

Consultation on Curriculum for Education Ministers August 26, 2016

Consultation Summary

Beginning in 2017, Harvard plans to invite ministers of education to participate in the Harvard Ministerial Leadership Program. A high-level consultation was convened at Harvard on August 26 to help inform an understanding of key challenges facing education ministers in Africa and around the world, and to shape an appropriate curriculum. The consultation included participation by a select numbers of former education ministers from Africa and Latin America, as well as international education experts and Harvard Faculty. The key goals of the consultation were to:

- Better inform lead Program faculty about the challenges in education in Africa and the developing world, specifically through the experience of a distinguished group of former education ministers and expert knowledge;
- Explore examples from international experience of education approaches which produce good results and examine possible key intervention strategies for incumbent education ministers in their effort to strengthen education system performance;
- Discuss application of the delivery methodology for enhancing education system performance, quality, and outcomes through discussion of examples of the application of this approach;
- Identify key issues affecting education systems performance and outcomes, and practical application for ministers.

Challenges in Education and the Role of the Education Minister: In an interactive, roundtable discussion, attendees discussed the challenges confronting education ministers in Africa and the developing world today and the root causes and downstream effects of these challenges. Key challenges identified included:

- Misalignment between the education system and the labor market;
- Lack of qualified and appropriately trained teachers; and
- Dearth of long term ministerial vision and planning.

Additional concerns include lack of recent and reliable data to make evidence-based decisions; decentralized education systems limiting national reach; constrained funding largely put towards operational (salaries) costs; limited policies to promote equity and inclusion for gender, geography, income, and disability; and lack of public engagement.

Overview of International Education Trends and Practice: The economic benefits of investment in education are well quantified with every year of schooling increasing earnings by 10%. Furthermore, improved investments in schooling have been shown to raise national income growth rates. However, key issues of access (124 million children are out of school) and quality (250 million children are in school but cannot read) persist. Strategies that have proven effective at improving access and quality include:

- Attracting good teachers;
- Improving system accountability;
- Increasing priority to early childhood development;
- Implementing assessment of students and schools;
- Providing autonomy to education providers; and
- Ensuring awareness and sensitivity to local cultures.

Based on their experience, attendees discussed key actions that can improve the education sector. These include policy goals such as recruiting, retraining and retaining good quality teachers; increasing access and improving early childhood development programs; and building a curriculum relevant to employment needs.

The Case of Costa Rica: Costa Rica is a small Latin American country that has increased its high school gross attendance rate from below 20% in 1957 to over 90% in 2013. In the past 15 years alone it has increased its investment in education from 4.43% of GDP in 2000 to 7.20% in 2014. In order to achieve this reform, Costa Rica did not attempt a comprehensive reform, but focused on a few key ambitious, but realistic priorities with the underlying values of ethics, esthetics, and citizenship. To break through poverty traps of low wages and low productivity, education was a necessary investment to improve productivity and wages. This could only be achieved by educating rural, poor, uneducated populations about the importance of education to support demand and by convincing the finance ministry of the potential return on investment. Concurrently, investments in teachers with regards to wages, professional development, and evaluation were critical to improve the quality of the education supplied. Costa Rica has seen reductions in educational inequalities between 2003 and 2013 and expects reductions in economic equalities to come.

Strengthening Education Delivery: Governments often underestimate the importance of implementation, instead devoting greater focus to policy development and leading to policy failure. Delivery is a systematic process through which system leaders can drive progress and deliver results on their policies. It is critical to successful implementation of policy priorities that the minister assumes a lead role in planning and monitoring implementation strategy. The delivery approach is a system for maximizing the chances of success. It requires a culture of ambition, focus, clarity, urgency, and irreversibility. It begins with a set of clear, measurable priorities and their delivery is planned through a reform strategy, delivery chains, and targets and trajectories. The reform strategy outlines the required steps for achieving the goal; the delivery chain shows the

connections from the policy level to the front line implementation level; and clear, measurable targets and trajectories are set for each goal. Investment in data systems is advised to measure progress against trajectories and to be used in decision making.

Attendees discussed strategies for implementing education policy goals based on their experience. Strategies included:

- Data collection systems to monitor implementation and to support evidence-based decision-making;
- Mapping system of institutions involved in teacher training and support to design effective teacher education programs;
- Prioritizing key goals and maintaining open communication with colleagues;
- Maintaining regular dialogue with the Minister of Finance; and
- Learning about best practices from other contexts.

Based on the discussions above, attendees recommending following priority topics for the curriculum were recommended for inclusion:

- Framing an ambitious and realistic legacy;
- Communicating legacy to influence support;
- Prioritizing goals and generating buy-in from the president and colleague ministers;
- Using the 'deliverology' process to create a culture of implementation;
- Using data to build information systems and inform evidence-based decision making;
- Using an outcomes-based approach to negotiate budget and attract funds; and
- Linking together leadership, strategy, and delivery.

Harvard Ministerial Leadership Program Consultation on Curriculum for Education Ministers Participant List

Harvard Faculty Club August 26, 2016

Rifat Atun, Professor of Global Health Systems, Harvard University

Aicha Bah Diallo, International Consultant, UNESCO Liaison Committee on Girls' Education in Africa and former Minister of Education, Guinea

Felipe Barrera-Osorio, Associate Professor of Education and Economics, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Claudia Costin, Visiting Professor of Practice in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Leonardo Garnier, Former Minister of Education, Costa Rica

Silas Lwakabamba, Former Minister of Education, Rwanda

Changu Mannathoko, Senior Policy Advisor, UNICEF

Dzingai Mutumbuka, Former Minister of Education, Zimbabwe

David Namwandi, Former Minister of Education, Namibia

Muhammad Pate, Chief Executive Officer, Big Win Philanthropy

Harry Patrinos, Manager, Education Sector, World Bank

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