



Building the Capacity of the Ethiopian Education Sector

A Case Study on Teacher Education
and Management Activities

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ABOUT QESSP

The Quality Education Strategic Support Programme (QESSP) aims to enhance the capacity of the education sector in Ethiopia to improve outcomes for learners. We support partners to implement reforms, enhance policy dialogue and improve the evidence base to inform education policy by providing technical assistance, management support and flexible funds.

We focus on these areas: teacher education, school leadership, inclusive education, curriculum development, and system wide strengthening. QESSP is a four-year programme funded by UK aid from the UK government and managed by the British Council.

Find out more: www.ethiopia.britishcouncil.org/QESSP

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SECTION 1

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY

The Quality Education Strategic Support Programme (QESSP), through its interventions, aimed to bring about systemic change within the Ethiopian education system during and beyond its lifetime. Five ‘component outcome’ areas were outlined in the programme’s Theory of Change (ToC), Results Framework (RF) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan.

These components or priority areas are, namely:

1. **Teacher education:** Strengthened teacher training and management capacity
2. **School leadership:** Improved instructional leadership and planning capacity
3. **Inclusion and equity:** Increased capacity in equity and inclusive education
4. **Curriculum:** Strengthened peace education curriculum development capacity
5. **System wide strengthening:** Enhanced institutional and organisational capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Regional Education Bureaus (REBs) to deliver key sector priorities

It is envisaged that if QESSP supported-outputs related to generating evidence, initiating and facilitating policy dialogue and developing capacity are delivered as planned and the critical assumptions identified hold true, then there will be significant individual, institutional and organisational change.

This will, it is believed, result in strengthened capacity of federal and regional educational institutions to enhance quality, through their enhanced ability to design and implement education reform programme and policies at national and regional level (e.g. GEQIP II; ESDP V). In combination with other reform initiatives, the long-term impact will be higher quality, equity and efficiency of general education, including enhanced learning outcomes and retention rates for boys and girls.

QESSP is now in its final year of implementation, and there is increasing need to report on QESSP’s contribution to higher-level results (outcomes) within its RF to DFID, MoE, and other donors in the education sector. It is also an opportune time to draw lessons from QESSP’s experience to inform future programming, such as follow on programmes to GEQIP II (GEQIP E) and other capacity development programmes.

QESSP, in consultation with MoE and DFID, has designed a lesson learning process to take place during its final year (2018-2019). This second case study on QESSP Component “Teacher Education” is a product of this learning process.

The purpose of this study is to trace the contributory effect of QESSP interventions on teacher education and management in Ethiopia, to the extent possible. In studying QESSP contributions, the expected outcomes of the intervention are taken into account, but also more broadly the effects on organisational, institutional and individual capacity.



Policy Dialogue

QESSP supported financially, logistically and/or technically policy dialogue among key education sector stakeholders at a number of conferences and events.

- **A national conference to review the implementation of the teacher education blueprint** was held in Addis in March 2016. More than 300 participants from education faculties of universities, Colleges of Teachers Education (CTEs), REBs, woredas and other stakeholder groups met to identify the challenges faced in the implementation of the blueprint. The decision to commission the study on current teacher education practices was a result of the conference as this was identified by stakeholders as a key area of concern.
- **A Teacher Education Conference** which brought ministry of education officials, University presidents, teacher education colleges deans, teachers representatives, teachers association leaders and national and international researchers together was held in Mekelle on 15/16 November 2018 on “Teaching, teachers and learning outcomes in Ethiopia”.
- **QESSP also supported financially and logistically the 2015 Annual Education Conference** from 25 to 27 October in Mekelle, Tigray. This is a regular event of MoE attended by ministers, MPs, REB heads, university presidents, TVET agency heads, teacher association leaders and other stakeholders drawn from all corners of the country.
- In partnership with various directorates of the MoE and REBs, QESSP delivered **11 events** which were attended by more than 2500 participants throughout the year 2015/2016.

Capacity Development

QESSP undertook organisational and institutional capacity building of key education stakeholders through:

- **Supporting the establishment of the five Centres of Excellence in Education (CoE)** universities (Bahir Dar, Hawassa, Mekele, Jimma and Addis Ababa) with, inter alia: a two day role assignment and planning workshop which brought two representatives from each of the five CoE, five from the MoE and three from the BC in Bishoftu (17-18 August 2018);
- **Assigning CoE specific tasks:** (i) Developing quality assurance manual for teacher education colleges (accreditation); (ii) developing strategic teaching workforce management framework and (iii) organising a national conference on teacher education; and **supporting CoE with international and national consultants as well as establishing long term research collaboration with international education institutions.**
- **Brokering a partnership between the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)** of UK and Addis Ababa and Hawassa universities, the two universities leading on the accreditation and teaching workforce management components respectively;
- **Organising a study visit to the UK** for six delegates drawn from three of the centres of excellence universities. Academic presidents and Centre Coordinators from each of the three Centres were accompanied by two State Ministers and their visit included visits to universities, schools and training providers¹.
- **Supporting the reorganisation of relevant Directorates at the MoE**, with QESSP assigned Advisors, including the centralisation of previously dispersed responsibilities among 13 directorates in one single General Directorate on School Leadership and Teachers Training which functions as single contact point.
- **Providing overall quality assurance and support**, including for organising two validation workshops, to the production of the CoE assigned outputs, namely:
 - Ethiopian teacher workforce management framework
 - Manual on Accreditation of CTEs
- **Supporting the development of the Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30)**, a comprehensive document outlining the strategic approach to reform the education sector according to national long-term developmental goals by MoE education Strategic Centre.
- **Funding a number of project proposals presented by the Regional Education Bureaus**, some of which involving teachers’ education, such as: Impact Assessment on the effectiveness of Upgraded primary school teachers in Tigray; “Better pre and in service training for ABE facilitators in Afar and Somali regions’.



SECTION 2

QESSP INTERVENTIONS

The quality improvement of teachers' education and management has been addressed under two consecutive multi-donor funded GEQIP 1 and GEQIP2 programmes and currently by the General Education Quality Improvement Programme Equity 2017 – 2022 (GEQIP-E), through the Strengthen teachers' and leaders' development component. QESSP was established as a complementary technical assistance programme which would help improving the implementation of GEQIP, however its scope was not expected to be limited to GEQIP-related activities.

At the outset of this current phase of QESSP, teacher education was identified as key intervention area by MoE both in the ESDP and GEQIP II but the specific problems were not identified. To this effect, QESSP organized the Ararat teacher education conference based on the minister's request. A key outcome was the recognition that most stakeholders were aware of the salient issues facing teacher education, but they did not have concrete evidence to fully understand the breadth and depth of the issues. QESSP supported three studies including the following to produce the required evidence.

QESSP addressed the theme of teachers' education (and management) through a range of activities and specific interventions.

Evidence Generation

Among the QESSP supported studies, the following ones were centred on teachers' education and management:

- **A national study of teacher demand and supply gap.** The study aimed to objectively establish the gap between supply and demand and to identify the causes for the gap. It provided recommendations for narrowing the gap. A total of 847 schools and 10,492 teachers from urban and rural areas were surveyed. Both public and private schools of all levels were involved in the study. The study was carried out by a national research firm (BDS) and the MoE Education Strategy Centre (ESC) was responsible for the overall technical management of the study.
- **A study of current teacher education practices** with a view to finding out how well national strategies were implemented, challenges of teacher training at pre- primary to preparatory levels, and possible remedies to improve quality of teacher training. This study was also coordinated by ESC and the Teachers and Educational Leaders Development Directorate (TELDD) of the MoE with support from QESSP.



SECTION 3

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS INFORMED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

QESSP did contribute to more evidence-based policies and strategies in several ways.

Providing evidence-based input to the Education Roadmap long-term strategic approach to teachers' education and management

The outputs of the work of the CoE supported by QESSP - the Teaching Workforce Management Framework and the CTE Accreditation Manual, adopt an ambitious approach that suits well the long-term approach of the Roadmap. In fact, the TWMF, with its ambition to step up the standards and demands on teachers as well as significantly improve their working conditions, adopts a phased approach to implementation distinguishing short-term (2019-2020), medium-term (2021-2025) and long-term (2026-2029) priorities, covering the same time-frame of the Roadmap. Among other things, both documents strengthen the case for establishing an independent Teacher Service Commission and independent accreditation body for the CTEs, two structural innovations that are being integrated in the Roadmap, according to interviewed stakeholders. Also the recommendations from the Annual Teachers' conference, fed by the studies, have been taken up in the context of the Roadmap process, with public endorsement by the State Minister of Education. These contributions are considered by stakeholders particularly timely: the Teaching Workforce Management Framework and Manual for CTE accreditation are almost finalised at the time of writing, while the Roadmap preparation is still going on.

Fostering a performance culture in the teaching profession

The Teaching Workforce Management Framework envisages the creation of a transparent and fair system for rewarding and recognising high-performing teachers and sanction poor-performing teachers. As emphasized by several stakeholders, too often recruitment and careers in the education system have been dependent on different factors than performance, like ethnic or political affiliation (the latter especially for school leaders). By promoting the recognition of qualifications and the strengthening of professionalism of the teaching profession QESSP, together with other interventions, contributes to cultural and behavioral change in the public administration, in line with the reform ambitions of the recently established government.



Connecting the academic world with policy-making

Through the National Teacher Education Conferences, QESSP has been successful in linking academic with practitioner input, as acknowledged by the interviewed academic researchers involved in the CoE. Academically rigorous research studies commissioned by QESSP have been valuable in developing actionable recommendations. The format of the Teachers Education Conference – alternating researchers and practitioner presentations on each theme, and holding discussions in mixed groups of stakeholders – has facilitated the interaction between researchers and policy-makers. A set of recommendations with clear indication of the responsible bodies and time frame has been produced as a result of interaction between academics and practitioners, covering the three conference sub-themes: attracting the right people to teaching, developing teachers into effective instructors and maximizing the teaching force.

Sharpening the dialogue between Federal MoE and REB on teacher shortage with better evidence

Before the Study on teacher supply and demand was carried out, some REBs had claimed that there was shortage of teachers in the country. This claim was often generic; while the study allowed gaining a much more precise picture of the problem, in part a counterintuitive one.

The findings of the study showed that teachers' utilisation in schools is far below the standard set of 22.5 hours/week, which contradicts the general shortage claim. At times, an oversupply or shortage of teachers and a large variation in teachers' load are observed across the regions.

However, the demand for natural science subjects and English language teachers is invariably high in all the regions². The study also identified the reasons for the mismatch: inflexible teacher training modality, inconsistency in applying guidelines on the selection and recruitment of trainees, very limited intake capacity of teachers' education institutions. This evidence-based contribution fostered dialogue between federal and regional level on how to reduce the gap between demand and supply. While improvements in the organisation and content of teacher training are necessary at the federal level (e.g. training teachers that can teach several subjects), REBs need to learn making better projections of their future needs. The discussion is ongoing, but its likely outcome will be the establishment of a Teaching Service Commission at Federal level and the creation of an independent body for CTEs accreditation managed by the centre, with regional focal points. By exposing the lack of capacity of REBs, the study provided a reality check on decentralisation in the education sector.

^[2] Proceedings of the National Teacher Education Conference on "Teachers, teaching and learning outcomes in Ethiopia", Mekelle, November 15/16 2018: British Council 2019.



SECTION 4

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE TEACHING WORKFORCE AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

The teacher workforce management Framework, which is about to be finalised at the time of writing this report, will support the management of teachers in various ways.

Developing a comprehensive model which covers all career stages and balances greater demands on teachers and greater support/better conditions for teachers

The Framework proposes a comprehensive model based on international good practice that covers all aspects of how to acquire, develop, retain/sustain, retire, monitor and evaluate the teaching workforce. The model is balanced: greater engagement and commitment is asked from teachers, but teachers are also provided with better conditions and greater support. This human capital system approach is quite new, according to stakeholders. So far, attention was mostly focused on recruitment and pre-service training, or in-service training at the very best. Little attention was paid to retaining and sustaining teachers more broadly. The Framework also envisages the involvement of retired teachers as mentors, thereby maximizing human capital investments in this category.

Supporting school principals and REBs with an official guidance document

According to stakeholders, the Framework will be of great help to school principals, who never had such a comprehensive guidance on the task of managing teachers, and Regional Education Bureaus, which acknowledged this problem and now can refer to a national policy framework. The Framework proposes a phased implementation plan. Furthermore, REBs and other stakeholders at the validation workshop indicated the need for more detailed implementation guidelines. These will hopefully be commissioned by donors under GEQIP E.

Creating a framework that can be taken up by the National Teaching Service Commission

The Framework is of the utmost importance also for the future National Teaching Service Commission that the government intends to establish with support from the National Teachers' Association (and that recommends as well). This Commission will be responsible for overseeing the management of teachers across the country, including providing a structure for overseeing their rights, executing policies tied to managing their performance, acting as a disciplinary body, and identifying and rewarding good performance of teachers and schools.

SECTION 5

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE ADOPTION OF UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR TEACHER TRAINING ACROSS THE NATION

QESSP contributed to the adoption of uniform standards for teacher training at various levels.

Contributing to the revision of the guidelines for educational management

The study examining the current teacher education practice addressed a recognised element of weakness of the Ethiopian education system. An impact of this activity was that on the basis of the research results, the Guideline for Educational Management, Organization, Community Participation and Finance (the “blue book”) released from the Ministry of Education was revised after 10 years. This is one of the few guidance documents available to school leaders.

Providing CTEs with a limited number of clear standards and related indicators

The MoE had already made attempts to develop a document on the accreditation of CTEs and piloted it in few colleges. However, they decided to join hands with QESSP to produce one agreed comprehensive document. The accreditation Manual, now in draft, provides a set of eight standards related to: vision and mission; governance and management; academic quality; teaching, learning and assessment; research and outreach service; student admission and support; resources; staffing. For each of these standards, indicators are identified. Both standards and indicators have been validated with key stakeholders, including CTE representatives (for instance, staffing and student admission where two themes added on stakeholders’ suggestion). According to the MoE licensing directorate, the establishment of these standards is welcomed by CTEs, especially the best performing ones, as it recognises their efforts.

Introducing an accreditation process with a strong self-assessment component fostering learning

The proposed accreditation procedure envisages an institutional self-assessment by the concerned college, followed by an external audit. The institutional self-assessment is managed by a quality assurance unit of faculty and staff together with a committee including members from the academic programmes, student services, administration and finance, technical support staff, CTE governing board, student union, and CTE's local teacher association. The self-assessment provides

an opportunity to stakeholders to identify the areas which need reinforcement and further improvement to enhance the quality of the CTE in delivering its programmes to achieve its mission and vision within the context of the accreditation standards being rolled out³. Some CTEs involved in the manual drafting highly appreciate this learning and continuous improvement opportunity and have offered their availability to start voluntary accreditation already from the next academic year, one year earlier than foreseen in the draft implementation.

Providing a clear framework for the to-be-established national accreditation agency

Currently there is no accreditation body in the MoE, except for an agency in charge of accreditation of higher education institutions only with a strong administrative focus (Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency). The responsibilities related to accreditation and quality assurance for the time being are shared by the Teaching and Learning programme area of the MoE (including curriculum and teacher development) and the Regulatory area (National education assessment and execution agency, accreditation agency). In the future there will be an accreditation agency to ensure quality and relevance of education in teacher education colleges, as recommended in the Education Roadmap study. The draft regulation establishing the agency has already been sent to the Council of Ministers for inclusion in the coming 90 days agenda of the Council. The accreditation manual will provide the agency with a solid and exhaustive framework for its working.

Supporting a gradual change of CTEs’ organisational culture through the phased rolling out of accreditation

The Manual moves from the awareness that establishing an accreditation system throughout the country requires quite some adaptations and investments on the part of the MoE and CTEs. This is why a phased approach is adopted, with three phases: a preparation phase (2019), a soft launch phase with voluntary accreditation of selected CTEs (2020-2021) and a hard launch phase (from 2022) in which accreditation will become mandatory for all colleges. The Accreditation agency will also be fully established by 2022. The approach is realistic and gives adequate space to initial awareness raising, preparation of policies, alignment with education plans, etc. It also leaves room for revising and fine-tuning the accreditation process.

SECTION 6

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE ETHIOPIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ACTORS IN RELATION TO TEACHERS' EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT

QESSP Teacher education-related activities helped develop the capacity of the education system and actors at various levels: individual, organisational and institutional.

Inspiring action plans based on exposure to international good practice

Through the study visit in the UK, a group of representatives of the Universities hosting the Centres for Excellence in Education together with two state ministers for general and higher education were exposed to the UK experience of teacher training, school leadership, accreditation and quality assurance systems and school workforce management system. This visit generated several lessons and inspired the identification by participants of a range of issues on which to develop action plans for Ethiopia: recruitment issues; mechanisms to broaden the pool of maths or physics teachers; alternative routes towards teaching; practicum and revisiting the attention; mentoring practices and the way how to train them and make more accountable; induction and accreditation; partnership agreements between schools and universities; teacher retention mechanisms; personal development plans to be practiced by each teacher; roles of schools in hiring and dismissing teachers; extra values to be attached with PGDT certification in Ethiopia; attention to be paid on Teacher Educators' recruitment; maintenance of strong links between subject and professional course teachers; mechanisms to ensure schools right to use University resources for success in teacher training; devices to maximize the degree of match between demand and supply of teachers. Moreover, with the support of international consultants international good practice was incorporated in the preparatory work to the teaching workforce framework and the accreditation manual. The CoE coordinators highly appreciated the possibility to benefit from international expertise provided by the QESSP technical assistance.

Giving a role and concrete tasks to Centres of Excellence in Education, allowing researchers to develop their skills

QESSP assigned to three university CoE the responsibility to lead the production of specific outputs (Mekelle University: national conference on teacher education; Addis Ababa University: teaching workforce management framework; Hawassa university: Ethiopian CTEs accreditation manual) and all CoE universities were involved in the productions of the documents. By doing so, QESSP gave CoE a purpose and task while strengthening their ability to produce non-academic deliverables, holding brainstorming workshops, working in a team, etc.

Strengthening networks between Ethiopian universities and the UK NFER

According to interviewed CoE coordinators, it was the first time that the five universities worked together in a structured manner to produce specific outputs. Interviewees highly appreciated the high caliber of the team and enjoyed the experience of working together. The relationship with the UK NFER and the other international experts was also seen as useful. With NFER, a long term partnership has been established that will possibly lead to other collaborations.

Rationalising the institutional structure of the MoE

Among contributions on teacher education, the role of the QESSP advisors to the restructuring of the MoE directorates also deserves mentioning. The fact that responsibility for teacher education was dispersed among several directorates slowed down the decision-making process considerably. Now the single General Directorate on School Leadership and Teachers Training ensures a smoother decision-making process, according to advisors and QESSP programme managers.

SECTION 7

LESSONS LEARNED

Below are a number of lessons mainly directed towards those designing/programming or implementing complex teacher education programmes with demand-driven technical assistance as a central element:

Demand-driven nature was very good for ownership, but also prompted ill planning of resources

At the beginning of the programme, before the outcome components were defined, QESSP responded to requests that were often last minute. This flexibility was appreciated and for sure helped relevance and ownership by the MoE. However, it also encouraged a hectic approach to resource planning. A good balance between flexibility and keeping a strategic results focus is not always simple to find, but is necessary.

Time alignment and coordination with larger relevant programmes like GEQIP should receive due attention

Coordination between DFID, QESSP and GEQIP teams happened in a monthly meeting at the Ministry but in practice there were not many joint activities. Also time-wise alignment was not optimal: QESSP started 18 months later than GEQIP II, while given its nature it had better contributed in the initial phase with evidence generation. It would be important to ensure better alignment and ensure a more regular coordination between the teams, besides MoE fora.

More time should be left for field testing of outputs

Some outputs were produced in the latest phase of the programme leaving several implementation issues open in relation to the workforce management framework and accreditation manual. Both require detailed implementation guidelines, according to stakeholders. Some more time for field testing of the accreditation manual would have been useful to involve CTEs to a greater extent and undertake a further reality check. The successor programme will need to take over the clarification of implementation issues.

Having a good team spirit and high-level membership was important for the CoE task force which produced the two documents

More administrative support for coordination of the publications' editorial process and organisation of meetings would have been appreciated by some task force members.

Gender mainstreaming could be more thorough

There was some attention to gender issues in the definition of standards for CTEs facilities (e.g. provision of dormitories to allow women to more safely attend training). However gender issues could be better addressed in the analysis of the teaching workforce and in the production of recommendations.

More coherence and cross-learning between Teacher Education and School Leadership activities at regional level would be possible

For example, the Bahir Dar CoE could have been involved in the implementation of the school leadership project in the Amhara region, given that the university also delivers training on school leadership. A communication strategy and awareness raising at regional level at the beginning of the programme would help create the link between key regional stakeholders.

It would be important to have a stronger communication strategy

This includes a social media presence and a dedicated website, and awareness raising at regional and local level, also to create some sense of community and continuing knowledge sharing after events among participants.