaged groups;
• Move from ‘one size fits all’ to differentiated approach;
• This requires developing capacity to effectively monitor learner achievement and progress;
• Context really does matter enormously. Need to assess relevance of global reforms/initiatives in local context and nurture the roots of local innovation and change;
• Need joined up approach across sub-sectors (ECD/BE/SE/HE) and sectors (e.g. health/education)
Some priorities

• The recruitment, retention, motivation and development of suitably qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas;
• Developing effective practice in teaching language and literacy in the learners’ first language and a language of wider communication;
• Increasing the relevance of outmoded curricula and assessment frameworks particularly in the areas of science, maths, technology, values education and life skills and in a way that reflects diversity;
Some priorities

• Developing the capacity of practitioners to make use of ICTs to support teaching and learning and for ICTs to become fully integrated into policy frameworks;
• To improve the quality and ensure the effective distribution of learning resources including text books;
• Developing capacity to effectively monitor quality including learner achievement and progress;
• To develop leadership capacity to implement and manage change at institutional level, to effectively mobilise community support and to make effective use of resources.
Putting quality on the change agenda: some discussion points

• What policy levers and incentives can be used to make quality issues more of a priority at national and sub-national level?
• How can quality issues assume a greater prominence in relation to initiatives such as FTI?
• How can we link quality more clearly to outcomes, both short term (learner achievement/skills) and long term (social/economic development)?
• How useful/appropriate is it to think in terms of minimum standards in relation to education quality?