

Stakeholder Consultation on GRA – Learning Outcomes

1. The Stakeholder Consultation thematic paper on learning outcomes sets out a comprehensive package of support to improve learning outcomes in recipient countries. DFID agrees that there is a need for concerted global action to improve the quality of education.
2. DFID is supportive of efforts by the EFA FTI Secretariat to develop a set of indicators and methodologies to measure early grade reading, as a proxy for learning outcomes. We await with interest the final report of the FTI Indicators Panel. We would emphasise the importance of communicating effectively the purpose of any new 'benchmark' of reading fluency (i.e. 45 wpm) with LEGs and ensuring that efforts on learning outcomes are demand driven and response to the priorities of partner governments.
3. Of the eight technical issues listed, we would suggest that teachers and textbooks have been well researched. There is still scope for better understanding of instructional approaches that work in resource poor settings with large classes and that have an impact on learning for all students. There is also a real gap in knowledge about what mix of inputs gives the best impact/value for money. More emphasis could be placed on supporting partner governments to better plan for the provision of quality teaching and learning materials – through rigorous unit cost analysis of monopolistic versus private sector publishing and distribution.
4. Section 3.1 suggests public examinations as a possible benchmark for assessing improved learning outcomes. We are concerned that high stakes examinations may not be a useful benchmark for assessing improvements in learning of all students as they are designed to distinguish between relatively high performing students. In addition, the results not comparable year on year due to the changing exam content and potential for manipulation of standards and results.
5. It would be useful to annex to the consultation document the 'results framework indicators' referred to in the table of proposed activities.