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Education Learning and
Development Module



**Diplomatic
Academy.**



COUNTRY OR REGION-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS

Foundation Level
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ACRONYMS

CESR	Comprehensive Education Sector Review
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NHTEP	National Higher and Technical Education Plan
PNG	Papua New Guinea
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UBEP	Universal Basic Education Plan



1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this module is to provide introductory information on education sector priority setting, and related processes such as country or region-specific analysis, stakeholder engagement and planning. On successful completion you will be able to be an informed participant in discussions and consultations related to priority setting.

2 EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING

What are education sector plans?

Education sector plans are common in developing countries. Sector plans are prepared by partner governments and set out the vision, the goals and outcomes for the education system. They can set out medium term (e.g. three to five years) or long-term (e.g. 10-plus years) objectives and priorities for the sector, with longer plans generally being updated over time.

Education sector plans act as a strategic guidance document, and involve many partners. Sector plans are larger than, for example, the Ministry of Education's operational plan as civil society, the private sector, development partners, several parts and levels of government, and – crucially – educators, caregivers and students, all have a stake in the education system. Ideally, an education sector plan is informed by wide consultation, and provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the many stakeholders in the sector.

In most countries, education sector plans provide sector specific objectives that are aligned to higher order goals set out in national development strategies. In some cases, plans are developed separately for different sub-sectors, such as specific planning for early childhood education, the schools sector, higher education, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

This module will work through the typical elements of an education sector plan, the first of which is to document stakeholder consultations.

3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) advises that education sector plans are most likely to succeed if they are the result of a process led by the government and internalised by all national stakeholders. The quality of the preparation process, as well as the quality of the plan are critical to the successful preparation and appraisal of the education sector plan.

It is important that the process is fully participatory and includes a range of stakeholders (such as civil society, teachers' unions, other ministries, and other involved stakeholders,



with good representation of women), as well as the partners who will be in charge of implementing the plan at the local level.

Note: Please see the *Role of Key Stakeholders in Education and Aid Effectiveness Principles Foundation* and *Practitioner level* modules for practical guidance on stakeholder consultation.

Examples of stakeholder consultations leading to education sector plans

Papua New Guinea

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has established PNG Vision 2050, which articulates key development targets to be achieved by 2050. According to the Government of PNG, the concepts and strategic direction in the framework of Vision 2050 were rigorously tested during a three-month comprehensive nationwide consultation program in the 89 districts. Children, adolescents and adults across society were asked to contribute to the development of Vision 2050.



PNG's medium and long-term strategies and plans are all required to align to this Vision 2050 in a cascading way. The vision articulates various targets for the education sector to empower people with the right education and life-skills, and provide them with the opportunity to earn an honest living. This strategic intent is reflected in the PNG [National Universal Basic Education Plan 2015-2019](#) (UBEP), which articulates an objective of 'quality learning for all'; and the National Higher and Technical Education Plan 2015-2024 (NHTEP) which sets out a plan to provide higher skills, knowledge and innovation for PNG's sustainable development.

The UBEP was prepared following extensive consultations by the national Department of Education with other government departments, church agencies, development partners and provincial education officers. Likewise, the NHTEP included extensive input from the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology in collaboration with sector stakeholders including higher education institutions, other government agencies and industry.

Source: Papua New Guinea Department of Education 2009, *Achieving universal education for a better future: Universal basic education plan 2010-2019*

Timor-Leste

The Ministry of Education in Timor-Leste prepared the [National Education Strategic Plan 2011-2030](#) (NESP) through a consultative process that involved Ministry staff at all levels, including the regions, municipalities and schools, as well as its international development partners and other key stakeholders. An annex to the NESP lists the core planning team, the staff of the Ministry of Education (including at regional level), 17 international advisers, and 25 international partners confirming that external advice and input to the NESP was considerable.



Source: Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste Ministry of Education 2011, *National education strategic plan 2011-2030*



An activity for you

The remainder of this module will present a series of activities to assist you in critically analysing an actual sector plan.



Please locate and refer to an education sector plan for the country in which you work or which is familiar to you. Consider how the education sector plan was developed.

Complete the following table by looking at your selected education sector plan. Find the sections of the plan which describe the process by which the plan was developed. Using the following table as a guide, develop a profile of the planning process.

Plan development activities	Examples of what to look for	Your country information
When was the planning process initiated and when was it concluded?	Start date Finish date	
Who were the key stakeholders in its development?	Political leaders Local technical staff External consultants Development partners Local representative bodies Teachers; teacher unions Students Civil society	
Who led the process?	The Ministry of Education's Planning Department A special task force A donor led group	
Were there consultative activities at the sub-national level?	Community and school level At district and regional levels Other levels Media campaigns No consultation Unknown	
To what extent were women, and marginalised groups such as people with disability involved?	Political leaders Ministry staff At district and regional levels At community and school level Civil society Local disabled persons organisations	



4 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

National sector or sub-sector plans should provide some form of situational analysis. This may comprise of a sub-sector analysis and a broader contextual overview, which may draw, for example, from the national development plan. See the following example.

Case study: Myanmar National Education Sector Plan 2016-2021



For three and a half years prior to establishing the [National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021](#) (Myanmar NESP), the Ministry of Education of Myanmar, with the support of partner ministries, senior national advisers, national and international organisations, development partners and education stakeholders from across the country, undertook a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). This initiative helped the Ministry of Education to widely discuss the challenges and opportunities to transform the education sector to provide students, youth and adult learners with educational opportunities that will enable them to fulfil their career and lifelong learning aspirations. The CESR considered political and socio-economic changes in Myanmar, as well as a detailed analysis of the status of education in Myanmar to inform the Myanmar NESP.

Source: The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Education 2016, National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021

An activity for you



Extract the situational analysis contents from your chosen education sector plan. See if you can answer all or some of the following questions.

- Does all the data add up?
- Good planning requires attention to progress over time. Does the situational analysis use trend data?
- Are there major disparities in data quality across different sub-sectors? E.g. is there a lot of available information on the primary school level, but less information on the secondary or TVET levels? Is it possible to determine why this might be so?
- How well is gender addressed? What references are there to sex-disaggregated data?
- How well is equity and inclusion addressed? What references are there to data disaggregated by socio-economic status, remote/rural/urban, disability, and ethnicity?
- Is there any analysis of the political economy of education? Political influence may well be as significant as technical appraisal.



An activity for you

Situational analyses may also be prepared separately by development agencies, including the Australian aid program, for their own program development purposes. See if you can undertake the following tasks.



- Has a separate situational analysis been prepared for your example sector plan? (Hint: check the DFAT country profile for your example country, and search for any related reports)
- Check the data sources that are being used. How recent is the data?
- If possible, run a check of national data against data provided by international sources, such as the statistical tables in the [Global Education Monitoring Report](#).

Source: UNESCO 2017, Global education monitoring report: Accountability in education, pp.410

5 INVESTMENT PLANS

Sector plans may include detailed investment frameworks, usually as a resourcing model. This financial information articulates how the government will resource its plan from all sources (including government, domestic non-government, development partners, private sector and household contributions).

In most developing countries, the Ministry of Education is often the largest ministry in terms of staff and levels of resourcing. Due to this, education ministries can face strong budget competition from other sectors. A best defence is good planning, clear priorities, strong operationalisation and demonstration of results. In education sector plans:

- efficient financial management and budgeting of education depends on clear priorities, accurate specification of resource requirements, and the cost-effective use of available resources
- the planning process should be linked with budgeting, via medium-term expenditure frameworks and robust financial management systems.

A good investment or financial plan has the characteristics listed below.

- Demonstrates clear links to identified education priorities.
- Considers all sources of funding – domestic (government and non-government) and development partner-financed.
- Demonstrates that planned domestic expenditure for education is consistent with the country's overall financing framework and its projected growth (or not) in levels of public expenditure.
- Relates to recent levels of expenditure.
- Includes financial analysis/projections that demonstrate education goals can be



delivered within a reasonable domestic financial envelope. If domestic financing is insufficient, development partner contributions need to be quantified.

- Defines mechanisms for the consistent reporting to all stakeholders on available resources and expenditures.
- Sets out strategies to mitigate the vulnerability of the education system to finance-related political, social, and environmental impacts as identified in a plan's situational analysis.

Note: For more information view the modules on *Education Financing*.

An activity for you

The Timor-Leste National Education Strategic Plan projects forward to 2030 and includes a section on costing the plan. These costings are further detailed within each budget line. An Annex on Population, Enrolment and Costing Projections provides the data which is the basis of the projected budget.



The table below gives data on costings for education in Timor-Leste from 2011 to 2030. Examine the budget framework and then answer the questions that follow.

Timor-Leste Planning Budget Framework 2011-2030

Priority Program	2011	2015	2020	2025	2030
Education Reform					
PP 01 Pre -School Education	\$1,740,486	\$13,836,553	\$12,038,696	\$16,172,470	\$19,055,507
PP 02 Basic Education	\$44,785,948	\$79,547,200	\$69,003,379	\$71,444,501	\$76,223,464
PP 03-01 Secondary Education General	\$3,771,533	\$11,431,956	\$13,296,627	\$15,296,155	\$17,049,896
PP 03-02 Secondary Education Technical	\$2,255,788	\$11,683,569	\$19,113,279	\$30,006,516	\$45,616,120
PP 04 Higher Education	\$13,246,317	\$39,471,757	\$76,782,122	\$104,211,057	\$116,583,958
PP 05 Recurrent Education	\$1,500,000	\$3,739,000	\$1,143,210	\$921,265	\$921,265
PP06 Social Inclusion	\$0	\$928,042	\$971,940	\$971,940	\$977,250
PP07 Teaching Quality	\$4,852,000	\$8,433,502	\$8,663,702	\$9,770,369	\$11,077,273
SUB TOTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES	\$72,152,072	\$169,071,579	\$201,012,954	\$248,794,272	\$287,504,733
Management Reform					
PP 08 General Management	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$6,380,000	\$5,690,000	\$6,190,000
PP 09 HR Management	\$264,000	\$292,000	\$292,000	\$292,000	\$292,000
PP 10 De-concentration and Reg Dvpm	\$2,384,000	\$2,722,000	\$2,722,000	\$2,722,000	\$2,722,000
PP 11 IT and MIS	\$632,941	\$1,723,653	\$802,581	\$1,012,501	\$704,501
PP 12 Planning and Budgeting	\$241,000	\$132,000	\$132,000	\$132,000	\$132,000
PP 13 Donor Coordination	\$0	\$5,632,000	\$2,432,000	\$2,432,000	\$2,432,000
SUB TOTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES	\$3,521,941	\$13,501,653	\$12,760,581	\$12,280,501	\$12,472,501
TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET	\$90,752,071	\$191,982,495	\$225,782,405	\$273,701,616	\$313,217,013
of which: Capital Development	\$9,935,000	\$34,228,823	\$9,463,521	\$7,137,028	\$7,395,810
of which: MoE non-teacher salaries	\$7,500,000	\$9,409,264	\$12,008,870	\$12,609,314	\$13,239,779
Total recurrent Plan Spending	\$80,817,071	\$157,753,672	\$216,318,884	\$266,564,588	\$305,821,203

Question 1: Based on the budget figures, what priority is given to different sub-sectors?

Question 2: Will priority given to different sub-sectors change over time?

Question 3: What priority is given to management reform?



Question 4: How important is capital investment in the budget framework?

Question 5: Will the education budget change over time?

Check your answers

Question 1: High priority. Under the education reform programs, basic education had priority in 2011 (\$44,785,948 or 62 per cent of the total education budget).

Question 2: Yes. By 2030 higher education is set to receive 40 per cent of the education budget.

Question 3: Medium priority. In 2015, management reform investment represented seven per cent of the budget allocated to education reform.

Question 4: Moderately important. Approximately 11 per cent in 2011. Capital investment rose to 18 per cent in 2015, falling back to below three per cent in 2030.

Question 5: Yes. The overall budget for education is set to rise by over 300 per cent by 2030.

Medium-Term expenditure frameworks

An education Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) has become an important tool in education sector planning. The purpose of an MTEF is to situate education sector planning within the context of public sector financial resource allocations. It is a medium-term (e.g. three to five years), program-based budgeting tool. It orients education priorities within a multi-year financial perspective.

Table 1 – Key difference between an MTEF and an annual budget

MTEF	Annual budget
Whole of education sector estimates	Review of the previous year to inform and justify annual figures
Trends and issues of the sector are provided within a three to five year time frame	Mandates for the planning year; justification of the expenditure estimates for the year
Priorities and strategies are set out in the medium-term expenditure plan	Templates typically required by the Ministry of Finance
Funding for existing policies and activities	Budget revenues (recurrent, capital)
Funding for new policies and activities	Expenditures by policy commitments (recurrent e.g. salary, and non-recurrent e.g. capital or reform priorities)
Captures all sources of funds for the sector	Proposal for in-year budget supplements



An activity for you

Find the budget and/or MTEF section of your selected education sector plan.



- How is the education budget formulated?
- Annually?
- Is there evidence of medium-term financial planning?
- Is the budget linked to programs and their outputs and outcomes?
- Is the Australian aid program involved in the process; if so, at what point(s)?

6 PRIORITY SETTING

The education sector plan should clearly set out priorities that relate to the national (development) level vision, mission and overarching goals. In setting out priorities, there should be clear links between impacts (e.g. an educated population), outcomes (e.g. all children complete basic education or all youth literate and numerate), outputs (e.g. sufficient numbers of trained teachers or ensuring that all school infrastructure meets national standards), and inputs (the financial and human resources to make it all happen).

Note: refer to the *Monitoring and Evaluation* modules for a description of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact.

- **Priority setting is far from an exact science:** Priority setting is a process of political dialogue and influence blended with technical design work. It may, or may not, result from widespread national consultation. It may be heavily influenced by development agencies and international goals and commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals and Education 2030.
- **Priorities are conceived within different frameworks:** In education, priority setting typically seeks to balance access, equity, participation and education quality objectives. Over the past decade many developing countries have endeavoured to enable more children, especially girls, to participate regularly in schooling. There is now a strong focus on improved learning, particularly literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills. Access, participation and equity are enduring priorities, but quality (improved learning outcomes) has become a key priority.

Does a country's state of development affect priorities?

The state of a country's development, including if it is experiencing conflict, will affect the priorities assigned to different education sub-sectors. In very poor countries with low levels of literacy, basic education – including early childhood education – is likely to be accorded priority. Growing, emerging economies need a much stronger skills base and may give weight to TVET. Higher education takes on greater importance as economies diversify and demand from a growing middle class increases.



Note: For more information view the Practitioner level module on *Education for Development Priority Setting*.

An activity for you

Priority setting in your selected education sector plan



Find the educational priorities in your chosen education sector plan and answer the following questions.

Identify the education priorities in your chosen education sector plan. List the priorities under the headings of:

- Sub-sector priorities (e.g. early childhood development; primary education; secondary; TVET; higher education; lifelong learning)
- Thematic priorities (e.g. equitable access and participation)
- Technical issues (e.g. mother tongue literacy)
- Target groups (e.g. low income households; ethnic minorities; disability)
- Geographical areas (e.g. remote areas; whole country)
- Others.

Answer the following questions:

- What does your analysis imply about the weight given to specific educational issues, target groups and sub-sector priorities?
- What attention is given to gender disparities?
- Are there any missing priorities?
- Is there an earlier plan that shows changing priorities over time?

7 AUSTRALIAN AID PRIORITIES

Education priorities

The Australian aid program seeks to support the education priorities of existing and potential partner countries for several reasons.

- At a policy level, a review of the education priorities set out in the sector plan allows the assessment of the degree of overlap between a partner government's priorities and the Australian Government's educational priorities and strategies in partner countries (please see [Strategy for Australia's aid investments in education 2015-2020](#)).
- Further, the Australian Government has an interest in working with partner countries to establish and implement priorities that are relevant to the wider development needs of the country (for example: economic growth and skills



development) and that are achievable given current capacity and projected levels of investment.

- Finally, the Australian aid program seeks to support the overall coherence of sector planning and programming. Education is a complex sector. There is a sequential connection from early childhood development through to adult learning. Education is organised and managed at several distinct but inter-related levels. Education has important linkages with other sectors such as health, water and sanitation.

Investing in specific projects without attention to wider opportunities and constraints is likely to limit the impact of those investments. For example, a teacher training program for rural teachers may have limited impact without attention to teacher housing, gender-specific concerns, and other incentives or barriers for teachers working in rural communities. An understanding and working knowledge of education sector plans therefore enables development partners to make more effective and sustainable program-based investments.

Note: For more information on education sector inter-connections and pathways view the modules on *Education Pathways*.

An activity for you

Use your example education sector plan to consider the current or potential role for the Australian aid program to support education priority setting, by answering the following questions.



Question 1: What are some of the ways the Australian aid program can support education priority setting?

Question 2: Can you add to this list? Which of these activities take place in your country program or a developing country known to you?

Question 3: What opportunities exist to influence education policy or priority setting in your country program or a developing country that is known to you?

Check your answers

Question 1: Possible ways include:

- by providing a technical adviser within the planning department of the Ministry of Education
- by providing specialist advisers on a short-term basis; for example in budgeting, financial management, or gender equality
- by having a strong education team, at post and in Canberra, which has regular dialogue with major stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, and other stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels



- by taking a leadership role in the education sector government and development partner coordination group
- by enabling countries to learn from comparative experience: for example through study visits and scholarships
- through high level political dialogue on the place of education and gender equality within the wider national development strategy
- through high level development commitments which specify partnership objectives in education and other sectors: for example in Aid Investment Plans and Sector Investment Plans.

Question 3: Possible opportunities include:

- a high-level visit from Australia
- high level government–development partner consultation forums
- through developing strong personal and professional links with ministers and senior officials
- through the demonstration of projects and programs (e.g. good practice pilots)
- through the provision of policy level technical advisers.



8 TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



Assessment questions

Answer the following questions by ticking 'True' or 'False'. Once you have selected your answers to all the questions, turn the page to 'The correct answers are...' to check the accuracy of your answers.

Question 1

A country's budget framework provides little direction to the priority given to education.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

Question 2

Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks are usually prepared for one year.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

Question 3

Priority may be given to different education sub-sectors, depending on the state of a country's development.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

Question 4

The Australian aid program is interested in the overall coherence of sector planning and programming.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

Question 5

There is only one way that the Australian aid program can support developing countries to establish their education development priorities.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False



The correct answers are...



Question 1

A country's budget framework provides little direction to the priority given to education.

This statement is false. Analysis of these frameworks can provide a clear indication of the allocations and priorities given to sectors (education, health, etc.), the relative budget change for individual sectors and the focus of reforms within those sectors.

Question 2

Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks are usually prepared for one year.

The statement is false. Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks put education priorities in a multi-year (usually three to five year) perspective.

Question 3

Priority may be given to different education sub-sectors, depending on the state of a country's development.

The statement is true.

Question 4

The Australian aid program is interested in the overall coherence of sector planning and programming.

The statement is true.

Question 5

There is only one way that the Australian aid program can support developing countries to



establish their education development priorities.

The statement is false. There are multiple ways that the Australian aid program supports the priority setting process, including providing short-term specialist advisers, building strong post and Canberra education teams with the capacity to engage in dialogue with partner governments, and providing leadership to education funding coordination and planning.



REFERENCES AND LINKS

All links retrieved December, 2018

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Learn more about...

- ✦ The Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and appraisal, found at, <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/what-makes-strong-education-sector-plan>
- ✦ The UNESCO Institute of Statistics, found at, <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- ✦ The World Bank's Education Statistics, found at, <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/education/>
- ✦ UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning, found at, <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/>
- ✦ Data provided by international sources such as UNESCO in the Global Monitoring Report, found at, <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>
- ✦ The Strategy for Australia's aid investments in education (2015–2020), found at, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/strategy-for-australias-aid-investments-in-education-2015-2020.aspx>
- ✦ The Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, found at, http://www.treasury.gov.pg/html/publications/files/pub_files/2011/2011.png.vision.2050.pdf



- ✎ The Papua New Guinea Universal Basic Education Plan 2015 – 2019, found at, <http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/papua-new-guinea-universal-basic-education-plan-2010-2019>
- ✎ The Papua New Guinea National Higher and Technical Education plan 2015-2024, found at, <https://www.dherst.gov.pg/images/downloads/NHTEP-2015-2024.pdf>
- ✎ The Timor Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030), found at, <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Timor-Leste-Strategic-Plan-2011-20301.pdf>
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