

Africa Education Watch programme (2007 – 1010)

The Education Watch Programme aims to improve transparency and accountability in the use of primary education resources in seven African countries: Morocco, Senegal, Niger, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda. It will assess waste, leakages and corruption in the education sector, and strengthen demand for policy reforms and improved service delivery.

In the context of the global agenda of achieving Education for All (EFA), recent scaling-up of resources for primary education has not always led to better outcomes, particularly in Africa where most of the world's out-of-school children live. Reasons for poor education outcomes include leakage, waste and inefficiencies in the use of financial resources, with the result that fewer resources are available for EFA.

Existing accountability mechanisms appear to be inadequate and ineffective in regard to controlling resources and ensuring their effective use. Recent legal and institutional reforms aimed at bringing services closer to the user apparently have not necessarily increased accountability at local level. These decentralized accountability structures are for example, school capitation grants flowing directly from the dispatching agency into school accounts, funds managed by school management committees, school plans approved by local communities, public display of budget information as a means to promote accountability of education providers, and other instruments.

The proposed work is based on the hypothesis that local accountability mechanisms need to be effective if financial resources are to be spent effectively. The Programme proposes to (a) examine the scope and forms of waste, inefficiency and corruption in the use of financial resources, and (b) to analyse the way in which local accountability institutions and instruments are effective in preventing leakage of resources. To provide a wide range of accountability mechanisms in different environments, seven diverse countries have been selected for the programme, namely Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

The programme consists of three components:

First, evidence of waste, inefficiency and corruption and of the effectiveness of local accountability mechanisms in regard to controlling them will be collected in national assessments, consisting of a financial study, a user survey and provider interviews that will be carried out in each country. Working in partnership also with national education NGOs, policy recommendations will be formulated at national level, drawing on the findings of the assessment, on how to improve local accountability with respect to controlling resources.

Second, Transparency International National Chapters in the seven countries will work in coalition, forming alliances and partnerships for national educational campaigns to integrate the call for more transparency and accountability into their agendas. A broad coalition of NGOs, public officials, teachers and other "reformers" will be established that is expected to institute changes in policy and practice that, ultimately, will lead to more effective use of resources for primary education.

Third, cross-country comparative analysis of national assessments will inform policy recommendations to donors and international EFA stakeholders. It is expected that they address issues that have been identified as key to improving the use of resources in the national assessments, thus the effectiveness of aid will be improved. Cross-country comparison of the different national campaigns for increasing effectiveness of local accountability structures will also be undertaken in the third year of the Program.

The Programme will ultimately be successful if policy reforms and measures for improved effectiveness of local accountability mechanisms are implemented; if the demand for change from coalitions and alliances between education NGOs and transparency activists persists beyond the programme period, and if sustainable resistance against wastage, leakage, corruption and lack of accountability is created both at user and at provider level of primary education.

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