

Concept Note

UNESCO IIEP Distance Education Program on *Education Sector Planning* English speaking Africa

1. Context and Rationale

At present there is wide recognition, both among international aid agencies and recipient countries, of the need for coherent planning, programming and budgeting, as well as for mid-term reviews with a view to achieving EFA targets, MDGs, poverty reduction and other policy goals related to educational development.

However, in a relatively large number of countries, particularly low income-countries, available national capacities for the preparation and implementation of educational sector development plans remain weak, because qualified and experienced planning staff are too few in number, or affected by rapid turnover. Although the existing pools of senior and middle-level staff in ministries of education do typically have some experience in specific areas of educational planning and management, they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively contribute to EFA and sector-wide policy and planning related processes. Eventually this can lead to situations whereby ministries of education continue to depend to a significant extent on so-called 'external technical assistance' for many plan preparations and review tasks.

IIEP's distance education programme on *Education Sector Planning* aims at reducing the aforementioned 'capacity gap' by training staff from ministries and other concerned institutions in several Sub-Saharan African countries in the areas of knowledge and the use of the techniques required for preparing and reviewing education sector plans.

2. Objectives

The programme is *output-oriented*. Its primary objective is for educational planners and managers in six countries to understand the main stages and tools involved in the preparation of an education sector plan and be able to *prepare a document for the elaboration or review of an education sector plan* at the end of the course.

More specifically, the programme is expected to contribute to capacity-building on several levels:

- *Individual:* Through this programme, a total of 50 to 60 educational planners, managers and trainers from six different English speaking countries in Africa will receive training in relevant areas and acquire techniques for educational plan preparation and review.
- *Institutional:* In each of the six participating countries, a team of nine to ten planners and managers from different ministries, departments and institutions involved in educational planning will be trained so as to build capacity at the

central level. As they will also interact with each other throughout the course, institutional links will simultaneously be created and

- *National*: The involvement of national training staff and institutions, both as participants and as course facilitators, will develop national training capacities in the field of educational planning.
- *Partnership*: By offering the possibility for the financial and technical partners of the participating countries to contribute at certain stages to the teaching-learning processes occurring at country-level and to access and share the results with the national team. The programme also aims at strengthening the EFA FTI and other existing partnerships in the countries concerned.
- *Regional*: the programme will also offer opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and experience on educational planning among the six participating country teams, and thus contribute to regional cooperation and capacity building in this area.

3. Purpose and Methodology

The central *purpose* of the suggested IIEP distance education programme is to help build a “critical mass” of staff from ministries of education and other concerned national institutions with knowledge on situational and policy analysis and the use of tools for sector plan preparation and reviews.

The *teaching and learning* during the programme will:

- *Mainly* use the *distance mode* but also include *a few face-to-face phases*. Interactions at a distance will mainly occur via internet and electronic mail;
- be “*application-oriented*”, and therefore include a significant component of *practical exercises* and *work on country data and country documents*;
- be *based on a ‘country-team’ approach* that IIEP has been practising with success in its previous distance education programmes, whereby each country team has a ‘leader’ or ‘national co-ordinator’ who will serve as the main instructor and co-ordinator of group work at the national level over the course of the programme. The team members will first read and work individually on the IIEP distance education materials. They will then discuss and finalise the work on the practical tasks related to each module in groups. IIEP will select the national co-ordinators, mainly from among the graduates from the IIEP Advanced Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management;
- *Associate national institutions* with the organisation and delivery of the teaching-learning processes at the national level; and,
- Possibly involve *technical and organisational support from the development partners of the participating countries and from UNESCO national, regional or cluster offices* at certain stages of the programme.

The programme has a *two-pronged orientation*:

First and foremost, the course stands *on its own*, its principal purpose being to enable its participants to fulfil effectively the main tasks involved in the preparation and review of education plans; participants who satisfactorily complete all programme activities, assignments and the final test will receive a certificate awarded by IIEP.

At a second level, it offers successful participants the possibility to get their distance education Certificate *validated within the framework of the IIEP Advanced Training Programme in Educational Planning and Management (ATP)*, and will therefore open the possibility for further training at IIEP, eventually leading to the IIEP Diploma or Master's Degree.

4. Key Areas, Scope and Methodological Aspects

The programme includes training on the *context* within which national processes of educational planning and policies are currently operating – in particular EFA commitments, FTI and other national policy frameworks (in particular PRSPs)- and on major *policy options* for reaching this targets that educational planners and policy makers can envisage. The main emphasis, however, will be placed on the *mastery of the 'technical aspects'* (statistics and data analysis; situational diagnosis, trend projections and policy simulation; expenditure estimates; etc) for the preparation of education sector plans and review documents.

It will be comprised of the following main components/modules:

1. Context and frameworks of sector-wide planning

This course module will deal in particular with:

- The current context and trends in educational planning;
- New aid modalities and frameworks for educational planning (SWAP, PRSP, FTI, etc); and,
- Major planning approaches and tools.

2. Statistics for educational planning

The main items covered in this module will be:

- Basic education indicators and their use for educational planning and policy reviews, in particular within the framework of EFA FTI;
- The calculation and analysis of selected basic education indicators relating to the participants' country; and,
- Presentation of selected statistical measures and tools (graphs, tables, etc.).

3. Education sector diagnosis

The main areas that will be dealt with in this course component are as follows:

- Analytical framework and instruments used for ESD.
- Analysing education in its context.
- Diagnosis of access, internal efficiency and equity.
- Diagnosis of quality and external effectiveness.
- Analysing cost, finance and management.

4. Analysis of policy options (access, equity and quality)

In this module participants will:

- Identify policy choices to improve access, equity and quality in education;
- Discuss the effects and implications of these options and related strategies; and,
- Draw lessons from selected country experiences with a view to discussing promising policy avenues for the education sector in the participating countries.

5. *Projections and scenario building*

During this course component, the participating teams will

- be familiarized with projection and simulation techniques and their application in estimating the implications (in terms of financial and human resources in particular);
- be familiarized with existing simulation models available such as the ones in CSR follow up and,
- discuss the feasibility of the main policy choices they have previously identified to address the priority problems of the education sector in their respective countries.

6. *Preparation of a draft sector plan or review document*

Parallel to modules one to five the participating country teams will have worked on country-related data and prepared a draft sector plan or review document. The last phase of the programme will be devoted to the finalization, presentation and discussion of the six country documents prepared by the participating teams.

5. Target Audience

IIEP's distance education programme on Education Sector Planning will be targeted at senior and middle-level ministry staff working at the central level – predominantly from ministries of education, but also from ministries of social affairs, ministries of finance and other ministries involved in education sector planning – who have some experience but need to consolidate and expand their knowledge and skills to contribute more effectively to the preparation and review of education sector plans.

In order to achieve a broader, more far-reaching effect in participating countries, the IIEP programme will also encourage the participation of staff from universities and other national institutions in charge of training in educational planning and management.

The first of these IIEP distance education programmes will be offered in English and aimed at educational planners and specialists from English-speaking Africa.

6. Time Frame and Products

The course interaction will take place over 10 months. It will be preceded by material preparation and a self learning phase:

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| • Preparation of course materials for distance mode delivery | 6 weeks |
| • Individual self-learning phase | 4 weeks |

- Workshop for national instructors/coordinators (residential in Paris) 2 weeks
- Module 1: Context and frameworks of sector-wide planning 2 weeks
- Module 2: Statistics for educational planning 6 weeks
- Module 3: Education Sector Diagnosis 10 weeks
- Module 4: Analysis of policy options (access, equity, quality) 6 weeks
- Module 5: Projections and scenario building 10 weeks
- Module 6: Finalisation and discussion of country plan/review document 6 weeks

TOTAL **52 weeks**

7. Planned calendar of events 2008

- January 2008 – July 2008*
- * Finalisation and editing of course materials
 - * Development of devices for individual assessment of course participants
 - * Establishment of the network of national partner institutions for the implementation of the DE programme
 - * Organisation of technical and logistic support required for the programme
 - * Announcement of the programme and recruitment of participants
 - * Selection of the national Team Leaders (Principal Instructors)
 - * Sending out of course materials
- August 2008*
- * Self-learning/preparatory phase for national Team Leaders and selected participants (individual reading of course materials, gathering of course-related country documents and data etc)
- September 2008*
- * Training of Trainers (National Team Leaders/Instructors) Workshop, IIEP, Paris
 - * Testing of the communication system
- October 2008*
- * Course interaction on Module 1
 - * Work on country documents and data relating to Module 1
 - * Individual assessment of participants relating to Module 1
- Nov./beg. Dec. 2008*
- * Course interaction on Module 2
 - * Work on country data relating to Module 2
 - * Individual assessment of participants relating to Module 2
- Dec. 2008/mid-Feb. 2009*
- * Course interaction on Module 3
 - * Work on country documents and data relating to Module 3
 - * Individual assessment of participants relating to Module 3
- Mid-Feb.-End March 2009*
- * Course interaction on Module 4
 - * Work on country documents and data relating to Module 4
 - * Individual assessment of participants relating to Module 4

April –Beg. June 2009

- * Course interaction on Module 5
- * Work on country documents and data relating to Module 5
- * Regional Workshop : Finalisation of projection/simulation exercise, Discussion of Country Documents
- * Individual assessment of participants relating to Module 5

June-July 2009

- * Finalisation and submission of Country Sector Review Documents
- * Course interaction on Country Sector Review Documents
- * Evaluation of the Programme

August-September 2009

- * Dissemination of country sector review documents
- * Possibly: adaptation of course materials for national training purposes