

Chapter 4

Country Initiatives

4.1 Access to education, through partnerships with the private sector, Cameroon

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Opportunities for education
Other issues addressed	Improved efficiency in delivery Equity in education Increased professionalisation Increased variety of study programmes
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary Tertiary Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Making education accessible to all, as well as increasing the range of education services available.

Outputs: Outputs identified to date include:

- (a) better variety in programmes on offer;
- (b) greater choice for students and pupils;
- (c) improved enrolments; and
- (d) distances to school shortened.

Outcomes: Outcomes identified to date include more positive attitudes by parents, as they can now get their children to pursue the trades they desire for them, sometimes without even having to cover long distances.

The Cameroon government acknowledges that alone it is incapable of meeting the needs of providing schools and universities. Therefore, it is encouraging the private sector to play an important role in meeting the heavy demand.

In the past seven years, private education has gained ground at all levels in pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary. Private education is prepared to provide support where the government is unable to meet the needs of the community. In vocational training, and also in higher education, programmes are offered by private institutions. Although it is more expensive, it adequately addresses the needs of the population. (The government pays no subsidies to the private institutions delivering education services.)

Implementation and challenges

Cameroon faces overcrowding in classrooms, overdependence on the government and a shortage of places to meet demand. To remedy these challenges, the government has enacted a law on private education; and so the process and procedure for creating private institutions has been made easier. The government has also enacted mechanisms intended

to stimulate the creation of new establishments; there are also new mechanisms for quality assurance and to establish a supervisory authority.

Non-legitimate education establishments still exist and are shut down once discovered. A related challenge lies in the recruitment of unqualified teachers by private establishments, an issue which is dealt with by regular institutional inspections.

More positive attitudes are being shown by parents who can now encourage their children to complete courses for eventual employment, sometimes without having to travel long distances to undertake their studies.

The major priorities for advancing education in Cameroon in the future, and achieving its goal of access for all, are:

- improving retention rates and eliminating social inequalities;
- improving the quality of service delivery; and
- encouraging private sector participation.

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4.2 Apprenticeship scheme, Mauritius

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Increasing access to and improving relevance of training Private-public partnerships – increased industry participation in training
Other issues addressed	Addressing the challenges faced by the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector
Level of initiative	Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Students Industry

Initiative aims

Goal: Greater access to education, improved quality and increased relevance of technical and vocational education and training.

Objectives: Improve employability and eliminate the mismatch between training and the demands of industry.

Outputs: There has been greater involvement of industries in the apprenticeship scheme. Currently the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) is working with a network of around 150 enterprises on this project, and more than 1,000 apprentices are enrolled every year to follow courses under the scheme – representing 30 per cent of total pre-employment training.

Outcomes: High rates of employment have been identified among ex-apprentices (78 per cent in 2011) as revealed by tracer studies conducted six months after the completion of training programmes. The figure shows that apprenticeship training contributes to enhancing the employability of young people. The survey of employers conducted on a yearly basis confirmed that employers are highly satisfied with the job performance of ex-apprentices. The training of supervisors' programmes has helped to bring about a positive change in attitudes of supervisors engaged in apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training has led to a new work culture, orientated towards learning through sharing at the workplace.

The apprenticeship scheme was introduced in 1996 to promote apprenticeship training and widen access to training. The scheme has various advantages over centre-based training such as:

- training costs are low;
- training is more relevant to industry needs;
- apprentices are eligible for payment of a monthly stipend to encourage them to enrol in training under the scheme; and
- the incentive also contributes to the integration of, and access by, needy students.

Participating apprentices should be older than 16 years; they normally spend four days each week in an enterprise to acquire work experience, and one day in an MITD training centre for theoretical and technological back-up. Apprentices undergo block release (two weeks' duration), centre-based training at the start of the apprenticeship to enable them to develop the basic initial skills required for engaging effectively in the on-the-job training.

Apprenticeship training is especially focused on the unemployed who have left the education system and who seek to enter the labour market, but are unskilled.

Generally, the period of apprenticeship lasts for one to two years, and leads to the National Trade Certificate or National Certificate, depending on the trade. The conditions of apprenticeship training are governed by a contract which is signed by the employer and the apprentice (or their responsible party).

The apprenticeship scheme gained momentum after the introduction of financial incentives in 2000 for employers participating in the scheme. The financial incentive contributed to motivating employers to engage actively in training under the scheme's activities – for the shared benefits of the industries, apprentices, and society. Skilling of supervisors has been conducted to ensure proper on-the-job training for apprentices.

Apprenticeship training represents around 30 per cent of pre-employment training in Mauritius, thus leading to increased access to training of youngsters who were largely 'dropouts' from mainstream education. The high employment rate of apprentices shows that apprenticeship training definitely helps young people to integrate into the world of work more smoothly. Furthermore, the apprenticeship scheme is the preferred mode of training in the hospitality sector, which is one of the pillars of the Mauritian economy.

Implementation and challenges

The MITD, originally called the Industrial and Vocational Training Board, is responsible for conducting apprenticeship training. In 1996, MITD launched the apprenticeship scheme in five trades, involving a total enrolment of 134 apprenticeships.

Currently, because of the many different initiatives implemented to expand the scheme, MITD is offering apprenticeship training through the scheme in a total of 22 trades – involving an overall enrolment of more than 1,000 apprentices (excluding in-house apprenticeship training conducted by employers).

The MITD has identified 69 apprenticeable trades which have the potential to provide training under the apprenticeship scheme. The MITD acts as a facilitator and monitors the on-the-job training process. Presently, National Certificates at Levels III and IV on the National Qualifications Framework scale are being offered under the scheme.

An overarching, tripartite apprenticeship committee is mandated to:

- investigate any dispute arising out of a contract referred to it and endeavour to settle it amicably;
- approve the extension of the term of any apprenticeship when the extension is in the interest of the apprentice;
- approve the reduction of the duration of apprenticeship where the apprenticeship committee is satisfied that the apprentice has already reached a high level of training; and
- enquire into any matter relating to apprenticeship, in any trade or industry.

Apprentices are paid a monthly allowance by employers, which is equivalent to 40 to 60 per cent of the minimum wage. From 2000, employers were reimbursed by the (previous) Institutional Vocational Training Board, and since 2004 by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), for 50 per cent of the qualifying expenses (apprentice wages and overheads) incurred by the employer.

The MITD is responsible for assuring the quality of the apprenticeship training, through close monitoring of on-the-job training, while the Mauritius Qualifications Authority is responsible for quality assurance of training programmes offered under this scheme.

One of the major challenges faced by the scheme's organisers was to motivate industries to participate in apprenticeship training. However, to resolve this problem, sensitisation campaigns were carried out with the different associations and groupings of local industries. To further encourage employer participation, the government provides financial incentives, under the levy grant incentive scheme, to employers participating in apprenticeship training.

A second major challenge was ensuring quality on-the-job training. To address this challenge, the MITD organised a number of training sessions with supervisors who were working in relevant industries, to provide them with the necessary skills to coach apprentices. During their training process, a logbook was introduced to assist in the monitoring of on-the-job training.

The third challenge has been a (relatively) high dropout rate among apprentices. To contain this problem, apprentices are paid a higher stipend in the second year of apprenticeship to encourage them to complete their training programme.

For other countries considering establishing a similar apprenticeship programme, Mauritius educators advise that it is important to set up a proper incentive package for employers – to motivate them to participate in apprenticeship training. Training of supervisors is essential for ensuring quality on-the-job training, and it is equally important to establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure quality assurance measures, while the legal implications have to be examined carefully to establish clearly the responsibilities of all parties.

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4.3 Assessment and recognition of foreign credentials for the teaching profession, Canada

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Pan-Canadian teacher mobility
Other issues addressed	Enhance teacher mobility between Canadian provinces and territories Facilitate the integration of foreign-educated teachers into the Canadian labour market
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Allow a teacher certified in one Canadian province or territory to receive a teaching certificate in any other province/territory.

Objectives: To provide teacher certification registrars in all Canadian provinces and territories assurance that teachers certified in all jurisdictions meet the highest standards of qualifications.

Outputs: Enhanced labour mobility, and enhanced certification processes for foreign-educated teachers.

Outcomes: These initiatives have significantly enhanced the experience of certified teachers who move from one Canadian province or territory to another.

In Canada, issues related to teacher education and certification are under the jurisdiction of individual provinces and territories, which has led to variations in the types of teaching certificates available. The initiatives will facilitate the movement of teachers to areas that may face labour shortages.

They will also ensure that teachers certified in one Canadian province or territory, including foreign-educated professionals, can receive a teaching certificate in any other, without being required to take additional courses. For foreign-educated teachers, the implementation of the Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Credentials will mean that there will be equivalent requirements across the country.

Implementation and challenges

Registrars for teacher certification in all provinces and territories exchange information with regard to international teacher-education institutions. The registrars are also looking at areas where establishing common requirements and practices are possible. When considering implementing a similar programme elsewhere, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, recommends ensuring continued communication between teacher-certification registrars in order to carry out such initiatives successfully.

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4.4 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), Australia

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	A positive start to life
Other issues addressed	Quality of a child's earliest environments Availability of appropriate experiences at the right stages of development
Level of initiative	Pre-primary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Early childhood, health and community service government agencies (federal, state and local), non-government organisations, service providers

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Provide data to inform policy and service delivery so that governments and communities can develop and reorient services and systems to improve the health, well-being and early learning of young children.
- Outputs:** The 2009 AEDI implementation provided Australia with the first comprehensive and holistic national picture of how young children are faring in almost every community across the country. It showed that while the majority of Australian children are doing well, almost one in four (23.6 per cent) children start school developmentally vulnerable in at least one domain, and just over 10 per cent on two or more domains (11.8 per cent). It also showed the variations across states and even more, across communities.
- Governments, communities and families now have access to a wealth of publically available information through the AEDI website⁵⁷ including:
- a 2009 national AEDI report which provides an overview of the results at national and state/territory level;
 - AEDI community maps which provide a geographic representation of the data collected, including the number and proportion of children in the local community who are on track, those at risk and those developmentally vulnerable on each of the AEDI domains;
 - AEDI community profiles containing important information about early childhood development outcomes using community-level AEDI results and contextual information, including population demographics for the whole community; and
 - AEDI school profiles available to school principals showing the results for children attending their school, so that principals and early years' teachers can use this information to inform planning, better prepare for the children entering their school and develop school–community partnerships.
- Outcomes:** Since the results first became available in December 2009, governments (at all levels) and community organisations have been using the data to:
- inform early childhood development policy and practice such as transition to school or reading and literacy programmes;
 - create partnerships across education, health and community services; and
 - develop or refine community based initiatives, such as young parents groups, mobile playgroups, parent workshops, community forums and partnerships.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)⁵⁸ is a population-based measure of young children's development which shows how children are faring in the years before they reach school. It provides governments and communities with comprehensive and holistic information to inform early years policy and service delivery.

The AEDI provides a measure of children's development at the time they start school in five key areas of early childhood development (or domains) – physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills and general knowledge. All of these areas are important and are considered predictors of good adult health, education and social outcomes.

By providing governments and communities with the evidence they need to inform early years' policy and planning, the AEDI can help ensure children arrive at school better prepared to engage effectively in the education system. Experts know from previous research that there are children who are at risk of not making a successful transition to school, and the gap between these children and their peers increases progressively.

While the AEDI provides information about the early years, it is also a vital tool for schools, in that it can be used to:

- strengthen links with community partners, early years education and care services, local government agencies, health centres, libraries and other local organisations, and encourage them to explore new ways of working together; and
- reflect on the development of children entering school and inform early years planning and curriculum development.

Implementation and challenges

The AEDI is an Australian government initiative, led by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) working in close partnership with state and territory agencies (especially education departments) and two leading Australian research organisations (the Centre for Community Child Health at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth).

The 2009 (initial) national implementation of the AEDI was a response to the need for more comprehensive early childhood data, to underpin the Australian government's early childhood reform agenda. Australia's National Early Childhood Development Strategy – Investing in the early years (Australian Government, 2009a) – also recognises the need to build a solid evidence base as one of its six reform priority areas.

Prior to the 2009 national implementation, Australia did not have access to such comprehensive and nationally consistent population-based information about its young children. The results from the 2009 AEDI are now providing a wealth of information which is being used to influence early childhood initiatives at the community, state and national levels, as well as inform early childhood policy development.

The commitment to ongoing national data collections every three years is recognition of the importance of this data and its continued relevance to governments and community organisations. Without ongoing collections Australia would not be able to:

- ask questions around what is working well and what needs to be improved;
- have access to up-to-date information on young children;
- support the growth and maintenance of partnerships that have already developed, across education, health and community services; and
- have a national progress measure of early childhood development (as endorsed by the Council of Australian governments).

AEDI is a measure of how young children are developing in different communities. This information helps schools, communities and governments to pinpoint the types of services,

resources and support that young children and their families need to give children the best possible start in life.

The AEDI provides information on young children's development across five key areas (or domains):

- (a) physical health and well-being: whether a child is healthy, independent, ready for school each day;
- (b) social competence: whether a child is self-confident, gets along with others and shares, how a child plays;
- (c) emotional maturity: whether a child is able to concentrate, help others, is patient, not aggressive or angry;
- (d) language and cognitive skills: whether a child is interested in reading and writing, can count and recognise numbers and shapes; and
- (e) communication skills and general knowledge: whether a child can tell a story, communicate with adults and children, articulate themselves.

Teachers of children in their first year of full-time school collect the AEDI data by completing a checklist based on their knowledge of each child in their class. Information is entered into a secure web-based data entry system and children are not required to be present. To implement the AEDI, schools are provided with funding for teacher relief to enable teachers to complete the checklists (20 minutes per checklist plus one hour professional development).

The AEDI has been adapted to ensure it is culturally inclusive and appropriate for use with indigenous children. Teachers are also encouraged to complete the AEDI checklist with an indigenous cultural consultant, if available, to bring unique cultural knowledge relating to the child.

While the AEDI is completed by teachers, results are reported for the communities where children live, *not* where they go to school. The results show proportions of children 'on track', 'developmentally at risk' and 'developmentally vulnerable' – in the five AEDI domains identified above.

In 2009 the AEDI was completed nationwide for the first time. AEDI Checklists were completed for 261,147 children (97.5 per cent of the estimated five-year-old population) across Australia. This involved 15,522 teachers from 7,422 government, Catholic and independent schools (95.6 per cent of schools with eligible children). The second AEDI data collection is being undertaken between 1 May and 31 July 2012, with results to be released in 2013. Based on 2009 figures, it is expected that data will be collected on more than 270,000 children across Australia. Similar implementation timelines are expected for future implementations (2015, 2018, etc.)

The AEDI implementation team in DEEWR note that rolling out a national initiative, collecting data on all children in their first year of full time school is challenging, given the vast distances, state and regional variations, and significant remote areas in Australia. To achieve their aims, DEEWR has worked closely with state/territory colleagues to develop a national approach that has flexibility to accommodate jurisdictional differences and provided funding and other incentives to promote participation in the programme as well as use of the AEDI results.

While teachers complete the AEDI checklist for students in their class, the information collected largely reflects what the children encountered in the years prior to starting school. As such, it was important in engaging schools (and other education sector bodies) in understanding the benefits of the AEDI and why teachers were being asked to complete the checklist.

To enhance schools' engagement with the AEDI, co-ordinators were employed in every state and territory to work directly with schools and other key stakeholders, such as teachers

unions. In addition, as noted above, teacher relief was offered to reimburse schools for the time taken to complete the checklist. This, along with strong messaging around the value of the AEDI to schools, communities and governments, made it possible to achieve the very high completion rate for the first national collection in 2009. A similar approach has been adopted for the 2012 data collection.

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4.5 Better Communication Research Programme, United Kingdom

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers Parents Education system administrators

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Provide for children and young people with significant speech, language and communication needs (SLCN.)
- Outputs:** A series of research reports have been produced or are in their final stage of completion; ‘What Works’, a communication-supporting classroom observation tool⁵⁹ and a resource analysis, has been created and will be translated into a web-based resource. The Warwick University Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) facility also contributed actively to the UK National Year of Communication in 2011 (through national conferences) and to the Communication Council which operated over this period.
- Outcomes:** The Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP) has contributed to the development of a specific and sustained consideration of the requirements of children and young people with SLCN and to the development of services to meet their needs. This includes the support of parents and professionals to which CEDAR’s research and dissemination have contributed.

The United Kingdom (UK) government recently commissioned a review of provision for children and young people with SLCN. Warwick University’s CEDAR undertook research in support of the review. The government accepted the review’s recommendations in full, and CEDAR was commissioned to undertake research as part of the Better Communication Action Plan.

Implementation and challenges

Collaboratively with partner organisations, CEDAR led the BCRP 2009–12, which comprised a series of related research programmes. The interim results have been presented in two reports and at three national conferences during the UK National Year of Communication in 2011. Final reports are currently being prepared for publication by the UK Department for Education (DfE).

The BCRP has demonstrated:

- a coherent, comprehensive research programme led by a core team and specialists, with researchers specific to each project;
- active engagement with practitioners, including speech and language therapists; key voluntary and community sector bodies (including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, the Association for All Speech Impaired Children (Afasic), Communication Trust);
- a national UK expert steering group with international experts as ‘critical friends’;
- active continuous/frequent engagement with the department for education; and

- continuing feedback of results during the programme, wherever possible, to allow responses to the developing research base.

The main challenges faced by the initiative concerned focus and scale. SLCN is a problematic concept as it is approached in two different ways in the UK: (a) specifically, to include children and young people with *primary* SLCN; and (b) to include a wider group with *secondary* SLCN (i.e., where these needs arise from another primary difficulty such as substantial hearing impairment or intellectual disability).

As a result, researchers had to produce a *programme*, not a single *project*. CEDAR was commissioned to develop this in consultation with the DfE and practitioners in the field. Hence, the programme was organic, developing over its lifetime, but needing also to maintain the confidence of the SLCN professional community, parents and the DfE. Moreover, one study suffered from problems in the National Health Service (NHS) with respect to research: governance procedures resulted in delays in starting one of the CEDAR projects (on children who stammer).

It is planned that, working with the DfE, voluntary bodies and others, the research will be used:

- to develop policy on the special educational needs system nationally and locally, with an emphasis on needs rather than diagnostic category;
- to develop pedagogy, by access to reviews of effectiveness of interventions and of classroom environments and pedagogy that supports communication; and
- to benefit children from better identification of their needs and more appropriately targeted and evaluated interventions.

CEDAR personnel advise that a research programme of this type and size requires a high level of expertise, not only in research *per se* but also in professional and policy experience. To achieve this, a core team of four, plus a specialist team of four professors, and seven co-investigators from five universities, was established. The CEDAR team also found that continuous engagement with the programme funder (DfE) was essential to ensure the research direction was acceptable and that results are disseminated widely, to optimise their impact.

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4.6 Bridging the Gap programme, Mauritius

Primary theme	Equity
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Transition between pre-primary and primary stages
Other issues addressed	To ensure the successful completion of primary schooling
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

- Goal:** The Bridging the Gap programme involves a one-term coaching of five-year old children who join Standard I of the primary schooling cycle to allow them to make the transition slowly and harmoniously from the informal learning of pre-school (or the home) to the formal learning of the primary cycle.
- Objectives:** To ensure that new entrants in the primary sector are on an equal footing in terms of acquired basic competencies and skills before embarking on the primary learning path.
- Outputs:** It has been noted that pupils adapted happily to a new school environment, and the rate of absenteeism among Standard I pupils dropped. There is better interaction between teacher and pupils, leading to improved participation of pupils in class activities, and the programme now has become an important part of the education system in Mauritius, with widespread acceptance of its importance.
- Outcomes:** An assessment of the programme revealed that pupils were ready to start the Standard I programme with more confidence.

The programme is activity-based and child-centred. It is carried out during the whole of the child's first term. Children are not given textbooks; instead teachers are fully equipped to carry out activities that foster the process of learning through play, gradually moving into formal education.

However, the vocabulary that pupils will eventually use is introduced in the activities. The classroom arrangement resembles one to which the child has been accustomed in the single-term, pre-primary class. The programme's focus is on language development and the acquisition of abstract concepts through play-based activities.

Formal textbooks are introduced during the second term, while retaining the play-based activity and learning approach to literacy, numeracy, health and physical education. All Standard I classrooms provide purpose-built, age-appropriate furniture and resources to ensure a conducive learning environment, while encouraging a successful transition into formal primary schooling.

Implementation and challenges

The programme is driven at the central level by the curriculum directorate of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education, which has the responsibility for training educators in Mauritius. Relevant pedagogical materials have been developed to support the programme.

At the beginning of each year, once a school's head teacher has allocated teachers to specific classes, special training is provided for all educators of Standard I. The primary inspectorate is responsible for the programme's quality assurance, and a specific budget is allocated to each school to operate the programme. Schools are also given the responsibility for guiding parents to strengthen the continuum between school and home.

The major challenges identified relate to parental resistance: some parents have felt that, as their children are not being taught in the formal way with a textbook, the programme is a continuation of pre-primary activities, and that pupils are wasting time. Resistance has also come from teachers who are used to the traditional methods of teaching which are clearly not child-centred.

Intensive sensitisation has been conducted to inform parents, and through the mass media. Heads of schools have adopted an open-door approach to allow parents to understand the programme. Posters and leaflets, explaining the philosophy of the programme, have been prepared for parents and other stakeholders. Prior to this, briefings were conducted for all Standard I teachers.

Considering the positive results obtained from this programme to date, the Mauritius Education Ministry believes that this programme should be a normal feature of the transition from home or pre-schools to primary school especially in view of the new pedagogy which is non-textbook based, and which views learning as a fun activity. Further, young children's social and communication skills are encouraged by the Bridging the Gap programme.

If Mauritius were to repeat or redesign the initiative it would:

- involve all stakeholders – from the inception stage of the programme; and
- ensure consolidation of the curriculum in the pre-primary sector to reduce the potential learning gap. This will eventually expose the child to more play- and activity-based learning that will develop his or her confidence and self-esteem – which are essential in laying a strong foundation for all future learning.

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4.7 Certificate of Primary Education repeaters project, Mauritius

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Quality in education
Other issues addressed	Improving Certificate of Primary Education results and ensuring no wastage of human resources
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Increase the pass rate at the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) level, thus ensuring that all pupils are given the opportunity to access secondary schooling and improve the overall quality of output.
- Objectives:** To reduce the rate of ‘dropouts’ from the education system, by giving failed CPE students a second chance – through a programme of study that takes into account the student’s previous learning deficits.
- Outputs:** Although the project only began in 2011, the pass rate of CPE repeaters has increased by three per cent.
- Outcomes:** At the end of the initial project a positive change was noted in the pupils. They became more confident and developed a positive attitude towards the CPE examination. The teachers involved also had a sense of satisfaction and achievement. Teachers have been motivated to teach slower learners in a different way.

The CPE repeaters project is a ‘catch-up’ initiative, to allow pupils to acquire the basic essential competencies required after primary schooling. This initiative is important within the broader Mauritian national education system as it opens further avenues for those who want to ‘beat the failure trap’. The transition rate will thus be increased, as more students will be allowed or able to access secondary schooling, and move on to the tertiary level. By having more students graduating at the tertiary level, greater numbers of young people will become members of society able to contribute to sustainable development in Mauritius.

Implementation and challenges

The project has been designed to cover competencies not mastered from Standard III level schooling. First, teachers teach the essential learning competencies (ELC) for Standards III, IV and V, to ensure that pupils are ready to address the ELC component of the CPE. Next, to boost their self-esteem, a model question paper focussing on the ELC component is completed by pupils. From this, their shortcomings are identified, and teachers carry out revision and consolidation as a final stage in the process.

The project is managed at the central level by the Ministry of Education which has overall responsibility, and which provides budget allocations for the development of materials. Implementation is the responsibility of the curriculum directorate, while the primary inspectorate is responsible for monitoring and quality assurance.

The Mauritius Ministry of Education has not identified any significant challenges to implementing the project. Ministry personnel believe this is because all relevant tools and materials required were provided to teachers. Furthermore, intensive sensitisation was carried out, and all teachers responsible for repeaters’ classes were given appropriate training.

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4.8 Child-friendly approach in primary education, Sri Lanka

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Continuous school improvement
Other issues addressed	Personal development
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Primary students, teachers, parents and communities

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Lay a firm foundation for the development of the personality of the child; and develop in them the necessary competencies to continue to secondary education.
- Objectives:**
- (a) To ensure full participation of children in the 5–9 age group in primary education;
 - (b) To ensure all children completing primary education attain essential learning competencies;
 - (c) To ensure 80 per cent of children completing primary education attain mastery in desired learning competencies.
- Outputs:** Outputs include:
- (a) low absenteeism;
 - (b) fewer dropouts;
 - (c) introduction of nutrition programmes;
 - (d) cleaner physical environments;
 - (e) improved school medical inspection and referral services;
 - (f) better drinking water and sanitary facilities; and
 - (g) introduction of health clubs in primary schools.
- Outcomes:** Outcomes already identified from the initiative include:
- (a) improved community participation;
 - (b) increased levels of essential learning competencies;
 - (c) multilevel teaching;
 - (d) positive relationships with communities;
 - (e) activity-based education; and
 - (f) children now engaging in decision-making.

Sri Lanka is committed to making universal primary education a reality. To achieve this, the nation needs to address the combined challenges of: schooling access; the development of the full potentialities of all students at the primary education level; a protective, safe and healthy schooling environment; and effective participation of communities.

Sri Lanka's child-friendly approach is a school-based participatory process that builds the capacity of all stakeholders to work together for the holistic development of the child. It focuses on access to schooling, inclusive education and an enhanced quality of education, which will shape children's life chances for the future.

A framework has been developed for the child-friendly approach. It contains the definition of the child friendly school, six dimensions, a number of criteria within each dimension, and indicators for each criterion. If a school achieves all six dimensions, that school is then known as a 'child-friendly school'.

School self-assessment is another feature of this child-friendly approach. A representative group of all the stakeholders, including children, assesses the existing level of the school by using criteria formulated by the framework. The representative group then identifies school requirements in a priority order, and the school development plan is prepared using those priorities.

Implementation and challenges

The Sri Lankan Ministry of Education (MoE) supports schools through a national level resource group. Provincial resource groups are established and their capacity development is provided by the national resource group. Provincial resource groups are responsible (in turn) for enhancing the grassroots levels. Vertical budget allocations operate, while monitoring systems are part of the overall initiative's framework.

The child-friendly initiative is currently operating in 1,400 primary schools or primary sections, and is expected to expand gradually.

The six dimensions of the child-friendly approach to education are:

- rights-based and proactively inclusive;
- gender-responsive;
- improving quality learning outcomes;
- healthy, safe and protective of children;
- actively engaged with students, families and communities;
- supported by child friendly systems, policies, practices and regulations.

Within (four of) those six dimensions, specific criteria include:

Dimension 1: Rights-based and proactively inclusive

- (a) effective mechanisms for preventing 'dropouts' and seeking and responding to out-of-school children are in place and applied;
- (b) all children have equal access to activities and resources in the school;
- (c) corporal and psychological punishment are not practised and preventive measures and responses to bullying are in place; and
- (d) the school's undertakings are based on the understanding – by the whole school community – of the rights of the child.

Dimension 2: Gender-responsive

- (a) equal opportunities exist for girls and boys to support completion of primary education and to transition to secondary education;
- (b) girls and boys participate on an equal basis in all school activities; and
- (c) physical facilities are appropriate for girls and boys.

Dimension 3: Improving quality learning outcomes

- (a) adequate human resources and classroom facilities are available to support learning;
- (b) the classroom atmosphere is inclusive, stress-free, democratic and conducive for learning;
- (c) the school curriculum is adapted to bring in the local environment, culture and knowledge;
- (d) teachers are continuously improving their capacity through provided opportunities and their own initiatives;
- (e) child-centred teaching methodologies are used; and

- (f) essential learning competencies are regularly assessed and effective actions taken to ensure each child achieves essential learning competencies.

Dimension 4: Healthy, safe and protective for children

- (a) school-level policies on health, safety and protection are in place;
- (b) the school has available adequate facilities related to food, water and sanitation;
- (c) the school environment and facilities related to food, water and sanitation are well maintained and safe;
- (d) competency-based health education is effectively provided for students;
- (e) effective psycho-social support and referral services are available and used;
- (f) children are protected from harm, abuse and injury;
- (g) readiness exists for operational emergency preparedness and response plans.

The existing MoE quality assurance system is expected to be revised this year, and to include indicators of success in achieving a child-friendly framework. A guidance manual on child-friendly approaches for quality primary education has been made available to participating schools.

In implementing the child-friendly school initiative in other countries, the Sri Lankan MoE recommends that strong advocacy for the programme is essential; that documents must be made available to ensure effective dissemination of the programme; and that effective monitoring systems must be in place and used. In general, the MoE recommends that there must be a strong focus on capacity development.

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4.9 Closing the gap on indigenous disadvantage, Australia

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Equality in schooling assistance for disadvantaged students
Other issues addressed	Indigenous education
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators Indigenous communities

Initiative aims

Goal: Closing the gap in school level achievements for indigenous students compared to non-indigenous students.

Outputs: To date, the following key achievements have been achieved under the Closing the Gap initiative:

- (a) Sixty assistant teachers in the government sector have attained Certificate III level qualifications, six have achieved diplomas, ten have achieved graduate certificates and eight have achieved a Bachelor of Teaching and Learning degree.
- (b) In the Catholic sector the Growing Our Own programme has supported 19 staff members to complete in-service qualifications.
- (c) A total of 73 scholarships have been awarded across the graduate certificate and master's level to remote teachers, including eight additional indigenous teachers' scholarships.
- (d) An increase in the number of assistant teachers undertaking study from 100 to 349.
- (e) Ninety-nine completion bonuses to teachers and assistant teachers for the successful attainment of higher qualifications to offset study costs.
- (f) Schools are delivering vocational education and training (VET) in the middle programmes (Years 7–9 in the Northern Territory) to enhance the availability of flexible pathways programmes for middle years students. This has resulted in 77 students (in 2010) attaining a certificate or statement of attainment in pathways such as manufacturing, hospitality and engineering.
- (g) Enhanced services are being provided to support students with conductive hearing loss. Thirty-seven Closing the Gap schools have accessed services, such as professional learning programmes for classroom teachers, special education teachers and assistant teachers that focus on the provision of advice about improving classroom acoustics, and the provision of support in the development of action plans for individual and groups of students who are diagnosed with otitis media (middle ear disease) and conductive hearing loss.
- (h) Establishment of a remote improvement team to work intensively with targeted government schools to support improvement processes and whole school approaches to literacy.

- (i) Employment of a remote indigenous education manager to work closely with school leaders and facilitate enhanced community partnerships in education.
- (j) Continuation of a remote schools' specialist support team working with five remote Catholic schools in English as a second language, literacy and numeracy, early childhood, health and well-being and transition of secondary students to higher education.
- (k) Establishment of a quality remote teaching service team to improve workforce recruitment and selection to enhance teacher quality and retention.
- (l) Nineteen literacy and numeracy coaches are working across the Northern Territory, based both in schools and at the regional level to provide onsite support and training for teachers and assistant teachers to deliver evidence-based approaches to literacy, numeracy, and English as a second language teaching.

Outcomes: According to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)⁶⁰ Reform Council, National Indigenous Reform Agreement Performance report for 2009–10:

- (a) there was a significant improvement in the proportion of indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in Year 3 reading nationally, and in Queensland and Western Australia; and
- (b) there was a statistically significant improvement nationally in Year 5 numeracy.

(Reading and numeracy national and jurisdictional results were generally consistent with the 2009 progress trajectories.)

According to the recently released National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) National Report for 2011:

- (a) the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Northern Territory improved in six out of the eight reading and numeracy test areas;
- (b) there was significant improvement in the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in Year 3 numeracy, with the outcome increasing by 13.2 per cent between 2010 and 2011; and
- (c) in the other five test areas that showed improvement between 2010 and 2011 for Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, increases ranged from 7.5 to 2.0 per cent. The only decreases in outcomes were in Year 3 reading (a decrease of 3.1 per cent) and Year 5 reading (a decrease of 2.8 per cent). (ACARA) (2010).

Every student has equal right and opportunity to quality education. There is a gap between the educational attainment of indigenous and non-indigenous students. The Closing the Gap initiative aims to lift attainment rates for indigenous students, 'halve the gap for indigenous school students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade', and halve the gap for indigenous Year 12 attainment by 2020 (COAG Reform Council, 2011).

Under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, all Australian governments have shared responsibility for closing the gap in indigenous disadvantage across six key areas, including literacy and numeracy and educational attainment.

The initiative aims to assist in improving educational outcomes for indigenous students by trialling and subsequently expanding intensive literacy and numeracy programmes in schools to assist indigenous students who are not meeting national minimum standards. The funding available under this initiative will assist education authorities to intensify

efforts towards halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy between indigenous and non-indigenous students by 2018.

Implementation and challenges

Initiatives to support the Closing the Gap programme are being implemented in a variety of ways. The Australian government contracts some providers directly, and other funding is provided to the Northern Territory government through National Partnership arrangements, although all state and territory governments are working collaboratively to achieve the initiative's goal.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (2010–2014) is a key strategy to implement a number of Closing the Gap initiatives. The action plan was launched by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in June 2011, following endorsement from COAG (MCEECDYA, 2012).

The Australian government and state, territory government and non-government education authorities have been working collaboratively to progress activities under the action plan, and state and territory education ministers report annually on progress under the plan.

The action plan identifies 55 national, systemic and local level actions in six priority domains that evidence shows will contribute to improved outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The priority domains are:

- readiness for school;
- engagement and connections;
- attendance;
- literacy and numeracy;
- leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and
- pathways to real post-school options.

The initiative builds on commitments by COAG to introduce substantial structural and innovative reforms in early childhood education, schooling and youth, as outlined in national partnership agreements between the Australian government and the states and territories.

Under the action plan, education providers have nominated around 900 'Focus Schools' as a means to assure state and territory ministers that the benefits of national reforms are reaching those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students most in need. Education ministers have agreed to prioritise resources under the National Education Agreement (NEA) to achieve activities identified in the action plan.

Although individual or joint state and territory governments progress many of the actions under the action plan, the Australian government also funds a number of complementary measures. These measures include:

- (a) the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package, involving 583 million Australian dollars (A\$) in schooling measures over ten years, for the following elements:
 - building a quality school workforce (additional teachers, quality teaching initiative, teacher housing);
 - improving school enrolment and attendance through welfare reform; and
 - introducing a school nutrition programme (A\$64M);
- (b) supporting the provision of quality early childhood services in the Northern Territory by providing continued operational funding for nine crèches in targeted communities (A\$11.4M over four years);

- (c) expanding the successful Sporting Chance Programme by establishing seven new boys-only academies and additional programmes to support girls (A\$4.8M over three years);
- (d) expanding the Teach Remote programme to strengthen the recruitment, selection, preparation, support and retention of teachers working in remote indigenous communities (A\$14.3M over three years); and
- (e) A\$30 million for the Focus School Next Steps initiative, a two-year project that will assist 101 schools in need of extra assistance to 'kick-start' activities using proven approaches to increase the school attendance, classroom engagement and academic achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Further information

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4.10 Developing a national curriculum, Australia

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Curriculum development
Other issues addressed	Helping disadvantaged students Supporting teachers and school leaders Improving literacy and numeracy levels
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: The Australian Curriculum will provide a clear, shared understanding of what young people should be taught and the quality of learning expected of them, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school that they attend or the location of their school.

Objectives:

- (a) to improve the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system;
- (b) to contribute to the provision of world-class education in Australia by setting out the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for life and work in the twenty-first century and by setting common high standards of achievement across the country;
- (c) to ensure there is consistency in what is taught in Australian schools so that students moving from one state or territory to another can be assured their new school will be teaching the curriculum at a similar, high standard;
- (d) to facilitate teacher mobility across the country; and
- (e) to improve Australian results in international assessment.

Outputs: Implementation of phase one of the Australian Curriculum (from Foundation to Year 10) is currently underway with substantial implementation expected by the end of 2013.

Outcomes: The introduction of the Australian Curriculum has been well received by the community. The curriculum provides the foundation for world-class, high-quality education for young people, while the online publication allows all Australians to see what students are expected to learn throughout their schooling.

In 2008, all Australian state and territory governments agreed that if Australia was to maintain its level of productivity and quality of life, the quality of education available to all young people in Australia needed to be of the highest order. All governments committed to the development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

For the first time, Australia will have a national curriculum that will ensure all students are taught to the same standard, regardless of where they go to school. As a relatively small country, it makes sense to have a national curriculum that will lift the standards of all students across the country. The commitment to develop an Australian Curriculum

reflects the willingness of the educational community to work together to develop a world-class curriculum for all young Australians.

This means that:

- the individual and combined efforts of states and territories can focus on how students' learning can be improved to achieve the national goals, regardless of individual circumstances or the location of their school;
- curriculum expertise across the country can be harnessed, and duplication of effort and resources reduced;
- high-quality resources can be developed more efficiently and made available around the country; and
- there will be greater consistency for Australia's increasingly mobile student and teacher population.

Curricula across Australia's eight states and territories have been developed over time and include differences in content and achievement standards. While these curricula have considerable strengths, there is also considerable divergence in what is taught between jurisdictions. Given the current trajectory of interstate migration, where some 80,000 school-age children move state each year, there is a substantial case for greater consistency of curriculum between states and territories.

While some effort had been made for a number of years in developing commonality between state and territory curricula, the decision to develop a national curriculum was part of a broader commitment by the current Australian government to improve school education.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)⁶¹ – governed by a board that includes representatives of all state and territory education ministers as well as the non-government schooling sector – was established by the federal government in 2009 to oversee the development of the curriculum.

The national curriculum will ensure that there is explicit agreement about the essentials that all young Australians should know and be able to do. It will enable states and territories, and local schools, to identify additional elements of knowledge which may also be valuable, and leave scope for creativity and sensible local variations.

The curriculum is being developed in three phases, based on the eight key learning areas outlined in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians:

- phase one – English, mathematics, science and history;
- phase two – languages, geography and the arts; and
- phase three – health and physical education, information and communication technology, design and technology, economics and business, and civics and citizenship. (MCEETYA, 2008).

The curricula for each learning area is developed through extensive consultation with the teaching profession and the community and written by educational experts – and includes both content and achievement standards. In addition to the key learning areas, three cross-curriculum priorities (sustainability, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures) are embedded across all areas of the curriculum.

Seven general capabilities are also featured throughout the curriculum, encompassing the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. The capabilities are literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical behaviour and intercultural understanding.

Implementation and challenges

Following agreement from all state and territory education ministers in December 2010, a staged implementation approach is underway. From 2012, some states and territories are already using the English, maths, science and history curriculum with all states and territories required to implement substantially by the end of 2013. It is expected that future phases will follow a similar model.

State and territory government and non-government education authorities and schools are responsible for implementation of the Australian Curriculum. This was a commitment for government schools under the National Education Agreement (NEA); and a requirement for non-government schools under the Schools Assistance Act 2008, which provides the legal and legislative framework for federal funding of schools.

While the Australian government does not have a direct role in implementation, it has invested significantly in a number of initiatives that will support implementation, including support for the development and alignment of online teaching resources linked to the Australian Curriculum, a flagship professional learning programme on leading curriculum change, and a digital strategy for teachers and school leaders linked to the Australian Curriculum.

In 2010, all Education Ministers agreed to a three-year period to achieve substantial implementation of the Phase one Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 (English, mathematics, science and history). During the initial implementation, jurisdictions are free to decide how they link Australian Curriculum achievement standards to their existing assessment and reporting practices. Development of the Year 11 and 12 curriculum in the initial four learning areas is currently underway and is expected to be finalised by late 2012 with implementation to follow.

Phase two of the Australian Curriculum involves the development of the curriculum in geography, languages and the arts. Work on this phase is progressing and curriculum development is expected to be completed in 2013 with implementation to follow.

Phase three of the Australian Curriculum involves the development of the curriculum in the remaining areas identified in the Melbourne Declaration – health and physical education, information and communications technology, design and technology, economics and business, and civics and citizenship. Development work in these areas is underway.

Given the differences between the existing state and territory curricula, each state and territory is starting out in a different position and therefore needs to take a different approach to implementing the Australian Curriculum. In some states, the Australian Curriculum has much in common with state-based curricula, while in other states there may be less in common.

Having a three-year implementation window allows time for jurisdictions to determine the extent of curriculum change required, work with stakeholders on implementation plans, and inform students and parents about changes to the school curriculum. It also provides time for additional resource development and teacher preparation.

The establishment of ACARA as an expert body, with oversight from all education authorities and governments, to develop and write the national curriculum has proven to be a successful model for high-quality curriculum development. The extensive consultation with the teaching profession, educational experts and the broader community conducted by ACARA has been crucial to ensuring the development of a world-class curriculum.

Further information

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4.11 Direct support to schools programme, Mozambique

Primary theme	Devolution
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Improvement of access and quality of primary education
Other issues addressed	Decentralisation of decision-making and resource management Involvement of the community in the life of the school Alleviation of the cost of primary education for families
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

- Goals:**
- (a) improvement of access and quality of primary education;
 - (b) alleviation of the cost of primary education for families; and
 - (c) ensuring adequate funding for basic learning materials.
- Objectives:**
- (a) to improve the quality of education by providing grants to schools for the purchase of materials; and
 - (b) promoting retention of the most vulnerable children.
- Outputs:** According to the monitoring reports, communities have been participating in all aspects of the programme, and the increased funding has benefited the children. The direct support to schools (DSS) programme has made it possible for the neediest learners to attend school.
- Outcomes:** There is evidence that the programme is leading to quality improvement in the classroom. Equally importantly, it is empowering communities and strengthening community-school links. Schools and communities now decide how to use funds to improve the quality of education for their children. This arrangement has revitalised school councils and introduced local-level accountability and local-level solutions. Community and school empowerment not only contributes to quality enhancement and administrative efficiency, but also creates a stronger constituency for education.

In general, there is insufficient financing available to fully fund schools in Mozambique. The DSS programme was established to alleviate the cost of primary education for families and, at the same time, to improve the quality of education by providing grants to ensure the provision of minimum learning materials for primary schools. At a later stage, an additional component was introduced to target specifically orphans and vulnerable children in providing them with basic learning materials to motivate them to enrol and stay in school. Poverty is one of the main constraints to enrolment and to retaining students in schools.

The DSS programme was developed prior to the abolition of social action fund fees in schools. The cost of education was a constraint to enrolment in Mozambique, and school fees were a major reason for not enrolling children in school and for high dropout rates.

This initiative is very important as it is leading to quality improvement in the classroom. It is empowering communities and strengthening community-school ties, and is also reducing disparities among schools through financial support – and is the only mechanism to reach all schools in the country.

The programme was planned by the World Bank and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), and discussed with other donors, but was implemented entirely by the ministry itself. It was launched in March 2003 and has two main purposes: to promote the decentralisation of decision-making and resource management in the sector; and to

further the quality of education through the supply of basic learning materials and the involvement of the community in the life of the school.

By allowing school councils to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of the funds, the objective of decentralisation was achieved. Quality was promoted by identifying basic materials for learners and teachers that could be purchased from the available funds. The scheme has continued through four phases and in 2006, entered the fifth phase. Now the programme is running in its (overall) sixteenth phase.

The first phase was started with the training of all provincial and district directors of education in the objectives and operationalisation of the programme. Special bank accounts, solely for the purpose of transferring the programme's funds, were then opened in the name of the district director.

Training and information materials were developed and printed, including manuals, brochures, posters, and wall and desk calendars. A wide range of communication strategies was used to reach the general public: these included newspapers and publicity and information spots introduced by the national anthem, through all local media, in Portuguese and in local languages.

Implementation and challenges

Once the programme was operational, funds were transferred to the accounts of the district directors of education, based on the number of schools in each district.

In the first year, a total of 37,721,840,000 Mozambique meticaïs (MT) was allocated. More than 8,100 English Programme (EP) schools could use up to MT240,000 each in two half-yearly disbursements to cover the cost of school materials for learners and teachers (notebooks, textbooks, library books, pencils, pens, erasers, dictionaries, glue, chalk, blackboards, maps, and cupboards with locks to store books), chosen from a list prepared by the MEC.

School managers were trained in the necessary procurement and financial procedures, and a letter of authorisation for the school to draw a cheque was countersigned. The school council, composed of teachers, community representatives, the school director, and the district director of education, decided on the most urgently needed items from the MEC list. A cheque was drawn and the items purchased directly by the school director and community representatives.

During the second phase, between MT3.5 million and MT90 million was allocated per school, according to the number of learners and the number of shifts. In addition, the district directorates of education received MT240,000 per school for the management team administering the programme.

The MEC developed and distributed a list of eligible schools in each district to the provincial and district directors. These lists specified the entitlement of each school and the goods each school received, and were available to all schools and could be reviewed by the general public. Each school, through its school council, prepared its selection from the list of materials, based on school needs and the funds identified as available – before the funds were paid out from the bank.

The ministry continued to strengthen the capacity of provincial and district directorates of education to confirm the objectives of the programme were being realised. In addition, regular auditing was carried out to ensure the efficiency of the programme. The programme's results led to the ministry's decision to continue the programme in subsequent years.

In the third phase, a new component, deworming, was trialled in two selected provinces in EP1 (Primary Grades 1 to 5) and EP2 (Grades 6 and 7) schools. To implement the deworming component, the Ministry of Health and the MEC decentralised planning of the entire process to a team activity (district staff and schools developed training and information materials). In this phase, EP1 schools received between MT4.2 million and MT70 million per school. Approximately 8,400 EP1 schools were involved, and the programme reached around 3.1 million learners.

One of the major setbacks in implementing the initiative has been the lack of resources to extend improvements across a number of programme aspects, including providing students with all necessary materials for learning; maintenance of schools; and the spread of the initiative to upper levels. Further, although the programme has been expanded now to encompass all schools, the target of US\$5 per primary school child has not yet been reached.

The Government of Mozambique is continuing to refine the programme, although facing challenges of ensuring good governance of the funds allocated, and efficient use of resources. An element of performance-based financing may contribute to meeting these challenges.

If other countries are considering such a programme, Mozambique advises that abolishing fees and providing direct support to schools and incentives for needy people may go a long way in improving access and some way in improving quality. However, a range of other interventions is also needed if quality is to be raised substantially and the initiative is to become sustainable.

Further information

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4.12 Early Grade Reading Assessment, The Gambia

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Devolution
Main issue addressed	Improving learning outcomes
Other issues addressed	Poor reading abilities of children in the early grades of the basic cycle
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Improve the reading and comprehension abilities of pupils at an early age (as reading is the base for the understanding of all subjects).

Objectives: To improve the literacy level of pupils at the primary level, and the reading, writing and comprehension skills of pupils, and equip teachers with good teaching skills.

Outputs: Improved learning outcomes as evident in the National Assessment Test in Grades 3 and 5, and improved examination results and classroom participation.

Outcomes: There is evidence of positive changes in the reading and comprehension abilities of children. Children can now read as early as Grade 1.

The main thrust of the Gambian education policy between 2004 and 2015 is to improve the learning achievement levels of pupils and in turn, to improve overall quality.

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) programme is an initiative that is addressing reading and comprehension abilities in Gambian schools. This initiative improves both teaching and learning processes. It is an effective method of assisting pupils in identifying letters and letter sounds and in improving reading abilities.

Implementation and challenges

Initially, a group of teachers from the six educational regions were trained to serve as trainers for the implementation at regional level. The step-down approach was used, and the trainers in turn, conducted training at the school level.

At the national level, a team from the (Gambia) Association of Teachers of English was identified to conduct follow-up training and supervision in schools. This team, together with the cluster monitors, monitors activities and addresses problems at the same time, through school-based and regional-based workshops.

The curriculum directorate also conducts impact assessments to measure the progress made periodically. To further support the initiative, a baseline study was conducted in 2007 to assess the level of the students in reading and related factors. This was followed by two impact assessments in 2009 and 2011 to determine the successes of the interventions and to make recommendations for improvement. The assessments show that marked improvements have been registered.

Inadequate finance could be a challenge to implementing the programme in the future, although the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education is managing this successfully to date, with the assistance of donor partners. If The Gambia were to extend the EGRA programme, it would implement coverage at the pre-primary level.

Other countries interested in learning more about EGRA are invited to conduct a study visit to The Gambia to find out how the initiative works and gather examples of good practices.

Further information

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4.13 Early literacy programme, Mauritius

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Improving literacy
Other issues addressed	Reading for enjoyment
Level of initiative	Pre-primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goal: To develop basic literacy skills right from early years.

- Objectives:**
- (a) to ensure that children are being exposed to language through constant interaction in a language-rich environment;
 - (b) to bridge the language gap between home and pre-school within a multilingual context;
 - (c) to ensure that educators and children have the opportunity to interact through purposeful talk and communicative activities;
 - (d) to ensure that children develop their vocabulary and language structures through culturally and developmentally appropriate activities like play, storytelling, puppetry and reading;
 - (e) to ensure that children are given the opportunity to handle and learn through books;
 - (f) to ensure that children are engaged in activities that lead to purposeful scribbling, drawing and writing acquisition;
 - (g) to develop children's ability to engage in critical thinking and questioning; and
 - (h) to ensure that children can smoothly acquire other languages at a later stage.

Outputs: The project is being implemented in 90 per cent of Early Childhood Care and Education Authority schools, and in 70 per cent of private, pre-primary schools, with books being exchanged on a fortnightly basis.

Outcomes: Increased participation of parents in school activities.

With the advent of new technologies, some children have lost the passion and skills for reading books. Through this initiative, children are being exposed to reading and other print materials from their early years, with the objective of inculcating a reading culture, both at school and at home.

The initiative aims to address the issue of failure at the end of primary schooling, particularly in the area of language, communication and literacy, through an early years' intervention programme. By ensuring that pre-school children have developed reading, writing and other related physical skills prior to their admission to primary school, the language gap between home, pre-primary and primary is being bridged in a very systematic way.

Implementation and challenges

To instil a reading culture, teaching and learning strategies enhance communication, language and literacy, through:

- use of games and play;
- use of songs, music rhymes and other forms of poetry;
- dramatisation of familiar stories, miming, recitation, role play, and simulation;
- use of shared reading of stories;

- narration of stories with children's participation; and
- use of practical experiences in contexts such as cookery and gardening, and for further language acquisition.

This programme, managed by the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, is being implemented in all pre-primary schools in Mauritius. Among other strategies, three key approaches are used:

- *Establishing a reading corner in all pre-primary classrooms*

The objective is to give children access to a wide variety of reading and other print materials that are familiar and will hold their interest. These reading materials are in different languages, although mainly in English and French. To encourage early years' literacy, children are expected to have at least 30 minutes of teacher-supported reading time each day.

- *Bedtime story project*

This initiative aims at involving parents in setting up a reading corner at home, and engaging them in reading activities with their children, with a view to sustaining and supporting the in-school literacy programme. Apart from enriching vocabulary, parents reading to their children helps to build a strong emotional bond between them. It also supports the conversational skills of the child at home and at school. (A child-friendly book lending system has been set up at schools whereby parents can borrow books from their child's school.)

- *Annual book fair*

To celebrate *Annual World Book Day*, the authority organises annual book fairs for pre-primary children, in collaboration with other institutions (National Library, Centre de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle and local authorities) where books for children aged 3–6 years are put on sale at very competitive prices. Book fairs are attended by educators, parents and pre-school children with the objective of encouraging parents to establish a reading corner at home.

The budget for the early literacy programme initiative is included within the annual budget of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority for school-based projects. At the school level, the project is being implemented and co-ordinated by educators under the supervision of the teacher educator supervisor.

To date, the only significant implementation challenges noted have been that: some private, pre-primary schools face financial difficulties in purchasing and or renewing their stock of books; and some schools were unwilling to renew the book lending scheme because some books were not returned by the pupils.

Early literacy programme organisers advise other countries interested in implementing a similar programme to ensure they have the full and active participation of parents as partners. Further, if funds allow, the relevant early childhood authority could offer reading materials to private, pre-primary schools in identified pockets of poverty, to help those schools sustain the project. An added improvement would be allowing schools to access the services of mobile libraries (*bibliobus*), often run by local authorities.

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4.14 Eco-schools environmental education programme, Seychelles

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Environmental education (conservation education)
Other issues addressed	Education for sustainable development, and global participation
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Promote environmental education and education for sustainable development in Seychelles' education system.

Objectives: The initiative had four objectives:

- (a) to enable students and teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are essential to maintaining a healthy environment;
- (b) to promote conservation education at school and at the community level so as to suggest solutions for unsustainable practices;
- (c) to encourage schools to be more environmentally friendly and more conducive to learning, and to catering to the needs of students and teachers; and
- (d) to support other partners with their education plans related to environmental education or education for sustainable development.

Outputs: The transformation in schools' environment and attitude included:

- (a) more plants for shade, beautification, shelter or food for animals, with benches used for recreational purposes, and murals showing environment concepts (such as protecting the mangroves or conserving water);
- (b) knowledge developed within the different projects and activities;
- (c) increase in the involvement of students and teachers in the projects or activities;
- (d) high participation of parents;
- (e) donations from partners (such as environmental education resources, bins, benches or other resources to beautify the school compound);
- (f) improvement in the participation of some participating primary and secondary schools as they establish their eco-schools committees and develop their action plans following support provided at a two-day workshop in October 2011;
- (g) participation of schools in national competitions, community projects such as tree planting; and
- (h) improvement in punctuality from students as the school is a fun and conducive learning environment.

Moreover, the programme also caters for low achievers, enabling them to engage in more practical activities and this has had an impact on their learning processes.

Outcomes: Outcomes identified to date include:

- (a) more positive attitudes from teachers;
- (b) students willing to take up jobs in the environment field;
- (c) ongoing learning processes on different environmental issues or topics;
- (d) sensitivity of students towards environmental issues;
- (e) students and teachers making use of skills such as recycling; and
- (f) positive attitudes of students when using water on the school compound, and student interest in other eco-friendly projects on the school compound.

The environment of Seychelles is vital to the economy: tourists come to enjoy the uniqueness and beauty of the country's natural resources. Moreover, some of the nation's natural resources such as fish are exported to many countries and thus provide a source of income for the economy.

A healthy economy means more job opportunities and equal sharing of the country's success between each responsible and productive citizen. Furthermore, students learn that the natural resources in their environment need to be protected so that the country's economy is not affected. Students also have the opportunity to use their abilities to promote environmental education and education for sustainable development as young ambassadors at a school level, in the community, or nationally.

This initiative helps to support the policies on the protection of the environment, while also promoting other topics related to health, safety and culture. The programme creates a foundation for students as the generation of tomorrow learns about different environmental issues or unsustainable practices that have an impact on their country. It equips them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to adopt more sustainable practices and to prevent negative environmental issues from having a detrimental impact on their country's environment.

Implementation and challenges

The initiative is being co-ordinated by the environmental education unit which forms part of the physical education and co-curricular section within the schools division of the Ministry of Education. It is implemented as part of the classroom curriculum and through micro-projects, and is supported by clubs in schools including wildlife clubs, environment clubs such as the recycling club, friends of Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve clubs, and Red Cross clubs.

An annual budget is provided by the ministry for the environmental education unit, for expenses such as: transportation fees for school environment leaders to travel from inner islands to the main island for meetings and workshops; buying equipment or resources and for printing; and meeting expenses for workshops or training for school environment leaders.

As well as the management role undertaken by the environmental education unit, many other sections in the Ministry of Education support the programme, including the centre for curriculum, assessment and teacher support, and the quality assurance section.

The annual eco-schools competition, in which schools submit their portfolio, also increases awareness of the initiative. Three schools from each schooling level: pre-primary, primary and secondary – are selected as awardees in each category. Other schools are given the opportunity to view the portfolios of the winning schools through visits conducted during the following year, and supported by the environmental education unit.

The major challenges facing the initiative to date have been:

- gaining better engagement from all head teachers;
- increasing the involvement of parents and communities in the programme;

- developing strategies to interest, inform and involve other teachers, students, and support staff;
- limited funding for some projects which are costly to implement (e.g. setting up a nursery to beautify school grounds, buying gardening equipment);
- donations from some organisations which do not necessarily benefit all participating schools;
- encouraging the increased use of environment-related resources in other teaching and learning;
- demands on schools from other significant school-based and external activities and competitions; and
- partner organisations who expect schools to collaborate with them on implementing a component of their (organisational) education plan, but which do not provide funding for projects.

For other countries considering a similar eco-schools project, Seychelles recommends ensuring that the proper structures are in place, planning a staged approach carefully, identifying responsibilities, and locating funding sources. Nevertheless, the initiative has been a very successful (if demanding) activity and Seychelles looks forward to the opportunity to share its ideas on eco-schools.

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4.15 EdTech Leadership Cohort, Canada

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Twenty-first century teaching and learning
Other issues addressed	Educational technology, ICTs
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Teachers

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Support the development of twenty-first century teachers.
- Objectives:** To develop educational technology leaders who are knowledgeable and skilled in the use of educational technologies.
- Outputs:** As a result of their participation in the EdTech Leadership Cohort, the teacher candidates have been provided with the necessary experience to be considered twenty-first Century teachers and future EdTech leaders, who can provide guidance to their colleagues and support the development of twenty-first Century teaching and learning throughout the schools that employ them.
- Outcomes:** The cohort participants have already shown leadership as they have been asked to provide training and deliver workshops to large numbers of practising teachers (who have noted that it was some of the most effective professional development in which they had participated).

As the education community continues to struggle with making twenty-first century teaching and learning a reality, the need for leaders that understand the challenges and benefits of using technology in the classroom grows.

The EdTech Leadership Cohort was designed to develop educational technology leaders who are knowledgeable and skilled in the use of educational technologies that can improve student learning and school operations in Kindergarten–12 schools and who can serve as educational technology leaders in their school.

Implementation and challenges

The EdTech Leadership Cohort initiative is managed by Brock University in Ontario, Canada, whose Faculty of Education provides Primary/Junior, Junior/Intermediate, and Intermediate/Senior teacher preparation programmes. The Faculty of Education has an enrolment of 7,000+ full- and part-time candidates, a faculty, staff and field associate complement of nearly 150, and a satellite campus in Hamilton.

To support their development as future educational technology leaders, members of the EdTech Leadership Cohort were required to become knowledgeable about the most recent literature regarding twenty-first century teaching and learning, emerging educational technologies, teacher leadership, and the impact and challenges of educational technology integration.

As part of the educational technology coursework, cohort participants were provided with hands-on training in the use of a variety of instructional technologies including smart boards (interactive digital whiteboards), smart pens (pens with an inbuilt processor and voice recorder), LCD projections, document cameras, interactive classroom clickers, digital audio players, digital video cameras, Twitter, blogs, and Google Docs.

In addition to developing their technical competencies, participants received instruction in the technological, pedagogical and content knowledge required to use technology to enhance teaching and learning. This was followed by coursework that examined best practices in designing professional development for adult learners.

Each person participating in the EdTech Leadership Cohort was required to create an online learning object to support teacher professional development; deliver a professional development workshop; and provide one-to-one coaching to a faculty member, instructor or classroom teacher in the use of a specific educational technology.

If considering a similar initiative, other countries are advised to remember that, despite the notion that ‘digital natives’⁶² are skilled at using technology in their personal lives, often they do not have the necessary pedagogical understanding to effectively use technology in the classroom, and require significant support and guidance to become twenty-first century educators.

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4.16 Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme, Namibia

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Planning and building a learning nation
Other issues addressed	Knowledge-based economy
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary Tertiary Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Marginalised youth Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goals:

- (a) respond to the call of 'Vision 2030'⁶³ so Namibia can improve the quality of life of its citizens, to be comparable with the developed world;
- (b) strengthen the education system; and
- (c) transform the nation into a knowledge-based economy by strengthening the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of general education and the training system.

Objectives: The strategic framework identifies five main objectives:

- (a) quality and effectiveness,
- (b) equity and access,
- (c) development relevance and responsiveness,
- (d) delivery capacity and management, and
- (e) efficiency of resource mobilisation and utilisation.

Outputs: Outputs noted to date include:

- (a) the school feeding programme has contributed to increased school improvement and improved attendance;
- (b) new schools and additional classrooms have been constructed;
- (c) early grade reading assessment (EGRA) is managed as a remedial tool for learner assessment;
- (d) textbooks and learners' materials have been procured and distributed to schools;
- (e) improved participation and enrolments;
- (f) parents understand the importance of contributing to schools, financially or otherwise;
- (g) some schools have shown remarkable improvement in the Grade 10 national exams;
- (h) standardised achievement tests (SATs) have been implemented to improve performance in mathematics, English and science; and

- (i) English language proficiency (ELP) testing established the level of teachers' English proficiency in order to align the training programmes to the needs of the teachers.

Outcomes: Through school visits and classroom observation by inspectors of education and advisory teachers in the cluster where conferences took place, it has been noted that the majority of teachers are more positive towards teaching and learning. Parents are committed and supportive towards teaching and learning, and some teachers are doing their lesson preparation and taking ownership of the subjects they teach. The number of stakeholder and the level of civil participation have increased at a regional and national level.

The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) is aimed at improving the quality of education by responding to the call of 'Vision 2030' and facilitating the transition to a knowledge-based economy. (Associated with ETSIP, the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia initiative has a focus on improving quality teaching and learning at individual schools.)

Implementation and challenges

ETSIP is phased in three five-year cycles, which coincide with the national development plans. The initiative is important to the development of the broader education system, and is a comprehensive sector-wide programme which covers:

- (a) early childhood development and pre-primary education;
- (b) general education;
- (c) vocational education and training;
- (d) tertiary education and training;
- (e) knowledge and innovation; and
- (f) information, adult and lifelong learning.

Although each sub-programme of ETSIP has its own results indicators, progress towards achieving 11 broader indicators, which have assisted in the effective monitoring of the programme, includes:

- Number of children from disadvantaged communities who enter primary education having successfully completed one year of pre-primary education increased from zero to 8,475 by 2011;
- Enrolment in Grade 11 increased from 14,777 in 2005 to 21,497 by 2011;
- Percentage of learners earning D or higher in mathematics, English and science in Grade 10;
- Percentage of learners earning D or higher in mathematics, English and science in Grade 12;
- National average Southern African Consortium of Educational Quality (SACMEQ) test scores (reading and mathematics) have increased;
- Percentage of learners receiving life skills education increased from 60 per cent in 2007 to 95 per cent in 2011;
- Total enrolment in vocational education and training increased from 2,733 in 2005 to 5,000 by 2011;
- Average annual completion rates for vocational and educational training trainees increased from 56 per cent in 2005 to 90 per cent in 2011;
- Employment rates of vocational and educational training graduates by category, within one year of graduation, as determined by tracer studies;

- Increase at all diploma, degree and postgraduate levels (awards) in key human resource categories; and
- Adult literacy rate increased from 84 per cent in 2005 to 90 per cent by 2011.

The initiative's key purpose is to enhance substantially the sector's contribution to the attainment of strategic national development goals, and to facilitate the transition to a knowledge-based economy. It will also complement the broader aims of the Ministry of Education, and improve learning outcomes in schools. ETSIP is a national document, controlled and monitored centrally, but its implementation is decentralised, meaning that all the activities take place at regional education directorates.

ETSIP covers all sub-sectors and the strategic objectives are distributed over a 15-year strategic plan. The first phase of implementation was from 2006–2011 and ETSIP is currently in phase two of implementation (2012–2016). Critical cross-cutting issues, such as ICT, HIV/AIDS, and capacity development, are mainstreamed into the key sub-programmes. However, HIV/AIDS has two dimensions: i.e., as a stand-alone subcomponent and as mainstreaming.

ETSIP is being managed at a regional level and is (generally) funded by the Ministry of Education and development partners. Regional directorates develop their annual (costed) programmes, and submit their needs to the head office; funds are then made available to regions for implementation.

The regional directorates and other heads of divisions are responsible for compiling reports for headquarters, while ETSIP reviews take place every three months, in which all heads of divisions and development partners participate.

Major challenges faced in implementing the initiative have included: placing pre-primary and primary education 'centre stage'; implementing monitoring and evaluation processes; assessing the effectiveness of the training approaches; and the limited extent of evidence to show improved learning outcomes. For greater quality assurance, there is a need to develop a simple monitoring tool to measure performance indicators.

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4.17 Education Sector Enhancement Programme, Barbados

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Sector enhancement – quality education for all
Other issues addressed	Human resource development Civil works Technology integration Curriculum reform
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Lay a firm foundation for the development of the personality of the child, and develop in them the necessary competencies to continue to secondary education.

Objectives: (a) to ensure full participation of children in the 5–9 age group in primary education;
(b) to ensure all children completing primary education attain essential learning competencies; and
(c) to ensure 80 per cent of children completing primary education attain mastery in desired learning competencies.

Outputs: Outputs identified to date include:
(a) low absenteeism;
(b) fewer dropouts;
(c) nutrition programmes introduced;
(d) cleaner physical environment;
(e) improved school medical inspection and referral services;
(f) better drinking water and sanitary facilities; and
(g) the introduction of health clubs in primary schools.

Outcomes: Outcomes include:
(a) improved community participation;
(b) increased levels of essential learning competencies;
(c) multilevel teaching;
(d) positive relationships with communities;
(e) activity-based education; and
(f) children are engaging in decision-making.

The Education Sector Enhancement Programme (ESEP) is designed to address a set of major priorities: early childhood education, educational management for leaders, increasing literacy and numeracy skills and addressing information technology.

Comprehensive reform of the entire primary and secondary school system in Barbados is a prime objective of the programme. It is intended that the output will be an increase in the number of young people who can contribute to the sustainability of the social, cultural and economic development of Barbados. This is expected to prepare citizens for the task of nation building as well as revaluing the role of education in the sphere of national development.

Reinforcement of the concept that learning is a continuous, lifelong process is also an important part of the initiative's philosophy. Teachers must be made aware of the importance of catering to the individual needs of students. Greater partnerships between school, home and the community need to be fostered. Through this, it is hoped that students will come to understand the necessity of being able to live and work harmoniously with other persons in their environments. The aim is to prepare students for life in a technologically advanced society by ensuring that all students who leave school will have a good knowledge of, adequate skill in, and favourable attitudes towards the use of information technology.

Implementation and challenges

Barbados faces a challenging international environment. Preferential markets and quotas which were used to determine areas of economic endeavour and employment in Caribbean countries no longer apply. Barbados has, over the last fifteen years, achieved most in areas in which there were no preferential markets or quotas. These include tourism, international business and the informatics sector.

More emphasis is being placed on competitiveness and reciprocity in the international arena, resulting in changes to the structure of the economy and the nature of employment opportunities. It is, therefore, imperative that people are trained to perform in areas where the economy is expanding.

In order to generate increasing wealth among the populace, the country must produce a considerably higher proportion of citizens capable of entering such spheres not merely as employees at the lower level but more importantly, at all levels and as entrepreneurs and innovators. The ability to better meet current demands for unskilled jobs, while necessary, is not a platform for wealth creation, higher savings, investment, and long-term national development. The radical changes of many of these alterations will pose challenges in themselves.

The components of the ESEP initiative and the implementation process involved are:

- (a) civil works at primary and secondary school;
- (b) teacher training and technical assistance;
- (c) institutional strengthening; and
- (d) procurement and installation of hardware and software.

Tangible benefits have already resulted from the programmes. The majority of the schools in Barbados have been refurbished. All schools have been made technologically ready, with public primary schools possessing at least one computer lab and public secondary schools having at least two computer labs. All teachers have their own personal laptop or easy access to technology, and every school has an information technology co-ordinator in place.

In the last three years of the project, there has been an increase of students taking the IT exam at the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) level. The new curriculum is implemented in all schools and a significant number of teachers are trained in basic technology, at the very least. The audio-visual aids unit has been strengthened by the creation of the software review centre.

Due to these developments and despite delays, the project is now set to achieve the goals established at the start of the initiative.

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4.18 Education sector planning for quality outcomes, Bangladesh

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Resourcing
Other issues addressed	Increased use of technology
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Improve the quality of education services in Bangladesh.

Objectives: To enact the National Education Policy, 2010, including:

- (a) distribution of approximately 640 million books;
- (b) hosting of a dynamic website for teaching and learning methods and uploading 109 books;
- (c) converting text books into e-books;
- (d) online registration for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations and online publication of results;
- (e) processing admission in public universities using SMS technology;
- (f) on-time completion of SSC, HSC, Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations;
- (g) nationwide on-time commencement of classes;
- (h) introduction of lottery for admission in Class1;
- (i) providing safety and security for female students;
- (j) assurance of quality in higher education; and
- (k) providing midday meals for students.

Outputs: Outputs related to the above goal and objectives are being achieved progressively. Nevertheless, results to date show that success rates in the SSC examinations of 2011 increased by 2.33 per cent in comparison with 2010. Bangladesh has made significant progress, especially with regard to increasing access and gender equity, both at primary and secondary levels. Gross primary enrolment rates increased from 90 per cent in the late 1990s to 98 per cent in 2003, while a corresponding increase in enrolment rates at the secondary level indicates a rise to 44 per cent. Gender parity in access to primary and secondary education has also been achieved.

Outcomes: Increased access to quality education services, and substantial progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Major reforms undertaken by the government for improving the quality of education include introduction of a uni-track curriculum in secondary education from 2006; school-based assessment at secondary level; reform of secondary school examination systems; privatisation of textbook writing and publication; reorganisation of management committees and governing bodies for non-governmental educational institutions; formation of an oversight committee for the supervision of teaching in classrooms; and strengthening teachers' training.

Implementation and challenges

Bangladesh is undertaking a number of diverse initiatives in an attempt to improve the quality of education services. These include the following:

- Each year, the government provides stipends to 3.9 million ‘poor but meritorious students’ through four projects. Aligned with this, to help the students and to facilitate opportunities, the Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust Fund has been introduced, and has allocated 1000 crore taka (Tk) (approximately US\$120 million) to this purpose.
- To improve the quality of teachers and officers working in educational institutions 250,000 teachers have been trained in a range of subjects, and 1,920 new teachers have been recruited for schools.
- Under the infrastructure development project ‘Construction of selected non-governmental secondary school/madrasah building’, a total of 3,000 new high schools and 1,000 Madrasah constructions are in progress. Construction of another 1,500 non-government college buildings is also underway.
- In order to popularise technical education and to tackle unemployment, the Ministry of Education is observing Vocational and Technical Education Week every year. This has resulted in increased enrolment in vocational and technical educational institutions.
- Two shifts in vocational and technical education institutions have been introduced and the number of places has been increased. Another 795 new technical education institutions are permitted to provide vocational technical education in the country.
- To modernise Madrasah education and to ensure it aligns with global needs, 100 new vocational courses in Madrasah have been implemented, and the existing general education science and computer programmes have been introduced. Thirty-one Madrasahs have been given permission to start honours’ courses in four subjects, while 35 Madrasahs have been transformed into ‘Model Madrasahs’.

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4.19 Educators' forum on Aboriginal education, Canada

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Addressing issues within Aboriginal education and sharing ideas, evidence and experiences in Aboriginal early childhood education and Kindergarten–12 education with respect to programmes, policies and practices for student access
Other issues addressed	Strengthening Aboriginal language and culture Enhancing equity in funding Increasing access, retention and graduation Sharing responsibility and accountability Planning for transitions – seamless systems for learners Reporting and benchmarking success Providing programmes and services Engaging all partners in First Nations, <i>Métis</i> and <i>Inuit</i> education ⁶⁴
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary Tertiary Vocational training Marginalised youth Multi-sector
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Investigate what works best for Aboriginal learners in early childhood education (ECE) and K-12 education.

Objectives: (a) strengthening Aboriginal language and culture;
(b) enhancing equity in funding; and
(c) engaging all partners in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education.

Outcomes: Outcomes to date include:
(a) improved academic outcomes;
(b) increased community wellness and student well-being;
(c) a positive link to employment;
(d) increased participation in the education system; and
(e) active participation in community life.

Despite many gains across provinces and territories in recent years, student dropout rates among Aboriginal youth remain high, and the transition rate from secondary school to post-secondary education remains low.

Along with the rapid growth in the number of Aboriginal children and youth in the school systems, several other factors present ongoing challenges:

- Aboriginal students, both male and female, perform at lower levels than other students – and this gap is not closing fast enough;
- transience levels are very high for Aboriginal students, as individuals and families move frequently on- and off-reserve;

- the number of well-trained Aboriginal teachers remains low; and
- existing curricula and teaching methods do not sufficiently reflect Aboriginal needs and values, and need to be addressed.

Implementation and challenges

Aboriginal education is one of the key activity areas identified as a priority for Canada's Ministers of Education in their joint declaration, 'Learn Canada 2020'. At the same time, the number of young Aboriginal people is rapidly increasing, with a forecast that in the next 15 to 20 years, Aboriginal students will represent more than 25 per cent of the elementary student population in some provinces and territories. In Nunavut, Inuit already represent 96 per cent of the student population. It is essential, therefore, that the issues arising from this be dealt with promptly.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) educators' forum on Aboriginal education brought together a wide range of stakeholders in Aboriginal education – from educators and academics to government officials and representatives of Aboriginal organisations – to talk about successful strategies and practices in Aboriginal learners in early-childhood education and K–12 education.

The forum was participant-driven and structured around a series of case-study presentations on promising programmes, policies, and practices. Case studies addressed the themes identified at the 2009 CMEC summit on Aboriginal education.

Forum participants examined programmes, policies, and practices that have been shown to be effective in improving one or more aspects of Aboriginal ECE and/or K–12 education, including:

- improved academic outcomes;
- increased community wellness;
- increased student well-being, self-confidence, identity, values, pride, personal development, and competence;
- a positive link to employment;
- increased participation in the education system; and
- active participation in community life.

The key success of the CMEC educators' forum was that it brought together stakeholders from across the nation to engage in face-to-face dialogue, exchange ideas with their colleagues and peers, and build networks in the field of Aboriginal ECE and K–12 education.

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4.20 Enhancement programme for primary students, Mauritius

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Improvement of quality and promotion of equity in education
Other issues addressed	Reduce over-reliance on private tuition in the primary sector
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goal: Promote the holistic development of the child and improve academic performance.

Objectives: The initiative's objectives are:

- (a) to promote the overall development of the young child;
- (b) to render the learning experiences of pupils more enriching and rewarding; and
- (c) to reduce end-of-primary cycle failure rates through the use of a differentiated pedagogy.

Outputs: Outputs to date include:

- (a) a relatively high participation rate has been registered (an average of 70 per cent);
- (b) teachers who resisted the programme in the first year have subsequently volunteered to adhere to it;
- (c) children following the enhancement programme have demonstrated positive behavioural changes through their performance in activities like drama, music, drawing and painting; and
- (d) the programme helps release hidden talents in both teachers and students;
- (e) and new resource materials have been produced in a short time span.

Outcomes: The programme culminates in a national competition which serves to showcase the range of students' different talents. The success of the initiative during its first year of implementation in Standard IV led to its extension in Standard III, with the inclusion of more subjects – including Asian language subjects. Although a preliminary evaluation of the programme is forthcoming, feedback obtained to date has indicated that the programme is working in the right direction to achieve the holistic development of learners.

The programme is premised on the concern that a purely academic emphasis has resulted in the distortion of the teaching and learning process – and needs to be addressed. The competitive nature of end-of-cycle examinations (Certificate of Primary Education) can result in undue pressure and stress on young children, and a thwarted growth with almost no leisure time. Teaching can be distorted and driven by assessment, and private tuition classes can be geared towards education drilling to pass examinations.

The enhancement programme was introduced in 2010 for Standard IV pupils in all public and grant-aided primary schools in Mauritius. Because of the success achieved, the programme was extended to Standard III pupils in 2011.

The programme curriculum has two components: (a) academic subject areas that form part of the normal curriculum and are taught by the class teacher; and (b) extracurricular activities delivered by resource persons.

Participating pupils are exposed to a more interactive and participatory pedagogy. The 75-minute programme for three days each week is designed over two sessions.

Approximately 45 minutes are used to cover pedagogical aspects of the Standard IV curriculum, by reinforcing work in core subjects of English, French, mathematics, science, history and geography. A further 30 minutes are devoted to a diversity of extra-curricular activities such as drama, physical education, sports, music, painting, and the arts. Such activities would not have been offered in the traditional private tuition approach.

The Mauritius Institute of Education has produced learning materials and teachers' guides to support the programme, while resource persons undergo training before and during the programme implementation. The programme delivery is further enhanced through the use of modern technology.

Implementation and challenges

The programme is driven at the central level; the zone directorates look after implementation, monitoring and supervisory aspects; while the Mauritius Institute of Education is responsible for curriculum development and the training of teachers and inspectors.

The pedagogical strategies adopted during the enhancement programme are expected to be integrated in the regular classes and carried forward to the upper primary cycle. Through an allocated budget, teachers, resource persons, headmasters, inspectors and ancillary staff are remunerated for their roles in the programme.

A major challenge has been the resistance of teacher unions who saw the programme as an alternative to private tuition, and therefore believed it to be against the pecuniary interest of their members. (A significant number of teachers continued with their private tuition classes offered outside school hours.)

Wide sensitisation of all stakeholders for ownership of the programme was undertaken, and financial incentives given to headmasters, teachers, resource persons, inspectors and ancillary staff. However, enhancement programme personnel believe that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms still need to be strengthened.

According to programme personnel, if other countries are considering a similar initiative, it may be advisable to extend training to headmasters and inspectors, as well as holding ongoing training sessions for educators and resource persons in charge of extra-curricular activities – and to support teachers by providing more facilities.

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4.21 Establishing a national curriculum framework, Dominica

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Relevance and inclusion
Other issues addressed	School improvement
Level of initiative	Primary
	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students
	Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Establish a national curriculum framework that provides all citizens with high-quality education and training, and which facilitates individual well-being and national development.

Objectives: To enable all learners to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills to function productively in the modern world.

Outputs: Outputs identified to date include:

- (a) programme of studies;
- (b) learning outcomes;
- (c) attainment targets;
- (d) a set of curriculum guides in core and foundational subjects;
- (e) teachers trained in visual and performing arts; and
- (f) improvement in literacy, especially reading at or above grade levels – which now stands at 80 per cent.

Outcomes: Outcomes include:

- (a) improved community participation;
- (b) increased levels of essential learning competencies;
- (c) multilevel teaching;
- (d) positive relationships with communities;
- (e) activity-based education; and
- (f) engaging children in decision-making.

Mandated under the Education Act 1997, the national curriculum makes provision for the development of programmes of studies, attainment targets, learning outcomes and assessments at key stages of the school system. It outlines the core and foundational subjects to be taught, and the instructional time allocated for each of these subjects.

Implementing a national curriculum was an essential step in harmonising the education system across Dominica's schools. It allowed for the development of agreed national programmes of studies, learning outcomes and assessments that are common to all schools, and will be driven by the employment needs of the country.

The initiative included the establishment of a national curriculum framework, based on discussions at 11 town hall meetings across the island, and from other national consultations. It included the establishment of programmes of study, learning outcomes and curriculum guides in all core areas at Key Stages 1 and 2, as well as the development of a guide for ICT across the curriculum.

Implementation and challenges

Until the current national curriculum initiative, the nation's curriculum was school-based and driven (in secondary education) by syllabuses arising from the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examinations (CSEC). It was irrelevant, fragmented and did not meet the expectations and development thrust of the country. Furthermore, it was clearly necessary to align the curriculum with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which is mandated to harmonise education within the OECS.

As an initial stage, subject teachers and other key experts in each area developed the programmes of study, attainment targets and learning outcomes, as well as determining success criteria. Curriculum guides in each of these key areas were developed; teachers trained in their use; and a phased roll-out took place. Curriculum officers and other school supervisors are currently monitoring the delivery of the curriculum, and providing feedback and support.

A curriculum-based measurement strategy and process is monitoring student progress on learning at Key Stage 1 (Grades Kindergarten–2), while national assessments are held every year at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (Grades 3–6), and also at Grade 4. The results inform education directions and instruction, as they are formative assessments.

Financial and time constraints were challenges in developing the full curriculum guides. To date, Key Stages 1 and 2 have been completed (started in 2006), and by May 2012, finances for developing guides for Key Stage 3 will have become available. Consultants to guide the process have only recently been appointed.

Continuous training for teachers in understanding and delivering the new curriculum needs to be implemented, and the limited work force to support and supervise such implementation – particularly at the central level – is a significant challenge that also needs to be addressed.

Other challenges still facing the Dominican Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development include the limited number of learning tools currently available to support the successful delivery of the curriculum, and the lack of sufficient financial resources to procure these tools.

If the nation were to repeat the initiative, it would make sure that it had sufficient financial resources to complete the task in one continuous process, instead of the long, six-year gap between beginning one phase and the next. (This delay was due largely to economic uncertainty and the austerity Dominica experienced between 2002 and 2006.)

Dominica advises that other countries considering introducing a similar national curriculum initiative should be prepared for the difficult task of national consultation. Such a process is an essential part of the process of attaining stakeholder support. The lengthy, but necessary task of involving teachers and other relevant stakeholders to assume ownership of the curriculum and its processes should also be considered carefully when planning such an initiative, while the challenges of making the transition to the new curriculum through monitoring, supervision, and feedback must also be addressed.

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4.22 Financial literacy scheme, Jamaica

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Financial literacy
Other issues addressed	To create solid foundation for the formation of wise long-term financial habits through a student-tailored programme
Level of initiative	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goal: Changing the behaviour of students when it comes to making financial decisions by increasing their financial knowledge, and enabling them to unlearn unwise financial habits and relearn appropriate ones before detrimental mistakes are made.

Objectives: (a) to examine the role that money plays in achieving lifelong personal goals; (b) to make informed financial decisions; and (c) to enable students to protect themselves against financial pitfalls.

Outputs: Through pre-test and post-test analysis, weekly observation of programme sessions by teachers and by staff of the Financial Services Commission (FSC)⁶⁵, essay competitions and student testimonials, it was shown that the knowledge base among the participants had increased.

Outcomes: The habits of saving and budgeting as well as the transfer of information from students to parents (which was encouraged during programme delivery) have indicated that so far the programme has been successful.

Even though it is well documented that improved financial literacy, particularly early in life, results in a higher standard of living over the long term, including retirement, research indicates that young people believe that financial choices and responsibilities are for adults. Research also shows that young people determine their attitudes about handling money by the time they finish Grade 5.

The same study indicates that teenagers aged 13 to 18 are spending money like adults, but are unaware of the possible consequences of their choices. Approximately one-third of teens surveyed admit owing money to a person or company.

In compliance with Commonwealth requirements for train the trainer initiatives, and research indicating a low level of financial knowledge among young people, the scheme was developed as a behavioural change initiative. Participants were selected from secondary schools, where structure and resource support already existed for the effective running of the programme.

About 70 per cent of participants were girls, and 50 per cent of participants were from single-parent households, who attended inner-city schools that have a low performing reputation. Within the communities of these schools, two in five adults were currently unemployed.

Implementation and challenges

The initiative was fully financed (materials, transportation stipend for facilitators, field trip costs, incentives for the students, etc.) by the FSC⁶⁶ and the resource materials and the acquiring/facilitating of school contacts was done by Junior Achievement Jamaica (JAJ).⁶⁷

The facilitators/volunteers were those who had previously worked with the Commonwealth Programme that was implemented by the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication,

at The University of the West Indies (). Schools provided the venue, technological resources, etc. Other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project were the Bank of Jamaica and the Jamaican Stock Market, which provided field trip sites.

The JAJ organisation contacted the Ministry of Education (MoE) for endorsement and access to schools. The endorsement was made easier, as the scheme was held outside school hours, which in turn facilitated the participation of the different stakeholders.

One challenge that delayed the delivery of the programme was co-ordinating its implementation with school personnel, due to competing activities in schools and intermittent disruptions in school schedules (e.g. holidays, other school events). Posters and the public presentation of certificates of participation at the schools assisted in promoting the initiative. The public media launch and the closing ceremony, where the Minister of Education was the guest speaker, also helped in promotion. Articles on the event and awardees were printed in the media.

The Commonwealth's manuals on financial literacy were integrated with the programme materials of the Junior Achievement Programme on finance. In terms of modifications to the Commonwealth's manual, the session on investment was widened to include low-risk and high-risk investment options. This introduced investment ideas in addition to the business planning session, as well as the risks involved, so that the options could be utilised earlier for wealth generation and long-term planning.

A session on identity theft was included as part of risk management and as a response to the growing crime in Jamaica. Cultural songs (modelled from the music industry) were developed to reinforce the concepts taught and to aid in the formation and retention of healthy financial habits. Field trips to financial institutions were included in the programme as well as an essay competition on the importance of budgeting.

In implementing a similar programme elsewhere, it is important that the Ministry of Education be a partner. In the future, teachers and/or guidance counsellors within the education system as well as members of the banking sector will be sought out to implement similar projects. It was also decided that time should be set aside to strengthen key concepts.

Basic cultural integration activities should be done with all trainers, to ensure that all students are exposed in a similar creative fashion, especially for trainers who are not gifted musically or with skills in drama. State endorsement and more beneficial partnerships and support (financial, material, people resources) will assist further in the programme's implementation.

Curriculum integration must be encouraged in order to guarantee greater reach and long-term support and to alleviate financial challenges arising from a disjointed approach. Savings programmes and financial literacy clubs must be established in schools to ensure the sustainability of learning and behavioural change.

Lessons learned must be shared through regular discussion forums (local, regional and international) among groups/NGOs/schemes, to easily disseminate successful practices and offer support. Standardised surveys and evaluation methodologies must be developed to generate comparable data, monitor progress towards goals and provide a reference point for further impact evaluation assessments.

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4.23 Free education at all levels, in all areas, St Kitts and Nevis

Primary theme	Resources
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Enhancing quality education
Other issues addressed	Improving school performance, and increasing teacher accountability
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary Tertiary Marginalised youth
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goal: Increasing the quality and quantity of educational output.

Objectives: To increase availability of and improve access to free education.

Outputs: Increased attendance, greater regularity of attendance and improved student performance.

Outcomes: Parents, teachers and community leaders value the reduction in truancy and the increase in students' academic levels.

The Government of St Kitts and Nevis has moved beyond the usual provisions of free tuition, furniture and facilities, to providing grants: free uniforms, lunches, transportation and examination fees for all students. Its success to date facilitates the work of the education system in meeting national objectives.

Implementation and challenges

The chief education officer (CEO), assisted by education officers, principals, teachers and parents, oversees the daily operation of this initiative. The responsible education officers and others report periodically to the CEO, and together they discuss and make decisions relating to monitoring, evaluation, benchmarks and mechanisms for success and improvement.

The Ministry of Education notes that, although financial constraints have restrained the capacity of the education sector to implement and sustain the programme, non-state organisations have helped alleviate this financial challenge, to some extent.

St Kitts and Nevis advises countries considering similar initiatives to consult with other jurisdictions to learn from international experiences, challenges and best practices. Further, the ministry recommends strongly that programme processes will need to ensure that benefits for individuals are limited to those genuinely in need.

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4.24 Green Skills Agreement, Australia

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Skills for sustainability ⁶⁸
Level of initiative	Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers Community members Employers and existing workers in sectors impacted by the move to a low-carbon economy including carbon-exposed industries, the building industry and the clean energy sector

Initiative aims

Goal: Build the capacity of the vocational education and training (VET) sector to deliver the skills for sustainability required in the workplace that will enable individuals, businesses and communities to adjust to, and prosper in, a sustainable, low-carbon economy.

Objectives: The Green Skills Agreement (Australian Government, 2009b) is a statement of the commitment of the Australian and state and territory governments to work collaboratively with employer and employee representatives, the vocational and education training sector and community organisations to ensure that training in, and the delivery of, skills for sustainability is an integral part of all vocational education and training and is relevant to the needs of industry.

The Agreement has four key objectives:

- (a) developing national standards in skills for sustainability within the requirements of the national regulatory framework;
- (b) up-skilling VET practitioners so they can provide effective training and facilitation in skills for sustainability;
- (c) strategic review of training packages (sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills) to embed sustainability knowledge, skills and principles; and
- (d) implementing a transition strategy to re-skill vulnerable workers.

Outputs: Major achievements to date include the following.

- (a) skills for sustainability have been embedded in training packages and work is now proceeding on the development of resource materials to support the delivery of new and revised units of competency and qualifications;
- (b) 1.1million Australian dollar (A\$) national VET skills for sustainability professional development programme for VET practitioners is building the capability of registered training organisations (RTOs) to deliver skills for sustainability training; and
- (c) research has been undertaken identifying training and sustainable employment opportunities for vulnerable workers in two specific regions: the indigenous population of Murdi Paaki in New South Wales, and existing workers in carbon-exposed industries in the La Trobe Valley, Victoria.

Outcomes: To date, the greatest positive changes have been the embedding of skills for sustainability in hundreds of units of competency (the skills and knowledge to operate effectively in employment, and their application), and the commencement of training to up-skill VET practitioners to ensure effective delivery of skills for sustainability.

Implementation and challenges

As Australia moves to a low-carbon, clean energy future there is an increasing need for workers, including tradespeople and professionals in key industries, to have high-quality, integrated sustainability skills to ensure they can provide the necessary knowledge, advice, products and services to businesses and individuals. An essential element in successfully transitioning to a low-carbon economy is ensuring an appropriately skilled and responsive workforce; embedding skills for sustainability in Australia's national VET training system is critical in achieving this aim.

This transition requires new skills, the application of existing skills to new technologies and practices, and new ways of thinking, working and doing business across all areas of the economy and society. The Green Skills Agreement is focused on building the capacity of the VET sector to deliver the required skills. More than 1.7 million Australians participate in VET each year through a national network of over 4,000 public and private registered training providers.

The Australian government is supporting implementation of the Green Skills Agreement through a budget allocation of A\$5.3 million over four years from 2010–11. Responsibility for administration of these funds, including project selection processes and quality assurance, rests with the Australian Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.

Implementation of the initiative is overseen by an implementation group which includes representatives from all state and territory jurisdictions, the VET and higher education sectors, private training providers, adult community education providers, industry and unions. The implementation group is currently developing an evaluation framework for future reporting and evaluation activities.

Engagement by industry sectors has varied depending on their business imperatives and views about the importance of skills for sustainability. Industries where the impact of the move to a low-carbon economy is immediate and pressing from a business perspective have been more proactive and willing to embrace change, and to explore innovative approaches to addressing changing skill requirements.

Industries where the impact is less immediate have generally been slower to address potential future skill requirements. Continuing to engage with these industries is an ongoing process and making changes to relevant training packages is expected to be a slower, iterative process.

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4.25 Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund, Mauritius

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Access to tertiary education, irrespective of financial status
Other issues addressed	Loan guarantees
Level of initiative	Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Since 2005, the growth of private post-secondary institutions has been very rapid. The challenge for Mauritius has been to ensure the quality of higher education at a national level, to safeguard the interests of the different stakeholders, and to widen access to tertiary education.

Objectives: To have one graduate per family and increase the gross tertiary enrolment ratio from 4.5 per cent (in 2010) to 7 per cent by 2015.

Outputs: Enrolment has increased as students from disadvantaged groups are increasingly enrolled in full-time tertiary education.

Outcomes: Between the creation of the fund (in July 2008) to December 2011, a total of 1,119 scholarships have been awarded to needy students, and 169 loan guarantees provided.

The Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund (HRKADF) is one of the means by which the Government of Mauritius is aiming to increase the access of underprivileged students to higher education. Under this scheme, students can apply for either a loan or a scholarship to pursue tertiary education.

The scholarship is focused on poor students (within a certain income limit). Over and above that limit, students can seek the assistance of the government to sponsor them for a loan which they can contract with any financial institution or commercial banks.

Implementation and challenges

The HRKADF initiative is widely advertised in the local press and on the website of the Ministry of Education, and all institutions are also made aware of the scheme. Applications are normally forwarded to the Ministry of Education, which subsequently submits these to a committee for consideration.

The scholarship covers the cost of tuition fees, books, examination fees and a maximum monthly stipend of 3000 Mauritian rupees (MRs) (US\$100), subject to a maximum of MRs150,000 (US\$5,000) per academic year over the duration of the course, in a Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) registered institution.

The loan guarantee covers a principal amount of MRs150,000 for students from Mauritius and MRs210,000 (US\$7,000) for students from Rodrigues and Outer Islands, per year.

For other countries considering a scheme similar to Mauritius' HRKADF, the TEC advises ensuring the financial sustainability of such a scheme, as a reduction in funds could jeopardise the initiative. If Mauritius were to repeat or revise the initiative, brand-name institutions could be exempted from following procedures and regulations for registration and accreditation – at the discretion of the regulatory body.

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4.26 ICT professional development strategy for teachers, Guyana

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Alternative
Main issue addressed	Professional development of teachers
Other issues addressed	Technology
Level of initiative	Primary
	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Teachers
	School leaders

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Identify a rapid, cost-effective way to enhance and overhaul existing teacher education systems.
- Outputs:** To date 3,000 teachers have been trained in basic ICT literacy, with a further 450 using the modules developed. Other education sector personnel have also been trained.
- Outcomes:** Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, teacher development management and staff, school principals, and teachers are competent to harness ICT effectively to support high-quality teaching and learning in Guyanese schools, with:
- (a) most able to integrate the use of basic ICT tools into the standard school curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom structures as well as management tasks and to support professional development; and
 - (b) a critical mass of personnel able to use more sophisticated methodologies and technologies in which the teacher serves as a guide and manager of the learning environment, and in which students are engaged in extended, collaborative project-based learning activities that can go beyond the classroom and may involve local or global collaborations.

The quality of both primary and secondary education in Guyana has been questioned recently, and research suggests it is only at the tertiary level that functional literacy is acquired. This situation has been attributed in part to the low retention of qualified teachers and the subsequent employment of untrained and unqualified teachers.⁶⁹ In response, the MoE has prioritised increasing the number of qualified teachers by providing opportunities for both pre- and in-service teachers to gain accreditation.

The ICT Professional Development Strategy for Teachers in Guyana initiative offers a rapid, cost-effective way to enhance and overhaul existing teacher education systems in environments with few resources and limited human capacity. Information and communications technology is being used to advantage by accessing good quality free resources such as curriculum frameworks, teaching and learning resources, and other online tools. The strategy also acknowledges the central role that education officials, teacher trainers, school managers and educators play for this to be realised.

Implementation and challenges

The strategy, and initiatives required to implement it, were developed in consultation with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning, Microsoft, and Neil Butcher and Associates, in conjunction with the National Centre for Educational Resource Development, the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) and the University of Guyana (UG).

The strategy is essentially a comprehensive framework and learning pathway for education stakeholders to become competent in harnessing ICT to support high-quality teaching and learning, and shares the broader vision of the Guyana MoE's ICT Operational Plan.

Initiatives identified in the strategy include:

1. revising the teacher education curriculum to incorporate ICT components at different stages of initial and in-service training, including subject-specific focuses for secondary education;
2. creating a suite of ICT integration courses aimed at school management, as well as courses for ICT school co-ordinators, and technical training for ICT maintenance and support personnel; and
3. introducing ICT awareness and capacity building initiatives designed for education stakeholders at ministerial and teacher education level.

In developing the new curriculum, the team used a method that proved quick and inexpensive to implement, but which resulted in a comprehensive professional development ICT programme. By adopting and reworking the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT) (UNESCO, 2011) the curriculum revision and materials development team was able to develop a curriculum that created a logical flow between courses run at CPCE and at UG.

In developing materials and activities to support the UNESCO competencies, the development team optimised free and open education resources. Although they did very little repurposing of these resources, they created sets of student activities designed to contextualise the readings, and sets of facilitation guides to assist the implementation of the programme.

The Guyana initiative demonstrates that digital resources and technologies can be used effectively as a catalyst for educational change. Potential benefits that can be derived from making the most of digital tools and content are significant – and can enhance teaching and learning, administration and communication. However, the Guyana Ministry of Education realised that the core of this transformation was not the technology itself, but rather the people expected to use it.

In countries where resources and human capacity are at a premium, the potential for the programme (or similar) to transfer is promising. While acknowledging the capital-intensive nature in funding the necessary infrastructure, the training, curriculum review and materials' development processes can be achieved cost effectively – because of the availability of good quality free and open resources and tools.

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4.27 Improved access to secondary and tertiary education for all learners, Grenada

Primary theme	Equity
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Education for all with improved services
Other issues addressed	Expansion, refurbishment or construction of a number of primary schools and upgrading of equipment
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary Tertiary Vocational
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Universal access to and participation in education for all citizens.

Objectives: (a) to ensure that there is adequate provision for children with special needs; and
(b) to develop enabling conditions for full participation of at-risk and excluded children within the context of gender parity.

Outputs: (a) increased numbers of children enrolled at secondary schools;
(b) improvement of student performance in some subject areas; and
(c) more students in the job market with employable skills.

Outcomes: Increased earning capacity among young people.

Implementation and challenges

Grenada believes that secondary education is the key to poverty alleviation and economic growth through employment. Financial concerns limit initiatives, and the country is still dependent to a degree on foreign monetary aid.

The focus on the quality of education in primary and pre-school is largely due to the high level of access available to people in Grenada. A number of components to enhance quality have been identified, such as teacher training, procurement of learning materials, accountability for student performance, improved student performance, parental involvement, teacher qualification and conduct, provision of textbook and transportation allowances, and a revised curriculum.

Several teachers have been provided with scholarships to study at bachelor's degree level, but the impact of training is yet to be seen. The revised curriculum taps into the various interests and strengths of students; thus, students gain motivation and the desire to stay in school and participate. Free school books have allowed for greater participation in school and at home.

Teacher performance standards remain a big challenge, which adversely affects children and school performance. There is no structure in place to cater for the termination of employment, except in matters that have nothing to do with classroom performance. This makes it difficult to address poor teacher performance.

Another pertinent issue lies with the increasing number of students eligible for secondary education and the lack of facilities to manage them. As the region has given the mandate

that all students should have access to secondary schooling, a two-fold problem emerges: a secondary cohort, older than the usual age range for each grade, evolves; and students are forced to work above their ability. These issues are exacerbated by a lack of training and efficiency among teachers.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has a dedicated project unit, headed by a senior education officer, and responsible for implementation of the World Bank-financed Basic Education Reform Project. Two existing sub-units with a general Ministry of Education mandate have been incorporated in the unit – maintenance and school supplies.

The project unit has specific responsibility for:

- co-ordinating the implementation of the Basic Education Reform Project;
- ensuring proper monitoring (procurement and accountancy) of the project;
- preparing the requisite project implementation reports;
- ensuring the maintenance of all school facilities; and
- ensuring procurement and distribution of school furniture, equipment, materials and supplies.

Grenada's education authorities believe that there is a need to focus on training and technical expertise in the future. The lack of sustained funding is a constant challenge, as is the lack of available subjects in high priority areas. Infrastructure also needs to be addressed in order for educational reforms to move forward.

Recent **Commonwealth of Learning (COL)** activities with Grenada have covered a variety of areas in all sectors. Grenada has participated in meetings and workshops to examine quality assurance indicators for improvements in teacher education, to develop open educational resources (OERs), and e-learning and educational technologies. COL has supported media development to assist farmers; and learners in Grenada have benefited from the development of a Special Diploma in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for practising teachers. Grenada has taken part also in the activities of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. The country also participated in the annual meetings of the Caribbean chief education officers, and the COL continues to work with Grenada on the regional priorities identified by Caribbean chief education officers.

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4.28 Improvement of education through the use of ICT, St Vincent and the Grenadines

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Integration of ICT into the curriculum
Other issues addressed	Equity in education
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goals: The main goal of the integration process is to create a more engaging atmosphere for students thereby focussing on their needs within the classroom. It is anticipated that the integration of digital technology will improve the levels of literacy and numeracy among pupils thereby improving the overall learning outcomes, as teachers are able to work with pupils at their different attainment levels.

Objectives: An objective of the ICT integration process is that of improving the operations at the Ministry of Education through change management. This process is being facilitated through the creation of a web portal known as SVGeNet (Education Portal of St Vincent and The Grenadines). The medium will allow for improved communication between the ministry and institutions, and also improve data processing through digital technologies as opposed to the extant paper-based means.

Outputs: Currently both the 'Improvement of education through the use of communication technology' and the government's One Laptop Per Child Initiative are now ending the implementation process. Consequently, it is too soon to assess impact.

Outcomes: While acknowledging the early stages in the implementation of both initiatives, general observations indicate higher levels of motivation among students in using the technology. This is evident in clusters of pupils working together at the various wi-fi hotspots or in their communities using their laptops.

The integration of ICT into the pedagogical process represents an essential paradigm shift from a teacher-centred classroom to a student-oriented one. It is hoped that student motivation and enthusiasm will increase through the innovative approaches being employed. Consequently, this should result in higher levels of achievement than previously experienced using traditional methods.

Implementation and challenges

The Improvement of Education Through the Use of Information Communication Technology initiative is targeted at providing the necessary hardware and training to modify classrooms to a modernised learning environment.

Initially, based on the available space, each primary school was afforded eight desktop computers so that computer laboratories could be established, while others with spatial constraints were given eight laptops and a docking station to both store and recharge the units.

Secondary schools were provided with 30 desktops and two laptops each. Additionally, all schools were given heavy-duty printers, LCD projectors and scanners, while smart boards are being piloted in selected institutions.

Under the project, teachers were also provided with training in areas such as technological integration in the classroom, the use of online resources and the use of software to improve pedagogy. The learning process is also enriched by a concurrent implementation of the National Telecommunication Regulatory Commission's project.

Through this government department, wireless internet connectivity was provided to all educational institutions throughout the country, via revenues collected from internet service providers. Hence, pupils who were previously underserved are now able to access online resources with greater ease.

The ICT integration process is further strengthened by the government's One Laptop Per Child initiative. This intervention is particularly important as it has equipped pupils with the ability to learn more through independent research at their leisure. Hence, there is greater equity through this intervention, as pupils who had no means of accessing digital technology are able to do so in relative ease and comfort, thereby bridging the digital divide.

One of the main challenges facing both initiatives is the acquisition of personnel for the maintenance and upkeep of equipment throughout the country. Given the volume of equipment to be maintained and the geographic distances involved, it is a challenge to respond to the increasing demands made by the respective institutions with limited access to technical staff. Currently the ICT unit needs to be expanded if it is to respond to the ongoing requests for maintenance and repair of equipment in schools.

Another point of concern in the integration process is that of motivating some educators to embrace the new means of delivery. Attitude modification meets with some resistance, as some teachers are hesitant to utilise the technology as this may reflect their deficiencies in various areas, or it may also indicate that some pupils may be more technologically aware.

The issue of content management and appropriate usage is also a prime concern for ministry personnel. Efforts are continuing to monitor student usage of ICT equipment in order to prevent, as much as possible, access to content which is unsuitable.

For other countries considering the introduction of technology similar to the St Vincent and the Grenadines' initiative, the nation's Education Ministry recommends that it should be done on a phased basis to allow for the monitoring and correction of potential problems.

As these issues are resolved, the process could be expanded with greater efficiency. Furthermore, as much as possible, educators should be comprehensively trained in the use of ICT equipment and minor repairs – so as not to inundate technical staff.

Where possible, an ICT policy should be developed in the initial phases of the integration process. This policy should guide what is accepted by donors and the appropriate means of usage. By minimising the variation in technology brands, it should be possible to reduce overall maintenance costs. Support services should be afforded greater training and familiarisation with the equipment which is being procured. Also, considering the volume of equipment being acquired, departmental resources may need to be strengthened.

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4.29 Improving Cook Islands education – a learning and teaching approach, Cook Islands

Primary theme	Equity
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	An integrated and holistic approach to education
Other issues addressed	Student achievement
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders

Initiative aims

Goal: Increase student achievement, engagement and enjoyment of learning through enhanced teaching practices.

Objective: To achieve an integrated and holistic education system.

Outputs: Teachers are beginning to utilise a student-centred approach, and are more energised and enthusiastic due to the implementation of new pedagogies, allowing them greater freedom to display creativity, innovation and initiative. Observations of classrooms clearly display the ongoing benefits in students' enjoyment and engagement.

Outcomes: Teaching practice has improved and teachers are beginning to become more aware of their role in the development of a child's holistic learning. Education administrators have witnessed a more contextualised approach to teaching and learning – students are learning concepts within a context they are likely to be familiar with, and staff at the Ministry of Education are adopting a more collaborative approach to supporting teachers, allowing for innovative approaches to learning and teaching to develop. (These changes are being measured through interviews, observations, feedback, questionnaires and surveys.)

The Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008–2023 (EMP) establishes a strategic direction for education and includes the following focus areas:

- *Taku Ipukarea Kia Rangatira* (language, culture and perspectives and aspirations of Cook Islands people and their role in the region and internationally);
- learning and teaching;
- learning and the community; and
- infrastructure and support.

The EMP maintains the learner at the centrepoint and focuses on learning for life, as the strategic vision for education in Cook Islands.

To achieve this vision, gaps in teacher pedagogical knowledge and the need for an integrated and holistic approach to learning are being addressed. Other changes within Cook Islands education that needed attention include the removal of corporal punishment (addressed through ministry directives and now a bill for legislation), necessitating alternative management practices; and the need for cross-curricular delivery of learning and teaching.

The plan to address the above issues was designed and implemented by the Ministry of Education's senior management team and school support division, which is responsible for the provision and support of the professional development needs of schools. This division historically includes curriculum advisors who assist principals and teachers with specific curriculum knowledge, as well as implementation of good practice.

As part of this new initiative, the position of learning and teaching advisors has been created. The learning and teaching advisors' role was designed to put an emphasis on best practice mechanisms by which any curriculum content can be delivered. The advisors work collaboratively to provide effective strategies and pedagogies that support teachers to increase student achievement, engagement and enjoyment of learning.

In effect, the new advisors emphasise the 'how' rather than the 'what' of learning and teaching. Initially three learning and teaching advisor positions were made available in 2011. The appointment of two further positions for 2012 will increase the capacity of this initiative.

Funding for the initiative came from the Cook Islands government and is managed by the Ministry of Education; supplementary funds are derived from the New Zealand Aid Programme. The government budget covers personnel and operational expenditure; the NZ Aid Programme covers associated activities, as identified in the initiative's business plan.

Ultimately, the students and citizens of Cook Islands are the ones who will benefit from this initiative through teachers becoming more knowledgeable in effective pedagogies. As the delivery of education improves, so too should the benefits to Cook Islands' society, through increased opportunities and employment prospects. Producing students who are at ease in twenty-first century environments will lead to creative individuals who can contribute to society – in ways that are not yet imagined.

Implementation and challenges

To date, 22 of 29 Cook Islands' primary and secondary schools have been involved in the learning and teaching professional development initiative aimed at improving teaching practice. The learning and teaching advisors have focused mainly on the pedagogies of differentiated learning, integrated learning and assessment for learning, but have also supported educators with a range of other strategies, including:

- behaviour management;
- compliance, governance and management at a senior management level;
- the use of ICT in learning and teaching;
- inquiry learning, planning, and the use of academic language in assessments;
- the development of a creative teacher's professional learning community; and
- encouraging teachers to share and collaborate within and beyond schools, through clusters and an online network of Cook Islands educators.

Professional development for teachers to date has included seminars, workshops, in-house and off-site sessions, as well as whole school, syndicate, departments, small groups, clusters, online or one-on-one skilling.

The major challenges faced in implementing the initiative were identified as:

- (a) *Providing and sustaining quality professional support to Pa Enua (outer islands) schools, given the challenges of distance and isolation.*

Overcoming this challenge proved to be difficult. With such large distances involved as well as irregular and expensive travel options, getting advisors to these islands is often prohibitive. One way the learning and teaching advisors overcame this was to utilise ICT, particularly Skype, email and internet sites. Schools were encouraged to contact advisors via Skype (messaging or video calls), email, or to dialogue via a forum set up by the learning and teaching advisors. This forum, created for Cook Islands educators, is designed to supplement and expand on information provided during professional development sessions. It also encourages dialogue between Cook Islands educators to create a co-operative and collegial education community where the sharing of ideas benefits all.

- (b) *Overcoming ingrained, historical teaching practices that no longer meet the needs of twenty-first century learners.*

To address this challenge, professional development provided by the learning and teaching advisors needed to be relevant, seen as useful, easily implemented and sustainable. This was achieved by providing professional development in targeted pedagogies, gradually, and with each meeting, introducing slightly more in-depth information on how to implement the pedagogy. This involved integrating theoretical and practical advice so that teachers were not too overwhelmed by the new ideas. Another important aspect considered when delivering professional development was to ensure teachers and principals saw that they were already doing aspects of the introduced strategy, to encourage building on steps already taken to implement a particular pedagogy. Ongoing support for professional development was provided by regular dialogue between the advisors and school principals. Advisors also encouraged contact with individuals or groups of teachers who required further support. The learning and teaching advisors were very aware of the need to make the support provided ongoing, and therefore worked on a model for providing sustainable professional development.

The Cook Islands Ministry of Education advises any other countries considering such an initiative to accept that change takes time and requires a supportive environment. Teachers need time to allow them to absorb new information and then implement it within a supportive environment, when they feel confident in their ability to succeed. However, modelling of strategies may help through the process of changing learning and teaching practice.

If Cook Islands were to repeat the initiative, it would ensure leaders in the schools were well aware of the critical part they play in confirming that professional development initiatives are successfully embedded into teaching practice. Ongoing support and follow-up by school leaders makes a significant difference in whether a professional development initiative is implemented successfully – or not.

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4.30 Improving numeracy, South Africa

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Alternative
Main issue addressed	School improvement
Other issues addressed	To address ongoing poor performance in mathematics at all levels
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Combat ongoing poor performance in mathematics at all levels.
- Objectives:** To complete and identify potential strategies from a five-year research and development project focused on improving primary mathematics teaching and learning and, from that, performance.
- Outputs:** Too early to report at this stage as the project is in its first year.
- Outcomes:** Building a focus around primary mathematics teaching and learning within the University of the Witwatersrand and more broadly in Gauteng Province, as well as within project schools for the initiative's development work.

This project is a five-year research and development project funded jointly by the First Rand Foundation, Anglo American, Rand Merchant Bank, the Department of Science and Technology, and is administered by the National Research Foundation (NRF). It involves supporting ten disadvantaged primary schools in one district in the development of numeracy and mathematics teaching, and improving numeracy and mathematics skills in these schools.

Implementation and challenges

The Witwatersrand (Wits) School of Education numeracy project began in 2011 and will operate until the end of 2015. Although based in ten primary schools in the Johannesburg East district, it works in collaboration with a range of both district and provincial-level personnel.

The focus in the initiative's first two years will be on building number sense in the foundation phase, by working with both teachers and learners across the ten schools.

The project leader, using extensive experience in both teaching and lecturing in the field of mathematics education in the UK and South Africa, is being supported by a small team of postgraduate students and lecturing staff from the School of Education, all of whom have expertise in primary mathematics.

In order for the project to function efficiently, labour-intensive negotiations with school principals and teachers and liaison with district and provincial level personnel have been required.

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4.31 Improving quality of teaching and learning, Malaysia

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Increasing the number of PhD graduates
Other issues addressed	Access to higher education
Level of initiative	Tertiary Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Students Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Allow higher education institutions to improve human capital.

Output: Improved quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes: Greater awareness among students, lecturers and researchers of the need for knowledge generation and community development.

One of the main challenges in the Malaysian higher education sector is to produce graduates who aspire to be first class, and have that approach to their studies. Such a graduate will be able to multi-task; serve the public and the community; contribute effectively to the development of the community; and at the same time become one of the nation's leaders to manage the national development programme.

Implementation and challenges

Continuous review and improvement of the curriculum is undertaken so that it gains relevance and fulfils the stipulated learning outcomes. It is also important to acknowledge those who have attained high quality in teaching and learning. Strengthening of the student evaluation system is also being undertaken in order to enhance learning outcomes.

Malaysia is currently engaged in providing a funding mechanism to meet the target of 60,000 PhD qualifications by 2020. Nevertheless, provision of sufficient funding still remains the major challenge to be faced. In encouraging other countries to invest in higher education, Malaysia advises that is vital to keep updating the curriculum to ensure relevance in the rapidly changing world of education.

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4.32 Improving Reception Year practitioners' professional competence, South Africa

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Improving the implementation of the Grade R year in foundation phase classrooms (through the University of the Witwatersrand)
Other issues addressed	Linking theory to practice and ongoing professional development
Level of initiative	Adult/continuing Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Enable Grade R practitioners to implement an appropriate and effective quality early learning programme in the Grade R year.⁷⁰

Objectives: (a) to enable practitioners to implement the national curriculum statement;
(b) to enable practitioners to make the necessary adjustments to their practice to ensure they are meeting national requirements, while at the same time implementing an appropriate Grade R programme.

Outputs: Outputs identified to date arising from the initiative include:

- (a) increased teacher professionalism;
- (b) improved teaching practices in the classroom; and
- (c) roll-out of the course to other organisations.

The facilitators who were involved in the implementation of the Grade R training have also expressed enthusiasm and motivation, and acknowledged changes to their own practice. The project leaders also have found it to be a 'rewarding, but humbling' experience.

Outcomes: Grade R practitioners have indicated that they found the course to be stimulating and beneficial, and it has enabled them to improve their practice. Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) district officials report that the practitioners who have attended the course are more positive about their practice, that there is evidence of improved implementation and that they have more confidence. Grade R practitioners who were not selected to do the course have been motivated to be accepted into the course.⁷¹

The majority of Grade R practitioners are unqualified or underqualified. There are huge challenges in ensuring the appropriate implementation of Grade R learning programmes. This initiative has attempted to enable practitioners to deepen their understanding of effective Grade R practice and to implement more child-friendly Grade R programmes.

For many Grade R children, this stage is their first exposure to any form of organised schooling. It is imperative that children be immersed in appropriate learning experiences from an early age that will support successful formal learning and enable them to succeed at school.

Implementation and challenges

This initiative was requested by the GDE because of the difficulties that the GDE had encountered with the rollout of the Grade R year. The initiative comprises a seven-module, interactive course aimed at increasing the professional competence of Grade R practitioners.

The course material was written by a core team of three, although suggestions provided by facilitators and practitioners were included in the material. This collaborative approach

enabled the material to be contextually relevant for the practitioners. The delivery model followed was a decentralised one, and two of the course designers subsequently became project leaders.

Before the delivery of a module, the project leaders held an orientation session with the facilitators who were qualified early childhood teachers. The facilitators, in turn, mediated this material to the practitioners during their school holidays. The focus was on appropriate early learning methodologies informed by simple explanations of the theoretical underpinning, and an emphasis on self-reflective practice encouraged practitioners to share their ideas and experiences.

After engaging with a specific module, practitioners were expected to apply what they had learned to the classroom situation. Feedback and support were given at a following training session, while during the training periods, the course designers visited each training centre to offer support and to monitor the training.

GDE district officials who monitor classroom practice and are responsible for quality assurance have suggested that participation in the course has led to improved implementation. There were some challenges, however: practitioners had to attend training during their school holidays; this was initially met with resentment. Nevertheless, the interactive model, which acknowledged practitioners' experiences, afforded them voice and agency – and they participated enthusiastically.

Language was also a significant challenge. Again, an interactive teaching mode, making use of peer teaching and code switching⁷² proved to be effective. Many of the facilitators could communicate with the practitioners in their home language, and this was also helpful.

During training, tea and lunch were provided. Surprisingly, the quality of the food became one of the initiatives' largest challenges. When organisers explored possible reasons for the practitioners' discontent, they discovered that the food grievances were closely linked to perceived notions of disrespect, and to external factors such as their conditions of service and lack of formal qualifications.

The completion of the assessment criteria also proved problematic. However, by viewing assessment as a developmental tool and offering practitioners ongoing support, the assessment tasks became less challenging. Providing opportunities to improve the tasks after consultation with facilitators also meant that practitioners grew in confidence and competence.

The Grade R Practitioners' Course organisers found it extremely time-consuming and demanding to write course materials (which had to be completed over a five-month period) and to oversee implementation. However, the response of the participants made it very worthwhile.

Further advice from the programme managers is to work collaboratively with all parties involved in the training. In South Africa's case, facilitators and practitioners took ownership of the material and the training, and this encouraged participation and commitment to the course. Increasing the time allowed for each model is expected to provide greater success and to improve the programme, by providing a mentorship model where a mentor works with practitioners in their classrooms.

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4.33 Improving school leadership, United Republic of Tanzania

Primary theme	Devolution
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Inspection of schools and support to teachers
Other issues addressed	Remedial training where needed
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders

Initiative aims

Goal: Quality assurance in education provision.

Objectives: To improve teachers' accountability and competence in the classroom.

Outputs: Increased numbers of heads of schools trained and of quality assurance documents published.

Outcomes: Improved performance of students academically, with relevant and necessary skills.

Implementation and challenges

To ensure effective quality mechanisms in schools, heads of schools and education co-ordinators have been given adequate skills and checklists to conduct individual school site supervision, instead of depending entirely on school inspectors to perform the task. Nevertheless, a shortage of skilled staff and adequate financial resources has proved to be challenging in implementing the initiative.

Tanzania advises other education systems considering devolving school inspection and related activities to the school level to emphasise the importance of effective in-service training for teachers and pedagogical leaders; and to ensure quality training for school administrators.

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4.34 Increasing the number of participants in community colleges' programmes, Malaysia

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Alternative
Main issue addressed	Widening participation in community colleges
Level of initiative	Tertiary Vocational training Marginalised youth Multi-sector
Target beneficiaries	Technical education and training Post-secondary students Community members Workers from neighbouring industries University graduates

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Develop quality workers by providing them with training to meet the demands of the high income economy of the future.
- Objectives:** To equip students and learners with living skills so that they are independent, able to earn a living and ultimately improve their standard of living.
- Outputs:** Improved enrolment and participation rates by local communities (both rural and urban).
- Outcomes:** Since the modular programmes are only into the second year of implementation, the outcomes are not evident at this stage. Like any other new programmes, there have been some teething problems and issues at the start, but such problems are not expected to continue beyond 2013. Refining and fine tuning of the modular programmes are ongoing.

It is necessary to minimise the gap in access to post-secondary/tertiary education, as a considerable number of school leavers start work after Form 5 without additional educational qualifications. As a result, they are less skilled and are likely to receive lower incomes.

In 2011 for example, of 468,000 Form 5 school leavers, fewer than 20,000 students were able to gain placements at local public and private higher educational institutions such as universities and university colleges. This indicates that the majority of school leavers will face considerable difficulty in gaining places at higher educational institutions, if they do not consider alternative pathways to further education and training.

Malaysia launched the economic transformation plan A Road Map for Malaysia, in 2011. The plan proposes that Malaysia should become a high-income advanced nation that is both inclusive and sustainable by 2020. Within the context of the broader education system, the initiative is a continuation of Education for All and the democratisation of education goals at the tertiary level.

Malaysia has to produce adequate skilled human capital to move the nation towards attaining advanced national and high-income status. In translating the national plan into action at the community colleges level therefore, there is a need to ensure that everyone can gain access to tertiary education to address the existing skills gap.

Unless there is a focus on increasing access and equity in tertiary education through the establishment of community colleges, the national agenda may not be attained, as the skills gap may persist and the demand by industry for more skilled workers may not be matched by the supply of skilled workers.

As institutions that emphasise lifelong learning, community colleges widen post-secondary access options and contribute towards achieving improved equity in tertiary education.

The core mission of the community colleges is to elevate the socio-economic status and well-being of society at large, through training and skills acquisition. Community colleges are committed to developing knowledgeable and skilled communities, able to serve the needs and priorities of the knowledge economy.

Implementation and challenges

In order to implement the initiative in community colleges, action plans to increase the intake of community college students nationwide have been drawn up. One plan involves increasing the number of intakes per year from two to four times a year (January, April, July and October) to facilitate students from local communities enrolling in these colleges.

Interested participants are encouraged to apply online or by simply walking into local colleges. Promotional exercises (in the form of aggressive advertising campaigns through all media modes) inform communities about the programmes being offered at community colleges, and are being enhanced to attract students from all ages and walks of life.

Likewise, the community college curriculum is continuously being reviewed with inputs from industry through consultation forums, during the course of the year. In 2010, community colleges began offering modular programmes to benefit all learner types, including school leavers as well as workers from industry.

These modular programmes are stand-alone programmes, allowing open entry and open exit, thereby enabling easy access to attaining skills. The duration of each programme varies between three and six months, and upon completion of a module, a student may leave to secure a job in the industry or continue with other modules to gain even more knowledge and skills.

Students are offered the flexibility of taking on more modules at any time in the future, should the need arise, and when time permits. The completion of four to five modules in the related field or subject area entitles the learner to be awarded the Community College Certificate, upon fulfilling a set of compulsory programmes. To date, 114 modules have been developed, and more than 80 have been offered at community colleges. By the end of 2011, the intake for modular programmes in community colleges peaked at 21,833.

Community colleges are still in the early stages of implementing their modular programmes, which has not taken place without major challenges. One such challenge is the operational readiness of colleges in terms of providing new and necessary equipment, and capacity (space, human and financial resources). In relation to human resources' issues, training of trainers takes place in stages, so that lecturers gain the skills and knowledge to teach modular programmes.

The new or upgraded equipment needed to teach such programmes is being identified and a budget has been drawn up to secure the equipment under the Tenth Malaysia Plan; while some issues of limited space in colleges have been resolved by making more intensive use of available space.

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4.35 In-service training for the grandfathering of directors and caregivers of private daycare and pre-school centres, The Bahamas

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Alternative
Main issue addressed	Investing in the future through equity in early childhood education
Other issues addressed	Indigenous materials and resources Caregiver capacity Private sector partnerships
Level of initiative	Pre-primary
Target beneficiaries	Pre-primary students Early childhood directors and caregivers

Initiative aims

Goal: Provide training for private sector directors and caregivers who are beyond the age of 45, have at least ten years' experience in early childhood care and education (ECCE), and who have no formal training.

(The Bahamas government believes that a focus on equity and quality in pre-school education is crucial, as early education can have a lifelong impact on students, and lead to greater achievement at the secondary level.)

Objectives:

- (a) to train 100 persons under the grandfather clause before the enactment of a law requiring that all persons involved in ECCE have training;
- (b) to build the capacity of caregivers and teachers in private pre-schools to the minimum standard of training;
- (c) to increase opportunities in the private sector for children to have greater access to quality pre-school education and care;
- (d) to provide greater understanding of the standards required;
- (e) to improve the knowledge base of experienced teachers/caregivers; and
- (f) to create indigenous materials and resources.

Outputs:

- (a) increased number of trained caregivers working in daycare and pre-school centres;
- (b) improvement in ECCE services;
- (c) incentives to pursue higher certification; and
- (d) greater acceptance of the monitoring process by education officers.

Outcomes: Improved personal development, (i.e. capacity built in persons who had years of experience, but little technical knowledge), improved adherence to early childhood national standards, and increased access to quality early childhood environments. A longitudinal study is being conducted to assess the impact of the in-service training for the Grandfathering Programme. To date, questionnaires have been completed by the participants, a focus group has been held for caregivers to share the impact of the experience, classroom observations have been conducted and caregivers rated on their performance and environment; and participants have been interviewed.

In-service training for the grandfathering of directors and caregivers of daycare and pre-school centres in the private sector is one of four strategies of the ECCE component of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)-supported project: Investing in Students and Projects for the Innovative Reform of Education, or INSPIRE.

Regulations and standards for daycare and pre-school centres require all persons caring for children under the age of five years to be trained in the area of early childhood

education. The enactment of the Act to Provide for the Regulation and Management of Daycare Centres and Pre-schools was the initiative for the grandfathering programme. Data collected in 2004 revealed that 626 persons/caregivers and pre-school teachers in the private sector were untrained; that is, they did not possess the minimum requirement of an Auxiliary Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

The percentage of qualified pre-school teachers in private schools is indicated below

Private schools	Provisionally registered	Estimated unregistered
Number of institutions	252	85
Number of teachers	881	300
Number of qualified teachers ⁷³	494 (56%)	35 (11%)

The Ministry of Education provided comprehensive training for directors and caregivers of (mainly) private daycare and pre-school centres. This enabled older caregivers to be upskilled before the new legislation came into effect, under a 'grandfather clause'. The clause was directed at untrained persons already working in the system who had years of experience, but little or no technical training in this field. The training took place from June 2008 to April 2009.

Training modules included components of teaching and learning that addressed the physical environment, child development, administration and management of daycare centres and pre-schools, and curriculum implementation. As a result, 201 candidates received certification from the Ministry of Education which allows them to continue teaching in their various centres.

Implementations and challenges

There are a large number of untrained caregivers (slightly more than 50 per cent) who do not meet the minimum requirements of the legislation. Without formal training, these persons had little understanding of pedagogy, child development and age-appropriate teaching strategies.

Participants in the programme are caregivers who work outside the public school system. As the government is not able to provide realistically for all children at this level within the public school system, building capacity for caregivers in the private sector supports the government's commitment to improve the quality of early childhood education and care for more children.

The grandfathering initiative sought to address several challenges in The Bahamas:

- inadequate human and financial resources allotted to ECCE;
- low emphasis on professional development for persons in the private sector;
- inequity in the pre-school programme;
- limited number of institutions offering ECCE certifications;
- lack of a developmentally appropriate curriculum;
- non-compliance with minimal national standards; and
- the need for greater collaboration among stakeholders.

Having achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary and secondary education, The Bahamas has determined to focus on equity and access to quality pre-school education programmes for all children. The nation believes that quality early education can have a lifelong impact on students and lead to greater achievement at the secondary level.

This initiative enabled teachers and caregivers outside the public school system, and in some remote school districts, to obtain skills and knowledge that would improve and foster

early childhood development. Further, it provided an opportunity to sensitise proprietors, administrators and teachers to the need for proper standards of operation, and to prepare them for the enforcement of these standards in the very near future. These standards focused on the physical environment, staff qualifications, quality early childhood practices, record-keeping in centres and health and safety requirements.

The in-service training conducted by the Ministry of Education through the INSPIRE project comprised 40 hours of early childhood courses which included theories of early childhood development, basic mathematics and English and the National Standards, in addition to supervised teaching practice.

The courses were designed to meet the needs of this specific cohort who would not have been able to qualify themselves through the existing pre-school education programmes offered at tertiary institutions. The in-service training certified caregivers to continue in the field of early childhood, while preparing them to meet the minimum requirements of the legislation.

Officers of the pre-school section of the Ministry of Education will continue monitoring and supervision to ensure that best practices and minimum standards are maintained, and they will conduct ongoing training and professional development throughout the year.

Due to the insufficient number of education officers responsible for early childhood, and the archipelagic nature of The Bahamas, travel to the various islands presented a challenge. Classes were held on weekends on the Family Islands and, as a result, the timeframe for the completion of the course was extended as officers had to travel from New Providence. The challenge was also resolved through the identification of professionals on each of the targeted Family Islands in the teaching and medical fields, and engaging those persons to present some of the courses, especially in areas such as mathematics, English, and child growth and development.

Now that capacity has been built in more persons in the ECCE sector, greater numbers of children and their families have access to an improved quality of early childhood education.

If other countries are considering implementing a similar programme, The Bahamas recommends identifying a team of early childhood specialists to design and implement the programme; securing adequate funding to execute the programme; and designing more age-specific programmes, for example, one for infant and toddler caregivers and another for pre-school caregivers and teachers.

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4.36 Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005–2010, Kenya

Primary theme	Resources
Secondary theme	Devolution
Main issue addressed	Delivering quality education and training to all Kenyans
Other issues addressed	Enhancing equality, access, relevance and quality
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Tertiary Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents

Initiative aims

Goal: Enhance access to education.

Objectives: To improve the equality, access, relevance and quality of Kenyan education.

Outputs: Greater participation in management by stakeholders, and development of the skills of teachers and managers.

Outcomes: Improved access and quality, and increased community participation.

Since independence in 1963, the education sector in Kenya has experienced rapid expansion. The number of public and private primary schools increased from 6,058 in 1963 to 27,487 in 2010, while secondary schools increased from 151 to 7,308 over the same period. Enrolment in primary education has grown from 892,000 pupils in 1963 to about 9.4 million pupils in 2010, while enrolment in secondary education has grown from around 30,000 students in 1963 to 1.7 million students in 2010.

The increase has been accelerated by a rapid growth in population, and the introduction of Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education in 2003 and 2008 respectively. At the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) level, enrolments grew to 75,547 in 2010 up from 62,439 in 2003. For the university sub-sector, enrolments rose to 180,617 in 2010 – up from 82,090 in 2003.

Implementation and challenges

In 2012, the Task Force on the Re-alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya made a number of recommendations (performance targets) for the Ministry of Education. These targets are listed below:

- (a) Ensure access, equity and quality across all levels of basic education and training by 2020.
- (b) Eliminate gender and regional disparities in basic education and training by 2017.
- (c) Improve the quality of education and training so that Kenya's measurable learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy, scientific and communication skills are in the upper quartile on recognised international standardised tests by 2017.
- (d) Equip schools to ensure that all primary and secondary schools meet minimum quality standards of teaching and learning by 2017.
- (e) In partnership with the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), revise teachers' conditions of service, institute performance contracts for all teachers by 2012, and enforce regulations that require sufficient teachers to be available to cover the syllabus.
- (f) Strengthen school inspection to ensure quality education service delivery at the classroom and school level immediately.

- (g) Develop guidelines for the establishment, registration and operation of early childhood development and education (ECDE) centres, including specifications on physical facilities, equipment, materials, and the qualifications of personnel required to operate them, by 2015.
- (h) Require all primary schools to have a functioning ECDE section, with admission not subjected to entry interviews or examinations, by 2015.
- (i) Create the conditions necessary to ensure that the teaching of science, technology and ICT takes place in all schools by 2022.
- (j) Initiate the implementation of the *new* structure of education (2–6–6–3) by 2013.
- (k) Review the teacher-training curriculum by September 2013.
- (l) Review the basic education curriculum by December 2012.
- (m) In partnership with the TSC, orient teachers on the new curriculum by 2013.
- (n) Strengthen school management through capacity building of boards of management by December 2012. (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

The current focus of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is on the provision of quality education. This is relevant to achieving the economic growth and development needed to face the competition provided by a global market. Non-dependence on external funding and support is another major aim, along with increasing awareness of the importance of lifelong learning.

The ministry has adopted a Sector-Wide Approach to Programme Planning (SWAP): a process of engaging all stakeholders in order to attain national ownership, alignment of objectives, harmonisation of procedures, approaches and a coherent financing arrangement. The SWAP process involves broad stakeholder consultations in designing a coherent and rationalised sector programme at micro-, meso- and macro-levels, and the establishment of strong co-ordination mechanisms among donors, and between donors and the government.

The KESSP initiative adopted this SWAP approach, which now covers a total of 23 investment programmes, and is decentralised to institutional level for implementation, monitoring and reporting. The ministry is responsible for budgeting and the disbursement of education sector funds, as well as for training managers in their use. Quality assurance is conducted at all levels of the system, although ministry personnel have noted that ensuring accountability and implementing effective reporting measures have been challenging.

KESSP is based on the rationale of the nation's overall policy goal of achieving Education for All (EFA), and the government's commitment to the attainment of the (MDGs). The broad objective is to give every Kenyan the right to quality education and training, irrespective of his or her socio-economic status. This will be achieved through the provision of an all-inclusive quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans.

KESSP co-ordination has been structured in a manner that facilitates: sector-wide stakeholder co-ordination through an education stakeholders forum and a national education advisory council; government co-ordination through inter-ministerial committees on education and training; development partner co-ordination through a consultative Government of Kenya/development partners' committee; ministry-wide co-ordination through a KESSP steering committee; and provincial and district co-ordination through provincial education boards and district education boards (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

The Kenyan ministry advises other countries expanding free public education through programmes similar to KESSP to guard against potential hazards in resource management, and to be sure to implement strategies that will enhance transparency and accountability.

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4.37 My School website, Australia

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Transparency
Other issues addressed	School improvement Accountability
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Greater transparency on school performance for the Australian public.

Objectives: (a) to provide information on school performance, finance data and school profile to allow parents to make an informed decision about their child's education;

(b) to allow transparency to ensure resources are targeted to where they are needed most;

(c) to provide clear school performance data that can be used as the basis for targeting funding and resources to schools in need; and

(d) to provide a basis for analysis for policy options, and rational and equitable distribution of national resources.

Outputs: Identified outputs include:

(a) improved transparency;

(b) parent choice; and

(c) community interest in schooling.

Outcomes: A number of key policy reforms can now be informed by My School data including a major current review of Australian government funding and efforts to implement in schools the types of governance arrangements and teaching practices that international analysis such as that from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows make a difference; including school autonomy and school evaluation practices.

The My School website (www.myschool.edu.au) enables users to search the profiles of around 9,500 Australian schools. It contains a range of contextual, capacity and student outcome information, including data such as student numbers, attendance rates, teaching and non-teaching staff numbers, average school performance in national assessments and school financial information.

The website provides an opportunity for everyone to learn more about Australian schools, and for Australian schools to learn more from each other. It contains a set of quality data that teachers, schools, parents and the wider community can use, along with other information, to help ensure that every child in every classroom receives a high-quality education. This is the first time that the broader Australian community has had access to this data.

Implementation and challenges

Prior to the advent of My School, parents had insufficient publicly available data to enable comparison of the operations and achievements of their school with other Australian schools. My School presents comparable school financial, performance and contextual

information that can be searched by school location, sector or name. The website provides statistical and contextual information about each school, as well as results from the National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)⁷⁴ that can be compared with results for all Australian students as well as schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds across Australia.

My School is managed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)⁷⁵ on behalf of all Australian state and territory governments. ACARA is the statutory authority responsible for collecting and reporting data on Australian schools, administering national assessments in literacy and numeracy and developing a national curriculum.

The website uses an index of student and school characteristics, known as the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), to identify schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds. This value represents the average educational advantage level of students at the school. ICSEA enables student results on national tests to be understood and compared in a fair and meaningful way, and enables schools seeking to improve their performance to learn from other schools with statistically similar populations.

In addition to the needs of parents, My School provides clear school performance data that can be used as the basis for targeting funding and resources to schools in need. Before My School was established, there was no nationally-comparable data or single source of data on all schools to provide a basis for analysis for policy options and rational and equitable distribution of national resources.

My School presents school data in a way that places each school at the centre of the reports and is designed to avoid the misinterpretation that often arises with school 'league tables'. Each school report on My School contains national data in three key areas: school operating context; school performance; and school resources.

The development, maintenance and implementation of the My School website were, and are, the responsibility of the ACARA. The cost of funding ACARA is shared equally between the Australian government and the states and territories.

Because each state and territory is responsible for delivering schooling to its own residents in Australia, schooling systems collect data in different ways. As such it was important to make sure that the data was comparable for presentation on the website.

Key factors were critical in achieving national school reporting through My School. These included the following:

- Ministerial leadership and negotiation across federal-state lines was pivotal in gaining agreement from all states and territories to this Australian government initiative.
- A clear rationale for making nationally comparable school information publicly available had to be provided.
- Widespread consultation with educational stakeholders with expertise in schooling and school performance outside of ministers' departments took place.
- National and international school reporting models were reviewed, to identify a set of key development principles tailored to Australia's education system.
- Policy details were based on scientific evidence provided by independent experts.
- Public concern about the production of 'league tables' needed to be overcome, as did concerns about Australia inappropriately following in the footsteps of international practices.

Further information

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4.38 MyUniversity website, Australia

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Transparency
Other issues addressed	Student-centred approach
Level of initiative	Secondary Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Secondary students Post-secondary students Parents Career advisors Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Inform potential higher education students about Australian universities and higher education courses, and showcase the quality of Australia's higher education providers.

Objectives: The MyUniversity website will support the objectives of the Australian government's phased, ten-year reform agenda for higher education, which emphasises the importance of:

- (a) putting students at the centre of government reforms;
- (b) creating a funding framework that supports student choice;
- (c) providing clear information and access to learning about what and where to study; and
- (d) funding that meets student demand coupled with ambitious targets, rigorous quality assurance and full transparency.

Outputs: Since the launch of the website in early April 2012, there have been more than 650,000 page-views across the site.

The MyUniversity website (myuniversity.gov.au) enables students to search and compare Australian universities and higher education courses. It contains course information, student services, campus facilities, applications and offers, results of student satisfaction surveys, results of graduate destination surveys, information about fees, student numbers, student/staff ratios and research student numbers and scholarships.

The website went live in April 2012 and it is the first time potential higher education students have had access to such information in a centrally accessible format that allows comparisons between Australian institutions.

Prior to the development of MyUniversity, students could not locate detailed data about student demographics, results of graduate destination surveys, results of student satisfaction surveys and available courses and fees, within one website, to make comparisons.

Implementation and challenges

The development, maintenance and implementation of the MyUniversity website is a shared responsibility between the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations .

Instead of working through individual university websites and thousands of available courses, students and prospective students can use MyUniversity to find information about:

- course information;
- student/staff ratios;

- student numbers;
- applications and offers;
- results of student satisfaction surveys;
- results of graduate destination surveys;
- information about fees;
- information about student services and campus facilities, submitted by universities; and
- research student numbers and scholarships.

Due to the broad range of data collected by the department, in planning the website, it was important to ensure the data was displayed in a format that is beneficial to potential higher education students. A number of key factors were critical in implementing the initiative. These included consulting with the higher education sector and key stakeholders to address key concerns prior to the website release; and overcoming potential public and sector concern about the production of 'league tables'. However, these issues were resolved by emphasising the purpose of the website as a student focused resource.

Further information

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4.39 National Assessment Programme, Australia

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Assessment and accountability
Other issues addressed	School improvement Transparency Equity in education
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Identify whether all students have the literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge that provide the critical foundation for other learning and for their productive and rewarding participation in the workforce and broader community.

- Objectives:**
- (a) To allow nationally comparable reporting on the progress of students in priority areas of schooling, using agreed key performance measures. The results are not used towards students' grades or entry into programmes/ courses, but provide valuable information used for policy analysis and setting policy direction.
 - (b) To provide the means by which the achievement and progress of Australian students, schools and systems can be measured and reported on using nationally comparable data against national standards.
 - (c) To support the national measurement framework for national key performance measures, (which collects data that is able to be disaggregated at all levels to provide important information for analysis and evaluation).

Outputs: National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data provides rich information on student, school and system outcomes, which helps identify students at risk and schools that need assistance. Further:

- (a) Student reports are provided to parents in the year in which their child sits the tests. These reports provide parents with an objective account of their child's literacy and numeracy skills and how they compare with the national average, and thus are a basis for conversations between parents and their child's teacher about their child's progress.
- (b) Jurisdictions also provide schools with a detailed report on their students' NAPLAN results. Principals and teachers can use this information to monitor student progress and identify students in need of additional support. The information can assist in their planning to cater for the individual needs of each student, and complements what teachers already know through classroom-based assessments.
- (c) Reports provide information at the national, state and territory level and include information on NAPLAN results broken down by student background characteristics (e.g., sex, indigenous status, language background other than English (status, geo-location, indigenous status by geo-location and parental education and parental occupation); gains in student achievement by the same cohort of students; and participation rates. Information from NAPLAN reports can be used to target support

to where it is most needed, ensuring that the most disadvantaged students receive the support they need to progress.

- (d) The My School (public) website includes information on NAPLAN outcomes at the school level, thus promoting transparency.

- Outcomes:
- (a) The community has comprehensive, national data on performance of students in literacy and numeracy and the key priority areas.
 - (b) Detailed school reports enable better decisions to be made by teachers about student needs.
 - (c) Results from the NAPLAN tests support school transparency by providing valuable information on how students, schools and school systems are performing against national standards, including national minimum standards in each of the assessed areas.
 - (d) Standardised reporting of NAPLAN test results offers an objective view of students' performance and a sound basis for decision-making about literacy and numeracy policies, practices and resourcing. It also allows the Australian public to develop a national perspective on student achievement and the performance of schools.

The National Assessment Programme (NAP) is the measure by which Australian governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether or not students are meeting important educational outcomes.⁷⁶ The National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9; and tests the types of skills that are essential for every child to progress through school and life – in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy. The assessments are undertaken nationwide, every year, in the second full week of May.

The introduction of NAPLAN in 2008 replaced eight separate state and territory assessments, which were previously used and equated to provide national literacy and numeracy assessment information. The main challenges at that time were in achieving the agreement of all governments to a common national literacy and numeracy assessment and in developing assessments that reflect core elements of the curriculum in all states and territories.

The NAP provides a national collaborative approach to gathering evidence to lift student attainment for all students, especially underperforming students. Student performance varies by student background characteristics and reporting the NAP outcomes by student subgroup (sex, indigenous status, language background other than English, geographic location and parental education and parental occupation, provides nationally comparable information on educational disadvantage.

National reporting of NAP outcomes provides the community with information on how well Australian education is performing in providing its students with foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, as well as in the important areas of science, civics and citizenship and ICT literacy. Results from NAP assessments permit the monitoring of student achievement in a range of skills, over time.

Rich diagnostic information from NAPLAN assessments informs specific intervention strategies and classroom practices to provide targeted support for underperforming students and to address disadvantage in educational opportunity. The data are also used to highlight areas of relative deficiency, determine patterns of educational disadvantage and to improve students' skills and knowledge in important priority areas.

Implementation and challenges

The National Education Agreement (NEA), through which the Australian government provides funding to the states and territories to support improved service and delivery and reforms in Australian schools, was the driving force to gain initial state and territory support to participate in NAP assessments.

The programme is run at the overall direction of the (national) Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)⁷⁷ is the independent statutory authority responsible for programme management, in collaboration with representatives from all states and territories and non-government school sectors.

ACARA is also responsible for the delivery of the NAP sample assessments. Funding of the national aspects of the NAP (test development and the analysis of results) is provided to ACARA by the Australian government, and states and territories, while individual states and territories meet test delivery costs.

State and territory test administration authorities are responsible for the implementation and administration of the NAPLAN tests in their jurisdiction, in accordance with nationally agreed protocols which provide detailed information, such as security requirements and uniform processes and procedures to ensure students complete the tests under similar conditions.

Parents of students taking the tests receive an individual report on their child's results, which provides an objective account of their child's literacy and numeracy skills and how they compare with the national average, and presents a basis for a conversation between parents and their child's teacher about their child's progress.

Student achievement in NAP sample assessments is reported at the national, state and territory level and by selected student background characteristics: sex; indigenous status, parental education and occupation, language background and geographic location. Each NAP sample population assessment measures students' performance based on a performance scale which has proficiency levels established at equally spaced intervals. The proficient standard represents a 'challenging but reasonable' expectation of student achievement.

There are challenges in developing the tests, in ensuring that they reflect what is taught in all state and territory jurisdictions. As the Australian Curriculum is currently being developed by ACARA and is currently being implemented in all states and territories, the NAP assessments will be reviewed continuously to ensure that they reflect the Australian Curriculum.

Further information

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4.40 National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality, Australia

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Teacher quality
Other issues addressed	Improving educational attainment
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members

Initiative aims

Goal: The Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership (TQNP) is designed to improve teacher and school leader quality to sustain a quality teaching workforce. Successful implementation of this agreement will be critical to the achievement of the aspirations, objectives and outcomes set out in the National Education Agreement.

Objectives: This national partnership⁷⁸ will contribute to the following outcomes:

- (a) attracting the best entrants to teaching, including mid-career entrants;
- (b) more effectively training principals, teachers and school leaders for their roles and the school environment;
- (c) placing teachers and principals to minimise skill shortages and enhance retention;
- (d) developing teachers and school leaders to enhance their skills and knowledge throughout their careers;
- (e) retaining and rewarding quality principals, teachers and school leaders; and
- (f) improving the quality and availability of teacher workforce data.

Outputs: Full implementation of reforms under the TQNP is expected from 2013. Jurisdictions have already commenced activities agreed under the TQNP and have provided the Australian government with progress reports.⁷⁹

Outcomes: When fully implemented state and territory governments will be able to monitor over time the impact of reforms through established mechanisms of monitoring and reporting. Monitoring of reforms will enable appropriate adjustment or updating of reforms such as the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Australia is experiencing teacher and school leader shortages (with the exception of non-specialist primary school teachers). In particular, employers report difficulties in attracting and retaining quality teachers in ‘hard-to-staff’ schools and in filling specialist teaching positions, especially in science and mathematics. The teaching workforce is also ageing (nearly one-third of teachers and more than half of school leaders are older than 50) and attrition rates are high, particularly among early career teachers.

At a time of strong labour market competition for high-calibre employees, the ability to attract quality entrants to teaching depends on the profession's attractiveness in comparison to other occupations. Remuneration and employment conditions have been identified as significant factors in people not choosing teaching as a career and in deciding to leave the profession.

Current teacher salaries in Australia plateau quickly, with a less than competitive salary level at the top of the scale, and progression generally based on time served rather than merit. Concerns have also been raised about the lack of consistency in both the quality of Australia's pre-service teacher education system and in the quality and provision of ongoing professional development for teachers and school leaders.

Implementation and challenges

The Australian government has committed 550 million Australian dollars (A\$) to the TQNP in recognition that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and achievement; and that improving teacher quality requires both strong school leadership from principals, and new approaches to teacher recruitment, retention and reward.

Under the TQNP, Australian governments are implementing a range of nationally significant and sustainable reforms targeting critical points in the teacher 'lifecycle' to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and leaders in schools and classrooms. These measures are supported by other reforms including those that will develop effective workforce planning and support and improve teacher remuneration structures, increase school-based decision-making and improve teacher education and professional development. The TQNP provides a platform to raise student performance and to support other school reforms targeting low socio-economic status school communities and literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Reforms under the partnership include National Professional Standards for Teachers, National Professional Standard for Principals, and accreditation of initial teacher education programmes, nationally consistent teacher registration and certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers.

The Australian government established and funded the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in 2010 to lead these reforms. AITSL is working in collaboration with state and territory governments, education jurisdictions, regulatory authorities, teacher and parent groups and other key stakeholders to develop and implement these reforms.

The National Professional Standards for Teachers are a key element of the TQNP. The standards are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality, and set out what teachers should know and be able to do at different stages across their careers. The standards also underpin teacher and school leader future professional development as well as guide the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes, initial teacher registration, performance appraisal and professional progression.

The National Professional Standard for Principals sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. AITSL managed the development of the standard through a series of pilot studies and rigorous testing with principals and other stakeholders.

Nationally consistent accreditation of initial teacher education programmes – where all courses will be assessed against national programme standards – and nationally consistent registration of teachers will contribute to improving and maintaining the quality of the teaching workforce.

The TQNP commits all Australian state and territory governments to national consistency in certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers. Voluntary certification is intended to address the challenge of recruiting, developing and retaining high-quality teachers by enabling teachers at the higher career stage to progress their career while remaining in the classroom. AITSL is currently consulting nationally on a draft certification proposal prior to implementation by jurisdiction from 2013.

AITSL is also leading the development of initiatives to support professional development for teachers and school leaders. AITSL's work on professional development also includes support for the development of a professional learning module to help leaders working with

indigenous students, commission of the Leading Curriculum Change flagship programme, and the development of a clearinghouse (containing research and resources) to support principals.

While all state and territory governments agreed to implement a range of reforms under the TQNP, agreement on the structure, content and application of the reforms had to be obtained from jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions already had systems in place, such as teaching standards, teacher registration/certification processes and mechanisms for programme accreditation, which required extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to develop an acceptable national proposal. Some jurisdictions will need to change state legislation in order to fully implement some reforms (registration).

Endorsement from all education ministers was required prior to the finalisation and implementation of each reform. AITSL consulted widely with key stakeholders, many of whom were also included on the working groups or committees, during the development and implementation of each reform.

Further information

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4.41 National policy and strategy for the attainment of core competences in primary education, Malta

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Curriculum development
Other issues addressed	School improvement
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goal: Children acquire the core competences necessary for them to access the curriculum effectively, so they can embark successfully on their lifelong learning journey to the best of their abilities.

Outputs: Outputs identified to date include:

- (a) more ownership by schools and class teachers with regard to effective teaching and learning;
- (b) clearer identification of learners who need support in mastering their core competences; and
- (c) greater collaboration between stakeholders, especially class teachers, complementary educators and literacy support teachers – as well as with other stakeholders providing services both during and after school hours.

Outcomes: Schools have a clearer strategy in deciding what they need to focus on to achieve mastery of core competences; how to achieve those targets; and who is to be involved in the implementation of the process. They have begun to reflect on how they can provide different learning experiences to prevent attainment deficits in a student's acquisition of core competences. This more thorough approach is also mirrored in college-based action plans, which are currently being drafted. (An evaluation of the performance of these action plans is currently underway.)

In January 2009, the Core Competences Working Group published a national policy and an implementation strategy for the policy, regarding the acquisition of core competences. The core competences cover three main areas: literacy, mathematics and e-literacy (digital literacy). The aim of the policy and the strategy is to ensure that all Maltese children acquire the competences not later than Year 3 of primary education (Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, 2009).

Among other resources, checklists have been proposed for each of the three competences at Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 levels. These checklists help educators identify children at risk at an early stage. Consequently, educators will be in a position to provide appropriate support for as long as it is needed. This will enable children to access the full curriculum and become successful, lifelong learners.

The national policy and the strategy emphasise the need for all stakeholders to co-operate and co-ordinate their work for the benefit of the child; stakeholders include teachers, schools and other educational leaders, parents and the community at large. This initiative is one of a number of measures taken to improve the quality of Malta's educational services. It is expected to enhance student achievement and raise the national standard.

Malta is working towards drastically reducing its early school leavers' rate to the established benchmarks of the European Union – which stand at 10 per cent – by 2020. Initiatives are constantly being implemented to attract more young learners to lifelong learning

through the introduction of vocational subjects in secondary education, new schools, and technologies in the classrooms such as interactive whiteboards, computers, and e-content, individual learning assistance at an early age, the provision of vocational programmes at the first three levels of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), and work-based learning approaches through joint public–private initiatives.

In 2012, parliament will be amending the Education Act to legalise the framework of qualifications and the validation of informal and non-formal learning, and to set up a more robust approach to the quality assurance, accreditation and licensing of all programmes and institutions in further and higher education.

The national policy and accompanying strategy for the attainment of core competences in primary education addresses not only educational engagement and success, but also fosters schools' capacities to address these issues effectively and proactively, thus placing the policy's implementation within the context of the overall approach to school empowerment and improvement.

The national policy is also part of the wider national commitment towards an orientation to lifelong learning. In this aspect, the policy considers the role of the different stakeholders in relation to the cycle of compulsory educational experiences in Malta and the nation's commitment to ensuring learners can master the required core competences. Accordingly, the policy establishes criteria relating to the roles of:

- school stakeholders;
- entities servicing schools;
- day school provision;
- after-school and family based provision; and
- monitoring and reviewing of strategy.

The document establishes the baseline definitions of literacy, e-literacy and numeracy, and proposes core competences checklists for Maltese and English literacy, e-literacy and numeracy for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 levels. Teachers use these checklists to identify learners who have not achieved the core competence benchmark, and who therefore require special assistance.

A major development to enhance core competences in compulsory education and ensure wider recognition of skills and competences was the development of a MQF for lifelong learning in 2007 which, two years later (2009), was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

The Referencing Report (Malta Qualifications Council, 2010) details how national qualifications in Malta are aligned to an eight-tier framework which cuts across the whole system of education. The framework covers sectors from compulsory education to adult learning, including vocational and higher education, as well as all forms of informal and non-formal learning.

Implementation and challenges

The strategy is being implemented through a defined set of cycles and phases, and looks strategically at ways of encouraging and promoting the dynamic balance between central structures, colleges and individual schools.

Responsibility for achieving targets rests with individual schools under the guidance of each college principal. At the central level, a directorate for quality and standards in education ensures that the targets set by the schools align with national priorities; monitors implementation; and provides services and resources to assist the schools to achieve such standards and results. (At this stage of the core competences programme, the major focus is on the Maltese and English literacy components of the policy.)

The core competences literacy checklists have been piloted and adopted by all state schools. Class teachers have been trained in their use and, at the central level, literacy

support teachers are available to assist the schools with the implementation of the checklists, while class teachers have had extensive training opportunities in the best use of the checklists, and parents have also been offered information sessions.

By 2011, all schools had to present a statutory action plan (SAP) for those learners in Year 3 who had not yet mastered the literacy core competences. These SAPs included the targets set (based on the needs of the learners in each school), expected outcomes and performance indicators. Through these SAPs, the schools defined an integrated and comprehensive set of practical actions to address their own specific targets, which incorporated school-led assessment and evaluation procedures. The action plans were then implemented when the identified learners were in their next year of schooling: Year 4.

A major challenge faced by Malta in implementing this initiative was rationalising different service providers that were not working coherently. A further challenge involved moving from an 'additive' and 'remedial' approach to addressing core competences in learning, to an integrative and holistic approach based on early support and identification, which also includes access to remedial support.

However, the most significant challenge faced was to address the profound culture change required for teachers to 'own' the individual learning needs of all their students, and moving from a focus on delivery to a focus on the active learning of every child. This was achieved through a combination of: strong central direction; up-skilling schools and their management; ongoing teacher training; resource development; in-class support; heightened expectations; and making data available to assist schools in their school development planning.

To achieve success, educational authorities are instilling a strong sense of ownership of the policy by all stakeholders. Awareness raising and opportunities for training and support are essential at every stage to ensure that there is smooth transition from one phase to another.

Further information

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4.42 National School Nutrition Programme, South Africa

Primary theme	Equity
Secondary theme	Devolution
Main issue addressed	Quality basic education
Other issues addressed	Learner well-being
Level of initiative	Primary
	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students
	Community members

Initiative aims

Goal: Enhance learning capacity and improve access to education.

- Objectives:**
- (a) to contribute to teaching and learning by working with provinces and districts in providing nutritious meals;
 - (b) to promote sustainable food production initiatives in schools, in order to develop skills and knowledge;
 - (c) to strengthen nutrition education for school communities, to promote healthy life styles; and
 - (d) To develop and strengthen partnerships to support the programme.

Outputs: Monitoring reports and anecdotal information from school principals, educators and parents have indicated that the programme has made a difference through improved school attendance and enrolment, as well as increased attention span of learners in the classrooms. In the 2011–12 financial year, the programme reached a total of 8,838,987 learners in 21,249 public primary and secondary schools.

Outcomes: No evaluation studies have been conducted to date.

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) is a South African government initiative, introduced in 1994, for poverty alleviation, and specifically intended to uphold the rights of children to basic food, and to contribute to learning by providing good, nutritious meals. Since its inception, the NSNP has targeted learners from the poorest communities.

A significant proportion of people in South Africa still live in poverty. Estimates by the Human Sciences Research Council show that approximately 57 per cent of individuals in South Africa were living below the poverty income line in 2001, unchanged from 1996 (Schwabe, 2004). An additional challenge is the poor nutritional status of children, with the joint problems of malnutrition (underweight, stunted stature, overweight) as well as micro-nutrient deficiency.

Learner well-being is an important element in achieving the goals of the Department of Basic Education's Action Plan 2014, which seeks to provide quality education for all. The school nutrition programme protects children at risk against hunger, and therefore keeps them alert and actively engaged in activities in school – as well as increasing school attendance.

The impact of poor nutrition and health on quality teaching and learning is acknowledged globally, and so the NSNP continues to benefit the neediest learners in developing their cognitive abilities.

Implementation and challenges

The programme started in primary schools, and has been progressively expanded to cover the poorest 60 per cent of primary and secondary schools. It is funded by the state through a conditional grant from the National Treasury.

The minimum requirements of the NSNP are:

- school feeding of all learners in Quintile 1, 2 and 3 (poorest) primary and secondary schools, on all school days;
- meals must adhere to specified menus using dietary guidelines, and consist of starch, protein, and fruit or vegetable group foods daily; and
- meals are served at 10am daily, or later if a breakfast is also provided.

As noted above, during the 2011–12 financial year, the programme reached a total of 8,838,987 learners in 21,249 public primary and secondary schools. More than 47,000 volunteer food handlers cooked and served meals to learners, for which they received a modest stipend. In addition, around 3,600 small to medium enterprises (including local women's co-operatives) procure meals and deliver them to schools nationwide.

Nutrition education, a key pillar of the programme, is aimed at promoting healthy eating habits among learners and school communities through the school curriculum, media campaigns and the distribution of resource material, including charts, pamphlets and posters, to deliver key messages on good nutrition.

Another important pillar is a sustainable food production in schools initiative, which encourages schools to develop school food gardens and to promote gardening knowledge and skills. The produce from school gardens is used to supplement school meals, or when plentiful, to sell for additional school income.

The DBE is responsible for NSNP policy directions and for overseeing the overall management of the programme. Provincial education departments have responsibility for implementing the programme at the district and school levels; for developing and managing a monitoring and evaluation plan; and for reporting on the programme.

Major challenges faced by the department in implementing this innovative programme have included:

- (a) *Lack of preparation and cooking facilities (at schools) that meet health and safety standards:* The department continues to strengthen partnerships with the business sector to gain support in building and donating fully-equipped container kitchens, while improved health and hygiene practices are encouraged through training workshops.
- (b) *Inadequate human resources available to monitor the programme at the district level:* This has been a major challenge, which is continuously negotiated with the South African National Treasury and provincial departments, through attempting to appoint full-time NSNP co-ordinators. Community and civil society organisation are also engaged in providing feedback on school-level practices.
- (c) *Inadequate cooking and eating utensils and equipment:* In the last three years, the DBE has progressively allocated funds to procure equipment and utensils for targeted schools, while programme guidelines for equipment have been developed.
- (d) *Poor quality food delivered to schools:* The DBE, in collaboration with the Department of Health, develops food specification guidelines, and monitors these through random sampling of products delivered to schools.

South Africa recommends that other countries considering a similar programme should conduct a situational analysis to collect baseline information that can inform interventions and improve planning for programme implementation.

Potential improvements to the NSNP being considered by DBE include: reviewing the meal cost, which could include provision of breakfast, as the majority of learners come to school hungry (a second meal could have been provided to sustain learners without compromising nutrient value); and the potential for decentralisation of funds to schools to allow them to have more responsibility and accountability.

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4.43 New academies, free schools and university technical colleges, United Kingdom

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	School improvement
Other issues addressed	Increased choices
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Community members Parents Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Establish new academies, free schools and university technical colleges with greater freedom to raise attainment, thus providing parents with more choice.

Outputs: (a) increased standards across the whole education system by allowing academies' head teachers, teachers and governors to make more of the decisions, rather than the local authority or politicians; and
(b) greater freedom for academies to teach, spend money and run activities in ways that specifically suit their local community of pupils, their parents, and those working in partnership with the school.

Outcomes: (a) improvement in raising reading standards and working collectively; and
(b) the number of schools opting for academy status is increasing.

The vision of the United Kingdom's (UK) ministries responsible for education is for a highly-educated society in which opportunity is more equal for children and young people, no matter what their background or family circumstances. This is to be achieved by five medium-term objectives:

- raising standards of educational achievement;
- closing the achievement gap between rich and poor;
- reforming the schools system;
- supporting all children and young people, particularly the disadvantaged; and
- improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the respective national departments for education.

Research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and others has shown that more autonomy for individual schools helps raise standards. In its most recent international survey of education, the OECD found that 'in countries where schools have greater autonomy over what is taught and how students are assessed, students tend to perform better' (OECD, 2011).

The UK government believes that teachers and head teachers should control schools and have more power over how they are run. Academies are publicly funded independent schools that, for example, can establish their own pay and conditions for staff; have freedom in relation to the delivery of the curriculum; and can change the length of their terms and school days.

Using the freedoms available to them, academies are able to innovate across all aspects of their work, such as curriculum, discipline, pastoral care, staff development and assessment,

to personalise the support they provide and improve standards for all pupils in the communities they serve. Families of academies can ensure that these benefits are provided more quickly to greater numbers of pupils.

Implementation and challenges

(a) Academies

It has always been the responsibility of schools to identify their academically more able pupils. School leaders in the United Kingdom have been given the freedom and flexibility to offer tailored learning opportunities, so that the most academically able pupils receive appropriate challenge and stretch. A planned pupil premium will provide additional funding to schools to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able. At the end of Key Stage 2, schools now can use Level 6 tests to allow brighter primary pupils to demonstrate knowledge and skills from a higher key stage.

The Department for Education (England) has introduced measures so that schools are more accountable to parents to help ensure that all pupils make progress; for example publishing clearer performance tables. For the first time this year, 2011 performance tables include information on progression of groups of pupils with different levels of attainment – so parents and others can see how well children of different abilities are catered for.

(b) Families in the foundation years

Improving the support that children receive in their early years is central to the UK government's aims of greater social mobility and reducing the number of children in poverty. The government intends putting in place a coherent framework of services for families, from pregnancy through to age five, which focus on promoting children's development and helping with all aspects of family life. To date, this has resulted in an increase in free early education for all three and four year-olds to 15 hours per week since September 2010, to make sure children are well prepared for school. The government also plans to:

- offer two year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds a free entitlement to 15 hours' early education by 2013;
- slim down the framework for early years settings (the early years' foundation stage), with a stronger focus on the three prime areas which are most essential for children's learning and development, and on sharing information with parents;
- recruit 4,200 more health visitors over the next four years, so that all families can benefit from regular support from a health visitor and receive the Healthy Child Programme;
- double the number of teenage mothers and their children who can benefit from the Family Nurse Partnership;
- introduce a new system of flexible parental leave from 2015 to help parents balance their work and family commitments; and
- retain a network of Sure Start children's centres, open to all families but focused on those in greatest need.

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4.44 Non-formal education resource centre, Sri Lanka

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Uplifting life through skills' development
Other issues addressed	Assisting non-privileged youth develop their skills
Level of initiative	Marginalised youth
Target beneficiaries	School leavers

Initiative aims

Goal: Social and economic development of Sri Lankan youth.

Objectives: To provide the opportunity for young people to gain the vocational training and language skills of their choice, as without proper guidance, their lives can be easily subject to unrest.

Outputs: An average of 750 individuals participate annually in the courses offered, and the numbers of interested applicants are constantly growing. During feedback sessions, it was noted that all participants of courses such as information technology have secured jobs through the vocational training provided. Also, those who participated in short courses have been able to initiate self-employment using the skills training they have received.

Outcomes: The initiative has gained a good reputation and the trust of school leavers and parents. The increased number of applications for the courses being offered illustrates this, and is supported by the personal reflections and comments of those who have already benefitted by participating in programmes.

In Sri Lanka, the net enrolment ratio in education was 97 per cent in 2002 (MDG Sri Lanka, 2012). At the end of their secondary education, 40 per cent of school students leave formal education without a well-recognised certificate. Similarly, 97 per cent of participants of General Certificate of Education (GCE) A-Level are not given opportunities to enter university.

Furthermore, unemployment is a major regional and national problem: often jobs are not available for young people, while also there are limited numbers of qualified young people with the skills required for existing job opportunities. The programme attempts to address this challenge by making qualified young people available for existing job opportunities.

Implementation and challenges

This initiative helps to fill gaps in the broader formal education system in the context of life skills. The educational resource centre provides non-formal education services as well as mainstream educational opportunities, depending on current national vocational requirements. Annually, the centre conducts approximately 15 vocational training courses of eight months' duration, and approximately 12 short-term vocational courses. The facility also features a reading centre.

On average, 750 individuals benefit annually from courses including: information technology, graphic design, computer hardware, electronics, draftsperson training (AutoCAD), sewing, machine embroidery, typing and languages (Sinhala, Tamil, English, German) – each of which are of eight months' duration.

Cookery, photography, cake making, hairdressing, curtaining, sari designing, batik work, lace work, and wool knitting are examples of short-term courses. These courses are directly aimed at helping young people focus on job opportunities.

The non-formal education resource centre is managed at the regional level. There is no specific budget allocated for different components, but the main operational funding occurs through the provincial education department and the relevant Sri Lankan government

line ministry. The departmental officers responsible for non-formal education (regional and national) undertake quality assurance of the institute's proceedings.

At the beginning of the initiative, the attitudes of parents and school leavers were a major challenge. Often they shared a misconception that community education programmes did not provide young people with recognised qualifications for job opportunities. This challenge was overcome by continuous awareness sessions, and gradually the benefits of the programmes offered were recognised.

Should other countries consider a similar initiative, Sri Lankan educators advise that the programmes offered should be constantly streamlined to match the demands of society, therefore allowing participants to directly take practical benefit from them. Further, it would be advantageous to begin offering the courses with more resources initially, thus improving learning support and outcomes.

The **Commonwealth of Learning (COL)** has been involved in education and development in Sri Lanka through several initiatives in three sectors: education, learning for livelihoods and human environment. This has involved education sector development, quality assurance, teacher training and development, capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) and testing new models of community engagement with the media. ODL activities have included a dual-model system at the higher education sector and working with non-government organisations (NGOs) as well as community-based organisations (CBOs), among them, the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), the University of Colombo, National Institute of Education (University of Ruhuna) and a number of NGOs. The COL also supported counterpart universities and agencies in professional development across different disciplines, to explore and share local, regional and international experience, especially in line with the ODL programmes. COL also provided assistance to the Open University of Sri Lanka to transform and implement their existing diploma/certificate programmes on "good governance and leadership" into ODL format, for delivery through OUSL's regional centres.

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4.45 Open and distance learning at secondary education, teacher education levels, Malawi

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Quality and relevance
Other issues addressed	Governance and management
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers Community members

Initiative aims

Goal: Recipients of education benefit socially and economically, with a view to participating successfully in national and international development.

Objective: To provide education through open and distance education (ODL) by MCDE (Malawi College of Distance Education).

Outputs:

- (a) learner enrolment at primary school level has increased (in some schools almost doubling);
- (b) enrolment at secondary school level has increased;
- (c) adults are able to take up secondary school courses and improve their academic qualifications;
- (d) the gap in teacher shortage is narrowing; and
- (e) the quality of instructional courses in open and distance learning is supporting and improving the quality of teaching and learning in conventional schools.

Outcomes: Through observation and informal talks with the public, both young and old people are showing a greater interest in education. An improved desire for education and reading is observable, and existing negative attitudes to open and distance education are being reduced as institutions are now opening themselves to dual-mode systems (e.g. Mzuzu University, Blantyre International University, Domasi College of Education, teacher training colleges in Malawi, Shareworld Open University).

The MCDE, a Ministry of Education, Science and Technology facility, provides primary and secondary school level education. The college supports teachers and learners to achieve quality education through electronic media on national radio – the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation.

The MCDE focuses on secondary and primary courses. However, the Department of Teacher Education and Development, which is also under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, focuses on teacher training. Each institution offering courses through ODL prepares a budget and submits it to the government, and is responsible for the implementation of its programmes.

Nevertheless, at the development level, institutions share expertise to ensure that the quality of distance learning courses is maintained. In addition, each institution monitors its own programmes to make sure they are within the required standards. Outsiders are also allowed to sample the materials and comment, for quality improvement.

Implementation and challenges

Currently, the service targets the junior primary sector and is expected soon to cover senior primary. This initiative has increased school enrolment, attendance and performance

in the sector. The service, which targets the learner, is also enjoyed by everyone in the community and some adults learn from the lessons aired on national radio.

The provision of secondary school education began in 2002. Having changed from distance education centres to community day secondary schools, the College introduced another approach called open secondary schools (OSSs). The MCDE provides the same secondary school subjects as offered in conventional secondary schools, at two levels: junior secondary education and senior secondary education. Learners in this system of study are enrolled under the management and administration of the conventional secondary school to which they are attached.

The college:

- develops and produces modular courses in print form to be used by learners in OSSs;
- trains teacher supervisors at OSSs in the management and administration of open schooling and academic course delivery; and
- assists OSSs with learner-support (academic and administrative).

In OSSs, both males and females are accommodated regardless of age, religion, etc. The college also allows distance learners to access its printed instructional materials. The quality of education for both open schooling and conventional learners has improved.

As noted in outputs above, access to secondary school education has increased from 17,000 learners in 2006 to more than 40,000 learners (2012). Personal initiative of, and motivation by, adults to access education to improve their academic qualification has also improved (assessed by the number of adults who come to the college to purchase instructional materials).

At the primary school level, there has been a huge shortage of teachers. Between 2008 and 2012, the government recruited 10,000 teacher trainees, who are working in primary schools while studying for a qualification through ODL.

In summary, Malawi's open and distance learning initiative is:

- improving the quality of instructional strategies;
- responding favourably to shortages of conventional learning spaces;
- allowing everyone who needs education to access it;
- responding favourably to gender equity and equality (female and male learners are able to access education); and
- increasing the number of teachers, as more teachers are being trained through ODL.

Although the Malawi government is responsible for all the open and distance learning programmes, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) currently supports the primary school radio programmes (until September, 2012).

The open and distance learning programmes appear to be quite cost-effective. In optimising ODL opportunities, the government spends less than it would spend in providing education and training through conventional methods. Facilities and human resources to support ODL are small, yet serve a large number of learners. And although there are huge costs in the development and production of the course materials, this is offset by economies of scale.

The major challenges involved in implementing the initiative have been:

- *Quality of course developers*: Some are not conversant with ODL philosophy and practices. In this case, course developers are given a short course in the philosophy and practice of ODL, including skills in writing.
- *Old press equipment (printing machines)*: Some are obsolete, and the college is expending significant funds to maintain them.
- *Inadequate knowledge and skills* of the ODL system – by implementers.

- *Shortage of staff for various activities:* Necessary tasks include assessment and identification, instructional designing, copyediting, typesetting, training in ODL, evaluation and monitoring, research for development.
- *Inadequate equipment and means of distributing course materials.*

If repeating the initiative Malawi would explore how digital or e-learning would allow many learners to access learning resources, other than through print only; improve short training programmes for teachers in ODL systems and course development; and make course materials modular.

For other countries seeking to implement a similar initiative, Malawi advises educators to share course materials with other ODL institutions, both local and international, to make the overall ODL system more cost effective; and to engage in research to improve ODL course development, besides offering traditional courses.

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4.46 Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme, Canada

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	System monitoring and accountability
Other issues addressed	Informing Canadians about how their education systems are meeting the needs of students and society
Level of initiative	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	School leavers Education system administrators

Initiative aims

- Goal:** A comparable measure of student achievement in the middle years, across provinces and territories.
- Objectives:** To provide information on the context of learning and teaching through detailed questionnaires administered to students, teachers, and school principals.
- Outputs:** Public, contextual, technical and research reports, as well as assessment frameworks.
- Outcomes:** A shared vision for curriculum, policy, and assessment across the provinces and territories, and an understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with participating in international assessment initiatives. PCAP was implemented about 10 years prior to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Canada, and we believe it has contributed to Canada's strong results in PISA, by promoting a positive culture of assessment in Canadian schools and a shared understanding of high expectations for all students.

The goal of PCAP is to complement other assessments undertaken at the classroom, school, province or territory, and international levels. Since education in Canada is a provincial or territorial responsibility, PCAP offers both a challenge and an opportunity to determine the skills and knowledge that are common to Grade 8 students across the country.

PCAP contributes to the validation of curricula in the provinces and territories. Through contextual questionnaires, PCAP helps stakeholders to understand the links between achievement and students' home and school environments.

PCAP is administered every three years to a sample of approximately 30,000 Grade 8 students from 1,500 schools. Results are reported at the provincial, territorial and national levels only. Detailed contextual reports, as well as specific research reports, are developed to guide provinces and territories as they revise their policies, curricula, and practices.

Implementation and challenges

PCAP is funded by provinces and territories and has been developed by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), with the assistance of content experts and teachers from all Canadian jurisdictions. A rigorous process has been put in place for the development, validation, field testing, and administration of the assessment.

CMEC believes that it is important to commit long-term to the programme, regardless of the results. A significant benefit of assessments such as PCAP is that they allow for the monitoring of trends in achievement over time, if the initiative is maintained as a long-term commitment.

For other countries interested in implementing a similar programme, PCAP personnel advise expanding the assessment to non-core subject areas, at least occasionally, to provide additional information benefits.

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4.47 Primary Education Review and Implementation, Singapore

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Priorities, programmes and resources needed to bring primary education to the next level
Other issues addressed	School improvement
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

- Goal:** Provide Singaporean children with a balanced and well-rounded education in their foundation years.
- Objectives:** To consult stakeholders on the philosophy and desired outcomes of holistic education at the primary level; study and recommend strategies to enhance primary education; and in that context consider in detail the following areas:
- (a) the roll-out of single-session primary schools;
 - (b) the move towards an all-graduate teacher recruitment by 2015; and
 - (c) recommendations to rebalance the learning of content knowledge and the development of skills and values so that young Singaporeans are well prepared for the future.
- Outputs:** The initiative is in its first year only at this stage, and outputs are yet to be identified.
- Outcomes:** The Primary Education Review and Implementation (PERI) committee believes that Singapore must equip its children with the necessary skills and dispositions to excel in an increasingly complex environment, and to better prepare them for life beyond the classroom. This provides a strong impetus for the nation to place renewed emphasis on holistic education, including character and life-skills development, starting at the primary level.

Implementation and challenges

In mid-2009, the Government of Singapore accepted the recommendations of the PERI committee. The committee sought to build on Singapore's strong education fundamentals, while raising the quality of teaching and learning, and so made recommendations across two broad areas. These recommendations were:

- (a) 'The (Singapore) education system should balance the acquisition of knowledge with the development of skills and values, through increased use of engaging and effective teaching methods, more holistic assessment, and a stronger emphasis on non-academic aspects within the curriculum.'
- (b) 'More resources [should] be made available in the areas of staffing, funding and infrastructure to support the proposed changes.' (MoE Singapore, 2012b).

Proposed strategies to achieve the committee's recommendations are identified below.

(a) *Balancing knowledge with skills and values*

1. *Use engaging pedagogy to teach skills and values:*
 - strengthen training of teachers in content mastery and in using a repertoire of generic and subject specific teaching methods.
2. *Emphasise non-academic programmes within the curriculum:*
 - implement a programme for active learning (PAL) for all Primary 1 and 2 pupils in sports and outdoor education and performing and visual arts, in tandem with the move to the single-session model;

- encourage all Primary 3 to 6 pupils to continue with PAL and/or to opt for a main co-curricular activity;
 - give schools autonomy, with guidelines and examples of good practices, in the implementation of PAL, which should complement existing art, music and physical education programmes;
 - enhance the quality of art, music and PE instruction through optimal deployment of qualified teachers;
 - provide schools with funds to engage trained coaches, instructors and service providers approved by the Ministry of Education to conduct quality PAL activities, as well as to procure equipment for art, music, physical education and other PAL activities; and
 - work closely with the Singapore Sports Council, the National Arts Council and other relevant agencies to build the pool of instructors for PAL in the long term.
3. *More holistic assessment to support learning:*
- encourage schools to move away from an overly strong emphasis on examinations in Primary 1 and 2, and explore the use of 'bite-sized' forms of assessment to help build pupils' confidence and desire to learn;
 - place less importance on semester examinations in Primary 1 to ensure pupils' transition from pre-school to primary school. Primary 2 pupils could be slowly eased into taking examinations;
 - equip teachers to use rubrics to assess and provide pupils with richer and more holistic feedback on their development and skills acquisition in academic and non-academic areas;
 - encourage primary schools to provide parents with a more comprehensive holistic development profile which captures a fuller picture of their child's progress and learning throughout the year;
 - continue to provide clear guidelines on the learning outcomes for each subject at the end of every level, to facilitate teachers' design of appropriate assessment tasks and ensure students' continued mastery of foundational skills; and
 - develop a system to assess schools' ability to develop their pupils in academic and non-academic areas and to provide a more holistic education.
- (b) *Investing in a quality teaching force*
1. *Provide additional resources:*
- in line with bringing forward the recruitment of teachers and allied educators, recruit and train more art, music and physical education teachers to raise the quality of instruction in these subjects; and
 - engage individuals with strong oral communication skills as language facilitators in schools.
2. *Recruit committed, quality educators:*
- continue to carefully select aspiring educators with the right aptitude, passion and suitability for teaching;
 - focus efforts to recruit new teachers from the pool of university graduates, or those who qualify for an undergraduate education, by 2015, to maintain the calibre of the teaching service;
 - encourage eligible non-graduates to join the teaching service by enrolling in the National Institute of Education's degree programmes, or to work closely with teachers as allied educators (teaching and learning), with future opportunities to become fully-fledged teachers; and

- provide current non-graduate teachers with avenues for professional development and/or academic upgrading.
3. *Equip teachers with the necessary skills through training and professional development:*
- strengthen pre- and in-service training to systematically equip all teachers with the basic teaching skills, sound content mastery and provide a variety of teaching and assessment methods;
 - encourage subject specialisation of teachers at the upper primary levels through in-service training, while continuing to provide schools with the autonomy to deploy their teachers according to their needs; and
 - continue to provide schools and teachers with rich learning resources and packages, and to work closely with schools to help them build expertise in new teaching and assessment methods (MoE Singapore, 2012b).

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4.48 Quality assurance of the Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Regulatory framework to assure quality of tertiary education provision
Other issues addressed	Instilling principles of good governance, transparency and accountability in the post-secondary education sector
Level of initiative	Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Since 2005, the growth of private post-secondary institutions has been very rapid. The challenge for Mauritius has been to ensure the quality of higher education at a national level; to safeguard the interests of the different stakeholders; and to widen access to tertiary education.

Objectives: To assist in the promotion of Mauritius as a world-class knowledge hub and as a gateway for post-secondary education in the region, and to attract 100,000 foreign students to Mauritius by 2020.

Outputs: All public institutions have completed the first cycle of quality audits and the second cycle is due to start in 2012. A total of 58 private institutions have been registered and their programmes accredited.

Outcomes: Increased public and institutional confidence in the quality of post-secondary education services delivery in Mauritius

Publicly funded tertiary education institutions are required to undergo an external verification of their quality assurance system, commonly called a quality audit, every five years. The first cycle of the quality audit, which started in 2005, has been completed and a new set of criteria for the second cycle has already been published.

The quality audit is conducted by an approved audit panel comprising international and local experts in the field of quality assurance. All tertiary education institutions have been empowered in establishing their internal quality assurance systems, and in preparing for the quality audit, by means of regular sensitisation workshops. After each institutional quality audit, implementation of the audit panel recommendations is closely monitored.

All private, post-secondary education providers are required to have their institution registered and their programmes accredited with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The programmatic accreditation is concerned with the quality of a programme or course that is intended to be offered by the private institution.

For the purpose of accreditation, a panel, comprising co-opted members from the industry sector and subject specialists in academia, is constituted. Medical and allied programmes are scrutinised by international monitoring committees, comprising international experts from overseas at the level of university faculty dean, the relevant councils, and representatives of the TEC and other related ministries.

Implementation and challenges

The TEC is responsible for the implementation of the regulatory framework governing quality assurance, recognition and equivalence, in higher education in Mauritius. No fees are charged for the quality audits of public institutions; however, private institutions are required to pay for registering their institutions and to accredit their programmes.

Building such a regulatory framework has been a complex exercise, which needs to be adapted to the local context. To command respect, all regulations and guidelines need to be clearly stipulated; and all procedures need to be transparent. A participatory approach is required in order to 'win over' the collaboration of institutions in the process.

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4.49 Quality education, improved access, and inclusive education initiative, Cameroon

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Improve quality, governance and sustainability
Other issues addressed	Revised teaching approaches and assessment methods
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary
Target beneficiaries	Pupils of nursery and primary schools

Initiative aims

Goal: Improve access, quality, governance and sustainability in the Cameroon education system.

Objectives: The initiatives aim to strengthen the Cameroon education system as it moves towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of 2015 on Education (Universal Primary Education for all) and the Cameroon 2035 vision.

Outputs: Improved school enrolment, especially for girls.

Outcomes: Improved community support for girls' education.

The Cameroon government's initiatives have been planned to improve access, quality, governance and sustainability, and involve a wide range of individual programmes. These include:

- revised teaching approaches based on the development of competencies in learners;
- revised assessment methods of pupils based on learner achievements;
- promotion of bilingualism (English and French);
- introduction of ICT in the school curriculum and the creation of ICT pilot schools;
- the use of national languages as a medium of learning in some pilot schools;
- 'education priority areas' created in parts of the country which have low school enrolment because of cultural and geographical factors;
- child-friendly and girl-friendly schools created in education priority areas;
- inclusive education initiative (which is still at the policy level); and
- combatting corruption in schools.

Implementation and changes

The Ministry of Education in Cameroon defines the nation's education policy and implements it with the help of school authorities at the regional and district levels. There is also institutional strengthening and support from technical and financial partners.

The challenges are many. Poor literacy and numeracy skills continue to be problematic. There is a high school dropout rate. Low enrolment of girls needs to be addressed, along with low teacher supply, a problem which is related to poor working conditions for teachers.

Low financial allocations for education initiatives hinder attempts to progress, and cultural practices need to be resolved successfully. Fortunately, however, the initiatives have already demonstrated positive results, with improved enrolment and increased community support for girls being one such positive outcome.

The Cameroon government knows that when everyone in the community is involved in initiatives there is a higher possibility for success. It realises that it must address its

education priorities, including improving the quality and effectiveness of the education system, developing strong partnership with a wide range of different stakeholders, and improving the management and control of the education system.

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4.50 Quality Enhancement Initiative, Uganda

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Teachers: addressing absenteeism and inadequate capacity Pupils: addressing absenteeism Communities: addressing negative attitudes and limited awareness about education
Other issues addressed	Mobilising resources from the government
Level of initiative	Pre-primary Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Achieve quality education.

Outputs: (a) number of teachers on the payroll has increased; and
(b) gradual improvement in school attendance by pupils, teachers and head teachers.

Outcomes: An evaluation of the initiative outcomes is yet to be conducted.

The Ugandan quality enhancement initiative (QEI) addresses both quality and access, in the way in which it relates to relevance and adequacy in the education sector labour market. The country's 'Four Education Pillars' – pupils, community, teacher, management – if adequately provided for (or their challenges and limitations addressed), will collaboratively assist in making the nation's education service delivery more responsive, efficient and effective.

Implementation and challenges

Additional resources are being allocated for 12 QEI districts, including:

- financial support for development and operations;
- increased teacher numbers to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio;
- development of instructional materials to address the high pupil-book ratio, and to cater for overcrowded classrooms;
- providing teachers' houses and improving schools' sanitation; and
- improving school inspection strategies to increase supervision – at all levels.

The challenges faced by the Ugandan education system in implementing QEI have resulted from inadequate funding for the initiative, as well as insufficient inspection capacity of Ministry of Education and science personnel. If Uganda were to repeat or expand the initiative, it would rationalise resources, by reducing funding for districts which are already 'high on the league table' and redistributing the available funds to more needy schools or districts.

In suggesting other countries introduce a similar initiative to QEI, Uganda recommends that any such programme should be trialled as a pilot first, and that system managers need

to realise that it is highly resource based. Efficiency measures also need to be considered when setting targets for areas of need – such as pupil–teacher and pupil–book ratios.

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4.51 Recognition of Prior Learning, Mauritius

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Further and continuing education
Other issues addressed	Providing the country with a qualified workforce
Level of initiative	Multi-sector
Target beneficiaries	Community members Industry

Initiative aims

Goal: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been introduced to bring people (back) into the formal education and training system with a view to equipping the country with a qualified workforce capable of facing the severe economic challenges that are prevailing worldwide.

Objectives: To foster inclusion and promote lifelong learning.

Outputs: Since the introduction of RPL, 48 RPL candidates have acquired a full qualification and 18 RPL candidates have obtained a partial qualification. Currently 25 RPL candidates are undergoing RPL assessment and 33 RPL candidates are building their portfolio. In addition, 143 RPL facilitators and 108 RPL assessors were trained.

Outcomes: Outcomes include:

- (a) less resistance on the part of the target audience;
- (b) a more refined programme, following an audit; and
- (c) better understanding by facilitators of the process and their roles.

A large proportion of the Mauritian workforce does not have any formal qualification but does possess extensive experience. Furthermore, these persons are often located at a particular point in an employing organisation, unable to move higher. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for them to move to other jobs due to the absence of formal qualifications, or even to pursue further studies. They are (to some extent) unable to pursue further qualifications through the standard mechanisms.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) therefore acts as a mechanism for inclusion, by offering access to those people who previously have been left 'outside the mainstream education system'. RPL ensures that an individual's knowledge and skills, arising from any kind of learning environment, are clearly visible and acknowledged. In this way, they can combine and build on previous learning, and be rewarded for it through formal qualifications which allow them to move within the labour market, and to pursue further studies.

In short, RPL responds to the changing demographics of the Mauritian economy by directly tackling the issue of up-skilling and retraining its workforce, while acknowledging their existing skills.

Implementation and challenges

The RPL policy has been reviewed following the first pilot project. In addition, several training sessions for key participants in the RPL system have been provided. The process involves two stages.

An *implementation stage* includes:

- registration of facilitators and assessors;
- sensitisation campaign for potential candidates to make themselves known;
- building of portfolios of candidates with support from facilitators; and
- examination panel and portfolios by assessors followed by interviews.

The *award and certification stage* is co-ordinated centrally by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority with support from other agencies (Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, Mauritius Examinations Syndicate).

Major challenges faced by the RPL programme have included:

- (a) rebuilding the self-esteem of workers (who had to be encouraged to understand the viability of joining the programme); and
- (b) linguistic challenges posed in the construction of the participants' portfolios (especially since the majority of the workers are only semi-literate or had relapsed into illiteracy).

To overcome these challenges, 'hand-holding' and psychological support was provided by facilitators.

For other countries considering a similar RPL initiative, Mauritius recommends that they develop a system which reflects their own specific needs. Although the experiences of other countries may assist in planning, care should be taken to avoid simply copying directly from other existing systems, which may or may not suit other environments.

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4.52 Roving Caregivers Programme, St Lucia

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Increasing access to early childhood development services
Other issues addressed	School readiness and equity in education Parental involvement
Level of initiative	Pre-primary
Target beneficiaries	Parents Community members Young children

Initiative aims

Goals: Strengthen the care environment for children from birth to three years; provide early childhood stimulation to children from birth to three years who are at risk, by focussing on parents in a home intervention model; and establish a focus on parenting by offering targeted parenting interventions.

Objectives: The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the care environment for children between the ages of birth and three years living in situations that place them at risk, by providing them with a solid early childhood development foundation. The initiative also seeks to strengthen the capacity of all participants and stakeholders in the programme, as well as building and sustaining partnerships with all sectors of society, to ensure the longevity and sustainability of the programme within an existing agency, such as the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour.

Outputs:

- (a) Parents have acknowledged changes in their parenting styles. These changes have occurred in the areas of hygiene, sanitation practices, disciplinary practices, use of punishment and nutrition. There is a significant improvement in their felt and articulated concept of parenting, their sense of efficacy and competence, and consequent feelings of responsibility where possible.
- (b) Roving Caregivers Programme (RCP) parents are now more able to identify areas of growth and learning in their children. The longitudinal impact study also shows clearly the change made in the RCP parents' sense of personal responsibility, as caregivers now see themselves as better able to respond to community and society expectations, and better able to fight the influence of drugs and irresponsible behaviour by adults.
- (c) 'Rovers' (community caregivers) are the connection between the programme and the families. They are the facilitators of the RCP objectives. They are young, energetic and are connected to the families in the areas where RCP is implemented. It is evident that the rovers have benefited from being involved in the RCP. There are increased interactions between parents and children in structured and non-structured meaningful activities, as parents accept their own roles as their children's primary teachers.
- (d) The rovers have shown greater confidence in themselves, their self-concept and their self-esteem, in their stature in the communities, and in their knowledge of the society and culture. They have gained education benefits in the area of early childhood education, and they have also acquired organisational, communication and presentation skills.

Outcomes: Outcomes identified to date include the following:

- (a) improved verbal and social skills of children participating in the programme are reported by parents and guardians;
- (b) a trained cadre of rovers and supervisors – currently maintained at 30 – with additional potential rovers participating in the training and in attendance;
- (c) the establishment of parenting support groups in all target communities to facilitate parenting education sessions;
- (d) acceptance of the RCP by parents and the community;
- (e) reported changes in parenting practices by participating parents;
- (f) support to families through referrals to agencies such as health and welfare bodies;
- (g) increased awareness and acceptance of the programme at both the community and national levels;
- (h) growth and expansion of the programme into additional neighbouring communities;
- (i) establishment of local community planning committees in all the communities where the programme is being implemented;
- (j) positive impact on cognitive development, especially among younger children, in the study;
- (k) increased parental competence and self-confidence among RCP participants;
- (l) positive impact on stimulating parent-child interactions and storytelling;
- (m) large positive impact on cognitive development of young children – in visual reception, and in fine motor skills;
- (n) gross motor skills and receptive language increase significantly for children who enrol at a younger age; and
- (o) expressive language (speech) has increased more for children who enrol at a later age.

The RCP implementation agency is the early childhood services unit, a department within the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour. This department is now the sole government agency mandated to oversee the establishment, operations and licensing of all early childhood facilities that provide services for children aged from six weeks to five years.⁸⁰

Implementation and challenges

The RCP is managed by a project co-ordinator who plans, organises and co-ordinates all aspects of the project, as well as managing the human, physical and financial resources, to ensure that the project's operating goals are effectively, efficiently and creatively achieved. The co-ordinator is assisted by an assistant co-ordinator, whose primary role involves field supervision, and advocacy.

Five persons have been recruited as project supervisors to work in four identified zones: Monchy and environs, Dennery and environs, Vieux Fort and environs and Anse-La-Raye and environs. Each project supervisor is assigned to a specific region, which comprises a number of settlements. Supervisors work in the field on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, with Wednesdays and Fridays allocated to meetings and training.

Supervisors are expected to organise and supervise programme delivery in the field on a daily basis. They are also required to monitor and evaluate programme implementation

and maintain records on a variety of information, including progress reports on appraisals of rovers, and parent education programme reports. Annual performance appraisals of supervisors and other project staff are conducted, as well as quarterly performance appraisals of all rovers. Supervisors are also expected to transfer newly acquired skills in working with families and communities to a range of local support agencies.

The RCP recruits primarily secondary school graduates to serve as rovers. These rovers work in their home communities making regular, scheduled visits to families where they engage children and parents in stimulation activities that support their development of motor, perceptual, emotional and cognitive skills.

Rovers receive intensive and systematic training in preparation for their work with children and parents. Training sessions are held on a weekly basis and focus on a multiplicity of child development, care and health issues, as well as preparing the rovers for their next week's assignments.

Parents meet on a monthly basis for workshops which focus on various aspects of child development, health, nutrition and other child-related issues. At these workshops, parents are also exposed to different methodologies and strategies to assist them with their child-rearing practices. A practical component requires parents to produce various early stimulation materials for use with their children. Parents are also encouraged to form parent support networks.

Monitoring and evaluating are critical components of the programme. Consequently, supervisors are required to include information on the performance of each rover under their supervision, as part of their monthly reports. A data entry form is used by the rovers to keep track of the number of visits conducted. This also allows for the monitoring and tracking of how often families participate in the programme. To complement this, a checklist is used to track the developmental progress of the children enrolled in the RCP.

A RCP management committee has general oversight for the programme, while local planning committees provide support for the programme at the community level. In the initial stage of implementation, the greatest challenge faced by the RCP was gaining community acceptance and trust. However, by constantly speaking, and advocating with community residents (supported by the obvious satisfaction expressed by families participating in the project), RCP personnel were able to resolve issues of trust and acceptance.

An evaluation of the RCP at the end of 2010 indicated that the children demonstrated significant improvement in all the various developmental domains. In addition, parents' knowledge, skills and practices also exhibited a marked improvement. The rovers' knowledge of child development, health and nutrition and other related issues also improved. At the administrative level, supervisors were introduced to new facilitation strategies and methodologies.

The RCP personnel believe that the programme should be viewed not only as an educational programme but also as a social development programme with the potential to alleviate the basic causes often associated with socially unacceptable behaviour.

Based on its nature and design, the RCP can serve as a co-ordinating body to help social development agencies and programmes reach their target population, avoid duplication, and maximise resources to maintain effective practices.

Significant value is gained from the funds invested in this programme that targets people at the community level, in their homes, during the most critical period of their children's development – and which also provides adults with the knowledge, skills and

competencies required to provide better services. It also allows them to become more productive, contributing and better citizens – a positive investment in the future of any nation.

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4.53 School health screening programme, South Africa

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Improving the quality of basic education
Other issues addressed	Addressing key health barriers to learning
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

- Goals:** Contribute to the improvement of the general health of school-going children and address health barriers to learning in order to improve education outcomes through access to, retention within, and achievement at school.
- Objectives:**
- (a) to provide health preventative and promotion services that address the health needs of school-going children and youth, with regard to their immediate and future health;
 - (b) to support and facilitate learning through early identification and addressing of health barriers to learning;
 - (c) to facilitate access to health and other services, where required; and
 - (d) to support school communities in creating a healthy environment for teaching and learning.
- Outputs:** The direct link between health and educational outcomes has not been measured as the joint programme is still being implemented (since 2010). However, the programme has enabled the identification of health barriers to learning and the provision of services such as oral health care and spectacles to those learners who were referred for further assessment. In 2010, more than 150,000 Grade 1 learners received health screening and in 2011 an estimated 303,143 learners received health screening.
- Outcomes:** As indicated above, the programme is in the developmental stages. As such, formal research has not been conducted to measure impact. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that parents are fully supportive of the programme and accompany their children on the day of screening. In light of the positive steps taken in implementing this programme for Grade 1 learners in 2010 and 2011, the Departments of Health, Basic Education, and Social Development are now working to expand the scope of the programme to cover a more comprehensive package of services, including sexual and reproductive health services, for all learners in the schooling system. This package will be rolled out progressively over the next five years to 27,000 schools, involving twelve million learners.

Ensuring optimal development of all children poses a considerable challenge to South Africa. In addition to addressing the effects of apartheid and underdevelopment, the country is recognised as facing concurrent epidemics. While poverty-related illnesses such as childhood infectious diseases and malnutrition remain widespread, many children face barriers to optimal health and development as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Violence and injuries constitute a further cause of premature deaths and disability, while a growing burden of non-communicable diseases is also evident. As a result, children face many health, social and other challenges that impact on their ability to learn optimally.

Health screening is especially important during the formative school years. Providing special attention to children's optimal health during this period will improve not only their survival, growth and health, but also their learning outcomes and development. In this regard, support for the early childhood years has been proven to have the greatest return on investment.

Implementation and challenges

The school health screening programme is implemented for Grade 1 learners in the most disadvantaged schools – Quintile one schools (no fee schools), as a joint collaboration between the Departments of Basic Education, and Health. Screening focuses primarily on identifying key health barriers to learning.

Accordingly, the following assessments are completed for all Grade 1 learners:

- vision, speech and basic hearing screening;
- measurement of height and weight to assess nutritional status;
- fine and gross locomotor assessment;
- checking immunisation status;
- oral health screening; and
- screening for minor ailments such as skin conditions, and deworming where required.

Screening is conducted by school health nurses and other health professionals, either through ongoing programmes throughout the year or through special School Health Weeks that provide a focus on health resources in schools. Active parental consent for participation in the screening is sought, and parents are encouraged to accompany their children on the day of screening. Learners with health problems are referred to local clinics for further assessment and treatment, together with the provision of personal assistance devices as required.

In order to expand the reach of the programme, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has also formed partnerships with other organisations such as the Transnet Foundation Phelophepa Health Care Train and Colgate Palmolive, which are offering health screening, health education and treatment as part of their outreach services.

The programme is led nationally by a joint task team comprising representatives of the two national departments/ ministries. Similar task teams are formed at provincial and district levels to plan and facilitate implementation. Individual provinces budget for implementing school health services, although this is not optimal; the programme is implemented at school level primarily by school health nurses and other health professionals, where available.

One of the major challenges faced has been a shortage of resources (human and physical) to implement the programme fully; in particular, a lack of skilled health personnel. This has been addressed in the short term by convening the school health weeks, where health professionals from district hospitals and other local clinics assist with the roll-out of services. In the medium to long term, the Department of Health will be appointing additional school health nurses. The DBE is also assisting with the purchase of health screening equipment for schools.

South Africa believes that the close collaboration between the Departments of Health, Basic Education and Social Development has been of paramount importance to the success of the activity. Regular task team meetings at national, provincial and district levels are also necessary to plan targets and identify resource requirements. Other countries considering a similar initiative are advised by South Africa to partner with civil society, the private sector and universities to harness existing capacity and goodwill.

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4.54 School Improvement Grant, Malawi

Primary theme	Resources
Secondary theme	Devolution
Main issue addressed	Education quality through decentralisation
Other issues addressed	Access and equity in, and relevance of, education
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students
	Teachers
	Parents
	Community members

Initiative aims

Goal: Increase access and equity in education and improve the quality and relevance of education.

Objective: To decentralise education.

Outputs: Outputs identified to date include:

- (a) reduced absenteeism;
- (b) improved access, especially for orphans and other vulnerable children; and
- (c) increased participation of community members in school management issues and in development projects.

Outcomes: Although the Malawi government is yet to carry out an impact evaluation of the initiative, it already foresees greater community support resulting from implementation of the school improvement grants.

The School Improvement Grant (or direct support to schools) initiative is a response to the challenges that came with the introduction of free primary education. As well as the key objective of decentralising education, other specific objectives of the initiative include decreasing bureaucracy and increasing administrative efficiency.

Direct transfer to schools means that all funds arrive at the school level without any loss to the different administrative levels. In addition, the initiative increases schools' autonomy in making decisions on what they urgently need to procure. The grant has also assisted in making communities realise the importance of making financial and material contributions towards the development of their schools; it instils a sense of ownership among communities.

Schools are expected to develop a school improvement plan (SIP), which they submit to the district education manager as a condition for receiving a school improvement grant for that particular year. The funds are allocated to schools based on enrolment bands established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which means that schools with larger enrolments are expected to receive relatively more funds.

In addition, the allocation of funds also depends on the location of schools: remote rural schools are expected to receive more funds than urban schools located closer to the centre.

When the funds reach the schools' accounts, different stakeholders at the school level decide what they need to buy, based on both the amount received and the guidelines given by the ministry. A high percentage of the funds go to the purchasing of teaching and learning materials. Another component covers small maintenance of school infrastructure and operating costs, such as transport to the suppliers of the materials.

Implementation and challenges

The head teacher, together with members of the school management committee (SMC), the parents and teachers association (PTA), representatives of learners and the school finance committee hold separate meetings to decide on the school's urgent needs, and include these in the SIP. When the funds are deposited in the school's account, the head teacher and chairperson of SMC and/or the PTA have the authority (as signatories) to withdraw money and purchase the required items.

Once the items have been purchased, a meeting is required to inform parents about the school's purchases and how they intend to use the materials. The SMC, PTA and school finance committee members have the obligation of monitoring how the funds are utilised and how the materials are distributed. The head teacher has overall accountability for the grant.

Major programme challenges include inadequate teaching and learning materials, congested classrooms and poor learning outcomes. Other significant challenges include delays in sending funds to school accounts; and the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms – both internal and external; while trained head teachers are sometimes transferred to a school that is not piloted.

Since Malawi is still piloting the initiative, the challenges have not yet been resolved, but they will serve as lessons learned when rolling out the initiative to more districts in the future.

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4.55 School-based apprenticeships, Australia

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Pathways into the Australian apprenticeship system, further education and employment
Level of initiative	Secondary Vocational training
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goal: Provide a pathway into the Australian apprenticeship system, further education and employment.

Outputs: In 2010, there were 18,700 school-based apprenticeship commencements, representing six per cent of the total apprentice and trainee commencements that year, at the national level. This represents an increase on the previous year's proportion at five per cent.

School-based apprenticeships provide school students of legal working age with the opportunity to participate in a part-time Australian apprenticeship while also completing their Senior School Certificate.

Implementation and challenges

A school-based apprenticeship includes a combination of secondary school subjects, paid work and vocational training undertaken on or off the job. The training can be in a traditional trade or other occupation at the Certificate I, II, III, IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma level.

Training is delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO) and may be undertaken for a couple of hours every week or for a longer block of time, although less frequently. This will depend on the requirements of the RTO and the vocational training course. School-based apprentices are required to negotiate time-release from their school subjects to attend work and training, and must arrange to catch up on any school material they miss at a later date.

The number of hours an Australian school-based apprentice needs to be employed per week differs between states and territories, and is based on their individual legislation. Some school-based apprentices can undertake paid employment outside of school hours, such as on the weekend; however others must take time during school hours to work, depending on the requirements of the employer.

The Australian government supports the school-based apprenticeship arrangements through the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive Programme, which provides personal benefits to eligible apprentices and financial incentives to their employers. The programme pays a financial incentive of 750 Australian dollars (A\$) to employers of eligible school-based apprentices on commencement, and A\$750 for the retention of the apprentice in an apprenticeship arrangement once they have completed their Year 12 studies. In the 2010–11 financial year, more than 7,700 employers of eligible school-based apprentices received A\$13.9 million in commencement and retention payments.

Organisers of the programme note that participation in school-based apprenticeship arrangements is relatively low when compared to all Australian apprenticeship programmes; however this reflects the difficulties in gaining a part-time Australian apprenticeship and balancing the apprenticeship demands with completing senior schooling.

The joint challenges of catching up with missed school work outside of school hours and completing the employment and training aspects of the programme can make a school-based apprenticeship a very demanding pathway for senior students. Such arrangements require a high level of determination and organisation by all parties.

Further information

Email Various Australian state and territory apprenticeship programme contacts available at www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au

4.56 Schools as values-based environments for learning and teaching, Seychelles

Name of initiative	Quality
Country	Devolution
Main theme addressed	School improvement, and student behaviour
Other themes addressed	Education for empowerment, accountability, and quality of learning
Level of initiative	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

Goals: Improve the quality of learning through a values-based approach to teaching.

Objectives: (a) to equip students with good values that will guide them through life;
 (b) to create a more conducive learning environment where students learn to respect and appreciate themselves, their colleagues, teachers and the community; and
 (c) to improve the quality of learning through a values-based approach to teaching.

Outputs: Initiative outputs include:

- (a) improved student attendance;
- (b) increase in the number of students selected to sit for national and international exams;
- (c) Beau Vallon Secondary School (BVSS), at which the initiative is being piloted, did exceptionally well in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in November 2011;
- (d) more than 80 per cent of students are doing homework;
- (e) more parents are becoming involved in school activities;
- (f) a more family-oriented atmosphere exists at the school;
- (g) generally, students are more polite, understanding, responsible and respectful towards others;
- (h) students are involved in weekly level masses and spiritual retreats; and
- (i) the school's achievements have become marketable in such a way that other institutions are seeking its assistance and expertise in various aspects.

Outcomes: Positive outcomes to date include the following improvements identified below:

- (a) The school has made a dramatic turnaround from being labelled 'the country's worst school' in terms of discipline and behaviour.
- (b) Mutual respect and tolerance, as well as collaboration between staff and students are evident and these are helping to give a more positive image to the school.
- (c) Staff and students at BVSS are friendly and courteous towards visitors.
- (d) Contrary to the normal rebellious nature exhibited by teenagers, BVSS students express trust towards their teachers and they feel at ease to confide in them and do not always need to take their problems to the school counsellor.

- (e) Cases of misbehaviour are dealt with promptly so as not to create precedents. The school has succeeded in getting its students to respect the dress code.
- (f) Students keep their shirts and blouses well tucked in throughout school time and also on the road.
- (g) Full collaboration of staff together has helped to enforce this rule.
- (h) Security guards posted at the gates are helping to monitor students' attire as they enter the school's compound.
- (i) Non-teaching staff share a strong sense of belonging to the school and feel valued by the school and its community.
- (j) Students serve on numerous school committees and interact with the teaching staff with ease.
- (k) Students participate in various social activities organised by the school.
- (l) Students' exercise books are usually well kept and covered with neat handwriting and marking is up to date.
- (m) The school enjoys a good relationship with its external agencies and has been assisted on numerous occasions.
- (n) Staff – particularly teachers – are very receptive to comments.

On the whole, a purposeful and relaxed atmosphere prevails at the school.

The concept of living values being incorporated into the school system is a positive step towards the achievement of well-mannered, well-educated and well-adjusted students. These outcomes are made possible by students sharing their ideas and experiences through networking with other secondary schools, which may be confronting social challenges.

The Beau Vallon Secondary School was selected to pilot the 'Living Values' programme by the National Council for Children. The theme chosen was 'schools as values-based environments for learning and teaching'. Initially, there was a sensitisation programme for all staff, assisted by an international consultant. Subsequently, staff were responsible for sensitising students on a number of basic values that they had to practise. Parents were also informed of the initiative at various meetings.

Implementation and challenges

To implement the programme at BVSS, a committee of teachers was set up to monitor a range of values-based initiatives, including those identified below:

- (a) teachers and students were engaged in transforming the school and its environment into values-based learning and teaching;
- (b) classes at each level took weekly turns in maintaining verandas;
- (c) mural paintings depicting living value themes were promoted;
- (d) beautification of the school grounds provided a welcoming and conducive learning atmosphere;
- (e) students' work was displayed in classes;
- (f) specific spots and trees were designated to promote living value themes;
- (g) the school grounds were kept clean and well maintained; and
- (h) colourful mobiles hanging from fruit trees and murals served as constant reminders of the school's aim and vision, and further enhanced the school's environment.

A students' committee was established with the combined aims of:

- promoting the values through weekly talks with senior students;
- organising activities to commemorate important days, e.g. International Women's Day;

- supervising students on school grounds during break time; and
- giving feedback at weekly meetings and discussing activities for the following week.

Students at BVSS have regularly expressed in their own words the benefits they see in their living values initiative:

- ‘The concept of living values has helped us turn from carefree teenagers into more responsible adults.’
- ‘It made us realise that we are not alone in our fears, in our doubts or in our experience.’
- ‘Networking has improved our communication skills with fellow youths, with teachers and with parents as well.’
- ‘We have learned that a positive outlook and attitude make very difficult situations turn into more manageable incidences.’
- ‘Networking has given us the chance to develop our acting ability in skits and drama, our poetic inclination and our skill in oration.’
- ‘It gave us an opportunity to gain deeper insight into ourselves and share it with other students.’
- ‘Networking with other secondary schools is not just a sharing but a learning experience as well.’
- ‘Whatever little steps we take towards the achievement of this goal, we are proud to make because we believe in the saying “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”.’

Nevertheless, maintaining the commitment and interest of all stakeholders has been a challenge for the school. In response, awards and certificates were introduced to motivate teachers. Time constraints provided another challenge, as most living values work had to be done after school hours.

In some situations, help was sought and provided by NGOs such as the Campaign for Awareness Resilience and Education which organised programmes tailored to cater for students with the most undesirable behaviour. Securing finance for the many different activities was difficult, although the BVSS Parents and Teachers Association helped to seek sponsorship.

If implementing a value-based programme elsewhere, BVSS recommends undertaking a proper needs assessment first, to establish the status of the problem within the organisation. Involvement of partners is important in the planning stages, since they need to have a sense of belonging to the initiative from the start.

The BVSS head teacher recommends reviewing the process regularly as well as ensuring that proper documentation is kept, to ensure continuity. Of equal importance if implementing the initiative elsewhere is to be receptive to criticism – and always to keep an open mind.

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4.57 Second chance programme, Mauritius

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Inclusivity and employability of marginalised youth
Other issues addressed	Improved literacy and numeracy skills of marginalised youth Psychological and sociological support for marginalised youth Social reintegration
Level of initiative	Young people (16–21)
Target beneficiaries	Community members Marginalised youth

Initiative aims

Goal: Reintegration of marginalised youth into society and provision of a pathway for them to technical and vocational education and training () courses, and eventually to the world of work

Objectives: (a) to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of marginalised youth;
(b) award of a National Certificate in Literacy and Numeracy pitched at level one on the National Qualifications Framework;
(c) to provide psychological and sociological back-up to marginalised youth and support them in their integration into society; and
(d) to enhance the employability of marginalised youth.

Outputs: (a) since the implementation of the second chance programme in 2009, of the 702 young people enrolled (year 2009 and year 2010) in the programme, 444 (excluding year 2011, as still awaiting results) successfully completed the programme for both Mauritius and Rodrigues, resulting in an overall success rate of 63 per cent; and
(b) a tracer study conducted with ex-students after the course (286 respondents) revealed that 21 per cent of the young people were able to integrate into the labour market in the years 2009 and 2010, and 16 per cent have been able to integrate into vocational courses.

Outcomes: The participants have developed functional literacy and numeracy skills that will help them in everyday life, and help them to improve their self-esteem, as well as enhancing their employability and capacity to reintegrate into society. The programme helps in the reduction of the illiteracy rate, and at the same time creates a pathway for those vulnerable young people to obtain formal training.

Every year a significant number of young people drop out of the educational system without any formal qualifications, which can render them unemployable. These young people often fall victim to various social troubles.

The programme has been initiated to promote reintegration of marginalised youngsters aged between 16 and 21 year, offering an initiation into literacy and numeracy. After having successfully completed this initial training programme, trainees are eligible to either follow a basic course in vocational training, or to be enrolled in the apprenticeship scheme.

This initiative provides a new opportunity for education system ‘dropouts’ to acquire literacy and numeracy skills, for greater opportunities for reintegration into socio-economic environments, thus promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Implementation and challenges

This programme is being implemented by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The MITD conducts a sensitisation campaign, with the support of non-government organisations (NGOs) and various ministries, to reach the target population. Based on the locations of prospective students, sites for the delivery of this programme are chosen to provide ease of access.

The Government of Mauritius had made provisions under the Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Fund for financing the second chance programme in the budgets for the period 2009 to 2011. From 2012, the project is being managed by the MITD and will be funded by the government.

A co-ordinator is responsible for the implementation of the training programme, and three supervisors have been appointed to monitor training and to ensure quality assurance. Trainers involved in the delivery of the functional literacy and numeracy component have undergone training to develop their pedagogical skills, and to assist them to deliver the training more effectively. The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is the awarding body for the programme and ensures quality assurance in assessment.

The curriculum comprises three modules and is of 300 hours' duration. The performance of trainees is assessed in all three modules, with assessment comprising four oral assessments and two written papers. A Basic Certificate in Literacy and Numeracy is awarded to successful candidates upon completion of the course.

To motivate young people to enter and complete the second chance programme, participants receive a monthly stipend of 1500 Mauritian rupees (MRs) (US\$50), refunds for travelling costs, and free learning materials. This financial incentive is funded by the government.

The main challenge MITD encountered was to reach the target population and convince them to enrol in the programme. Sensitisation campaigns were implemented before the start of courses, with the collaboration of government and non-government organisations. Media support was also arranged, comprising radio and television spots, newspaper articles, and posters and flyers to help disseminate information. Meetings were conducted in different localities of the country with the collaboration of social workers ('Educateurs de Rue'), NGOs, citizen advice bureau officers and other partners.

A high rate of absenteeism was initially noted among the trainees. To remedy this, the terms of payment of the stipend were redefined on a pro-rata basis, taking into consideration the attendance of trainees.

Mauritius believes that the collaboration of NGOs, social workers and government institutions is essential for the successful implementation of the programme; it is very important to provide adequate financial incentives to motivate young people to join the programme.

To improve this programme, organisers believe that it would be advisable to make provision for all participants to obtain further training or to be enrolled as apprentices, immediately after the completion of their training. This inability to ensure a logical follow-on activity or opportunity for all those participants completing the programme is a significant challenge to address.

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4.58 Special Bilingual Education Programme (SBEP), Cameroon

Primary theme	Alternative
Secondary theme	Quality
Main issue addressed	Bilingual education to improve quality and skills of learners
Other issues addressed	Intensive English for French-speaking learners (language module) Intensive French for English-speaking learners Immersive module (a non-linguistic subject taught in target languages; co- curricular module)
Level of initiative	Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers

Initiative aims

Goal: Use secondary education to create bilingual citizens.

Objectives: To produce bilingual students and to provide a bilingual certificate through an English-French bilingual education for English-speaking and French-speaking secondary education students.

Outputs: Tangible benefits are yet to be identified.

Outcomes: Respect and understanding of Francophone culture by Anglophones; and similarly of Anglophone culture by Francophones.

The issue of bilingualism is vital in Cameroon. Since independence and the establishment of a small number of bilingual schools, there has been no bilingual syllabus. This initiative is of great importance within Cameroon's broader education system as it will provide more job opportunities for bilingual citizens and increase higher education opportunities.

Implementation and challenges

The Special Bilingual Education Programme involves developing a five-year secondary education syllabus with three modules:

- a language module, (inclusive, English or French);
- an immersive module taught in the target language; and
- a co-curricular module (out of classroom).

At the central level, documents are conceived by national inspectors under the supervision of an Inspector of Pedagogy; at the regional level, the follow-up component is carried out by regional inspectors under the supervision of a co-ordinating inspector; and at the school level, teaching is done by teachers under the co-ordination of a 'focal point'.

There have been some major challenges involved in the implementation of the initiative. Although it is clear that a functional use of French and English languages needs to be arrived at by learners, a programme assessment is yet to be completed as the initiative is still in the pilot phase.

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4.59 Strengthening foundation phase teacher education, South Africa

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Management
Main issue addressed	Teacher education
Other issues addressed	Enhancing the capacities of universities
Level of initiative	Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Teachers University education faculties

Initiative aims

Goal: Enhanced capacity of universities to prepare more and better-prepared foundation phase teachers, especially African language teachers.

Objectives: To increase capacity through a holistic programme designed to strengthen initial professional and foundation phase teacher education by a focus on research programme, and materials development in universities.

Outputs: Outputs to date include:

- (a) a greater number of students enrolling specifically as foundation phase teachers;
- (b) a higher number of universities involved in preparing teachers for this phase; and
- (c) a strong research community of practice emerging.

Outcomes: Wider access by schools to skilled foundation phase teachers.

South Africa has identified strengthening the teacher education system to better meet the needs of teachers across all education sectors, including pre-schooling and post-schooling as a key current priority for education in the country.

Recent policies and guidelines directed towards achieving that priority include: an integrated strategic planning framework for teacher education and development in South Africa (2011); and minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications (2011).

Implementation and challenges

Foundation phase education is the start of quality learning: it is essential that the building blocks are effectively placed in this phase. However, in South Africa there is currently an inadequate number of foundation phase teachers available, especially African languages' foundation phase teachers.

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that only a limited number of universities are offering programmes for this foundation phase.

Implementation of the initiative to strengthen foundation phase teaching is being undertaken through a series of related activities:

- research, programme development and materials development projects at universities;
- providing funds for employment of new staff at universities;
- supporting postgraduate studies in the field and in early childhood education;
- supporting the establishment of a research journal and a research association in early childhood education; and
- bursary funding to provide for foundation phase initial teacher education.

Challenges currently being faced include the ability of universities and staff to participate fully, given the demanding workloads on personnel that already exist in this sector.

For other countries considering a similar activity, South Africa advises that it is imperative to understand what is seen to be important in the field, and to integrate this into the initiative, in order that it is supported fully and that it aligns with the needs of the country.

Further information

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4.60 Support for Disadvantaged Students, Australia

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Resources
Main issue addressed	Improving literacy and numeracy
Other issues addressed	Improving engagement and education outcomes of disadvantaged students Indigenous students Improving teacher quality Support for students with disability Promoting equity in education
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students, including those who are disadvantaged and/or from low socio-economic backgrounds, indigenous students and students with special learning needs and disability Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

- Goals:**
- (a) support states and territories to implement systemic and sustainable education reform that will improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, strengthen the capacity of disadvantaged school and drive quality and continuous improvement in teaching; and
 - (b) ensure Australian schools and teachers are better able to support students with disability, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work.
- Objectives:**
- (a) to improve the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system;
 - (b) to contribute to the provision of world-class education in Australia by setting out the knowledge, skills and understandings needed for life and work in the twenty-first century and by setting common high standards of achievement across the country; and
 - (c) to provide a clear, shared understanding of what young people should be taught and the quality of learning expected of them, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school that they attend or the location of their school.
- Outputs:** The Smarter Schools National Partnerships national evaluation has identified a range of impacts, activities and interventions at the systemic levels through to individual teachers, schools, classrooms and students.
- (a) Systemic-level benefits:
 - considerable co-investment by the jurisdictions as partners with the Australian government;
 - instances where jurisdictions are integrating and aligning the Smarter Schools National Partnerships to maximise impact;
 - instances where the Smarter Schools National Partnerships effort is integrated with major jurisdictional priorities and initiatives to provide leverage for a whole-of-system change;

- growing recognition of the importance of cross-sectoral capacity to ensure school improvement;
- collaborative teacher development within and across both jurisdictions and sectors; and
- spreading devolution of decision-making to school principals.

(b) Teacher-level benefits:

- emerging professional structures that can underpin reform and better pathways into teaching, including those for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- establishment of school centres of excellence for pre-service practice, internship and ongoing support;
- trials of approaches to recruiting high-quality staff for hard-to-staff schools; and
- embedding of improved performance management approaches to support continuous improvement in teacher quality and the engagement of many leading teachers as leaders of teaching.

(c) School- and classroom-level benefits:

- increasing focus on the skill and knowledge of teachers for effective classroom practice;
- increasing in-class support from coaches and tutors;
- recognition of the importance of data analysis to inform pedagogy and practice;
- emerging identification of the learning tools that lead to improvement;
- identification of analytical tools to measure and understand learning issues and teacher performance; and
- linking teacher professional development within the context of whole school reform strategies.

(d) Student-level benefits:

- growing recognition of the imperative to improve student performance and expectations; and
- the inclusion of in and out of classroom strategies to minimise barriers to educational achievement, and the emergence of new models of student engagement.

Outcomes: Through direct and indirect funding support to schools, the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership, and the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership allow schools to adopt flexible, locally-based solutions to local contexts and challenges in ways not previously seen. Work associated with the Smarter Schools National Partnerships programme has generated considerable enthusiasm and a sense of revitalisation in schools. Impact can be seen through a discernible shift in school culture towards a student-centred focus as well as significant improvements in classroom teaching and practice, through initiatives such as coaching and mentoring to strengthen pedagogy in literacy and numeracy, increased use of data to inform teaching and learning, opening up of classrooms to external assessors and consultants, and teachers working together to support student learning outcomes.

The Australian government provides supplementary funds to support reform and implementation in key policy areas through National Partnership Agreements with the

states and territories. The Smarter Schools National Partnerships include three schooling National Partnerships:

- (a) literacy and numeracy: supporting teachers and schools to focus effort on the approaches that are the most effective in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes;
- (b) low socio-economic status school communities: providing support for schools in disadvantaged communities to improve student outcomes; and
- (c) improving teacher quality: recognising that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and achievement.⁸¹

A related programme, the More Support for Students with Disability initiative will provide 200 million Australian dollars (A\$) in additional funding to government and non-government education authorities to support their work with students with disability and/or learning difficulties. This will be achieved through the selection of a range of activities based on the needs of students, teachers and schools.

Implementation and challenges

(a) *Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership*⁸²

A\$540 million has been provided over four years (2008–09 to 2011–12), comprising up to A\$500 million for education authorities and A\$40 million for strategic initiatives. Over the first two years, A\$150 million was allocated to education authorities to facilitate literacy and numeracy reform activities. The remaining A\$350 million is available to reward education authorities for achievement of agreed literacy and numeracy performance targets.

Distribution of facilitation funding is based on each state and territory's share of students at or below the national minimum National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)⁸³ standards in reading and numeracy for Years 3, 5 and 7 in 2010. States were afforded the opportunity to select schools for participation, based on their capacity to benefit from the investment. In several jurisdictions, these were not the schools with the lowest performance in literacy and numeracy outcomes. \$A40 million is also being directed to strategic initiatives that will increase understanding of what works to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and contribute to a national evidence base.

(b) *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership*⁸⁴

This national partnership provides A\$1.5 billion over seven years (2008–09 to 2014–15) to assist the lowest socio-economic status schools in the country to overcome disadvantage and support improved student well-being and learning outcomes. Schools have been selected on the basis of relative community disadvantage, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, or state-based measures. Education authorities have been given the opportunity to add or replace participating schools, based on local measures of disadvantage and existing investments being made in these schools.

Education authorities have the flexibility to decide how they implement specific reforms and how funding is allocated to schools. The level of funding each school receives varies considerably, depending on the reforms being implemented, the school size and location. A proportion of national partnership funding may be retained by some jurisdictions for system/sector-wide initiatives, such as the delivery of system-wide professional learning, development of resources or personnel. (For example, in South Australia some national partnership schools do not receive direct funding support; however they can access national partnership funds held at the regional level on a needs basis. In New South Wales, the bulk of funding is allocated directly to schools, with large schools receiving in excess of A\$1 million over four years.)

(c) *More Support for Students with Disability*

This initiative will be implemented through a national partnership agreement with state and territory governments and funding agreements with the non-government sector.

Under these agreements, states and territories have the flexibility to select activities that will best assist teachers and schools in their work with students with disability. Implementation plans which detail the activities jurisdictions have selected to implement under this initiative have been developed and are publically available on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website.

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4.61 Technical workshop on pan-Canadian Aboriginal data, Canada

Primary theme	Access
Secondary theme	Equity
Main issue addressed	Improved data on Aboriginal learners in Canada
Other issues addressed	Aboriginal education, education data and indicators, equity and access in education
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary Tertiary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders Parents Community members Education system administrators

Initiative aims

Goal: Improved data on Aboriginal learners in Canada.

Objectives: (a) examine approaches to encourage Aboriginal students to self-identify;
 (b) increase the comparability of data on Aboriginal learners across the country and across multiple jurisdictions;
 (c) explore a methodology for self-identification that supports pan-Canadian data collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on Aboriginal students; and
 (d) encourage knowledge mobilisation and transfer, facilitate dialogue, and create new partnerships.

Outputs: Accurate pan-Canadian Aboriginal data to provide shared solutions to common problems.

Outcomes: This initiative will improve the state of data relating to Aboriginal learners so that progress may be better measured as Canadian governments work toward eliminating the gaps in educational attainment and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

The Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) and Statistics Canada are working together on an overall pan-Canadian education data strategy, and deputy ministers of education have asked that Aboriginal indicators and planning on pan-Canadian Aboriginal data collection be incorporated into the main strategy.

The purpose of this workshop was, therefore, to provide input at an early stage into this work. Participants shared challenges and solutions, and gave guidance on practical priorities for work on data at the pan-Canadian level.

Implementation and challenges

Participants at the workshop comprised individuals with technical expertise from provincial and territorial ministries and departments of education, regional and national Aboriginal organisations, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the First Nations Statistical Institute, and Statistics Canada.

The workshop focused on technical issues facing the collection and analysis of Aboriginal data in Canada, and featured both panel discussions and break-out groups, providing an effective forum for experts working in this field throughout the country.

A greater awareness, at a pan-Canadian level, of the data needs surrounding Aboriginal learners has since developed. The workshop also presented an opportunity for those working with Aboriginal data to network and work on shared solutions. Aboriginal groups invited to the workshop presented their views and opinions on the state of Aboriginal data and worked with government representatives in a spirit of openness and collaboration.

Although the workshop was a one-time event hosted by the CMEC in partnership with other levels of government, ongoing work to improve Aboriginal data is continuing to take place as a follow-up to the forum, and while the CMEC technical workshop was a significant step toward better data, further progress remains to be made.

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4.62 Training for untrained teachers (by distance education) in primary schools, Solomon Islands

Primary theme	Quality
Secondary theme	Alternative
Main theme addressed	Improved learning and teaching, and quality education management
Level of initiative	Primary Secondary
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers School leaders

Initiative aims

Goals: Improving quality of teaching and learning, and learning outcomes.

Objectives: To revise and develop the curriculum.

Outputs: More than 400 untrained teachers are trained in teaching the national curriculum; (later, this this will involve a much wider group).

Outcomes: It is too early to indicate correlation with learning results from students.

Improving quality is now the main goal of Solomon Islands' National Education Action Plan, 2013–2015. Teacher training of 'untrained' teachers by distance education, with support from mentors (master teachers and head teachers), is a Solomon Islands' strategy to achieve improved quality. Currently teacher training materials are being reviewed and converted into effective and attractive distance learning materials. In this way, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) believes it can address a national problem in a reasonably quick and efficient manner.

Implementation and challenges

The management of the initiative is outsourced by the Ministry to a selected group of developers/trainers from the teacher training college, and a group of selected master teachers who work with clusters of schools.

Managing time, resources (funds and human resources) and the timely development of new curriculum materials for different subjects has proved challenging. As a result, the project has suffered from some implementation delays.

In recommending the initiative to other countries, MEHRD suggests that organisers ensure they have enthusiastic and sufficient staff to manage the project. Organisers also need to confirm they have the full collaboration of, and understanding by, management within the selected delivery institution, and that they plan funding and human resources issues precisely.

Early planning should promote distance education to stakeholders and potential clients, not only as an efficient alternative, but also as having the same – or even better – quality than standard learning modes.

And to ensure an efficiently managed budget, Solomon Islands recommends explicitly linking the contracting and payment of curriculum writers to agreed outputs.

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4.63 University strategic planning, Papua New Guinea

Primary theme	Management
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Motivating staff and students to overcome social, political, economic and cultural challenges
Other issues addressed	Creating employable graduates, able to contribute to nation building Contributing quality research
Level of initiative	Tertiary students Tertiary lecturers and staff Adult/continuing
Target beneficiaries	Students Teachers Lecturers (tertiary) School or institution leaders/managers Education system administrators Government employees

Initiative aims

Goals: Employable graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to nation building, and enhanced quality of Papua New Guinean tertiary education.

Objectives: The Divine Word University's 2012 theme/objective is titled The Power of Positive Vision which aims at motivating staff and students to overcome social, political, economic and cultural challenges while offering a quality education in the complex Papua New Guinea (PNG) context.

Outputs:

- (a) the enrolment rate has increased rapidly and for the last three years, with 54 per cent of enrolments comprising women;
- (b) through its partnerships with different overseas universities, the institution is able to enhance the quality of its academic programmes; and
- (c) use of advanced information and communication technology (each student at Divine Word University (DWU) is provided with a laptop to assist in their studies, as well as access to extensive databases).

Outcomes:

- (a) Enrolments are substantially higher, with increasing applications from prospective students to study across all programmes.
- (b) Tracking of graduates shows that most are employed after completing their studies.
- (c) Potential employers visit the university annually to interview about-to-graduate students as potential employees.
- (d) Activities and programmes are regularly reviewed through DWU induction and review weeks that are conducted at the beginning and end of the academic year.
- (e) A successful external academic audit was conducted, the first to be carried out by a university in PNG.

Implementation and challenges

The Papua New Guinea Government Vision 2050 aims to develop PNG into a 'wise, healthy and well-educated nation' (Papua New Guinea Department of Education, 2012). DWU's initiative contributes directly to the implementation of the first objective of

the national vision, which calls on the universities to build a qualified, committed, and ethically-oriented workforce.

One of the main challenges facing PNG has been the lack of qualified academics in the country. Thus, the university has entered into partnerships with universities in Australia – and through this partnership, the university is developing skilled researchers and academic staff. By introducing international academic standards, DWU has been able to guide and prepare its staff for quality academic and administrative services.

In terms of graduate numbers, DWU is currently graduating the highest number of graduates in the country, and is confident that its innovative approach to offering a comprehensive range of education opportunities is improving the quality of education generally, as well as ensuring its own students graduate with necessary competencies. The university believes that its quality of education and sound philosophy of life will assist in making a positive change in PNG and help to meet the PNG government's vision for the future.

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4.64 Zones d'éducation prioritaires – ZEP (Education priority areas), Mauritius

Primary theme	Devolution
Secondary theme	Access
Main issue addressed	Additional support to most needy pupils
Other issues addressed	School environment
Level of initiative	Primary
Target beneficiaries	Students

Initiative aims

Goals:

- (a) ensure that all pupils attend school;
- (b) help vulnerable children complete primary education with the longer term goal of breaking the poverty cycle; and
- (c) increase completion and pass rates at the end of the primary education cycle.

Objectives:

- (a) increase the attendance rate of pupils in ZEP schools;
- (b) better implementation of differentiated pedagogy in schools;
- (c) improve the school climate to make schools more welcoming to children and their parents; and
- (d) improve parental participation.

Outputs: The pass rate has increased from 30.9 per cent in 2003 to 35.6 per cent in 2011. Eleven schools had a pass rate higher than 40 per cent in 2011, with six having maintained that rate for five consecutive years. Absenteeism rates in ZEP schools have decreased from 15.7 per cent in 2007⁸⁵ to 11.7 per cent in 2011.

Outcomes: Identified outcomes include:

- (a) improvement in the school infrastructure;
- (b) enhanced and structured collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector;
- (c) improved parental involvement within the school community;
- (d) improved attendance;
- (e) improved performance (although marginal);
- (f) more teachers are willing to work in the ZEP schools; and
- (g) relations within the school community are improving (although an occasional difference of opinion still occurs).

The initiative specifically targets schools situated in, or close to, pockets of poverty in the country. These areas are not only poor but are affected by complex socio-economic issues that permeate into the school community. These issues lead to:

- high rates of pupil absenteeism;
- indiscipline and tense relations within the school community;
- low parental involvement;
- poor teacher motivation;
- low attainment and performance; and
- a stigma attached to (these) schools.

The failure rate at the national primary education level has been significantly high, at more than 30 per cent, year after year. The failure rate in ZEP schools has been even more worrying, being above 60 per cent. Given the severity of the situation, it was deemed necessary to provide additional support to these specific low-performing schools.

Failure to obtain the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) usually leads to students dropping out of the formal education system into poverty, and adds to the socio-economic problems of the national regions and the country.

The ZEP Project was introduced by the government in 2003, targeting 30 primary schools (from pockets of poverty) with pass rates below 40 per cent in the CPE examinations for five consecutive years prior to 2003. The components of the strategy can best be summarised as: providing additional support to pupils, parents and teachers; improving school infrastructure and facilities; and harnessing additional resources.⁸⁶

Implementation and challenges

A budget of approximately 50 million Mauritian rupees (MRs) (US\$1.7 million) is allocated to the ZEP project, and is expended on the following activities:

- motivation allowance to all staff in ZEP schools;
- allowance of cluster co-ordinators and parent mediators (part-timers);
- supplementary food programme to provide food items to all pupils;
- grants provided for running of schools; and
- costs associated with implementation measures including:
 - investment in infrastructural work to improve the school environment;
 - enhanced collaboration with NGOs and the private sector; and
 - building rapport with school communities.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources has established a ZEP unit comprising a project manager, four cluster co-ordinators, four school inspectors and seven part-time parent mediators to focus on the needs in ZEP schools, and to work in close collaboration with the zone directorates responsible for all schools in each educational zone.

Although showing positive results, a number of challenges remain, including: providing a quality education service; changing the existing mindsets of parents, pupils and teachers; implementing differentiated learning approaches, (which educators find difficult because of the significant differences in the academic levels of their pupils); and improving basic literacy and numeracy.

The Mauritius Institute of Education is also working with educators in ZEP schools on a literacy project to improve literacy levels in these schools. School inspectors are providing support to educators on pedagogical strategies and tools, through regular class visits.

If implementing a similar programme elsewhere, ZEP unit personnel believe it is important to adapt the project to the existing social context; to formulate a mission and vision statement with all partners and to ensure that it is shared by all; to implement a coherent action plan; and to monitor and evaluate all indicators regularly, in order to fine-tune the implementation.

Other implementation options to consider include replacing the motivation allowance provided to all school staff by a performance-based allowance, payable only to staff that meet a specified target. A further enhancement would be to commit to a specific time frame, with a set evaluation and reporting schedule defined in the project design.

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