

EFA FTI Global and Regional Activities Stakeholder Consultation

Thematic Area: Out of School Children

Proposed activity: Data gaps

This activity is well documented and the issues relating to difficulties in defining out of school youth and drop out are appropriately acknowledged. In addition to the attention given to data collection, use of data is critical. Use of data to identify target groups for policy, vs use of data for detailed planning. Here the linkages to local level data management is essential. Provision of technical assistance to support processes of data collection, management and analysis will be necessary. Maintaining a focus on the use of data alongside the processes to collect it, can reinforce motivations to improve data collection, as needs and demands for appropriate, reliable data improved with an evidence-based focus on policy and implementation. This applies at both central and local levels.

As part of the proposed activity it would be useful to collate information on best practice in data collection and management, particularly the linkages between different surveys and measurement techniques and between local and centralized levels. There is a role of the FTI and its partners in disseminating this learning and encouraging peer learning between country offices.

Proposed activity: Policy

The proposed activity gives a central role to the LEG in examining policy, highlighting good (and ineffective) practice etc. They will also need to consider the cost-effectiveness of solutions, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of targeting, accessing evaluations of existing interventions wherever possible as part of this. It is helpful that regional workshops have been included within the proposed approach to facilitate the sharing experience.

Rather than focusing assessment on the main causes of policy inattention (as proposed), it may be more positive and constructive to focus on how issues relating to OOSC have been more effectively addressed in policy than following the list of activities given (TA, action plans, use of data etc). Countries typically have very inclusive education policies, the issues for out of school children are more likely to arise when there is a gap between policy and practice. Thus this activity will need to go beyond the assessment of education policy and plans to explore the planning and budgeting processes and implementation issues that may cause a disjuncture between intended approach and outcomes (linking to activity 3)

Given the multiple causes for lack of enrolment and/or early drop out, overarching policy and complementary interventions and their potential to reduce drop out should be mapped, for example school improvement work, and their significance assessed alongside more targeted interventions to identify policy gaps and areas for improvement. In addition consideration needs to be given to ministries and stakeholders beyond the education, for example health and social protection policies.

Sampling of ESPs should consider going beyond FTI countries, to look at best practice within countries for whom tackling the final ten percent and marginalized has perhaps been addressed over a longer period of time and where policy statements and good practice have had more time to emerge.

Proposed activity: Management and implementation

Given the scope of activities to be covered under this area, the initial approach of a literature review seems reasonable. Finding robust evaluation data will be key.

This activity could be accompanied by peer learning events, both regionally and within country (hosted by LEG), either as part of the research process or to disseminate findings.

Australian Government Aid Agency (AusAID)

Involving non-state providers and civil society in the identification and sharing of good practice will be essential, particularly to draw upon their strengths in community-level interventions.

Through this activity a distinction will need to be maintained between targeted approaches designed to meet the needs of the hardest to reach groups, and more general input-related barriers (e.g. teacher management, school construction and supplies). Strategically it may be more useful to prioritise the former, whilst acknowledging the importance of broader input-related barriers. It is also in the area of more targeted interventions that evidence-based advice and guidance would be most valuable.

The approach taken and expected deliverables will need to consider issues of coordination, particularly on cross sector work, such as feeding programs and the additional management issues that may arise.

Within the guidance produced and approaches for linking national/policy level issues with local level measurement and management of enrollment and attendance, attention also needs to be paid to the scaling up of effective strategies. Learning from NGOs and civil society will be critical to this, and the activities outcomes should seek to build knowledge on what works.

There are overlaps within the activities proposed here and learning outcomes given the focus on the education offer, and financing in terms of appropriate financing mechanisms (e.g. cash transfers) to address demand-side factors.

Conclusion

Overall, the revised paper and activities have provided a more focused approach and a coherent set of proposed activities.