

Improving Education Delivery in Ethiopia

The experience of the Quality Education Strategic Support Programme (QESSP)



Ministry of Education
Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia

This is the fourth results paper documenting experiences and lessons learnt from support provided to the Ministry of Education (MoE) by QESSP.

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.

www.ethiopia.britishcouncil.org/QESSP



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KEY MESSAGES

Fewer and clearer priorities help focus delivery and achieve results.

Staff delivery units with the best talent possible. This provides employees with better career prospects, which leads to better commitment and higher quality implementation.

Leadership, shorter delivery chain and relative autonomy in budgeting and decision making results in improved implementation.

Timing is of the essence. Ensure there is alignment with the timeline to develop implementation plans and government budget allocation.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Ethiopia's Minister of Education was introduced to deliverology through a QESSP-supported visit to an international conference. At the request of the Minister, QESSP facilitated further discussions with the founder of deliverology, Sir Michael Barber. The discussions led to consensus amongst the Ministry's leadership to commission a scoping visit by an international team to explore two key questions:

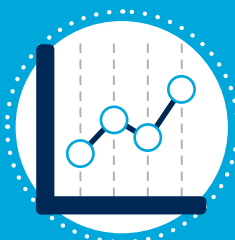
1. Can a delivery system be effective within the context of the Ethiopian education system?
2. If so, what prioritised actions could be accelerated and driven through a delivery system to achieve faster learning outcomes across the primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary sectors?

The scoping visit concluded that the conditions were met in Ethiopia and that the deliverology process could be initiated.



WHAT IS DELIVEROLOGY?

Many countries, including Ethiopia, have sound education policies with limited success in implementation. Deliverology aims to improve the implementation of policy by prioritising a small number of selected priorities through the use of data. Key components include creating delivery units to lead implementation, collecting data to support assessment of targets and progress, and embedding routines.



Necessary conditions required for a successful delivery approach

- **Committed top leadership**
- **Few core priorities with great potential impact**
- **Ambitious and concrete targets (in numbers not words)**
- **Strong and realistic plans created by those tasked with implementing, using a catalysing force to ensure detailed action plans are created**
- **Dedicated budgets matching the needs of the plan, since without funding nothing can be delivered**
- **Strong performance management**
- **Continuous external pressure on the system to perform**

The scoping team also identified three key challenges:

Prioritisation: The Ethiopia Education Sector Development Programme V (ESDP V) focused on over 54 targets/ indicators without any form of prioritisation. This resulted in a lack of focus for implementation. It was recommended that the sector select a few key priority initiatives to be achieved over one to two years.

Availability of quality data: Leaders need accurate and verifiable data regularly for effective decision making. However, the quality and frequency of obtaining data can pose significant challenges. In Ethiopia, the Education Management Information System (EMIS) collected, analysed and published data every two years, which made the information out of date for any timely decisions.

Field support: Ensuring a common understanding of key initiatives and an ability to implement them requires a commitment to implementation at all levels – from the Minister to the classroom. This required a concerted effort to build implementation capacity and provide support through regional and Woreda administrations.

THE RESPONSE

QESSP supported the Ministry of Education to address the above challenges and roll-out the deliverology approach through the following activities:

Workshops on deliverology: In July 2017, two key workshops were organised to introduce the deliverology approach to government stakeholders and obtain high-level buy-in for implementation. The first workshop presented the deliverology concept to the Prime Minister and other high-ranking officials, and ultimately achieved buy-in from senior leadership.

To transform the country's economic focus from an agricultural-led economy to manufacturing and export-oriented, deliverology will help to achieve better results and develop knowledgeable, trained and skilled professionals.

Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemeriam Desalegn



A second workshop was held for high level officials in the education sector, including the Minister, State Ministers, Regional Education Bureau Heads, University Presidents, and others. Clear priority areas for the education sector - at all levels - were agreed at the workshop.

To achieve the successful transformation of Ethiopia's education system, the science and art of deliverology is vital.

Workshop participant



Developing manuals: To support the implementation, five manuals were developed and validated. Practical check lists were created to track progress on the following key areas: lesson plan, lesson study, instructional leadership, engaging parents, school feeding, task management, and teacher/student attendance.

Creating an enabling environment: A Ministerial Delivery Unit (MDU) was created to lead the effort. Based on data derived from the scoping study, three focal sub-sectors were chosen: general, higher and TVET education. QESSP provided technical assistance to the MDU, along with advisors from Delivery Associates, an international firm specialising in helping leaders deliver long-lasting and meaningful results.

Regional Delivery Units (RDUs) were also established for general education and TVET institutes in nine regions and two city administrations. In the higher education sector, a delivery focal person was assigned in each of the 36 universities.

"Delivery Labs": A series of workshops, named "Delivery Labs", were held at regional and national levels for over 550 staff in the education sector, in which key challenges were identified, priority areas agreed, strategies designed, and detailed implementation plans developed. The implementation plans were different from previous plans in that they were very detailed with responsible persons assigned to each of the activities and with a clear delivery chain. The plans also identified possible challenges and weak spots in the education system that needed to be strengthened to deliver results.

Capacity development trainings: Various capacity building initiatives, including on-the-job-coaching, formal training, and international experience sharing targeting RDU and MDU staff were implemented. The capacity building focussed on facilitating delivery workshops, developing implementation plans, and implementing delivery routines effectively. Participants also learned how to use IT software to support the successful implementation of deliverology, including: Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Power Point, Google Drive, and other relevant programmes.

THE RESULTS

Although it is too early to witness concrete results at this stage in terms of improved learning outcomes and employability, the following results were observed:

Areas of focus prioritised: The 54 sector targets were revised down to three priority areas and targets.

1. General Education: All students from Grades 1 to 12 achieve 50 percent and above in NLA subjects
2. Higher Education: 80 percent of graduates employed with degree relevant employment within 1 year
3. TVET: 90 percent of TVET graduates will be employed or self-employed within one year

Delivery units established: Twenty-five delivery units were established (3 ministerial, 22 regional) and 36 delivery focal persons (DFPs) in universities assigned. All of these units have become functional in a short time.

Routines embedded: Different routines to track and review progress in a scheduled and structured manner were embedded into the work of the delivery teams. Among them are traffic light systems, monthly notes, continuous collection of data, and regular stocktake meetings.

These new routines provided a tremendous opportunity for the sector to focus on performance and engage in timely problem solving and course correction. The routines are quickly gaining acceptance in the sector. For example, the rate of receiving weekly traffic light and monthly reports from regions has increased from 20 percent in February to 70 percent in June 2018.

Quality implementation plans developed: A total of 58 detailed delivery implementation plans were developed (11 for regional education bureaus, 11 for TVET institutes and 36 for universities).

Figure 1: Traffic Light - Progress report against strategy

	Lesson plan	Coaching	Instructional leadership	Parental engagement	Data	Accountability	School feeding	Teacher availability	Basic facilities
Addis Ababa									
Afar									
Amhara									
Benishangul-Gumuz									
Dire Dawa									
Ethiopia-Somali									
Gambella									
Harrari									
Oromia									
SNNPR									
Tigray									

Apart from the above system strengthening gains, some early results have been recorded.

Career service in universities improved: Improving career services is one of the strategies developed for higher education in an effort to increase the employability of graduates. Over 23,000 prospective graduates (across 22 universities) have participated in trainings on communication skills, CV writing, job searching, and mock interviews. In addition to the training, approximately 9,000 students have also benefited from career counselling sessions held across 15 universities.

As part of the strategy to increase employability, a national career expo - the first of its kind in Ethiopia - was organised. The expo was held on August 10-11, 2018 at the Millennium Hall in Addis Ababa. Over 29,000 new graduates, 200 firms, prominent industry leaders, HR managers, and consultants attended the expo. This led to over 3,000 graduates being recruited for different jobs.



LESSONS **LEARNED**

Alignment of goals enhances collaboration

The various workshops have successfully aligned the different regions and relevant parties to a common goal, with clear targets, and trajectories. This has also encouraged collaboration and exchanges between delivery focal persons and RDUs, through active interaction over Google Groups.

National and regional plans should be developed in parallel

The initial plan for the workshops was to split the regions into separate clusters, holding a workshop for one cluster after another, in order to account for available resources and the large size of workshop groups. However, the regions completed their delivery plans at different times, which caused challenges in aligning activities and milestones at a national level. In the future, it would be more optimal for all regions to develop their plans in parallel.

Budgeting and planning periods should be aligned

Although a detailed implementation plan was prepared, required budget for the implementation was assigned elsewhere and regions struggled to finance proposed activities. This can be avoided by aligning planning and budgeting periods.

Involvement of senior leaders significantly enhances implementation

At the higher education workshop, University Presidents were invited to attend the final day and sign a pledge to commit to the delivery plans. While the REB Heads and regional TVET Heads also signed a pledge, they were mostly absent during the workshops and were also unavailable post-workshop for RDUs to brief them about the plans. As a result, the delivery plan for the higher education sector was implemented faster than that of general education. In the future, it is imperative that leaders attend the workshops, so that they are fully aware of what is expected of them and their bureaus.