

**SUPPORT FOR**

**EDUCATION QUALITY**

**MANAGEMENT**

**IIEP-UNESCO DAKAR**

DIAGNOSE - PROPOSE - SUPPORT



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# IN BRIEF

Although enrolment rates have been increasing for several decades, equality in education remains a major concern in sub-Saharan Africa.

Around 60% of pupils have poor math and reading skills on completing primary school.

How has this happened? Do we understand the barriers holding back education systems? And, more importantly, what can we do better?

To answer these questions, in 2018 IIEP-UNESCO Dakar, in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), launched a programme to support education quality management.

## A three-phase process :

### 1. Diagnose

Encourage actors to assess their actions themselves



### 2. Propose

Work with actors to develop proposals to improve quality management



### 3. Support

Support the implementation of recommendations for sustainable change in education practices

Through this programme, quality management is viewed as a process of continuously improving educational action at all levels of the education system – the school, decentralised and central administrations.

The programme makes no assumptions about barriers to a quality education. Solutions are

developed with actors themselves, drawing on existing promising practices in the system.

The programme aims to support actors in improving education quality through a lasting transformation of their professional practices.

## Education quality is a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa

Quality education is a powerful way of enhancing development and establishing social cohesion and lasting peace among nations.

For several years there has been a push to increase enrolment rates to ensure every child has access to a quality education. While teacher recruitment and improved pupil access are essential, the major challenge is quality.

Despite the introduction of robust measures, little progress has been made. Solutions remain very generic and lack conclusive outcomes. There is therefore scope for further initiatives.

### How the global education crisis affects Africa

In Africa, after 6 or more years of primary schooling



**60%** of pupils have poor math skills



**50% to 60%** of students have poor reading skills

## A programme to help understand the education crisis

While countries receive support to achieve SDG4, several questions remain unanswered:

- A large amount of information and knowledge has been produced about education systems. Is this information and knowledge effectively and efficiently used for decision-making?
- Although classroom- and school-based actions to improve quality in education exist, they are influenced by decisions taken at other levels of the education system. Are these actions coordinated, consistent, and focused on producing quality education?
- Regardless of level (class, school, inspectorate, or region), some units are performing better than others, despite local challenges. Do actors responsible for education systems capitalize on these findings?

These realities raise questions about the role of actors at each level. What are actors on the ground doing, in practical terms? To what extent are their actions likely to produce quality education for all? And how should their actions be coordinated to achieve this?

## Three phases for transforming practices

The programme, organized into the three phases set out below, involves reflecting on current practices in order to identify and implement various drivers of change.



### 1. Diagnose

#### **Working together on a joint assessment of practices**

The diagnostic phase aims to pinpoint the issues that continue to obstruct the achievement of quality education. Past initiatives have been unsuccessful in resolving these issues.

A national research team is sent to the field. The team will immerse itself fully at all levels of the education system, working with actors to observe and describe their professional practices, analyzing the reasons behind these practices, and pinpointing their goals.

This approach will enable the team to detect elements of existing initiatives that can be capitalized on, while identifying barriers that may lessen the impact of their actions. It will also enable them to canvass actors' opinions on actions to improve their practices.

### 2. Propose

#### **Supporting countries in identifying actions to strengthen the effectiveness of the quality management practices.**



During this phase proposals are made for improving education quality, based on the outcomes of the diagnostic phase (findings, causes, barriers to action effectiveness, opinions of actors on the ground) to make recommendations.

This work is led by an expanded team of education actors, including senior staff from across the education system and civil society, as well as technical and financial partners. Areas for improvement are then tested in a restricted environment to consolidate them, and to identify conditions for successful implementation. This includes identifying skills that need to be strengthened, new ways of organizing work flow, or identifying relationships within the ministry where collaboration is lacking. Ultimately, a recommendation will be made for these proposals/conditions to be incorporated into sectoral policy, with a view to supporting change.



### 3. Support

#### Supporting implementation of the actions identified

The change support process, will capitalise on the programme's outcomes to transform education quality management practices.

To do this, the programme will refer to its results to inform sectoral reviews and other forums for debate on educational policy.

The programme also plans to support the implementation of the adopted proposals, for example, by facilitating collaboration between ministries and national development aid institutions with greater expertise in some of the proposed areas.

#### Capacity-building

To ensure the programme's achievements are instilled at political and social levels, training modules on quality management will be developed to provide capacity-building for national officials. It is envisaged that, in partnership with training institutes for supervisory staff (headteachers, educational advisers, inspectors, officials at decentralized and central levels), these modules will be incorporated into in-country training curricula.

## An innovative approach

To support quality management in basic education, the programme has three unique features :

- The programme makes no assumptions about barriers; it seeks to uncover obstacles through the team's immersion among actors, leading to a co-diagnosis. The teams rely on what is prescribed by the regulatory education policy texts, what the actors themselves say, and the analysts' observations.
- There is no pre-established solution for improving education quality; the proposals are developed with the actors by drawing on existing promising practices already in place.
- The programme goes beyond making recommendations; it focuses on the conditions required at an individual and system level for the actions adopted to produce the expected improvements, thereby boosting the chances of successful implementation.

# Main functions of quality management

The programme assesses the level of education quality management within the education system by analysing actors' capacity to perform four fundamental functions.

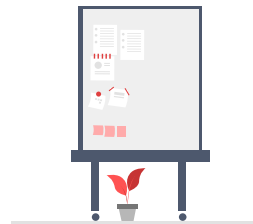
## FUNCTION #1

**Setting objectives and promoting action**

**Capacity #1:** Assessing in-country quality

**Capacity #2:** Setting clear and contextualized targets and objective

**Capacity #3:** Encouraging action



## FUNCTION #2

**Negotiating action and resource allocation**

**Capacity #1:** Establishing a realistic pace of change, in line with the objectives

**Capacity #2:** Providing space for discussion between actors

**Capacity #3:** Allocating resources



**FUNCTION #3**  
**Supporting and monitoring the action**

**Capacity #1:** Producing reliable and timely information

**Capacity #2:** Guiding and supporting actors to transform their practices

**Capacity #3:** Adapting support according to needs



## FUNCTION #4

**Assessing the action and adjustment impact**

**Capacity #1:** Documenting any management-impacting element

**Capacity #2:** Sharing and capitalizing on the documented elements

**Capacity #3:** Disseminating this reflection to a wider audience

**Capacity #4:** Adjusting current projects and policies based on these reflections

## A national approach

The approach is mainly led by national actors:

- The co-diagnosis is made by a national research team (NRT) consisting of eight ministerial officials. Specially appointed by national authorities for the duration of the diagnostic phase, estimated to last 6 months.
- This team reports to the national focal point, appointed by National Director-level superiors. Working closely with the Secretary General and the minister, the focal point liaises between the NRT, the ministry, and a supervisory team.
- The supervisory team, consisting of quality management and change support experts, supervises the work teams throughout the process.
- To ensure the assessment is carried out according to programme methodology, a national coordinating consultant is recruited to support the team on the ground and help capitalize on the information identified.
- During the quality management improvement proposals phase, the team is expanded to incorporate other actors in the system, including partners, education experts, civil society, and parent representatives. This phase is estimated to last for approximately six months.
- The selected proposals made to improve education quality (phase 3) will be implemented by education ministry official, with support provided by a range of education partners, based on their field of work.

## Expected outcomes from the programme

- Increased awareness among education system actors about the importance of quality management issues.
- Strengthened capacity among actors at all levels of the education system for assessing quality management practices.
- Development of a co-diagnosis identifying the main barriers to good quality management.
- Proposals for improving quality management based on existing promising practices.
- Supported implementation of the actions identified.
- Creation of quality management training modules for supervisory staff in the education sector.
- Sharing experiences with other countries and a community of education experts.

# Changing practices to improve the quality of education in Africa



## Co-diagnosis

Working with actors to help them analyze their quality management practices based on action research



## Relationships based on trust

Creating the right environment to help actors transform their professional practices



## Shared experiences

Pooling knowledge among actors and within the community of education experts and researchers



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